

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

AMBASSADOR WILLIAM B. MACOMBER, JR.

Interviewed by: Warren Unna
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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Background	
Born and raised in New York	
Yale and Harvard Universities and the University of Chicago	
Central Intelligence Agency	
State Department: Bureau of Intelligence and Research: Special Assistant to the Assistant Secretary Parker Armstrong	1953-1955
Foreign sensitivity towards former Intelligence Officers Central Intelligence Agency (CIA)	
Administrative Assistant to Senator John Sherman Cooper Subcommittee on Education and Labor	1954-1955
Administrative Assistant to Under Secretary of State, Herbert Hoover, Jr. Herbert Hoover, Jr. Hoover's Sensitivities Security cases McCarthy era Ambassador Frederick Reinhardt	1955
Executive Assistant to Secretary of State John Foster Dulles Roderick O'Conner Dulles Cap Regatta Eisenhower/Dulles relationship President Eisenhower Dulles's India visit Dulles/Nehru relationship Suez Canal War Eisenhower and golf Alan Dulles/John Dulles relationship	1955-1957

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Eleanor Dulles Mrs. Dulles Dulles decision-making process John W. Dulles Dulles recreation Anthony Eden British division on Suez War Harold McMillan Carl Marcy Senator Green Vietnam General Collins mission Diem support Advantages of strong Secretaries of State National Security Council (NSC) Ambassadors' authority 	
Assistant Secretary of State for Congressional Relations	1957-1961
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> United States Ambassador to Jordan King Hussein's marriage Muna al Hussein Embassy officers Israeli lobby Congressional support 	1961-1963
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assistant Director, Agency for International Development (AID), Near East and South Asia Congressional interest Aid philosophy Ceylon Bill Gaud Congressman Otto Passman Congressman John Rooney Pakistan aid program India India/Pakistan rivalry Jordan Iran 	1964-1967
Assistant Secretary of State for Congressional Relations	1967-1969
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Deputy Under-Secretary of State for Management Communications King Hussein and Kuwait 	1969-1973

Cyprus

United States Ambassador to Turkey 1973-1977
Opium poppies
Greek coup d'état
Threats of Greek/Turkish War
Joe Sisco's shuttle diplomacy
Prime Minister Ecevit
Embargos on US aid
Turkish viewpoint

Author, "Angels Game"

INTERVIEW

Q: This is an oral history with Ambassador William B. Macomber taken at Nantucket, Massachusetts at his home on September 19, 1993. It follows an oral history taken five years ago on September 30, 1989. This is Warren Unna doing the interviewing. Ambassador Macomber has had a 25 year history with the US government beginning with the OSS in World War II and then CIA. He worked for Senator John Sherman Cooper, as his administrative assistant. He was first in the State Department in Intelligence and Research, prior to working for Senator Cooper. Then he came back to the State Department as assistant to the Under Secretary of State, Herbert Hoover, Jr. and then to the Secretary of State, John Foster Dulles. He then was Assistant Secretary for Congressional Relations in two interrupted periods. He has been assistant director of the AID program for the Near East and South Asia. He has been Deputy Under Secretary of State for Management. He has been Ambassador to Jordan and Turkey.

Ambassador Macomber, you have a law degree, you were working for a Ph.D. How did you happen to desert the Ph.D. to go back into the US government for the CIA.? Why did you make that choice?

MACOMBER: I had done graduate work at Yale and Harvard and the University of Chicago. It was during the Korean War and I was asked to come back to CIA, which was the successor agency of the OSS. I thought I could come to Washington and get some government experience and work on my thesis at night. Unfortunately I got pretty busy and never did do much night work on my thesis. But my plan was to come to Washington, get some Washington experience, and work on my thesis. My plan had been to be there for a couple of years and then go off and teach at a university and hopefully one day run for Congress. That was my long range thinking.

Q: I believe that a congressional race would have been in your native Rochester, New York. Is that correct?

MACOMBER: Actually I had sought the Republican nomination for Congress back in my hometown of Rochester earlier and I had hoped in the future to try again from wherever I ended up teaching.

Q: Your first State Department assignment as I recall was in Intelligence and Research. Did you find then, or later in reflection, that this was duplicating the work in CIA or duplicating the work in the Pentagon's intelligence? Was it a relevant office? How did you look on it then and how do you look on it today?

MACOMBER: I am sure there was some duplication, but I was not familiar with what was going on in other offices. They were doing useful work. They were coordinating and collecting work from other agencies as well as what was coming out of the State Department, itself. So they were bringing together many sources and putting out a product that was pretty valuable, I think. They were very big and I am sure there was some duplication. But what impressed me was that they had first rate people. It was run by a man named Parker Armstrong who I spoke about five years ago. He is not very well known and not much remembered, but he was an extraordinarily able man. He was called special assistant to the Secretary for Intelligence. He actually had the rank of an assistant secretary. I was one of his two assistants. That was the first of a series of jobs I had of being a special assistant.

I came up the State Department as an assistant to the senior people which was good training and very good experience. He was very able. I described it some time ago and won't do it again how I got the job. Henry Owens, for example, was involved in getting me the job. He was an extremely able fellow who later ended up in the Policy and Planning staff. There were a lot of very able people in that organization.

Q: I ask this question because I notice, say, in a country like India there once was a rumor of the nomination of a man who had been head of INR at the Department of State and the Indians were having a fit. This was the man who is now president of the Carnegie Endowment of the National Peace. But I wondered if you felt, having been in the intelligence research office in the Department lost more points with the people abroad than it gained?

MACOMBER: Well, it didn't hurt in Jordan where I was and it didn't hurt in Turkey. It probably would have hurt in certain other parts of the world. CIA was considered the intelligence agency. Being in the intelligence department of the State Department I don't think created much of a problem. I wasn't aware that it created a problem for Mort Abramowitz which you just referred to. But being in CIA could cause a problem. The Soviets put out a book of all the diplomats who had been in CIA and the implication was they still were. I was prominently mentioned in that book and I used to wonder if it would make any difference, but it never did.

Q: Now to get to your assignment outside the executive branch with Senator John Sherman Cooper. Looking back, how has this helped your State Department career by having a congressional perspective very early in it? I believe you were his administrative assistant so you were privy to almost all his activities. You lived through his fighting of Senator McCarthy, but you certainly were aware of his role in the Senator Foreign Relations Committee. I wonder how this then affected your perspective when you went back into the executive branch?

MACOMBER: Senator Cooper had not gotten on the Senator Foreign Relations Committee yet. That came later. While I worked for him he was Chairman of the subcommittee on education and labor. First of all he taught me you could be a really good politician and a dead honest man, both. He was a rather saintly person. He was not easy to work for. He was very strong willed and administratively somewhat disorganized. He had a willful, strong minded wife. But he was a man of enormous character and it was great to be in his company. I learned to respect the Congress. Congress has a lot better people in it than it gets correct for. They obviously play a very important role in our government and its foreign relations. What helped me a great deal later on was being up there, knowing the Hill, knowing the way it worked, knowing some of the players, quite a few of the players eventually. That was a factor in my getting the job later on as Assistant Secretary for Congressional Relations.

Q: Before we get to that assignment, you went from Senator Cooper's office to being the assistant to the new Under Secretary of State, which was then the number two job, Herbert Hoover, Jr. Very little is known about this man. His name is rarely mentioned now and always confused with his father, the President. You had a year with him. Could you tell us a little bit about working for him and what was his input in US foreign relations?

MACOMBER: He was an honorable man, a very conservative man. He was not geared to government service. His personality and temperament didn't fit it very well. He was a slow reader and he insisted on reading everything that came across his desk. All that seemed to pile up very high on the desk. He bore all the scars of the attacks on his father. His father had forgotten many of those attacks many years before, but he was a young man at the Harvard Business School at the time his father was President and he remembered every bad thing that was said about his father. He was very sensitive on that subject. To give you an illustration. He called me in one day, Cordell Hull had just died, and said, "The Secretary is going to the funeral and I would like to know if I am expected to go?" I said, "I don't think so if the Secretary goes, but I will check." And that was the answer, he didn't have to go because the Secretary was going. However, all most all the Department was going to go to pay their respect to Cordell Hull. But he said to me, "If I don't have to go I am not going to go." I said, "Well, Mr. Hoover, would you mind telling me why you don't want to go?" He said, "I will never forgive him the things he said about my father." And then he told me that Secretary Hull had been a Senator from Tennessee and from 1930-32 had been Chairman of the Democratic National Committee. Of course that was a very partisan job and he had taken a lot of potshots at Mr. Hoover, Sr. I am sure Mr. Hoover, Sr. had forgotten them long

ago, but Mr. Hoover, Jr. hadn't forgotten. He carried all the scars of that shots that had really been aimed for his father.

Q: What, as you recall, was Under Secretary of State Hoover's input in foreign relations. Now obviously Secretary of State Dulles was a very strong figure. What was left for Mr. Hoover to do or what do you remember him having done?

MACOMBER: His great strength was being a good negotiator. The Department often is not as good at negotiating as they ought to be and assume diplomats should be. He was at his best when he was hammering out a negotiating position for an upcoming negotiation. Not necessarily one that he was going to participate in, but one he wanted to keep an eye on but would be conducted by other people. He knew a lot about negotiating and was very strong on not giving your hand away too soon. That was the most useful thing that I learned from him.

He was a conservative fellow and of course this was the McCarthy era. One of my duties was...he signed off on security clearances. He was not a McCarthyite at all, but he was conservative. My job was to read these performance files. He said he read everything, but he couldn't read really everything. These security files were endless. There was an awful lot of garbage in them. My job was to read through them and tell him if there was anything derogatory in them. I remember when Ambassador Reinhardt was going off to be Ambassador to Egypt, his security file had to be updated. There was nothing derogatory about the Ambassador in there, but there was an awful lot about his mother. She had joined a good many organizations. So I mentioned that his mother was prominently featured in the report but nothing derogatory at all about Freddie. And he said, "I would like to see what they said about his mother." I thought, "Oh, my gosh, I shouldn't have mentioned it because it had nothing to do with Freddie Reinhardt." I said, "Sir, it has nothing to do with Ambassador Reinhardt. It is about his mother and we are not clearing his mother." He said, "Let me see it." My heart sank and I thought there would be a row here and I would have to get Bob Murphy next door to come in and help me persuade Mr. Hoover that this was something he should not concern himself with.

So he was reading this thing through and finally, to my enormous relief, a grin spread across his face and he said, "You know she sure was a joiner that lady. But she was a wonderful woman. She was a very good friend of my mother's."

Q: Now this was Dr. Rega Henry Reinhardt, who was president of Mills College who was the mother of Ambassador Frederick Reinhardt. And also you mentioned Bob Murphy. He was Deputy Under Secretary for Political Affairs at that time. You were only with Under Secretary Hoover for a year. By the way this was what year when you began working for Hoover?

MACOMBER: It was the end of 1954. In 1954 Senator Cooper was defeated when Barkley beat him. Senator Cooper came back into the Department and went to India as Ambassador

and I became special assistant to Mr. Hoover. I stayed about 10 months and then went up to work for the Secretary.

Q: You joined Secretary of State Dulles. As I recall this it began at Duck Island and you were quickly rushed there to help him out and you got involved in some tangled anchorage on his boat. Is that how you and Mr. Dulles got to know each other?

MACOMBER: That's a very garbled version of how we got to know each other. My predecessor as special assistant was Roderic O'Connor, who was a very bright naval fellow who had also worked on the Hill at one point. He had worked with Mr. Dulles when he was a Senator. Everyone forgets that Dulles was a Senator for about nine months filling a vacancy. When he ran to complete the term he lost to Senator Layman. Rod O'Connor was getting married and wanted a little more time at home and as special assistant to the Secretary you didn't get much time out of the office. So he resigned from the office and went off to run one of the Bureaus in the State Department. Mr. Dulles simply promoted me as I was the special assistant to the next highest ranking person and I moved up.

Actually I had an interview with Mr. Dulles in which I did terribly. I said every dumb thing you could say. I thought I had really blown it. But at the end he said, "Well, if you will take a chance on me, I'll take a chance on you," which is what he always said to somebody who he was about to hire. So he apparently had made up his mind to hire me before the interview because I certainly didn't do well in the interview.

I worked for him for some time. Roddie said goodbye to him in Geneva and he flew back to report to the President in Gettysburg. So I met him in Gettysburg, that was the first time I worked for him. Roddie had put him on a plane and I greeted him when he got off the plane. I worked with him for a number of months.

I always thought that the day I made the team was up in Sodus on Lake Ontario where the Dulles Cup Regatta was taking place and Mr. Dulles went up to see it and I went with him. We were taken out on a boat. One forgets how famous a figure he was. There were crowds lining the shore to see this Secretary of State. He was a very famous figure although controversial. He was very proud of his abilities as a sailor. He was a sailor man, he loved to sail. But he wasn't skippering this boat we were on. He was a guest on the boat. The skipper got the boat tangled up on a mooring line and there we were hung up before thousands of people looking like landlubbers.

I went down below and got out bathing trunks and went over the stern with a knife and cut ourselves loose. It was hard work for a minute or two. This was the only time Dulles was my assistant. He was hanging over the edge handing me knives and tools I needed to cut us loose. I got us loose before anyone on shore realized we had pulled a landlubber stunt by getting tangled up in our mooring. He was greatly relieved. I always thought that was the moment that he decided I was all right.

Q: You have had some of the most important posts in the State Department, but I have often wondered if your job as assistant to Secretary of State Dulles was the most powerful of all and perhaps the most interesting, the most informed. Reflecting back on that let's just take anything that comes to mind, but certainly the Secretary's relationship with President Eisenhower.

MACOMBER: I have always been sad because very few people have ever gotten that straight when they write about it or speak about it. For many years the writers, of course, presented it as President Eisenhower way over his head, a little fellow, the job was too much for him and he didn't understand foreign policy. And this bull in the china shop next door in the State Department came over and told him what to do and he immediately said, "Yes, thank you for explaining it to me. You are so much more able than I am. I will do just what you say." Then later on when people began to think much more highly of President Eisenhower the caricatures got reversed. Dulles is still the bull in a china shop but fortunately Eisenhower is so bright, so informed and so strong that he sits on this Old Testament prophet he had and somehow or other restrained him from doing all the dumb things he wanted to do.

Neither of those scenes come close to it. They were partners. The President was the senior partner and Mr. Dulles never presumed. They thought a lot a like. Mr. Dulles was technically more experienced in foreign policy, but President Eisenhower since he had been in North Africa had been involved with all the other nations of the world, had been NATO commander, had served in the Philippines, in Panama, and consequently had a very broad background in foreign policy. He saw the world very much as Mr. Dulles did. That was before they worked together. They had the same chemistry except that Mr. Dulles had attended more international conferences.

My point is that the President was a very informed man and they thought a lot a like. Mr. Dulles never, ever presumed that what he was going to recommend to the President was going to be accepted. It generally was.

The way Mr. Dulles dealt with the President was that if something came up that he was going to have to make a big decision on he would talk to the President early in the day and say to him that he thought they were going to recommend such and such. The President might agree or say nothing. Maybe at mid day he would call again and say that he thought they would have to do what he had mentioned earlier. By the time he got over to the White House at the end of the day and recommended what they should do, he had a very good feel for whether the President would be on board or whether he was going to take some persuading or whether he was not going to be persuaded.

When we were abroad at the end of the day the Secretary of State sat down and dictated a telegram to the President. I always sat in on them. He would tell the President what he had been doing, who he had met, who sent their regards, etc. So Mr. Dulles never presumed on his relationship. But he had a great deal of influence with the President, who thought very

highly of him. So it was a partnership. Mr. Dulles considered himself rightly the junior partner. They did not disagree very often.

Q: One of your colleagues, Ambassador Cox [ph], is preparing a book on Indo-American relations and he apparently came across correspondence through the Freedom of Information to the fact that President Eisenhower was much more sympathetic to India and Prime Minister Nehru than Mr. Dulles. If I recall, he had to overrule Mr. Dulles on this subject. Do you have any memory of that?

MACOMBER: No. Before we made this recording, you mentioned that to me and I have no recollection of it. That doesn't mean it didn't happen. But I do recall going to India with Mr. Dulles and having the great privilege of flying over the Taj. The Indian authorities let our plane fly very low over the Taj Mahal. It was a marvelous experience. We landed and Mr. Dulles spent the afternoon just alone with Mr. Nehru. Mr. Dulles told me when it was over that they really had a heart-to-heart talk and got to know each other at that session. I know we went to dinner that evening, it was a very small dinner, and Mr. Nehru was there and Indira Gandhi was the hostess...it was another year before she emerges as a political figure in her own right. The ladies in our group were all enchanted with Mrs. Nehru. Again it was very frank talk. Mr. Dulles always made the point that he didn't agree with him in trying to be neutral in the world, but he certainly understood it. He always pointed out that the United States had been neutralist as the dickens for many years after it had gained its independence. It was a natural impulse.

Anyway, when the Suez Crisis happened a number of months later, Mr. Dulles is kind of restrained about the nationalization of the Suez Canal by Egypt. He got in touch with Mr. Nehru and said, "You and I have different views of the world and a different approach to the world, but we are both working for the same thing. I know you want a peaceful and better world and I do to. Here is a situation that in spite of our differences we can work together because I will try my best to hold back these people. Will you please do your best to make Mr. Nasser be forthcoming a little bit in our direction to help so I can hold them back until we can get a peaceful solution?" And Nehru responded affirmatively and worked quite hard. And they almost pulled it off. What you say may well be true, but they worked together in a very important episode.

Q: Back to the relationship with President Eisenhower, remember we thought he was always out at Burning Tree playing golf and not in the White House. Would he keep in contact with the Secretary of State from all places?

MACOMBER: Yeah, he sure would. I used to think that he wasn't enjoying his golf rounds much. He would be told on the first tee that something horrendous had happened in the world and would be talking to him by the time he got to the sixth, seventh, or eighth or ninth hole. I can't believe the President had a very happy time on the golf course between those holes because he would call on very difficult problems and then he would call back. If the President had to stop the game he would, but generally speaking, he didn't.

Q: Let's look at the relationship of the Dulles brothers. Years ago Eleanor Dulles told me, "Alan tells me that there are some things he doesn't tell the President, it is better he doesn't know." Would that mean he would consult his brother on everything or not even Foster Dulles on such things?

MACOMBER: Well that was the fashionable thing in those days if you were in the intelligence business and in the dirty tricks business that you didn't want to have the President embarrassed by knowing about these things. It was not considered a disloyal act, it was considered an act of loyalty to protect him. I think Alan Dulles would regard the Secretary of State in the same way. I don't know, because I don't know what he was doing or what he told the Secretary. They were very close and Ali, he called him Ali...I remember when Mr. Dulles was dying and the Phoenix Foundation, or some organization, wanted to give him an award and they knew he was too ill to receive it. They asked if it would be all right for his brother Alan to come and receive it on his behalf. Mr. Dulles was quite concerned, he knew they meant to be nice but he said to me, "Alan always screws up and should get the award in his own right. He is too important a person to be getting awards for me."

Q: The other Dulles I mentioned, Eleanor Dulles, she worked at the State Department the same time her brother was Secretary of State. How did that work out?

MACOMBER: The State Department was always wondering just how close she was to the Secretary. He used to have Sunday lunch with her almost every Sunday. He liked to swim in her pool in Virginia. She was a German specialist, a Berlin specialist. He would talk to her about Berlin, particularly. I think she certainly had an influence with him on that subject. Now she told the assistant secretary that she worked for what he was saying. It wasn't an end around. But he consulted her the way he would any expert in the building. She was a trusted advisor in that area.

Q: Now you didn't answer my initial question, even though you got much more prominent jobs in your government service, was that job with Mr. Dulles as executive assistant to the Secretary in your mind perhaps the most exciting and really the most powerful?

MACOMBER: It was the most exciting, not the most powerful. Mr. Dulles thought by arguing which few people realized. He told me once that he didn't trust ideas that he had on Duck Island because he didn't have experts around to argue with. Mrs. Dulles ran everything on the domestic side. He trusted her implicitly. But she wasn't involved in the foreign policy end so he didn't really talk about foreign policy matters with her. And she was the only person ever on Duck Island with him. That was the place where he was all by himself. But he told me he didn't really trust his judgment when it wasn't being bounced off other people. That was the way he thought. So if you were his special assistant he would invite you to argue with him.

One of the more humiliating things was that you would argue for a certain course that he should take and he would defeat you in the argument. The next day he would do what you

were thinking about because he thought up some arguments that you hadn't thought about in favor of what you were recommending. So it was an exciting, thrilling business to be in constant dialogue arguing with the Secretary of State or presenting your views on what to do. But he used that as a way to develop his own thinking. He wasn't really waiting to hear how I wanted to solve the Suez Crisis. But I might offer some views. He would bounce off the right ears and eventually settle in his own mind sometimes what they were arguing, sometimes not what they were arguing. He thought by dialogue. All the people around him were good arguers. And he encouraged them to argue. So that was thrilling.

And he also didn't think the special assistant could do his job if he didn't know everything his boss knew. He also was very conscious that when he was a young man his grandfather had taught him things about diplomacy...

Q: His grandfather was?

MACOMBER: John W. Foster who had been Secretary of State and Minister to Russia. He was an Indiana politician and very able in public diplomacy. He taught Mr. Dulles a lot of things so felt an obligation to young men around him, especially his special assistants, he had two. He would explain to us what he was doing. So he was teaching us as he went along.

He was a lot of fun in the office. He laughed. He always said you couldn't make the same mistake twice. That he didn't like. But you could make a mistake once and he would explain it to you and he didn't expect you to repeat it.

It was the most exciting period in my life in many ways, but the only problem is that after a while as exciting as it is to carry a great big briefcase, it is even more exciting to carry a small briefcase if it is your own.

Q: Now you were a bachelor in those days and an extra man at the Dulles dinner table. Did you watch diplomacy performed there in the evening?

MACOMBER: Not very often because Mr. Dulles did not entertain very much. Every Ambassador in Washington was invited to the house. He entertained about one night a week. He was not a young man when he was Secretary of State and he was very careful about reserving his strength. I was occasionally invited to those evening and would watch him operate the very same way he did in the office. He was always very calm. He told me once that getting mad was a waste of time. He always worked at the same pace whether we were in the middle of the Suez Crisis or writing a letter to Nehru.

He used to worry about the young people around him not getting enough exercise. I said, "Well, Mr. Dulles you don't get much exercise." And he said, "Yes, but I am at that age when I don't need it as much." And that wasn't true. He liked to play tennis. What he would look forward to was saving until Saturday afternoon letters to Adenauer or someone. That was the way he would let up from the pressure, turn to something he particularly enjoyed.

Q: As the extra man bachelor and special assistant at the table once a week or whenever, was there anything that you remember, any explosive situation with a diplomat that the Secretary would have handled there?

MACOMBER: I remember when after I was Assistant Secretary for Congressional Relations he organized a dinner with a number of prominent Congressmen and Senators and one of the Congressmen, who I won't name, drank too much that night. I remember Dulles was very patient with him. No I don't remember anything particularly happening at the dinner table, I wasn't there all that often. Nor did he ever tell me about any particular episode at the table.

He mentioned Anthony Eden. One of the more memorable times I had with him was when the Suez Crisis was beginning but before the troops had moved. Mr. Dulles flew to London to try to calm things down. Bob Murphy had gone over first and had sent a message back saying, "It is hard to believe that these people are about to go to war. You had better get over here." We went over and I went with him when he went to see Mr. Eden, who was then Prime Minister. I went into Ten Downing Street with him, but didn't go into the meeting with him. I sat outside and waited until they were done. When they came out I joined them walking to the front door. Mr. Dulles introduced me to Mr. Eden, who I had never met. It was amazing how Mr. Eden was like a US Senator. He shook your hand, looked you in the eye and made you think there wasn't another thing in the world he was thinking about but you and what a great honor it was to meet you. This is what every Senator knows how to do. Here it was the middle of the Suez Crisis and for 20 seconds he thought I was the center of the universe. It was a side of Mr. Eden that I never knew about. I remarked on this to Dulles later and he said, "I'm surprised you are surprised. He is well known to be a wonderful politician."

Anyway we went to the front door and the three of us came out and I remember saying, "God, I wish there was a photographer around." I walked out between Mr. Dulles and Mr. Eden and as luck would have it there was nobody around. So we got in the car and went back.

I remember two things about that ride back. One is that every time we stopped at a red light people would bang on the window. They recognized him. They would say, "God bless you Mr. Dulles, keep us out of war." The other thing I remember about that trip is that Mr. Dulles didn't say anything for a while and then he said, "You know, Antony...he could never pronounce Anthony right. He never got secretary straight either, he would always say it like it was spelled secretary... Anyway, we were driving along in the car and he said, "Antony said a strange thing to me. He said I was going to go down in history as a great foreign minister." I said, "Mr. Eden said that?" It was well known that they weren't the greatest of friends. He said, "Yes he did." There was another pause and then he said, "Nobody knows. It is too early to tell. You won't know for at least 25 years. The returns aren't in." He said, "I take great comfort from that when I get attacked by everybody for doing this or that."

Q: On that trip trying to forestall the Suez Canal did you also go to France or Israel?

MACOMBER: No. France was ready to go, Israel was ready to go. The key was that if Britain joined them they were going to go and if Britain didn't they weren't. If we could stop them it wasn't going to happen. And Britain was divided. Those people who were banging on the window didn't want to go to war. The Labour Party did not want that war. The Conservative Party was split, however. I remember... Harold Macmillan was no longer Foreign Minister, he was moved up to Chancellor of the Exchequer...he came to a later meeting in Paris and he came after the NATO meeting as a friend. He said, I wasn't there but Mr. Dulles told me later, "I know what you are doing, you are stalling. You are trying to hold us up. You figure that public opinion in Britain will calm down and there will be a strong majority against moving and we won't be able to move because we won't have the support for it." He said, "You go ahead and think that." That was exactly the game Mr. Dulles was playing while trying to get Nehru and the Egyptians to come forward a little to make it easier not to go after them. Mr. Macmillan said, "I know what you are doing but I want you to know where I stand. It is not a matter of public opinion, but a matter of honor. We are going to go in I've got the government."

Q: Moving on a bit, you earlier went into your Assistant Secretaryship for Congressional Relations, but I don't think you in your earlier oral history mentioned your relationship with the staff, because I believe you and Carl Marcy, the Chief of Staff of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee ...followed through with Ambassador William Macomber.

MACOMBER: Yes, I had excellent relationship with Carl Marcy who was Chairman of the Foreign Relations Committee and quite a close one with Boyd Crawford, who had the same job with the House Foreign Affairs Committee. They were the head of the staff in both instances. I was particularly close with Carl because when I came in Senator Green was the Chairman of the Foreign Relations Committee. He was very elderly, he was ninety years old. He was a remarkable man for ninety years old and had the best attendance record in the Senate at that time. But he was obviously frail so that the Chief of Staff had to be more front and center than I think Carl would have liked to have been. So I had a deal with him simply because he was the backstop to a frail chairman.

Q: He would fall asleep at the meetings wouldn't he?

MACOMBER: Well, he didn't do that too often. He was a pretty remarkable man for ninety years, but he was ninety years old. Anyhow, Carl and I developed a tactic which was very useful, I thought. We would never meet with Senator Green without Carl Marcy present because you were always afraid that it would look like maybe taking advantage of an old man. So we always had Carl there to watchdog Green's interests. So Carl was thrown in with me and Mr. Dulles and out of that evolved a very close relationship which continued long after Senator Green was chairman.

We used to have something called non conversations by which we meant we would never admit publicly to anyone else what we had said to each other. We would really level with

what the problems were in the State Department and he would level with me on what the committee thought and why certain things were not going to work, etc. So the relationship worked smoothly together both with the Senate and the House. There was still a bipartisan spirit in those days and there was a general feeling that we had to stick together and support the President. Mr. Rayburn used to say to me that we have only one president and one secretary of state and he is everybody's president and everybody's secretary of state and we have to help them regardless which party we are in. So in that spirit Carl and I worked very smoothly together.

Sadly when I came back about ten years later it was different. We still had conversations, but not as many and there was a lot of antagonism and pressure. The spirit was gone. That was because of Vietnam. Vietnam tore everything apart. Everything was sacrificed during that time over that issue.

Q: I was about to ask you about Vietnam because the first US involvement began during the Eisenhower Administration. What did you and Carl in your non-conversations have to say about it then?

MACOMBER: Well it was pretty small potatoes back then. I doubt it came up very much in our conversations because it wasn't one of the more prominent issues at the time. I remember General Collins was sent out on a mission to really examine whether the South Vietnamese could make it and as I recall he came back saying the odds are against it but it is possible and we could help them and give them the best chance to make it possible to work. But nobody had in mind sending troops. The involvement had not taken on the proportions that it took on later. The idea was to support Diem, who was difficult. I remember Mr. Dulles saying to me that he was difficult, he was difficult to help, difficult as an ally, but one reason he may succeed is because he is so tough, difficult and stubborn. We were going to Vietnam with Mr. Dulles on a trip and meeting Diem. We were supporting him although the general feeling was that the odds were against him but we could give him the best chance to make it if he could.

Q: I'm not sure of my memory, but wasn't this a period when there was a suggestion of using nuclear arms in Vietnam and President Eisenhower said nothing doing? If so, who was pushing it?

MACOMBER: You will have to go back to the newspapers and record books of the day. I don't recall.

Q: Because you worked in Congress, first for a Senator and then you had been Assistant Secretary for State for Congressional Relations and then been in the executive part, how do you look upon the NSC and then the Department of Defense's national security arrangements there? Were these things that helped you in your policy, conflicted, duplicated, what?

MACOMBER: You have to have a coordinating mechanism and it is very hard to get it right. I don't think there is one best way to organize the government to run foreign policy. I think you have to adjust it to the style of the President. One of the things that doesn't go very well if you have a strong Secretary of State is administrative machinery to really get the job done because what happens is you have dominant Secretary like Acheson, Dulles or Kissinger, to name a few, who are so supported by their boss, the President, so able, tough, strong people, that they dominant things.

For example, when any one of those people were Secretary of State you knew who was running foreign policy for the President. And the State Department always feels very good about themselves in those days because their bosses are front and center. The fact of the matter was that they were trading on the strong relationship of an Acheson or Dulles, etc. and they were not really on top of the job building the kind of administrative arrangements and relationships with other Departments that would endure beyond the time when the strong Secretary left. After Mr. Dulles left you had an explosion of suppressed interests which while he was on the scene were not heard. Once he left there was an explosion all over the government, in every Department of government involved in foreign policy some way. Most of them eventually had people abroad. You had a proliferation of involvement in foreign policy and kind of chaos and energy in lots of places. You have to have coordinating machinery to handle that. You can't count on a very strong Secretary because he can only deal with certain parts of the problem and there are many more who can't get his attention. There has to be coordinating machinery within the government. It is very difficult to work out this machinery because of the complex problems. But we can't suppress everything and just say, "The Secretary of State will decide agriculture policy abroad." Agriculture has to have a hell of a big input in such policy abroad. But they can't have their own foreign office. You can't have an independent state department in every one of these other energies of government. On the other hand you can't have a State Department speak a 100 percent for them and not check in with those who are much more expert on the subject.

Q: Well, take the Pentagon. They have really their own foreign office, don't they, in the National Security Council?

MACOMBER: They do and we could do without it because it can get in the way, but actually that office works very closely with the State Department. They are used to working together. The NSC is a very good start. The NSC can only deal with the very top issues that come to the President. It cannot coordinate all the foreign policy issues there are. There has to be a mechanism, led, I think by the State Department that allows you to coordinate all the other things that are not quite at that level of importance, but are still very important. So the NSC machinery is a good idea, not a bad idea. But it can only do part of the job. You have to keep working on ways to coordinate.

Every Department of government has interests abroad, and most of them have people abroad, and they are all lining up together except on the very key issues which the President settles. But there is a lot more that people need to be coordinated on so that we don't keep trumping each others aces all the time.

Interestingly enough in an embassy the ambassador has a stronger position in a funny way than the a Secretary of State does in Washington. He is not only representing the Secretary of State, he is representing the President, he is the boss. The last outpost of feudalism is the American embassy. The ambassador is in charge and it is his job to see, no matter what the instructions are he is receiving, if he can help it that 70 percent of the effort going on 30 percent of the target. But he is in a strong position to say what goes on in his embassy. The Secretary of State can say what goes on in foreign policy formulation in Washington, but the Secretary of Defense and a number of others people are almost equals around him. Whereas at an embassy the ambassador does not have any equals or near-equals around him, he is it. He represents the President as well as the Secretary.

Q: Then lets go on to your first ambassadorial post in Jordan. First, let's get the dates straight. Could you remind me when you were Assistant Secretary of State for Congressional Relations and when did you go to Jordan? Then I would like to know, when you are getting off the plane, what are the first things you have to be careful of to make the best impression with both the country you are coming to and your embassy staff? I am sure your first steps were very much in your mind before you got out of the door.

MACOMBER: I was Assistant Secretary for Congressional Relations the first time, the last three years of the Eisenhower Administration. I went to Jordan when Kennedy became President in 1961. Mr. Douglas Dillon and I were the two people in the State Department that he kept. He sent me to Jordan and kept Doug Dillon at a much higher level as Secretary of the Treasury.

Q: You were the two Republicans to survive.

MACOMBER: Well, there was another Republican, Joe Farland, Ambassador to Panama, who he kept because he heard he was doing a very good job, which he was.

Your next question was what you think about when you arrive at a new post. The first thing you think about is "My gosh, at last I am here," because you have been told weeks, and weeks and weeks before that the President is going to nominate you and you sweat it out. You sweat out your confirmation hearings, you go through your briefings. There can be delays while a security check is done. They have to make a public announcement. They have to go to the host country and get an Agrément which generally is forthcoming, but once in a while it is not. A lot of things have to happen before you finally get on your way. So I think one of the first things is "My God, I have finally gotten here."

Obviously a very important thing to focus on if you want to get off on the right foot with your chief of state or chief of government...in Jordan's case it was the king who ran the government. So you read a lot about him hoping you can get off to a good relationship on the first meeting. You want to be a person who has influence with him, but you are not going to have that if he doesn't respect or like you. So that is on your mind. In Turkey you had to worry about the President, the Prime Minister and many other officials. Obviously

you want to get off to a good start with the people you are going to be working with you, to be cooperative, supportive and earn their respect and support of you.

Q: Let's get to specifics. What was your opening gambit with King Hussein to try to indicate you want a good relationship with him and you want his respect? And what was your opening gambit with your staff to assure that they are all going to be coordinated around you?

MACOMBER: I must say I didn't spend a lot of time thinking about gambits. I had a problem to deal with that was developing while I was en route.

Q: What was it?

MACOMBER: It looked like the King was going to marry an English girl and the politics of that were difficult because the Arabs were pleased that they had gotten out from under British rule and the Jordanians liked the British a bit more than most Arabs did, they had a better relationship with them, but they still didn't want the British back. So the idea of their beleaguered King marrying a British girl didn't sit very well. His enemies were delighted, of course. He was accused of being a stooge of the West, stooge of England and America. To marry an English girl seemed to underscore that. So I unfortunately had to talk to him about that problem the first time I met him. That is not a very comfortable situation to be in because young men all over the world don't particularly cotton to being told by their parents or anybody else who they should marry.

So I had a rather difficult first session with the King. He said...I don't want this to be published while he is still alive, it would be a shame to tell an intimacy we had...He said to me, "I can't take this alone anymore." I found him quite moving. She was a very young girl but every day his life was at risk. He had every reason to wonder if he was going to be alive when the day was over. He was just tired of standing up by himself. Afterwards I remember talking to Muna, her English name was Tony Gardner and he changed it when they were married to Muna al Hussein, which means the beloved of Hussein. They were very happy for quite a while.

Anyway, I was having dinner with them a few days after they married and I asked her what was the biggest change in her life being married to a king and she said, "Well, it is not what you think. It is not the trappings, guards, royalty, etc. because I saw all that when we were courting. Do you really want to know what is different?" I said, "Yeah." She said, "It is waking up in the morning and watching him get dressed. He puts on his clothes like everyone else does except when he gets his shirt on then he puts on a shoulder holster the way one puts on a tie. It is part of his normal clothes. It makes you realize that you may not see him when the day is over." They were living under tremendous pressure in those days. I liked and still like the King. He is a very admirable fellow and fortunately we got along very well.

Q: Go back to that a little bit. The newly arrived American Ambassador had to indicate that the United States didn't think it was a great idea for the King to marry a Brit who was the US closest ally. Did the King after marrying her anyway ever remind you of this conversation? How did it go?

MACOMBER: First of all the British were giving him the same advice. They were more concerned about it than we were. They just thought it was going to hurt him and strengthen the hand of his enemies. No, we never discussed it again. Muna was a very attractive person and we were all friends. She would have been the one who could have been sore, but she wasn't.

Q: Now back to your initial contacts with your staff at the embassy. How do you start off with your staff to be sure it is going to be solid with you?

MACOMBER: Well, the way I started off...it wasn't a big embassy but there were some very good people in it. I had many life long friends from that experience. The DCM was a fellow named Eric Coucher, who had done a very good job as Chargé for about three months. The Prime Minister had been assassinated during that time, so he had been through a difficult period, and the Department had said that he had handled it very well. So I had great respect for him. I had the pleasure of starting out by saying how impressed I was, which was the truth, with how he had handled the situation when there was no ambassador there. He was just a darn good Foreign Service officer and we became good friends. We didn't see much of each other because he left early due to a very bad back. He and his wife were wonderful to me. I had great respect for them.

They were succeeded by Geoff and Betty Lewis. Geoff was a few years older than I and it is always awkward working for a younger person, but he never let it trouble him. He ended up as Ambassador to small countries in Africa. He was a key partner in the embassy. I always wanted everybody in the embassy to know that seeing the number two in the embassy was as good as seeing me because he and I talked over everything and he could speak for me. If, by chance, he can't, he would come and ask me. So I was always close to my DCMs and had great respect for them.

There was a wonderful gang of people there. The head of the political section became a live long friend. The head of the economic section was first class. The head of CIA was very, very good. The head of the AID mission was very good. They were all about the same age. I didn't have a strategy for getting along with them, I was just delighted to find such good people out there.

Q: Let me get at this in a different way. I gather Ambassador MacArthur in Japan made it clear that he was the emperor of the embassy and this created all sorts of friction. How do you make it clear when you start your first embassy as ambassador that its a team? What indications do you give to the staff that they all have their part in it?

MACOMBER: One thing I learned from Mr. Dulles was that when I was hired by him he told me, "Look, I have had more experience than anybody in the State Department, but I would never want to substitute my judgment for the collective judgment and experience of this Department. Collectively they have had more experience than any one individual could ever have. So I never want to act without being exposed to that experience and judgment. That doesn't mean I will advocate to it. I may listen to it and not go in that direction, but I sure don't want to make a decision without consulting and being exposed to this knowledge." That was my attitude with the embassy. At the end I would have to call the shots, but I would darn well like to know what they thought I should be doing. Most of the time I followed what they said I should be doing, they made a lot of sense. If it didn't I explained why it didn't. We got along fine. I was young and demanding. If I had to do it again I would be a little nicer. But they put up with it in the end. We are all very good friends.

Q: How old were you then?

MACOMBER: I had just turned 40.

Q: One more thing on the King's marriage. Did he marry the American Queen during your period or was that later?

MACOMBER: He married the English girl during my period. It was many years later that he married the American girl.

Q: Was there the same concern with that marriage?

MACOMBER: She was Jeeb Halaby's daughter, you know, and part Arab, so I am sure that made it easier. I don't think that kind of thing was an issue later on as it was when I was there.

Q: What about the Israeli lobby? How did this come into your ken? Did you have to deal with it in the Congressional Relations job and later on in Jordan, too? What was your general thought about it?

MACOMBER: I would deal with it a lot when I was Assistant Secretary for Congressional Relations. It was very strong but not heavy handed. The people who were doing the lobbying were very intelligent and polite. They had a great deal of influence both through the Jewish vote and through liberal Jewish money financially supporting members of the Congress. So they had real clout. There were issues with Arabs and about Arabs that I certainly would be at logger head with them. But there were occasions that they were actually very supportive of what we were trying to do. So they were one of the very powerful lobbies that you dealt with. If you deal with Congress you expect to deal with lobbies, that is a big part of the job.

As far as Jordan was concerned, they were supportive. They did not want to see the King collapse. The general view was that anything that took the place of the King would be much worse, probably a much less moderate person, much more unpredictable, less responsible. So up until the June 1967 war they were very supportive of appropriations for Jordan. It was a plus factor for the most part.

Q: Let's move over to your job as Assistant Director of AID for Near East and South Asia. You in your earlier oral history referred to this as the top period of AID. Looking back now, because in September, 1993, a new report has come out about recasting the whole AID structure and its national objectives. It is an agency that keeps Americans happy and gives them perks while the recipients get very little of the original intent?

MACOMBER: Well, I doubt that is the case, but I don't know because I am out of touch. It wasn't the case in the old days. Foreign assistance is something the United States has to give. There are two givens you can take when you are thinking about foreign aid. One, we have to be in the business of foreign aid and secondly, it is the most unpopular program you can have. Nobody in Congress likes to vote for it because it always looks like you care more for the foreigner by sending assets abroad that could be used back home by those who need help. Under the circumstances the world is in now you are going to have to be in the foreign aid business. We are always going to have to be reconstituting it.

Even back in my day, Congressmen knew in their hearts they had to vote for this thing, it would be irresponsible not to, but it was very tough to explain it back home. But if you could say, "I am very concerned about foreign aid but they have just reorganized themselves now and are going to be much more efficient and I felt I should encourage them, stay with them because they are making an effort to make it better." That was a peg you could hang your hat on. So they are consistently reorganizing it because the subject is so unpopular. Whatever agency is doing it will become unpopular so what you do is say you have to rethink the whole thing and create a different agency or revised agency or a better agency as a tactic to keep in the business, because we are going to have to stay in the business.

The key to foreign assistance is don't do it for political reasons, goodwill, that kind of political reason, because if you saddle a program with a bad aid project they have to put some money into it too, it is not just your money, it is their money also. If you saddle them with a turkey, with a bad project, they will thank you when you first announce that you are going to give them the resources and into about a year, but then they will curse you because you saddled them with a bad project.

So one thing you have to do is resist ambassadors and State Department people who say, "I need this aid because it will ingratiate ourselves with the government." But it won't do that. It won't work unless the people who are receiving the aid are making at least as much a sacrifice as you are in giving it to them. Not in financial terms because they don't have it, but there are other sacrifices that they can make. They have to have their shoulder to the

wheel along with you or otherwise it won't work. If they are not going to invest that kind of resources, then you better not do it.

Q: Jim Grant, the current head of UNICEF, but the first AID director in Ceylon, I think back in 1956, reminded me, I think Sir John Kotelawala was then the Prime Minister of Ceylon and he had given a speech about a new type of colonialism, Soviet and Chinese, and Secretary Dulles was very taken with this. This came just as the US had cut off aid to Ceylon because of a rice/rubber deal with China. So Mr. Dulles said that he was going to the Far East and going to include Ceylon on that trip. Do you have any recollection of that period or how Mr. Dulles responded to that sort of situation?

MACOMBER: You know, I don't. I am shame to say I don't because I was with him on that visit to Ceylon and had all the briefings papers. I simply just don't remember. I remember that Mr. Dulles' great, great, great, great grandmother was buried in Ceylon. She was a missionary's daughter. She died in her twenties. Her husband wrote the first English-Tamil dictionary and moved to southern India and lived for many more years, but he also is buried out there in southern India.

I remember a number of things about that visit, but I don't remember anything of the kind you are mentioning.

Q: Now as an Assistant Director of AID for Near East and South Asia you worked under Bill Gaud. I remember him having to appear in the usual Congressional testimony before Chairman, Otto Passman, of the House Appropriations Subcommittee, I think, for foreign aid, and he said...Mr. Passman said something indiscreet and he said, "Oh, I guess I shouldn't have said that Mr. Gaud." And he said, "Don't worry, Mr. Chairman, you are our favorite son of a bitch." I don't know if you were around for that, but it is a famous story that has been told. Since you worked for Congressional Relations and then you were in this AID job, how did you deal with powerful chairmen like that?

MACOMBER: Passman was very tough. But I learned after a while that he attacked and year after year he learned quite a bit about the aid business simply by sitting there as chairman of the aid committee and listening to the testimony, but it wasn't a deep knowledge so if he came after you, you had to hit him back. He respected you if you argued with him. John Rooney was another one. He was Chairman of the House subcommittee that dealt with the State Department. I had a friend who was testifying and I was reading the published transcript later and it said: "State your name?" "Would you repeat the question?" said the witness. I said, "Were you so rattled you couldn't remember your name?" He said, "No, I wasn't in the room when they asked the question." It was sort of a dirty trick leaving that out of the transcript that way because it looks like he was just so befuddled that he couldn't remember his name.

The big thing was not to be intimidated. You had to take the shots and go back after them. I always did fairly well with Passman because I figured that out early. It took me two or three years to get...my transcripts got better and better with Rooney. I learned another thing about

John Rooney. He made fun of and belittled people, and he talked about a whiskey fund, but by the end of the day he got you almost everything you had asked for. The Bureau of the Budget was the enemy, not the Rooney subcommittee. They made fun of the government and had a great joke at your expense, but at the end of the day you got the money. We got about 97 percent of what we asked, which was not true with the Bureau of the Budget.

Q: Something that has long puzzled me is the US turning new cheeks to Pakistan with a very large aid program given and then Pakistan would defy us. Maybe you don't agree with this.

MACOMBER: Well, in my day, for whatever reason, the Indians always said we were being foolish because we were building up Pakistan and the Paks were pretending they were letting us build them up so that they would be a bulwark to communist expansion but we were really building them up so that they could take on India. But the Paks we regarded as somebody who was going to fight to stop the spread of communist influence, and India being neutral, was not. We could never persuade the Indians that that was the reason we were building up the Paks, they thought there was a more negative motive in the aid which was to eventually take on India.

But we didn't always back Pakistan against India. I remember Mr. Dulles saying, "It is not whether you are popular abroad. We could be popular in India by saying that we are 100 percent against Pakistan and 100 percent for India. And we could be popular in Pakistan if we did the opposite. We could be popular in Israel if we say we going to have no consideration for the Arab world. And we could go to the Arab world and say the heck with Israel and we would be very popular." He said, "You can't always talk about whether we are popular abroad because it misses the point." He used to use Pakistan and India. He never regarded himself wholeheartedly on the side of Pakistan against India, but he did feel we could support Pakistan because they had said to us that they were committed against the spread of communism.

Q: Well, it wasn't a loaded question. I remember I was in the Subcontinent in 1965-67 when Ayub threw out all the American intelligence bases in Pakistan and took in Soviet aid. This made we wonder what sort of a great ally it was. And then later on, I think after your period, there was the firing of the American Embassy in which President Zia refused to come to the appeal of the Ambassador and they had to climb off the roof and seek refuge in the British Embassy in Islamabad. That I think was after your time, but it made me wonder what is this great ally, Pakistan.

MACOMBER: I am not in a position to defend or attack Pakistan. I am not an expert on Pakistan/Indian relations. I can tell you in the aid business, the Paks were next to the Israelis the best and most effective users of American aid. They were very, very good at that. I don't know if we were bamboozled by the Paks or not.

Q: Now on the subject of military aid, do you feel that the US during the period you were handling it, put too much emphasis on the military and not enough on the economic, or was it well proportioned?

MACOMBER: We put too much on the military, but whether we could have done anything different, at least in certain situations, I doubt. Let me explain what I mean. Take King Hussein and the Shah. As young people they came into office and looked around to see who were the normal supporters of the monarchy. In the view of both those young men they were hopelessly outdated. They were the merchants who were conservative and in those areas were exploiters of poor people. The merchants and the mullahs were the people in favor of these thrones. These young kings didn't think much of that kind of support so they alienated themselves from it. They became identified with a more progressive element in their countries, but these elements never really accepted them or trusted them. So they had lost one constituency and they didn't gain the new one they were seeking so they were in between. Both, consequently, depended on the military to stay in power, but hoping that eventually the progressives in the countries would see they were doing what was right. This has happened in Jordan and Hussein doesn't have to depend on the military any more to stay in power. But in my day he did because he had not gained a constituency and he had lost the right wing. Now when you get people who are pretty good running a pretty good country, basically moderate progressive people, and they are dependent on the military, the military in order to stay with them is going to demand modern equipment. The leaders know that, so they are always going to allocate too much to the military. It is an understandable impulse because if they don't get the military support they are going down the tube, unless they manage to jump over and get the rest of the people on their side.

Q: Okay, let's call it quits for today and continue tomorrow.

Q: There is one final area I would like to ask you in your job as Deputy Under Secretary of State for Management and that is why the need for frantic cables back and forth in this electronic age? Is there really a recorded memory or do people really consult these fast memos that so many Foreign Service officers put so much time in, or are they just filed away?

MACOMBER: In my day they were just mostly filed away and it was very hard to recover them. Problems, say at the UN, have a tendency to repeat themselves and it is a very good idea to know what you did the last time it came up. What you considered and what you rejected and the reasons for rejecting it and what you finally decided to do and whether it worked out proper or not. But in my day the way you did that was that somebody would remember that Pete down the hall was around when we were handling that crisis and go down and see what he remembers. It was a very hit or miss kind of thing.

We began during my time to use the computers to recover that information. When you dictated a telegram you had to put a code on it and start the telegram saying what the subject was and who the personalities were so when it came back it was not only delivered to the addressee, but it also went into the computer bank. So if five or six years later a similar

problem came up relating to the Arab-Israeli problem at the UN, you could hit some buttons and wouldn't have to depend on whether somebody down the hall had a memory of what happened. If you happened to be serving at home and not abroad at the time, it was a much less hit or miss way to do it. So they really do have a way of recovering those situations.

Let me tell you an example. I don't know whether they used it or not, I never asked anybody. But remember King Hussein during the Desert War was on the side of Iraq, he was sympathetic to Iraq and shocked everybody because he was basically a friend of the West. But I wasn't because I remember when President Kennedy was President I got a message, as did all the other ambassadors in the area, from Secretary Rusk saying we have very strong evidence that the Iraqis were about to make a move to take over Kuwait and this would be a very bad thing and please call on your chief of state and government and tell them what we know is going to happen and ask them to weigh in and get in touch with the leadership of Iraq and tell them not to do it. The response from everywhere else in the area would come in with comments that they don't agree with a lot of things America is doing in this part of the world but we sure agree with you on this and we will weigh in. I went up to talk to King Hussein and I asked him to weigh in and he said, "Certainly not." I was very surprised and said, "I have to go back and say that our best friend in the area has declined to help in this obviously important effort?" He said, "I am not going to do it." I said, "Would you mind telling me why not?" He said, "Because Kuwait belongs to Iraq." His great uncle had been a great king of Iraq and he was just on the other side. Now I wonder if anyone remembered that a few years later when Desert Storm came along. Everybody seemed surprised but Hussein was being consistent with the position he had taken so many years before. Anyway the point is, the reporting that I did at that time was not coded and you couldn't recover it. Today, something like that would be in the memory bank and you could, I believe, recover that kind of information so you wouldn't have to reinvent the wheel every time you dealt with a somewhat similar problem.

Q: Thank you. That should be very heartening to the poor Foreign Service officers who slave all hours of the night, whether from Washington or these overseas posts, doing these memos and wondering if they are paid attention to.

MACOMBER: That reminds me of a story about our Ambassador to Cyprus. He had gotten into a feud with the Under Secretary and the Under Secretary was somewhat critical of the way he was doing his job. George Ball was the Under Secretary and Toby Belcher was the Ambassador. Toby stayed up all one night writing an analysis about what was going on in Cyprus. It was in the middle of the Cyprus crisis. He worked very hard on it. He got a report back saying, "Just give us the facts, skip the analysis," from the Under Secretary. I said, "That must have been a little discouraging." He said, "Well, the hell with him, I kept on giving him analysis because that is my job." They were both good men. I don't know why they got at each other. Ball was a fine Under Secretary and would have been a fine Secretary but never had the chance. And Toby was one of the top ambassadors, a very tough guy.

Q: Let's move to your final posting, Ambassador to Turkey. Something I have always wondered, do the Turks feel they are getting a fair deal from the US for what they are doing for the US and does the US feel its giving more aid to Turkey than it is getting in return for its needs?

MACOMBER: Yes to both of the questions and it is ever thus. Always each country feels that they are doing more than their partner. The Turks felt they were under appreciated. That the Greek lobby ultimately controlled American actions. The Americans felt the Turks didn't appreciate how much we were doing for them. Originally there was a very different relationship. When I was a young man in the State Department I was told that the greatest and best partnership that the US was involved in was the one with Turkey. It wasn't England, it wasn't France or Israel. With the Turks each thought the other was great. It was a very simplistic thing, what was important was stopping the communists and we agreed on that. Democracy was important and we agreed on that. Of course, no country agrees with another country on everything. So by the time I got there the relationship was no longer as simplistic. It was actually much more mature. We argued about a lot of things and each side began to become less grateful of what the other side was putting into the equation.

Q: Now when we discussed your first embassy post in Jordan, you said your first assignment was to try to persuade King Hussein not to marry a British wife because that would backfire on him and his own independence. What was your first assignment in presenting your credentials in Turkey?

MACOMBER: There was no current crisis and the relationship was fairly smooth. But I remember saying to Jim Spain, who was later Ambassador to Turkey, when I arrived that there were only two things that could happen to mess things up here, one the Turks start growing poppies again, they had been a main supplier of opium that was shipped out of the country into Europe and used to make heroin for smuggling into the States. The Turks had had a brief military government intervention which had put a stop to that. The democratic government returned and there was pressures from the farmers to make money on this crop. They considered it a legitimate product that was being used illegitimately by other people, not the Turks. So there was a lot of political pressure to start again. The other thing that could cause a crisis in our relationship would be a war in Cyprus. And sure enough both of those things happened during my time there. So it was a difficult time.

Q: It the Greek-Turkish outbreak over Cyprus were to begin today, what lesson did you learn from the origin then should be the role of the United States?

MACOMBER: Well I learned a very scary lesson. It was a terrible thing to see two modern, civilized, sensible states, Greece and Turkey, work themselves into such a lather. In this case the Turks started it. The Greek Cypriots pulled a coup and the Turks were convinced that this put in jeopardy the Turkish community in Cyprus. They were determined to go to Cyprus and take it over to protect the Turkish Cypriots who were living there. It was a thing that I believed, and still believed, could have been settled by negotiation, but the Greeks were under the colonels then, a dictatorship, and unyielding and the Turks grew more and

more determined to invade Cyprus. What I watched unfolding under my nose was a civilized state convincing itself that it was totally right and the opposition was totally wrong and that there was nothing honorable or logical for them to do other than go to war. To see a civilized state throw aside negotiating possibilities and work itself up to a point where there is no turning back and go to war was a very scary thing to see. And I remember thinking that's how the big war will start. I remember going home the night it started and dictating a reporting telegram about what had happened, what had been said and what our last effort to head it off was.

Joe Sisco was out there shuttling back and forth. He was Under Secretary of State in those days. He was shuttling back and forth from Athens and working with Ambassador Kubisch and then coming over to Ankara working with me. Joe and I went, with some other staff, for a final appeal to Ecevit. Joe and Kubisch had not been able to move the Greek colonel. The Turks said they would give us a certain amount of time, which was running out, for the Greeks to soften their position or they were going to go. The Greeks would not soften their position and we were still hoping to head the Turks off. Joe was very eloquent and did a very good job but they were just sitting there ready to go. He asked me what I could add. I said, "Prime Minister Ecevit, look you are a man known for peace. If you give the word to go in a few hours a lot of people will be dead...Greeks, Cypriots and Turks. It is not clear that's necessary to protect your interests. In a week's time there is no way the Greeks can reinforce their position. You don't lose any option you don't have today and maybe we can pull something off in a way of a more peaceful solution. Give us a chance to try.

And he said to us, he was a humanitarian, I don't think he wanted to be remembered as a man who gave the go sign to a war, "There is a momentum in these things which when it reaches up to a particular level has reached a point of no return and there is no turning back."

While we were in Ecevit's office talking to him, in the room next door were the joint chiefs of staff of the Turkish forces and after we left he gave them the word to go.

I sent in a reporting telegram telling the Department in detail what had happened and I think we were also on the phone telling them it was going to happen. It must have been about 4:00 in the morning I went home and was sitting on the front porch by myself and thinking it over. I thought, "I have seen tonight how the next big war will start where a rational state will be convinced that it is totally right and the enemy is totally wrong and they have no choice but to go to war." There is no logic anymore. That was very scary. That could happen with not just another Turkey but with the great powers and result in another world war. It is a scary thing to see something like that.

Q: From what you said there really is no afterthought of how the US could have acted differently to prevent this. Could NATO have been evoked to go to Turkey and Greece to impose peer pressure or was that already done?

MACOMBER: I think they tried to put all the pressure they could on, but the Americans were the ones who had the great influence in both camps. They were major players in both capitals. I can't think of anyone else who had as much influence as the Americans.

Q: Something that has always intrigued me, every diplomat I have known associated with Turkey, whether in the State Department or the AID program, has put in a lasting affection, more so I would think than many countries I know to which diplomats have been sent. Now you and your wife have been active in Turkish/American groups ever since. You obviously are one of those who has been smitten by the country. Could you explain this affection?

MACOMBER: I have the same affection for the Jordanians. They also are interesting, appealing people. Specifically why we like the Turks we thought they were honorable, decent people who were hard to get to know but once you got to know them and they became your friend it was a live long friendship. They believed in democracy. They believed in the Western tradition and that that was the way of real progress for Turkey. I think the most appealing thing to us was that you can't imagine the bitterness that came out of our opposition of their going to war and our cutting off of aid and the embargo that was put on Turkey and not on Greece. Congress was very sympathetic with the Greek side. There was much more domestic Greek pressure on Congress than Turkish because there are fewer Turkish Americans than Greek Americans. Understandably the Greek-Americans wanted to go to the aid of their motherland. So the Turks were very, very bitter about that. They felt they were the sinned against party. They hadn't pulled off a coup in Cyprus. That had been started by Greek-Cypriots, not by a Turk. Of course, when the Turks first went there was a lot of sympathy for the Turks because people thought they were the main ones sinned against and democracy at that point in Greece was a dictatorship. Later the Greeks kicked out their dictator and put in a democratic government and became much more sympathetic figures than they were in the beginning. But the Turks who started it had the feeling that privately they were being applauded for making a move. At least people understood why they were doing it. And then they felt their great friend lined up on the side of the Greeks in a situation where objectivity, which some of them still retained, would be that at least America would be neutral. Most of them thought they should be on the side of the Turks because the Greeks had started it, but at least neutral. And when they weren't and Congress forced an embargo on the executive branch...the executive branch was fighting against the embargo, the Congress was for the embargo. The executive branch was villains in Athens and the Congress were heroes. It was a little reversed in Ankara where Ford and Kissinger were because they were fighting against the embargo. Put the point was that they were very, very bitter about the way they were being treated and I have to say with some justification. My own view is that if you are going to shut off aid you should shut it off on both sides, not one side or the other.

Anyhow, during that period, our Turkish friends never turned on us and their personal friendship continued. It was difficult at times when they had every right to be angry at the United States. So that is another reason why we like them a lot.

Q: A final area. I believe while you were still in Turkey you decided to write a book on diplomacy, "Angels Game" and I think you did it in the early morning hours of your tour in Turkey and in airports commuting back and forth to the US. What motivated you? Why did you want to write a book on diplomacy?

MACOMBER: Because when I was in the job of Under Secretary for Management one of my pleasant duties was to swear in the entering class of Foreign Service officers. When I first started doing this I wanted to recommend a book they should read which would give them real insight into the profession they had entered and I looked around and there wasn't any real book that satisfied the need I thought was there. There was a wonderful book by Sir Harold Nicholson that we all read when we were young and is still an outstanding book on diplomacy but was written in 1938 before there was a USIA, before there was an AID, before there was a CIA, before all the other branches of government got interested in what was going on abroad. The whole thing got much more complicated. Nobody had written about the crafts of diplomacy as it emerged after World War II. I did recommend Nicholson but an awful lot had happened in the profession since he had written it. The other great writer was DeCallieres in the 1700s. He was a terrific writer too. Nicholson learned a lot from DeCallieres. Charlie Sayre also wrote a very good book on diplomacy. He like Nicholson had been a diplomat when he was young and left it to become a writer. Anyhow they all wrote before the revolution and change in the diplomatic profession. So I felt that what we needed was a book that said what of the old things that DeCallieres and Nicholson talked about are still important and explain them and tell why they are important. But also talk about the added dimensions that had come to the profession since they had written. That is why I wrote the book.

Q: Ambassador Macomber I thank you very much for all your time and patience. This ends the oral history of Ambassador William B. Macomber, Jr. at his home in Nantucket. It is now moved over a day so is September 22, 1993. Thank you.

End of interview