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

FRANK H. PEREZ

Interviewed by: Charles Stuart Kennedy
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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Policy and Arms Control
Soviet capabilities
Chinese
Uranium bomb
Strategic Arms Limitation Talks (1969)
Multiple Independently Targetable Reentry Vehicle
SALT I and II
INR's role
National Intelligence Estimates
Arms Control and Disarmament Agency
Reconciling differences
Kissinger views
Anti-ballistic Missiles

State Department, Policy Planning Staff 1973
SALT II
Political-Military issues
New Targeting policy study

Brussels, Belgium; Political Advisor to NATO 1974-1977
Senior Political Committee
Soviet threat to Europe
The French
Greek-Turk issues
Nuclear Planning Group
Mutual and Balanced Force Reduction talks
Ambassadors
Working with allies

Geneva, Switzerland; Minister; SALT II 1977-1978
Congressional views
Soviets
Telemetry issue
The Back-Fire Bomber
Special group interests
Soviet negotiators
Presidential input

State Department; Director, Office of Combating Terrorism 1979-1983
Hijackings, assassinations and kidnappings
Hostage taking
Ambassador Diego Asencio's kidnapping
Columbia rebel group
Pakistan aircraft hijacking
Cuba
Working with other Agencies

INTERVIEW

Q: This is the fifteenth of February 2006. This is an interview with Frank H. Perez. This is being done for the Association for Diplomatic Studies and Training, and I am Charles Stuart Kennedy. You go by Frank, right?

PEREZ: Right.

Q: What does the "H" stand for?

PEREZ: "H" stands for Herbert.

Q: Herbert. When and where were you born?

PEREZ: I was born in Washington, D. C.

Q: What year?

PEREZ: l924.

Q: 1924. So, you've got four years on me. I was born in 1928. Can you tell me a little bit about your family? Let's start with your father's side. The Perez side. Where do they come from? What do you know about them?

PEREZ: My father was born in Jamaica, but he was a Cuban citizen. His father had been a revolutionary; a Major in the Cuban Army, who had gone in exile to Jamaica. My father was educated at the University of Michigan. He became a Phi Beta Kappa and then stayed on and taught history as an Associate Professor. He then went to Carnegie Institute in Washington, worked there and did some writings on Cuban and Latin American history. After that he became the Librarian of the Cuban Congress. When I was born he was stationed at the Cuban Embassy in Washington. My mother was Irish-American first generation.

Q: Do you know where her family came from? How they got here?

PEREZ: No. There was a family of 11, the name was Fenton, and she was the first generation. Being born of a diplomatic father, I had to become a naturalized citizen. Even though I'd registered with the Justice Department, and they said, "No, you're an American citizen because you were born in Washington." A friend of ours happened to be the Commissioner of Immigration, Ugo Carusi, and he told me flat out, "You've got to register as an alien and become naturalized."

Q: How long did you live in Washington? Do you recall that? Did your father continue here or what?

PEREZ: We went to Cuba a couple of times on visits. When I was about nine years old, he was assigned to London as the European representative for the Cuban Sugar Institute. The whole family went over. I had an older brother and a sister. The three of us lived in London for about a year and a half. My mother and father, however, broke up in London. We stayed there for close to a year in a Catholic boarding school, and with a nanny we came back by ourselves to the United States. On arriving at the dock in New York we were photographed by the New York Times and our picture was published with the title of "the three little globe trotters".

Q: Did you go back to you mother then?

PEREZ: Yes.

Q: Where was your mother settled?

PEREZ: In Washington.

Q: In Washington.

PEREZ: Yes.

Q: Did you get any feel for diplomatic life while you were both in Washington and in London?

PEREZ: I was really too young for it, so I don't really recall much about it.

Q: What about Cuba? Was there an extended family in Cuba?

PEREZ: My father had a brother and sister. The sister had passed away. The brother lived in Havana. I went down to Cuba several times after my father retired to Havana in the late fifties and met the family. I was in Havana the night that Batista fled and spent a most interesting four days there before I was able to get out. I witnessed a major city in utter anarchy and chaos and saw Castro's ragged troops march into the city. I did not realize at that time that my father would later become a virtual prisoner in the city and it was only many years later that he was able to get out – an old and broken man.

Q: Oh yes. Castro took over in 1960?

PEREZ: It was '59.

Q: It was '59. Yea.

Q: How did you find the Catholic school in England?

PEREZ: I remember that I used to have to serve mass every morning at 6 and every evening, and the French nuns were quite strict. My brother and sister were there also, and when we left we were not unhappy to depart.

Q: Was there much in the way of in your family of discussions of what's going on? Because you were born to a family that was connected to the international world, and I was wondering before your father and mother split up.

PEREZ: Because I was very young then, it all escapes me now.

Q: When you came back to Washington, where did you go to school?

PEREZ: I went to public school in Washington because my mother's financial situation was not that great.

Q: The public schools were quite good in those days.

PEREZ: Yes. Yes. Then we moved to Baltimore. I went to public school there. Then we moved to Florida, to Miami, where I graduated from high school in 1941.

Q: In D. C. and in Baltimore, what sort of subjects turned you on or turned you off? How did you feel about school?

PEREZ: I liked social sciences, geography and history. I did not like mathematics at all. I had an interest in Foreign Affairs because of my background, my father's, so I did focus my attention on the politics and that sort of thing.

Q: Did you speak Spanish at home? Was Spanish a close to being a native tongue or not?

PEREZ: When I was very young we spoke Spanish, and after being in London and then coming back to Washington, much of it just slipped away.

Q: By the time you got to Florida, did you consider yourself part of the Cuban community there? Your mother was not of Cuban descent. I was wondering if you got involved in that?

PEREZ: At that time there was not really a Cuban community. That's only been since Castro took over in Cuba and the resultant influx of Cubans into Miami. No, I didn't find I was associating with Cubans or Latins. Mostly Americans.

Q: Where did you go to high school?

PEREZ: I went to Miami Senior High School.

Q: How was that?

PEREZ: It was very good. Excellent. They happened to have had the national champion football team!

Q: Did you get involved in extracurricular things in high school?

PEREZ: To some extent. I was in the Spanish Club and some other social activities, but I can't really remember much more than that.

Q: Sports?

PEREZ: No, not in a competitive way.

Q: I'm not from there, but I would have thought that Miami the beach would have been a great attraction.

PEREZ: It was. Very much so, in terms of the weather and the ocean..

Q: Or distraction!

PEREZ: Yes. It was a completely different city then than it is now.

Q: How did your mother make a living?

PEREZ: She relied on my father providing support, but that was not always steady, so we had our ups and downs.

Q: How did you feel? Did you feel that you had a fairly middle class upbringing or not? Was there a problem?

PEREZ: Yes, there were some economic problems, but I tried to associate with those whom I felt were at my social level.

Q: When you were getting through high school, did you know where you wanted to go to college? Were you planning on going to college?

PEREZ: At that time, no, because of the financial situation. We returned back to Washington. This was the summer of 1941, and I got a job working for the Capital Transit Company doing statistical work.

Q: By the time you got out, we were in World War II, and the draft must have been beating on your neck.

PEREZ: It was.

Q: What happened?

PEREZ: When I turned 18 I was drafted.

Q: Into what?

PEREZ: There was only the Army in those days.

Q: Of course, you had the Air Corps.

PEREZ: Yes. The Army Air Corps. I was drafted and went to Fort Lee, Virginia and spent some time there being inducted. Then I was sent for Basic Training to Sheppard Air Force Base in Texas. After taking a battery of tests, they decided to send me to a clerical school at Louisiana State University. After graduating from there, I was sent up to Mitchell army air base on Long Island for reassignment. After a short period I was sent up to a classified facility in Boston that turned out to be an Air Defense Wing located down in Skully Square atop the telephone building.

Q: Skully Square at that time was the hotbed of strip joints. This was a great place for sailors, particularly soldiers, on leave!

PEREZ: Yes, it was a very popular spot for sailors on shore leave. It was heavily patrolled, however, by the Shore Patrol and the Military Police patrols.

PEREZ: The telephone building I worked in was a skyscraper in a sense. We were based on the top floors and did the tracking for the northeast U.S. area for incoming aircraft that could have represented a threat. My job there was serving as the Assistant to the Chemical Warfare Officer. Each command had a chemical warfare officer. Why they put

me there I have no idea, since I had no science training or technical training. I got promoted to Sergeant there. They disbanded the headquarters, and I was sent to Walterboro Air Force Base in South Carolina. It was there I decided I wanted to become an officer, and I was able to get myself recommended for Officer Candidate School. I went to Edgewood Arsenal, Maryland, to the Chemical Warfare Officer Candidate School.

Q: When they were talking about chemical warfare in the '40's or World War II, what were we talking about?

PEREZ: We were talking about the standard agents: the mustard, the lewisite, that sort of thing, types of agents that were used in World War I. The nerve gases were not known at that time.

Q: You graduated from Chemical warfare School as an officer when?

PEREZ: It was in February 1944.

Q: We getting cranked up, the great Invasion and all. What happened? What did you do then?

PEREZ: I stayed at Edgewood Arsenal as a Supply Officer for a new school that they established and conducted training exercises. I was there about a year or so. Then I was assigned to a Chemical Mortar Battalion in Texas, but I never went there. The war ended, so I went out to Fort Ord, California, in a Replacement Depot. From there I was assigned to Japan in the Army of Occupation.

Q: You went out to Japan in '45 or '46?

PEREZ: Right, in 45. It was a couple of months after the end of the war.

Q: Where did you go in Japan? What were you doing there?

PEREZ: When I first arrived, I was doing security work in the port.

Q: Which port?

PEREZ: Yokohama. Then I was assigned to the 11th Corps Headquarters as the Assistant Chemical Warfare Officer, and there we were concerned with the destruction of the Japanese Chemical Warfare Materiel and that sort of thing.

Q: Did you get involved in the biological warfare? The Japanese apparently had in Manchuria been messing around with biological warfare, weren't they?

PEREZ: At that time the U.S. had a biological warfare program that was highly secret. It was treated like the atomic program, so I was not aware of a U.S. biological warfare program until the end of the war.

Q: The Japanese as far as I know never really got into chemical warfare, did they?

PEREZ: Oh, no. They had quite a bit.

Q: Did they use it?

PEREZ: They used it in China.

Q: That's right. In China.

PEREZ: They had substantial amounts of chemical agents, and they had a lot of protective gear.

Q: How did we get rid of it?

PEREZ: I hate to say it, but we had dumped the chemical bulk containers in the ocean. Some of it, unfortunately, washed back up onto the beaches.

Q: At that time nobody was really paying much attention.

PEREZ: No.

Q: How did you find Japan? This must have been a very devastated place.

PEREZ: Very devastated. Tokyo and Yokohama were pretty much destroyed from the firebombing. I remember when I arrived there, a Japanese would see me and he would run into the bushes because we had been portrayed as ogres, villains, that sort of thing. Gradually, as they got to know us, relationships became very friendly. They are extremely courteous people. Throughout my whole stay there, I enjoyed it very much in terms of the socializing with the Japanese people.

Q: You were there till when?

PEREZ: I was there till July of 1946. After they disbanded the 11th Corps, I was assigned to a Chemical Mortar Company that was doing occupation duty to the north in a city called Mito, the capital of Ibarak Prefecture. So for about six months or so, I did occupation duty.

Q: M-I-T-O?

PEREZ: Yes.

Q: What was it like there? This was a major city wasn't it?

PEREZ: No. It was not a major city then, but I believe it has grown quite a bit since then. My job was to look after a third of the prefecture. I would go out every day and visit the mayors and the police chiefs in the various towns and make sure everything was running smoothly. All in all, it was pretty calm, although we did get some demonstrations toward the latter part of my stay there.

Q: Who were the demonstrators? Would you call this communists or right-wingers? Where were they coming from?

PEREZ: The best I can tell was they were left wingers. We, however, didn't have a major problem.

Q: Was the American hand pretty heavy where you were in Mito or were the Japanese pretty well running things?

PEREZ: The Japanese were pretty well running things. We had our daily contacts with them, and if problems arose we would work with them. But they essentially ran their own shows.

Q: Was there much effort of trying to get the Japanese economy back and going?

PEREZ: Yes. General MacArthur, I think, did an outstanding job in turning the country around -- establishing a democracy, and getting the economy going.

Q: Did you sense any problem with the Japanese authorities? After all, they had been brought up under the old regime of adjusting to being more democratic and all?

PEREZ: I didn't see any of it, no. They were very—I don't want to use the word subservient. Rather, they were generally cooperative and didn't really see us as the hated enemy after a few months of the occupation.

Q: The occupation went very well, didn't it?

PEREZ: Extremely well while I was there, yes.

Q: I got in at the very tail end of the occupation. I was in the Air Force. I got there as an enlisted man in '51. I think half the way into my time in Japan, I stopped being an occupier and became a defender. The treaty went into effect. It seemed to go very well. It's interesting how the American troops and the Japanese got along quite well. It was not a resentful occupation.

PEREZ: In general, not at all.

Q: Did you get any feel for what you wanted to do after you got out? You didn't have any real college, did you?

PEREZ: No. They promoted me to First Lieutenant, and I came back and was discharged in July. I stayed in the Reserve eventually achieving the rank of Lt Colonel. I decided with the G. I. Bill of Rights, I would take advantage of it and go to college. The only university in the Washington area I could get into because they were so crowded at that time was George Washington University. I entered there and majored in History, Foreign Affairs and Government.

Q: You were there what, four years?

PEREZ: I graduated in three years. I went in in '46 and graduated in '49. Then I stayed on and got a Masters Degree. My master's thesis was on the Rio Treaty.

Q: In what?

PEREZ: In Government/ Foreign Affairs.

Q: What was George Washington University like in those days?

PEREZ: It was terribly crowded in the beginning. Some classes would be in the Lisner Auditorium with hundreds of students. Generally. after a year or two, things sort of settled down and became more normal in terms of university life.

Q: Did you find particularly at the graduate school a lot of government workers who were getting graduate degrees or BA degrees at night? Was it working, functioning not as a complete night school, but people doing this… It's a university that government workers have gone to being able to improve their education.

PEREZ: I went during the day. I had set up my schedule so I went to school Monday, Wednesday and Friday, and I worked Tuesday, Thursday, and Saturday. As you say, it has developed special programs for government workers, but all in all it seems to have developed into a first-class university.

Q: Where did you work?

PEREZ: I worked mainly in furniture stores selling furniture.

Q: How were you as a furniture salesman?

PEREZ: Pretty good!

Q: Were you working in department stores or in furniture stores per se*?*

PEREZ: Furniture stores *per se*. One that I worked for was Smith's Moving and Storage. I don't know whether you're familiar with that company.

Q: It doesn't ring a bell, no.

PEREZ: They sold used furniture from their storage operation. I would be able to work there in the evening and study since there weren't that many customers. That worked out very well.

Q: Did Foreign Service or anything cross your path while you were in George Washington University?

PEREZ: Oh, yes. I was a member of the Foreign Service fraternity at George Washington University. Its name was Delta Phi Epsilon. I became its Vice President and then President. A number of the fraternity went on to join the Foreign Service and some eventually became Ambassadors.

Q: You said fraternity. What was it doing? I take its focus was diplomacy?

PEREZ: Diplomacy. Yes.

Q: Did you get any contact with working Foreign Service people, either American or foreign?

PEREZ: Yes. We would have guest speakers, or we would visit embassies. I remember once we got invited to the Soviet embassy when U. S./ Soviet relations were very bad, and we spent an evening there with them. It was reported in the press and seen as a possible harbinger of warming relations. I think it was a very useful organization.

Q: I think so. Were you pointed toward going into the Foreign Service while you were there?

PEREZ: Yes, yes.

Q: Did your time in Japan give you a feel for overseas life?

PEREZ: To some degree, yes.

Q: Were you married at the time?

PEREZ: No, no.

Q: You graduated in l949, and you got your Masters degree?

PEREZ: No, not until 1952. While working on the Masters degree I did two tours of reserve active duty. Each was for three-month periods as a means of getting some income.

Q: Was the fact that you were getting out just when the Korean War was cranking up.

PEREZ: That is correct. My active duty tours were in the Office of the Chemical Corps, as it was called then, not the Chemical Warfare Service. I worked in the Intelligence Office there. So when the Korean War came, they hired me as a civilian under certain emergency hiring powers. So, my first government job was as a GS-11 that I thought was quite good because my compatriots were getting GS-4's and 5's.

Q: Where were you working, and what were you doing?

PEREZ: It was a small intelligence operation, and not much had been done in the way of intelligence on other countries' chemical warfare programs or biological warfare programs. I worked on developing intelligence particularly on the Soviet chemical warfare program. One of the things that I was able to do was uncover that we'd shipped from Germany following the end of the war a whole slew of Russian chemical warfare equipment. I uncovered it essentially lying on the ground at the Edgewood Arsenal Museum. So we gathered this material which consisted of both offensive and defensive items, got it cleaned up and placed it in the museum. From that I was able to produce a comprehensive manual on Russian chemical warfare equipment. Also, I was able to establish the movement of the equipment from the German nerve gas plant, along with its chief scientist, to the Soviet Union. Those were the sorts of things I was working on.

Q: Chemical Warfare was always sort of an option that was oft within the military. It really hadn't been used… Well, I don't know. Would you say it had been used much during World War II?

PEREZ: No, it wasn't used at all.

Q: I was just wondering whether there had been places. There was talk I think of the Italians using it in Ethiopia or something like that.

PEREZ: That was before World War II.

Q: Before the war. But after that, it never really got going, did it?

PEREZ: No. The Germans had secretly developed the nerve gases, but didn't use them I think because they lacked the air superiority… We controlled the air, and therefore they were reluctant to use it because of our ability to retaliate against them. I think in the case of the invasion of Japan, if we had been forced to undertake that, we might very well have made the decision to use chemical agents to reduce American casualties.

Q: The whole debate over the use of nuclear weapons was predicated on the fact that if we did a normal invasion with Okinawa, Iwo Jima, Saipan is examples, the losses on both sides would have been horrific.

PEREZ: The Japanese had developed a whole network of caves on their homeland, so it would have been an extremely bloody invasion. As horrible as Hiroshima and Nagasaki were, an invasion undoubtly would have cost many more Japanese and American lives.

Q: Were you working in the Pentagon by that time?

PEREZ: No. I was at the Chemical Corps headquarters down at Gravelly Point where the National Airport, now called Reagan National airport, is located.

Q: How long did you do that?

PEREZ: I did that about a year and a half. Then I decided that I needed to move on, and I got a job with Air Force Intelligence working initially on chemical and biological, and then I moved into the nuclear and missile areas.

Q: Where were you located?

PEREZ: I first was located here on this campus for part of the time, but most of the time in the Pentagon.

Q: Working here, in Arlington, Virginia at Arlington Hall?

PEREZ: Yes. Air Force Intelligence was here and then DIA took over.

Q: On the nuclear side, what were you doing nuclear wise?

PEREZ: My boss had been a gentleman named Spurgeon Keeney, and he had gone to the Defense Department, had become a Deputy Science Advisor in the White House, and then he became Deputy Director of the Arms Control Agency. When he moved out I took his place. This involved the whole spectrum of interagency work in the nuclear field. The Assistant Chief of Staff of Intelligence for the Air Force was a member of the United States Intelligence Board, so I participated in all of the interagency activities including the interagency committees and the preparation of the national intelligence estimates.

Q: You were doing this from when to when?

PEREZ: I spent 14 years with the Air Force doing this intelligence work, and then they selected me to go to the National War College. The Air Force had one civilian slot. I went there in 1966 and graduated in ’67. Not too long after that I decided it was time to move on because when you work as a civilian in a military service, you work for a Colonel or a General, and you can never rise very high in the system. I went to the State Department and was picked up by INR, the Bureau of Intelligence and Research.

Q: Let's move back to the time you were working with the Air Force. Did you find yourself involved in the Great Debates? Particularly you had the missions we're talking about. "Well, if we had launched this attack, we'll only lose 20 million, but they'll lose 40 million. Some of these calculations were just absolutely horrible."

PEREZ: No, I didn't really get into that sort of thing until I got to the State Department. In those days the Soviets were just beginning to operationally deploy their nuclear capabilities, the Chinese were just getting started and so forth. My work centered on those areas. I recall being involved in developing the initial intelligence on the Soviet deployment of their first operational nuclear weapons, their stockpiles and that sort of thing.

Q: How did you feel about the intelligence? Were we getting some pretty good stuff? I would think this would be difficult to…

PEREZ: In those earlier days there were balloons floating across the USSR and returning prisoners of war that didn't give you much useful information.

Q: …transmitting…

PEREZ: Then we had the U-2 that gave us very good intelligence and following that the satellite intelligence, which, of course, at that time was primitive in relation to what is currently available.

Q: It was just coming on board then.

PEREZ: Yes. I was taking this information and trying to make a story out of it, develop the estimates.

Q: Did you find yourself developing a scientific background or did you need science to do this?

PEREZ: By exposure you developed the knowledge of the subject matter. I sat on the joint atomic intelligence committee, the guided missiles and astronautics intelligence committee and the scientific intelligence committee. I also attended the meetings where the top scientists would evaluate the data and try to reconstruct the Soviet weapons and that sort of thing. Also, I made it a point to visit all our key sites – R & D, testing and production, so that I was able to assimilate quite a bit of information and knowledge. One highlight was going to Christmas Island in the South Pacific to witness a thermonuclear explosion during the last U.S. atmospheric test series. Even so, in terms of true scientific knowledge, I was completely devoid of that, but I did have the opportunity when necessary to call on top scientific talent.

Q: At your particular area, you were trying to figure out what they had. The time has gone by, was human intelligence, was that a major part of what we were able to gather, or was it mostly from observation?

PEREZ: At that time, it was mainly technical means of collection (e.g. recon satellites) that was the major source of our information.

Q: The rise of the Intercontinental Ballistic Systems that must have concerned you all.

PEREZ: It did. I was involved in the intelligence debate at the time of the so-called missile gap, and I remember…

Q: This was, I think, during the 1960 campaign.

PEREZ: Yes, President Kennedy had to deal with the issue of the missile gap. There was, of course, a natural desire in the military to come up with a major threat. I remember I was following certain sites in the USSR that I thought were nuclear sites, and the Air Force decided no; these were more likely missile launch sites for ICBM's. What happened eventually was the creation of the missile gap. It was on this basis that Kennedy decided to launch a major program of strategic offensive weapons: the 41 Polaris submarines each with 16 nuclear missiles, the thousand Minutemen and the 50 Titan II ICBM's. The consequences of this decision for the arms race were profound. It was a fascinating period to work in, and there was a lot of debate about Soviet ICBM capabilities both within the Air Force and within the Intelligence community.

Q: *What about the sites, which you thought, were nuclear and not ICBMs?*

PEREZ: In the end they turned out to be nuclear -- they were the initial Soviet nuclear weapons assembly and storage sites. The chairman of our interagency nuclear committee thought the evidence was worthy of presenting to the United States Intelligence Board (USIB). He asked me to present it to their weekly meeting. When I arrived, my boss, the Chief of Air Force Intelligence, asked what I was doing there. I said that I had been asked by the interagency committee to brief the Board on my analysis. He evidently was not pleased. I presented my briefing to the Board and there was not much reaction. I went to lunch and then returned to my office. My staff was frantic, saying that Allen Dulles, the USIB Chairman, who had been absent, wanted to hear the briefing. I raced back, gave the briefing, and Mr. Dulles did not find my conclusions very convincing. This is just one example of the difficulty of connecting all the dots in a convincing manner when you are dealing with essentially new and virgin areas of intelligence.

Q: Were there any unusual events you were involved with in Air Force intelligence during the cold war, say for example the Cuban missile crises?

.PEREZ: Yes, I was caught up in the Cuban missile crises. One day I was called to meet with my colleagues on the joint atomic energy intelligence committee in the Pentagon. We were shown a series of photographs and were asked to identify what we saw. With

little hesitation, we identified what seemed to us to be Soviet SS-4 and SS-5 ballistic missiles, which respectively were of medium and intermediate range. We were then told that these photographs had been taken over Cuba. That evening the committee met in a downtown facility to review incoming photography and intelligence and we were charged with preparing a report for the President's morning briefing. We met this way for about five nights. My wife could not understand why I was working all day and then in the evening until three or four in the morning. It was not until President Kennedy addressed the American people on the crises that my wife understood what was going on. Our most pressing task had been to determine if the missiles had been mated with their nuclear warheads. The photographic and other evidence was ambiguous, but we had to assume that the warheads had accompanied the missiles. Information since the end of the cold war has confirmed that the nuclear warheads were in Cuba and that also some tactical nukes had been deployed as well.

Q: Can you recall any other controversial areas during that period?

PEREZ: I remember the nuclear test moratorium in 1958 that President Eisenhower had entered into with the Soviets. During that three-year period there was a strong suspicion among the conservatives that the Soviets were using that opportunity to test clandestinely. I, of course, had to carefully analyze all of the available material, but was not able to develop any convincing evidence. However, in our Air Force Special Studies Group, one member (Dr. K) came up with a study that he claimed pointed to Soviet cheating. Pressure had built up on this issue nationally to the point that Kennedy appointed a special group under Dr. John Foster of Livermore to look at the evidence. For some reason, I was asked to brief Dr. K's analysis that I had personal reservations about. It wasn't much later that the Soviets suddenly broke the moratorium with a major atmospheric test series, including the detonation of a fifty-megaton device. What became evident then was that the Soviets had not tested clandestinely but had used the three years to make extensive preparations to test a whole new generation of weapons in order to narrow the gap with the U.S.

Q*: Did you get any feel about the part of the nuclear program, the military side of it, when the Navy wanting to make sure it had a _____ with the Titan missile and all of that, and the Air Force was running the whole ground based missile program at that time. Did you find yourself caught up in the spirit of the... "Well, the Air Force has got the solution and the Navy is taking away our money," and all that?*

PEREZ: No, that sort of thing was more on the policy side. I was just involved in the development of the estimates of the threats, and the threat was what the planners and the policy makers presumably predicated their programs on. At that time, however, I recall a lot of interservice rivalry, each service wanting to be sure it received its fair share of the budget pie. I had a personal experience that pointed up to me the lack of, for a better word, trust between the services. One day when I was on my annual reserve active duty of two weeks as an Army major, I received a call from my Air Force bosses saying I was needed right away to brief the Air Force Council (all generals) on some topic of current concern to them. When I arrived in my army uniform I felt their discomfort and the next

day I was called into my boss's office and informed that the paperwork to transfer me to the Air Force Reserve had been initiated.

Q: Did you find this was the reason the Iraq War when there was a lot of pressure placed on the analyses of, "Are there Weapons of Mass Destruction?" It's a great debate. You're talking about this missile gap that is to a certain extent driven by the people that wanted more money for their program. I mean, the more of a threat, the more money you get for developing your own program. Did you feel as an analyst on this any pressure by saying, "Well, let's make that side a little more scary," or something like that?

PEREZ: I think it was definitely there at that time. You had individuals who were very enthusiastic and wanted to push their particular agenda, but the one thing I found with the CIA was they had nobody to please other than themselves. There was no pressure to support one particular program over another and they tried to be the honest broker.

Q: They didn't have any dog in that fight.

PEREZ: That's right. I had always found the CIA to be very objective and to try to present the evidence and the information in an unbiased and impartial way. Of course they were not always right.

Q: You say you went to the War College. How did you find the War College?

PEREZ: I found it fascinating. It was very interesting and educational.

Q: Did it sort of open your eyes? You had been in a fairly specialized field. Did you find getting there it gave you a broader view of things?

PEREZ: Very much so. The student body consisted not only of the military. There was a substantial civilian presence from various agencies concerned with national security matters. This provided a unique opportunity to exchange views and ideas on topics of current interest. Also, the lecturers were high-ranking officials or academics. Even ex-president Eisenhower came to speak and, after, met with us in a smaller group. On the overseas trip I took to South America I recall we met with at least three presidents. We were required to do a research paper. I did mine on the prospects for democracy in Venezuela. After graduating I returned to the college to be on various discussion panels. One invitation I thought was for a panel proved, to my surprise, to be as the main speaker of the day. I gave my standard spiel on international terrorism and somehow made it with my scalp still in tact.

Incidentally, during my year in the War College I didn't find time to complete my 50 points Reserve duty in order to stay active. The following year I was discharged for not having completed the required training. My explanation that I had just completed a year at the nation's top military school fell on deaf ears.

Q: How did you get yourself over to INR?

PEREZ: Since I worked with all the intelligence agencies in the Washington area, including INR, I asked them and they said, "Yes. We'd like you to come," so I did.

Q: You were in INR from, I gather here, from '67 to '73?

PEREZ: Yes.

Q: What were you doing, to begin with, anyway?

PEREZ: I started out as an analyst for what we now call Weapons of Mass Destruction, and then I became the Division Chief and then the Office Director.

Q: On this weapons thing.

PEREZ: Yes.

Q: Was there a different almost atmosphere or outlook from the State Department side looking at this problem that you had been looking at for the Air Force?

PEREZ: Oh, yes.

Q: How was that?

PEREZ: The people in the State Department weren't really concerned about the technical nuts or bolts or pure military aspects of the thing. They were looking at it in broader policy terms such as arms control possibilities. I found I had a different audience and one that was more receptive to using the information from a policy standpoint.

Q: We were really looking at the Soviets, weren't we?

PEREZ: Mostly the Soviets, yes, and the Chinese.

Q: How did we look at the Chinese? Did we see them as having particular designs or threat or not?

PEREZ: The main concern was the Soviet Union because we didn't think the Chinese would advance perhaps as rapidly as they did. There was one point where we estimated the first Chinese nuclear test to be a year off from when it actually occurred, October, 1964, and rather than being a plutonium device was instead U-235 which was not estimated to happen before mid-1966. As an aside, when I was in Air Force intelligence I thought the Chinese were further along than my colleagues on the interagency committee. I was able to convene an Air Force scientific advisory panel consisting of prominent nuclear weapons specialists. I showed them the evidence on a possible Chinese U-235 facility, as well as a possible nuclear test site. After working all night they did a report in the morning that was distributed the next day. They predicted an imminent test of a U-

235 device. It was only a few days after that that the Chinese exploded their first device that proved to be uranium based. It was an obvious embarrassment to the intelligence community, and at the next US Intelligence Board meeting the Director of Central Intelligence distributed the report and made it mandatory reading.

(Transcriptionist's note: Tape ended during Mr. Perez's statement. Start Tape 1, Side 2.)

Q: A uranium bomb was made how?

PEREZ: At that time, any substantial production required a very large facility and lots of electricity. By passing uranium U-238 gas through thousands of barriers or stages, you were able separate the heavy isotopes from the light ones and thereby get your weapons grade Uranium 235.

Q: Could we tell by the residue sampling the air that it was 235?

PEREZ: Yes. I won't get into those aspects of it but yes, you can tell.

Q: I would imagine that we have planes that sniff and all that.

PEREZ: Yes.

Q: Looking at it from '67 until '73, how did we view the Soviet threat and our response? Was this a growing thing or did we feel that things had sort of reached an equilibrium that mutual assured destruction or something, the MAD doctrine? Is that how we viewed things at that time?

PEREZ: We started into the process of the Strategic Arms Limitation talks in 1969. There were those who felt strongly that we shouldn't go that route and others who favored reaching some accommodation with the Russians. By the time we started the process, the Soviets were pretty far behind us strategically; however, they were doing everything they could to narrow the gap, so there was a lot of concern within the government and the State Department about the Soviet programs. It looked like they were going full blast to try to achieve parity with us and maybe even superiority.

Q: Was there a feeling that there was such a thing as superiority? The difference between having a thousand and two thousand missiles really doesn't make particular sense.

PEREZ: There were certain elements in our government and defense community that believed that the Soviets were seeking nuclear superiority. What they did was to cite the huge missiles that they had developed—the SS-24's—and the large payload that these missiles carried. So when the Soviets developed the MIRV…

Q: Mutual… What does MIRV stand for?

PEREZ: It's Multiple Independently Targetable Reentry Vehicle.

Q: In other words, a cluster of warheads on one missile which could attack multiple targets.

PEREZ: Yes. When the Soviet missile accuracy and the yield-to-weight ratio of the nuclear warheads improved, and with their very large payloads, they would potentially be able to, in a first strike, knock out most of our land-based Minutemen sites. This was something that was a constant argument throughout the period of SALT I and SALT II, as well. Some people believed that this was what the Soviets intended to do. They were developing these missiles in order to give them the option of doing a first strike. There were others of us who felt that while this was a technical possibility, it was not a feasible thing for the Soviets to contemplate. It would not be realistic for the Soviets to have confidence that if they fired their whole arsenal against us that it would work as predicted or that we wouldn't fire our missiles before they got wiped out. I wrote a paper on our capabilities to launch our ICBMs on warning and was quickly labeled "a blood-thirsty dove". These were the sorts of arguments that went back and forth with regard to the Soviet program.

Q: During this time, how did INR fit into this? Were you basically feeding our negotiators, or who was taking this information and using it?

PEREZ: The interagency community and the CIA were feeding the intelligence to the SALT policy makers and negotiators; however, there were differences of view among agencies about the threat. My job in the State Department was to present the intelligence data and my views to the policy makers and keep them informed of all the significant developments as they occurred, as well as to participate in the drafting of National Intelligence Estimates. I would provide briefings and memos for the Secretary and the key staff on new developments as they occurred, and then I would work with our policy makers. In 1969 I received a Superior Honor Award for this activity. The Political Military Bureau had only recently been set up with the primary responsibility within the State Department for working on strategic matters. I would also work closely with the Arms Control and Disarmament Agency, which did not have an intelligence staff.

Q: In this time you almost developed… You were up against people of almost a religious bent. They believe one thing or another, particularly in this field. I know theoreticians got into this. Did you find you were up against people who…it's like trying to convert a Catholic to being a Jew or vice versa or something like that. Did you end up dealing with…

PEREZ: All the time. Constantly. We had running debates about it. I personally favored arms control in order to get a handle on the continuing proliferation of nuclear weapons. Both sides were building more and more destructive weapons at ever-growing costs and it didn't make sense to me since we already had enough nuclear weapons to obliterate each other many times over. Within the State Department we had both soft and hard liners and all the points of view were forcefully presented. One example was the nuclear

test issue. The Deputy Secretary invited three of us to his apartment in the Watergate for breakfast with Ed Teller to discuss the merits or demerits of a nuclear test ban. Obviously it was a lively discussion. Incidentally, the senior State official who had arranged for Teller to meet with the Deputy Secretary became an Assistant Secretary responsible for arms control matters. After he retired he wrote an article entitled "The Case Against Arms Control" and co-authored a book entitled "Beyond the SALT II Failure".

Q: Did you also find yourself also running up against the job situation. You had a lot of people in the industry and all of which were devoted to making more weapons and testing and all of this. They didn't want to see these things go away which still exists today. We keep testing, and what do we do? Did you find yourself up against an industrial establishment?

PEREZ: The problem the State Department had initially was that it really didn't have any expertise in strategic weaponry. We were dealing with the Pentagon that had huge staffs of people: Systems analysis, the Services, the Joint Chiefs. We had ACDA, but ACDA wasn't under our direct control, and it operated as an independent agency. The one thing we lacked was the expertise and the resources to do the very complex studies that the other side was doing, and saying, for example "this supports our view that Minuteman is vulnerable to a first strike." We were in an unfavorable position. I remember since I was the only one in the department at that time who had some depth of experience in strategic weapons, that instead of being strictly intelligence, I became part of the policy process. For example, Phil Farley, a senior adviser to the Secretary, took me to an interagency meeting in the White House with Henry Kissinger. Kissinger wanted a study done on multiple independently targetable reentry vehicles because we were just on the verge of deploying them, and the Soviets hadn't even tested any. I was selected to do this study because Kissinger did not want to give the task to Defense or ACDA. I did the study, which was then turned into an inter-agency study that I chaired. After that I was asked by the NSC to be the ramrod for the inter-agency work on the studies for SALT I. I coordinated the interagency work on the major study of our SALT verification capabilities. Hence, I was involved not only with INR, but on a broader policy scale within the department and the NSC. I worked pretty directly with the Deputy Secretary Richardson at the time, and I went with him to a number of meetings of the Verification Panel which Kissinger chaired which dealt with the whole SALT I process. I remember one meeting Kissinger held at San Clemente when President Nixon came by to see how we were doing and invited us to join him and Pat for cocktails. Much to my chagrin, Secretary Richardson and the other principals decided to fly back to Washington immediately after the meeting.

Q: The introduction of the MIRV's on both sides really escalated everything. Didn't it change the whole playing field?

PEREZ: Yes, well, my argument and that of some others in the State Department and ACDA was that we should try and get a handle on the MIRV's. If we went ahead and deployed them then the Soviets eventually would move ahead of us, since the Soviets would have a much larger throw weight with their big missiles. In the end they could out-

MIRV us, which they did. That was one of the arguments that we had. Then there was the issue of anti-ballistic missiles, and we did manage in SALT I to get an ABM treaty, that we have since renounced, but which did put a lid on further deployment of strategic defensive missiles which at that time were essentially ineffective and would have cost huge sums of money.

Q: This was time of having missiles that could shoot down missiles. The whole idea would be if one side developed it, it would give such an advantage to them that they may be tempted for a first strike.

PEREZ: Right.

Q: As you went about this, was there a change of attitude? Were we thinking that all this is really…that at any time things could take off, all hell could break loose, or was there a feeling that we'd reached a…the main thing is to keep the lid on everything, it's been working pretty well so far?

PEREZ: I think we realized that we couldn't go on as we were. Neither side wanted to be in an inferior position to the other. Each side had to anticipate the potential threat and then start deploying systems to counter what it perceived to be the other side's likely capabilities. So there was a feeling that we'd reached the point where we had to do something to rein in all of this. I think that by and large, all the presidents and their White House staffs were very much for getting agreements with the Soviets in order to de-escalate all of this. Certainly, all of the Secretaries of State were for it.

Q: Were you getting any feeling during this about what was going on on the other side of the mountain; in other words, what the Soviet thinking was? Were many of their people having more or less the same feeling or no?

PEREZ: We certainly got that feeling, yes. They probably were seeing the arms race as a tremendous burden on their economic system, and they didn't feel that they could win in an all-out nuclear race with us. There were a lot of academics and others who seemed to favor some sort of accommodation.

Q: From your vantage point—I realize you're _____ some removed—did you get any feeling about how Henry Kissinger felt about the whole thing?

PEREZ: Oh, yes. I think he wanted a good agreement, and he was very much in favor, I think, of arms control. He realized that he had to make certain accommodations with the military in order to bring about an agreement, and he thought that the best thing to do was to focus on those areas where we could get an agreement and leave the others for later, such as MIRV's. In other words, he was a pragmatist. He was also a master bureaucrat in terms of working with a small inner group (which I was not a part of) to resolve the sensitive issues. The interagency bureaucracy was basically sidelined grinding out endless studies (of which I was a part).

Q: One of the things forgotten. We talk about negotiations with the Soviets on missile things or else any military thing. There's another negotiation that's going on. That's between the Department of State and the Department of Defense, which is usually a more acrimonious…

PEREZ: There were a lot of differences.

Q: Did you find some of your colleagues that you knew from your Defense days, were they thinking you were selling them down the river by getting over and joining the enemy, the Department of State?

PEREZ: Could well be! I think in the intelligence community, however, that it was a fairly harmonious operation. If there were a differing point of view, it would be footnoted in the various estimates.

Q: In '73. This would be during the Nixon administration, you moved over to go to the…as a senior member of the Secretary's policy planning staff. You did that for a year about.

PEREZ: About, yes.

Q: What were you doing there?

PEREZ: I was still dealing with SALT II and attending many of the meetings because the White House and the Verification Panel wanted study after study. I served as an adviser to Ambassador Alex Johnson who headed the SALT II negotiation and visited Geneva in that capacity. I had to participate in all of that, and then do various other things in the Political Military field. For example, when I went to the job, I found out there was a new targeting policy that had been done very close hold. I found out about it in the files when I took over the job. Two other SPC colleagues and I discussed this new policy initiative, and we decided to write a study for Kissinger saying that we had certain reservations about it. My colleagues and I prepared a study, and Winston Lord, who was the head of the Policy Planning, agreed to send it to Kissinger. Kissinger sent it back saying, "A very good study, but I disagree," so that was that. But one of our jobs on the Policy Planning Staff was to provide the Secretary with differing views. As an aside, in the recently released Kissinger telephone tapes Schlesinger complained about leaks to the press about the new targeting policy and suggested my name as the possible leaker. Obviously, our internal study had gotten to the Pentagon.

Q: All of these things _____ someone disagrees, it's lodged in the principles, mind that there are other options. Was it a different atmosphere being out of the INR and Policy Planning?

PEREZ: Not too much for me because I'd been in the policy area dealing with the White House and all the other agencies on that sort of thing. So it really was not that much different.

Q: How did you join the Foreign Service, or what happened? What did you do?

PEREZ: When I came into INR, I was made a Foreign Service Reserve Class 2. In 1971 I was promoted to class one.

Q: Class 2 would be about Lieutenant Colonel level in those days.

PEREZ: No. It would equate to the current counselor rank or GS-16. Class 1 equated to a GS-17/18

Q: You were then assigned, I think to…NATO?

PEREZ: Yes.

Q: And you were there from '74 to '77. What were you doing in NATO? This would be in Brussels.

PEREZ: I was the Political Advisor on the delegation. That was a job that was held by Jim Goodby when I took over, and before him Larry Eagleburger had held it. The job was to serve on the NATO Senior Political Committee and to work with the various delegations on mutual problems, as well as to run the Mission's political section.

Q: In other words, you weren't used as sort of the Nuclear Advisor. This was a much broader scale. This being '74 to '77, at that time how did we view the Soviet threat in Europe?

PEREZ: We viewed it as very serious and as a growing threat because of the continuing deployment of nuclear weapons, the growing imbalance in ground forces and that sort of thing in Eastern Europe.

Q: This was before the great crises when the SS-20 was put in?

PEREZ: Right.

Q: That maybe upset the whole mutual policy at that point or at least it was about to.

PEREZ: Yes.

Q: How did you find working with other nationalities in NATO? Was this a different way of working?

PEREZ: Pretty much so, yes. It was very collegial, but then there were problems. For example, when I got there we had the crises over Cyprus involving Greece and Turkey. We had to work with their representatives separately, and we couldn't deal with them in

the normal manner. The French were somewhat of a problem, particularly with regard to such things as Ministerial communiqués.

Q: On the Turkey-Greece thing, I had been in Athens As Consul General. I left in July of '74 just before all hell let loose, and there was a Greek sponsored coup in Cyprus, and the Turks responded by inserting troops, and here were two NATO countries sort of at loggerheads. How was this resolved in Brussels?

PEREZ: It was solved by a delicate diplomacy working with both sides. They cooperated, I think, as much as one could expect under the circumstances.

Q: There must have been sort of a feeling under the other NATO countries where you were, "Oh, my god! We've got to worry about the Soviet Union with so many divisions sitting on _____", and you've got these two little countries on our flank going to war over a small little island, and it seems more like a tribal dispute or something. That must have been a certain attitude.

PEREZ: Yep, when you had North Atlantic Treaty council meetings, and the Greeks and the Turks went at each other, it wasn't a very allied thing to do.

Q: You get that. Especially a _____ issue when you deal with those people. It's hard for us to empathize. You mentioned the French. The French were not on our Military but on the Political side, but in some ways their military had to be kept involved.

PEREZ: Oh, yes, they were. They were involved. They knew what was going on. They were fully involved in all the NATO activities, except the military side, but they were fully aware of what we were doing military-wise.

Q: I image there was quite a bit of really understand that despite what the political masters were saying in Paris and other European capitols, and the French were not in the military side of NATO had sort of military command, military commander, there was quite a bit of cooperation. So it was more a dispute that seemed to…

PEREZ: They had a mission in SHAPE headquarters, so they were fully informed and aware of what was going on militarily. They saw the need for it because of the need for full integration of NATO forces in the event of wartime situations

Q: As things played out, did you find that the Germans, the Netherlands, Norway and all, Italy, were there disputes or differences between these various countries on what we were going to do in NATO?

PEREZ: No, I didn't really discern too much difference in views on the various issues that came up before us. The Soviet threat was growing and the allies saw a clear need to work together to confront it.

Q: You weren't there at the time that the Neutron bomb came up? That came a little later or not?

PEREZ: That became quite an issue. I don't specifically recall much about it since it was an issue that would be handled by the Nuclear Planning Group (NPG). The one thing we did was to keep the North Atlantic Council and the Nuclear Planning Group fully updated on all these issues. We didn't want them to feel that we'd left them out of any of these sensitive matters.

Q: I'm looking at the dates, '74 to '77, nothing particular was happening on the Soviet side. The Czech invasion was back in '68, but…

PEREZ: There were no major crises while I was there. One of the areas that I worked on was the Mutual and Balanced Force Reduction talk that were being conducted in Vienna. In Brussels, at NATO, we put together the Allied policy on MBFR. That was one of the important areas I worked on as head of the Political Section.

Q: Watergate was being played out, the crisis there with President Nixon I think while you were there.

PEREZ: Yes.

Q: Did you see with your colleagues, did that have any impact at all?

PEREZ: It had a direct impact on our mission because Donald Rumsfeld was the Ambassador. President Ford called him back to be his White House Chief of Staff not very long after I arrived in NATO.

Q: Who took his place?

PEREZ: David Bruce, a prince of a man. He was called back from retirement by his friend Henry Kissinger.

Q: He kept being called back from retirement. Poor man! They never let him go.

PEREZ: As soon as he got there, there was the Portugal crisis and I can remember being with him during the wee hours of the morning as the crisis unfolded. We had the Red admiral in charge of Portugal, so this created a lot of problems for the alliance.

Q: Yes. I think it's one of the major stories. I have Frank Carlucci's account about what to do with Portugal. While you were there, this was when basically relatively junior officers who were leftist in Portugal had their coup and took over, and the feeling was that… I think Henry Kissinger to all accounts was about to write the Portuguese out of NATO practically, and Carlucci and others were saying, "No. Let's let this run its course." Were you getting into the debate?

PEREZ: Not directly. Carlucci came up, and we spent a couple of days with him and Ambassador Bruce. We felt that the best thing to do was to keep Portugal in, but we had the requirement to cut off their access to highly classified materials such as Nuclear Planning Group materials and other sensitive materials.

Q: What was the Portuguese role in NATO at the time? They must have been off to one side at that time.

PEREZ: They didn't play a major role, no, but they were a full member of the Alliance.

Q: Basic thing was, of course, they had the Azores, I think.

PEREZ: Yes. For us. .

Q: How did the other countries look upon Portugal at this time, the other countries in NATO? Were they more supportive of Portugal?

PEREZ: I think they were equally concerned as we were about having a government that was leftist and they worried about the security of the NATO information and the commitment of Portugal to the alliance.

Q: Did you get any feel for how Rumsfeld was as our ambassador to NATO?

PEREZ: Yes, I did. He was very positive, and he felt very confident in his role. He felt that he needed to take a leading role in the key activities in NATO to include both the political and the military. He was highly respected by the people in our mission and well liked by his colleagues on the NAC.

Q: Did you find in NATO that we were working hard not to force our will on NATO? In other words, trying to allow all countries to have their say and not appear that this is just an American instrument. Was this a problem?

PEREZ: That's always a problem because we had a much larger presence there than all of them, and we had Alexander Haig as NATO Supreme Commander, plus a very active crowd in Washington seeking to push their agenda in NATO. In general I'd say we tried to be even-handed and not to give the impression that we were the bully on the block so to speak. We worked closely with these countries and took into account their concerns as best we could. Obviously we worked the closest with our key allies to develop a consensus that we could then push in the larger arenas.

Q: Was the Mansfield Amendment Proposal on the table at that time, which was to the NATO countries weren't fulfilling their troop and financial quotas, and we should start withdrawing? Was that an active issue?

PEREZ: I don't really recall that, but yes our allies always worried about any reduction in the U.S. commitment to defend Europe, both in terms of our troop strengths and the coupling of our nuclear deterrent.

Q: I'm not sure when it came up, but it was sort of to make the European countries live up to their commitments more.

PEREZ: We constantly urged these countries to meet their NATO commitments. Of course, there were annual reviews of each country to determine if it had met its commitment to NATO.

Q: Had any?

PEREZ: In most cases yes. When they hadn't, NATO would seek a commitment from them to do more.

Q: When you left NATO, where did you go?

PEREZ: I went to Geneva to the Strategic Arms Talks, SALT II. I was nominated for the rank of U.S. Minister by President Carter and confirmed by the Senate. The rank was for my period of service on the delegation.

Q: You'd do that for about a year, I take it.

PEREZ: Yes.

Q: What was the status of SALT II at that time?

PEREZ: It was dragging on. We were reaching the end of the line, and by then had successfully resolved most of the major issues. By the time I left most of them had been resolved except for some remaining technical issues.

Q: Was there a feeling that this is going to work and we're going to have something?

PEREZ: There were those who favored an agreement with the Soviets, and there were others who were still suspicious of the Soviets and were concerned. There were mixed emotions. As you know, the Congress because of the opposition to it never ratified SALT II. There had been uncertainty once we negotiated the agreement as to whether or not it would be ratified by Congress. To try to get Congressional support President Carter made every member of the Senate automatically a delegate on our delegation. Hence they were free to come to Geneva and actually participate in our meetings. We spent a lot of time briefing them and arranging their meetings with the Soviets. One visit I remember in particular was that of Senator Ted Kennedy. Minister Semenov, the Chief Soviet negotiator, invited him to lunch and I accompanied him. The reason for the invitation, I suspect, was that he was being talked about as a presidential candidate. When we entered the Soviet compound he was enthusiastically greeted by all of the people there. It was a

very warm and genuine reception reflecting in part, I suspect, their admiration for his brother

Q: In a way SALT II wasn't ratified but one of these non-ratified observable treaties, wasn't it? Or was it being observed?

PEREZ: In general, it was, yes, although it had no legal status since the Congress had not ratified it.

Q: Did you get any feel for the Soviet side of things there?

PEREZ: I worked closely with them. I would normally meet at least two days a week with my counterpart who was Minister Karpov. They, I think, had pretty much the same problems as we did. They were subject to strict instructions from Moscow, and they weren't very free to do anything independently on their own, as was our case. We were not in a position make independent proposals without Washington's instructions, but we did seek to have some modifications in our position to enhance the negotiability. Any significant negotiating change would entail a major bureaucratic action in Washington and approval by the President. We were both playing the game of trying to fulfill our instructions as we saw them.

Q: By the time you got there was there pretty much mutual agreement between the two sides of where we were going, or were we haggling over small points? How was it at that time?

PEREZ: By that time I think that both sides had pretty much agreed that it was time to get an agreement and that we were moving ahead to wind up the remaining details, mostly technical issues.

Q: You left there in '78. Where stood it at that time, by the time that you left?

PEREZ: It was almost concluded. All the remaining problems were basically technical, like the telemetry problem. We wanted the Soviets not to encode or encrypt telemetry from their missiles so that we would know if they had developed a new missile or not and what missile they were testing. It was these sorts of technical issues that kept the thing going, and there were issues as to how you identify nuclear cruise missiles from non-nuclear cruise missiles and how do you identify aircraft as to whether its nuclear equipped or not, and these were the issues we had pretty much reached agreement on when I left. Shortly after I left, they wound up all those details.

Q: Was there this debate over the back-fire bomber? Some people say, "This is a trans-continental…"

(Transcriptionist's note: Concurrent talking made this small part indecipherable.)

PEREZ: That was one of the issues that we fought over for many years. My view had been it was a medium range bomber. It certainly was not an inter-continental bomber. But the other side said, "If you put in more fuel, it can fly inter-continental." So it was these sorts of issues that occupied the last six months of the negotiation, ironing out those details.

Q: On your delegation, was General Rowney there?

PEREZ: Yes.

Q: Was he on the hard-line military track or essentially stop this whole thing? How did you evaluate his stance?

PEREZ: He was not the easiest guy to work with, and he was suspicious of the rest of the delegation. He felt that he had to be the guardian and watchdog of our treasures and didn't want us to give anything away.

Q: I take it there were two major sets of negotiations going on: One was Rowney and the other was the Soviets?

PEREZ: Sort of, yes. Then there was the back and forth with Washington where the special interests of the involved agencies played an important role.

Q: You had the Carter administration at this time which was roughly the world disposed towards this process, wasn't it?

PEREZ: Except possibly for Brzezinski. I'm not sure how keen he was on it, but he was reputed to have taken a somewhat hard-line view of the negotiations.

Q: Did you find the Soviets to be tough negotiators?

PEREZ: Very much so. But they respected our willingness to listen to their point of view and to openly debate the issues with them. While I was there I avoided polemics and counterproductive arguments and tried to persuade them with reason and logic. At the same time I treated them in a friendly and amicable way. From time to time, my wife and I would invite them to our home with their families for friendly get-to-gethers. Once we invited the Academician on the delegation and his wife to our home for dinner and had a very pleasant evening. The next morning to my surprise General Rowney raised the matter saying that I should have cleared the invitation with the delegation. To my pleasant surprise, when I departed Geneva the Head of the Soviet delegation hosted a farewell for me with his delegation at a hotel in Geneva.

Q: Any final thoughts on the negotiations overall?

PEREZ: I find it interesting that in the most recent strategic nuclear weapons agreement, the Moscow Treaty of June 2002 that calls for significant reductions, the Bush

administration sought first to have an informal agreement or understanding with Russia calling for significant mutual reductions in strategic weapons over the next ten-year period. The Russians balked and asked for a formal agreement that Bush acceded to. From what I can tell there was not a huge bureaucratic exercise in Washington or the formal negotiating delegations that we have had in the past. It seems that once the military was aboard with the numbers the President moved ahead. Perhaps, if in the past, the Presidents had taken more decisive action, agreements could have been reached sooner and with much less pain. I remember going with General Curtis LeMay to a hearing on the Limited Nuclear Test Ban Treaty before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee. I could tell he was not happy with the LTBT, but he did not object to it. Rumor had it that President Kennedy had called in the Chiefs individually and told them he expected their support.

Q: Again, we're moving on, and you came back to Washington for four years. You were Deputy and then for one year the Acting Director of the Office of Combating Terrorism. What was terrorism as defined in '79 to '83?

PEREZ: It was quite different than it is today.

Q: Can we stop here? You were saying terrorism was essentially a different breed of cow.

PEREZ: It was. We dealt mainly with such things as hijackings, assassinations and kidnappings and those kinds of events. There were also events like the seizure of the U.S. Embassy in Iran and the burning of our embassy in Islamabad, but these were not acts committed by established terrorist groups. I remember when I first arrived on the job, there was a Peace Corp worker who had been taken by the rebels in Columbia, and his mother had been trying to get him out for a long time. I maintained regular contact with her. The rebels wanted a ransom, and we wouldn't pay a ransom because of our official policy. There was a prominent correspondent trying to help his mother who went down to Colombia and I assume evidently paid some ransom to get him out. The hostage came back, and he landed at Andrews Air Force Base. The Vice-President was there to greet him because this was a major event to get an American out of captivity. After that I worked on things like the abduction of the US Ambassador to Columbia, Diego Asencio, who was taken hostage at the Dominican Embassy in Bogotá. I spent a couple of months down in Bogotá working on the case until he and the others were finally freed.

Q: What were you doing at that time to get him out?

Q: This is Tape 2, Side 1 with Frank Perez. You were saying the DCM had become the charge.

PEREZ: The DCM in Bogota was made Chargé. Secretary Vance sent me down to help him out. So I worked with the embassy. We worked with the other governments and the Columbian government to make sure, first of all, that the Columbian government didn't storm the embassy and try to free the hostages and get them killed in the process. We conferred and negotiated on a daily basis with the Columbian government and the other

countries that had hostages inside. After about two months an arrangement was made by the Colombian government to fly the hostages from Bogotá down to Havana where they were released.

Q: Did you get any feel for the… I can't think of the name of the group that was holding them hostage. Where were they coming from, and did you end up having contact with them?

PEREZ: It was a large rebel group called the M-19. We felt it was the responsibility of the Colombian government to handle this situation, so we didn't deal directly with any of the terrorists, or rebels as they were called. Fortunately the hostages got out alive.

Q: You were saying hijacking. Who was hijacking? What was this all about?

PEREZ: There were various hijackings. One, for example, was in Pakistan when four Citicorp executives were aboard a PIA aircraft. The Pakistani government was handling it, although we had our ambassador and others at the site monitoring the situation and we communicated back and forth. Again we were concerned that no actions be taken which might threaten the lives of the hostages. The hostages finally were released safely. My team received a Meritorious Honor Award for the handling of that crisis that lasted for some 13 days. The President of Citicorp came to the Department and presented Secretary Haig with a crystal sculpture as a token of appreciation. Then, we had the Cubans who had been released from…What was the name of that prison?...and sent to the United States by Castro.

Q: Mariel.

PEREZ: Mariel, yes. Some of them wanted to get back to Cuba, and the way some selected to get back to Cuba was to hijack airplanes. So we had essentially weekly hijackings of aircraft during that period.

Q: Were we working to find a way just to fly them back?

PEREZ: Not that I was aware of! It did raise some interesting problems. The way they did it was to carry a bottle of gasoline, with a lighter, and they threatened to ignite it if the plane didn't go to Cuba. So the plane would go to Cuba, and then the hijacker would get off. The passengers also would get off, and they would go into a tax-free shop run by the Cubans, where they would purchase a bunch of stuff. The airline would have to pick up the tab, so that was a pretty good business for the Cubans. This problem also lead to some racial profiling because the metal detectors couldn't detect the gasoline, so the airlines, if they saw somebody who looked like a possible Cuban hijacker, would pull them aside for further interrogation. During that period I attended a meeting that our law enforcement officials had with the Cuban authorities to work out procedures to deal with these hijackings.

Q: Where did your office fit within the department?

PEREZ: It was originally directly under the Secretary. It was SCT. When I joined, it was DCT, Deputy Secretary of State. Then it moved to MCT, Under Secretary for Management. That showed the priority the department was giving to this particular activity. The director of the Office for Combating Terrorism, however, has held the rank of Ambassador. Now the office is back as SCT directly under the Secretary, signifying the high priority it deserves.

Q: Was this a crisis management? If you have a hijacking or a kidnapping, you'd go do something or were we working to set up a legal system to cut out this nonsense?

PEREZ: We were doing both. The head of the Office for Combating Terrorism was the head of the inter-agency terrorism group. Lt. Col. Ollie North was the NSC rep on it. Also on the group was Bill Buckley, who later was kidnapped and brutally assassinated by terrorists in Beirut. I served as the Chairman for about a year. We would develop governmental policies and deal with crises. For example, there was an Army General taken by the Red Brigades in Italy. As Chairman, I set up an interagency task force that met almost daily to deal with the crisis.

Q: Oh, yes. I would say Downey. It wasn't Downey, but it was…

PEREZ: Dozier was his name. General Dozier. We worked this crisis on an inter-agency basis. Ollie North, for example, knew Ross Perot. I got in touch with Ross Perot who agreed to offer a substantial reward—a personal reward—for any information leading to the freeing of the General. I went over to Italy and met with the Minister of the Interior and the American ambassador and discussed how things should be handled in terms of what needed to be done. Obviously, we had friction between the U.S. military in Europe and the Embassy as to who was in charge. It was eventually resolved, with the Ambassador having the final say. Basically, however, we looked to the Italian government to handle his rescue, but we provided them with resources to assist them in doing that.

Q: Did you see how that came out?

PEREZ: The Italians discovered where he was being held and raided the apartment. He came out alive.

Q: Where did the Red Brigade fit into the political spectrum? What were they after?

PEREZ: They were sort of a radical intellectual group who were basically anarchists, and they plagued Italy for quite a while, killing a Prime Minister, conducting kidnappings and killings of industrialists and that sort of thing.

Q: That was a nasty outfit. Also decapped people, too. Shot them in the knee, and…

PEREZ: Yes, judges and industrialists. That was the sort of terrorism that we dealt with in that period.

Q: Were we looking for groups that were sponsored like Abu Nidal and others that were being sponsored by the Soviet side in a way? I mean, training camps in East Germany and all that?

PEREZ: Each year by law we had to come up with a list of those countries supporting terrorism, so we came up with what is called the Terrorism List. That was one of the things we did; however, the CIA did much of the basic work for us on that issue, and we would designate these countries like Libya and Iraq, as countries that supported terrorism.

Q: Did you get involved in the Libyan business, the bombing of the…

PEREZ: No.

Q: No. That was after your time.

PEREZ: The one thing we did develop while I was the Acting Director was an anti-terrorism training program for foreign countries. We felt we needed to help those countries that had this problem to train their personnel and to get equipment so they could more adequately deal with the problem. We initiated this program that I believe is still going today.

Q: Was there on tap anti-terrorism military outfit that could storm planes if need be?

PEREZ: You are probably referring to units like Delta or Navy Seals. That type of info is classified, so I won't…

Q: …won't go into that. Just to put it in perspective, religious, Islamic religious fundamentalism did not have any particular resonance within terrorism at this time, did it?

PEREZ: No, not anywhere near the extent to which it has now. The United States wasn't a major target in those days. The Israelis were certainly a target of the Palestinians and radical Islamists, the British in Northern Ireland from the IRA, and Spain from the ETA. The IRA, for example carefully avoided targeting U.S. interests since at that time they were receiving major funding from Irish-Americans sympathetic to their cause. Attacks against us were mainly overseas and involved mostly anti-Americanism bomb attacks against U.S. businesses, such as McDonalds and US banks. There were also a number of attacks against official U.S. personnel abroad.

Q: Did we find ourselves caught in the political things of how do you designate the IRA? The IRA used to have fairly strong backing from Irish constituents in Boston and New York and all that. Was this a problem for you?

PEREZ: I remember one incident when I was asked to go testify at the trial of an IRA fugitive in New York City for whom the British were seeking his extradition. I appeared and testified about the IRA and the acts of terrorism that they had committed. This trial went on for quite a few hours. When I left the trial room, there were all these Irish Americans outside the courtroom just giving me holy hell. How could I be testifying for the British and that sort of thing!

Q: In '83 you left that job, and you're off to Turkey. What were you doing there?

PEREZ: I was the Deputy Chief of Mission.

Q: Who was the ambassador when you were there?

PEREZ: It was Robert Strausz-Hupe.

Q: How was he? How did you find him at that point?

PEREZ: I served under him in NATO. After David Bruce, Strausz-Hupe became the U.S. Ambassador to NATO, so we had established a relationship there. When he needed a new DCM in Turkey, he asked me if I'd like to go, and I said, "Sure".

Q: What was the situation in Turkey when you were there? This was '83. You were there from '83 to '8…

PEREZ: To1984, Yes. They had had a military take-over two or three years earlier. By the time I got there, they were preparing for elections. I was there during the period of the elections, setting up of the Parliament and the establishment of a new government under Prime Minister Ozal. Things went very smoothly during that particular period. It was a very democratic election. The military candidate was not even in the running.

Q: How did Robert Strausz-Hupe operate? He'd been an ambassador at a number of places, but he was getting on in years.

PEREZ: He'd been Ambassador in Sri Lanka, in Belgium, Sweden, NATO, and then Turkey. He stayed on in Turkey for eight years. He functioned rather effectively, but he focused on policy and dealing with the higher levels of Turkish government. The running of the embassy was the sort of thing that I tried to do for him to ensure than things went smoothly. Despite his age, however, his intellect remained sharp.

Q: How did you find the embassy at that time?

PEREZ: I found the morale to be good. There was a certain amount of unhappiness with the ambassador because he was not the typical ambassador who works closely with his staff, and they felt that perhaps he wasn't as concerned for them as he should have been.

Q: Did you find yourself playing the normal role of the DCM, sort of the middle man trying to keep the staff happy, at the same time trying to coax the ambassador into showing a little more, at least appearing more often?

PEREZ: Yes. It worked fine. But I was there only for a year because under the new Foreign Service regulations, if you were in grade as a Class I Officer for a certain period of time and not promoted to Career Minister, and I had been 12 years as a Class I Officer, you were out. The aim was to open up the senior ranks to younger and deserving officers. Efforts on the part of the Ambassador and others to have me extended failed because of the unwillingness of the Director General to bend. I had been shocked to be told by Washington shortly after arriving at post that I would be retired in several months hence. After all, I had disrupted my life to go to Turkey and the government had paid the not insignificant costs of sending me and my family there. The Ambassador awarded me a Meritorious Honor Award for my period of service. When saying my farewell to the Acting Foreign Minister of Turkey, he told me that I was very much appreciated in Turkey because of my respect for the people and the country, my willingness to be open and to listen to their views and in not trying to dictate to them.

Q: What were some of the major issues you had to deal with?

PEREZ: Our relations were generally good to excellent. We were renegotiating the defense agreement and as always it had many sticky problems, but we were able eventually to overcome them. The Turks were unhappy with the military assistance and economic aid levels we were able to give them and they pointed out to me more than once that the U.S. was giving more aid to Egypt than to them, a staunch NATO ally. The so-called Armenian holocaust was always a sensitive issue when our Congress was contemplating a resolution. Cyprus was a sensitive issue and the Turks were always trying to convince us of their position. When the Turkish north of Cyprus declared its independence, I was Chargé D'Affairs. As it was late in the day, I called right away for a meeting with the Foreign Minister, knowing I would be getting instructions from Washington to register a strong US objection to Turkish recognition of North Cyprus. I saw the Foreign Minister without receiving instructions. When I returned to the Embassy the instructions had arrived and were essentially what I had conveyed to him. There were little problems as well. One day I was called to the Foreign Ministry and was presented with a U.S. AID study that contained a map of Turkey showing the Hatay province in southeast Turkey as part of Syria, a very sensitive subject in Turkey. Hatay had been annexed by Turkey in 1938 and still showed as Syrian on older maps. Obviously, I was somewhat embarrassed and said I would get to the bottom of it.

Q: You left in '84 and retired, is that right?

PEREZ: That's right. I left with mixed emotions. By that time I had completed over 35 years of government service and was grateful to have had the opportunity to serve my country and at the same time to enjoy some very interesting and challenging assignments. I would have no hesitation in recommending a career in government to bright young people seeking a challenge and the opportunity to do something worthwhile in their lives.

Q: What have you been doing since?

PEREZ: For the past twenty years or so I have been working on a part-time basis in the Office of Freedom of Information and Classification/Declassification in the State Department, mostly as a Senior Reviewer dealing with Europe, with Political-Military matters, Non-Proliferation, Arms Control and those sorts of things.

Q: This business all falls within you expertise.

PEREZ: Yes, and Terrorism, too!

Q: Oh, boy! Terrorism has now become sort of the de-growth industry in the government. I'm struck by basically a rather small group of Islamic Fundamentalists have done a wonderful job of creating work for Americans from security checkers at airports to think tanks here in Washington. They really have done a splendid job!

PEREZ: Created a lot of jobs.

Q: Absolutely! Frank, I think this is probably a good place to stop then. But do you have any last thoughts before we bring this to an end.

PEREZ: Yes, particularly for those individuals who may elect to choose a career in government service. I felt the most important thing for me during my government service was intellectual honesty in whatever I did. I always expressed my views forcefully based on what I thought were the facts. There always was a temptation to please the bosses or the policy bent of the administration. But the only way I could remain true to myself was to give the most honest assessment I could before decisions were made. Of course, I was tainted with certain of my own prejudices, but I tried to take them into account. Once decisions were made I had no problem giving my full energies to implementing them. For me, the most important thing was to advance the interests of the United States in its pursuit of global democracy and freedom. During my lifetime in government this country has saved the world from Fascism and Communism in their efforts to take over the world. We are now engaged in another worldwide struggle with a very shadowy enemy roughly defined as radical Islamism. And if the past is prologue, there probably are new and challenging threats just under the radar horizon that threaten our way of life. Our government will need the best minds and talents to deal with what will be extremely complex challenges, which unfortunately will not be black and white as were the World War II and the Cold War struggles.

End of interview