

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

**ALBERT L. SELIGMANN**

*Interviewed by: Charles Stuart Kennedy*

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### INTERVIEW

*Q: Today is January 27, 2000. This is an interview with Albert L. Seligmann. This is being done on behalf of the Association for Diplomatic Studies and training, and I am*

*Charles Stuart Kennedy. You go by Al, is that right?*

SELIGMANN: That's right. Only my parents called me Albert.

*Q: All right. Well, let's start at the beginning. Tell me when and where you were born and a little about your family.*

SELIGMANN: I was born in New York City on May 26, 1925. At the time my family was living in an apartment house on the west side of Manhattan, West 83rd Street. While growing up, we lived in three west-side apartment houses before I went to college. My mother and father were both born in the United States - on my father's mother's side, at least, I am a third generation New Yorker. My earliest "first-hand" recollection of American history is a vague memory of my grandmother talking about the Civil War draft riots, which took place when she was a young girl.

My grandfather and my grandmother's parents on my father's side, and as far as I know, my grandparents on my mothers side, whom I never knew personally, all came from somewhere around Strasbourg in Alsace when it was still part of France before the Franco-Prussian War.

*Q: Before 1870.*

SELIGMANN: Yes.

*Q: Well sticking to your father, had he gone to college or had he started a business or some such?*

SELIGMANN: He went to public schools in New York City. After graduating from DeWitt Clinton High School, still going strong today, he went on to City College and then obtained a law degree. He never practiced law, however, but ended up in the wholesale flour business founded by his father in the Washington Street market in lower Manhattan.

*Q: Did you have brothers and sisters?*

SELIGMANN: I had one older brother who still lives in New York. I always thought he was the brilliant one in the family. He wrote extremely well. I thought he was going to go far in literature or some such, but he got trapped into going into the family business, where but for the grace of World War II, I might too have been trapped.

*Q: He was the sacrificial lamb.*

SELIGMANN: Right.

*Q: How about your mother? What was her background?*

SELIGMANN: She went to Hunter College. Like most women of her generation, at least those who got married - there were a number of maiden-aunt teachers in our family - she didn't have a professional career. She married my father while he was in the army stationed in Asheville, North Carolina during World War I.

*Q: So you basically grew up in New York City. Where did you go to school, to begin with, grammar school?*

SELIGMANN: I started off for one year in a coed kindergarten, PS 93, but shortly after that, boys went their way and girls went theirs and I moved over to PS 166. All this was about the beginning of the real depression - my brother, for example, was in a private school but was pulled out to join me at P.S.166. Fortunately, New York City had pretty good public schools in those days, although the physical plants of many were antiquated and austere by today's standards. I read in the newspaper last week that the city was about to renovate or tear down all those magnificent, ancient public school buildings, and P.S.166, which to the best of my knowledge is still standing, is certainly in that category; it seemed a hundred years old when I went there, although it was probably more like fifty.

*Q: How did you find, do you recall the education you were getting then?*

SELIGMANN: It was excellent. In those days a woman could be a teacher or telephone operator or a secretary but not much else. So you had all these well-educated, mostly spinster, mostly Irish schoolteachers. I remember them all. I had a fine education in what have become to be called the "basics:" no social studies, but solid history and geography; no communication skills, but solid grounding in grammar and spelling. Also, there were possibilities for skipping grades or what they called "rapid advancement," combining grades, so there was plenty of challenge. Moreover, the student body was very mixed: middle-class kids like myself and what we used to call the Columbus Avenue toughs, so we received something of an education in real life as well.

*Q: Did you get into fights and things?*

SELIGMANN: I remember one intimidating classmate sticking a knife in my back, and saying, "You're going to help me on the quiz aren't you!" I do not recall what happened, but if he was sitting behind me, I doubt whether I covered my paper. Another time, one of his comrades picked a fight with me. I didn't know much about fighting, and still don't, but I let loose a wild punch and broke one of his teeth. Of course, that made me an embarrassed hero.

*Q: Never back someone into a corner. Well, then you went to grammar school. Do you recall much of the reading? Were you much of a reader at that time?*

SELIGMANN: I doubt whether anyone who took first grade with Anna Magee will ever forget her - and that is where my reading got started. For at least some weeks, an afternoon hour was devoted to reciting a self-chosen memorized selection from Robert Louis Stevenson's "A Child's Garden of Verses;" The prize awarded for the best

performance was, guess what, an autographed copy of “A Child’s Garden of Verses.” By the eighth grade I was on a Mark Twain jag, and ran through not just the assigned Tom Sawyer and Huckleberry Finn, but his complete works, which we had at home, including my favorites: “A Connecticut Yankee at King Arthur’s Court,” and “The Innocents Abroad.” In between, I went through the Sonny Boy series, the “Tom Swift and His Flying Machine,” etc. series, and was embarked on Shakespeare. My brother and I were also plied at birthdays and Christmas with a steady stream of books from uncles and aunts, especially one uncle, who unimaginatively, we thought, never gave us anything but books. Another set of books that comes to mind opened up some of the more exotic areas of the globe from a colonialist perspective. The G. A. Henty series had a revival about that time, but my father still had his “With Clive in India,” “Dash for Khartoum,” “Under Wellington’s Command,” “With Wolfe in Canada,” and the rest from his boyhood days, and I read them with engaged gusto, if not great historical understanding.

In retrospect this was a pretty happy period. I still keep up with some of my classmates. My very oldest friend, Larry Finkelstein, was in first grade with me, and we have never lost touch. He had a multifaceted career, most of in academe, and while not in the Foreign Service came very close to it. He was part of the U.S. delegation at San Francisco when they drafted the UN charter, and served on the Goodwill Mission for Indonesia before independence. Whenever we meet, we talk about Anna Magee and our first grade reading. A whole bunch of us stuck together through public school, some like myself, finishing in six years instead of eight. And we went on to good high schools, good colleges.

*Q: Well, when you went to high school, where did you go to high school?*

SELIGMANN: I attended Townsend Harris High School. Considering that, jumping ahead, much of my career centered on Japan, I hadn't the vaguest notion that Townsend Harris had a Japanese connection. I only knew he had been President of the Board of Education of New York City, later to spin off a Board of Higher Education, and that he was credited with the establishment of City College.

*Q: But you hadn't any idea that he was from Japan and set up our first consulate in Shimoda.*

SELIGMANN: Not at the time. And there was, I discovered many years later, a Townsend Harris Scholarship to bring a senior to Japan for the summer. but I had no interest in Japan, didn't know anything about it. The high school was not under the New York Board of Education like the other public high schools, with the other exception of the girls' equivalent, Hunter High School. It was administered by the Board of Higher Education of New York, which also supervised the city colleges. Entry was by examination, and the four-year curriculum was compressed into three years. It was a tough high school. Many of our teachers also taught at City College, and a majority had advanced degrees. Most of them were wonderful, dedicated people, whom one does not forget, albeit they numbered among them more than one eccentric.

*Q: By that time, what were you interested in?*

SELIGMANN: When I entered high school, I had no special interest any more than, I think, most of us. A doctor's son, maybe, knew he wanted to be a doctor, but I didn't know what I wanted to be. I enjoyed most of my courses, although I had no special affection for math, disliked physics and was a miserable art student. English lit and history were enjoyable, and I became very much interested in Latin. One maiden aunt who was a high school Latin teacher in New York may have stimulated my interest, but one thing led to another, and in addition to being president of our own high school Classical Society, believe it or not, the largest of the extra-curricula clubs, I was at one point president of the New York City (student) Classical Society. Although I continued to study Latin in college, when I graduated from high school, I still didn't know just where I was headed.

*Q: How about readings; what sorts of things were you reading?*

SELIGMANN: It is hard to remember. Some things like *Silas Marner* and Milton seem antiquated. Certainly we had a lot more Shakespeare.

*Q: But for recreation, did you read much?*

SELIGMANN: I have to scratch memory, but we had all kinds of multi-volume bound sets at home, and so I would run through Fielding,, Devoe, Stevenson, One book that comes to mind was Marquis James's biography of Jackson, overtaken by Schlesinger's "Age of Jackson." And about that time, we are getting into "Anthony Adverse" and "Gone with the Wind."

*Q: Well now, did you at home, were there sort of discussions around the dining room table and all that about what was going on?*

SELIGMANN: We had very lively home discussions. My father was not what you would call an intellectual, but he was doubtless more of a pedagogue than I realized. We followed what was going on in the world and talked about it at dinner. The worst punishment was to have offended him (or my mother) in some way in the course of the day, having been rude or done something terrible and having not yet apologized, which led to this dreadful silence at the table.

*Q: How about - almost every family was on one side or the other - how was your family on the New Deal at that time?*

SELIGMANN: My father didn't hate Roosevelt with the same passion as some of my other relatives, but he was no great fan.

*Q: He wasn't "That man in the White House."*

SELIGMANN: It was close to it. He was tolerant of the fact that my brother and I were

kind of New Dealers. This was a nice thing. We didn't have to agree. I don't think he was about to condemn everything that Roosevelt did either, but he was a businessman, and businessmen were against Roosevelt.

*Q: Yes, even though he probably saved their bacon.*

SELIGMANN: Yes, and vivid impressions of the depression remain that are lacking for people who didn't witness its effects. I was pretty young, but I remember the Hooverville shacks on the site of the old reservoir in Central Park and the desperate unemployed selling apples on the street corners.

*Q: Well, your family was able to go through the depression without...*

SELIGMANN: They rode it out in pretty good shape. I hesitate to draw comparisons with the style in which I would have been brought up had there been no depression. The extended family was an odd menage. My father was one of five children. He had two brothers and two sisters, but he was one of only two that had any children. The two maiden aunts lived with my grandmother, and lived on Park Avenue in a very nice apartment with servants supported in part by the three sons, so life wasn't barren.

*Q: Well you were getting out, you were still in high school at the beginning of WWII weren't you?*

SELIGMANN: I was in high school well before the beginning of WWII.

*Q: I am trying to figure out when did you...*

SELIGMANN: I finished elementary school in six years, and Townsend Harris in three, so I was 15 when I graduated in June 1940.

*Q: Good heavens. Was this a problem? I mean looking back on it were you too young?*

SELIGMANN: I have often asked myself that, and have wished that there might have been some interim year or two in which I could have done some research, or taken advanced courses, or lived abroad with a family, the kinds of things kids can do today. Our own children had maturing experiences in the summers, at least, and when I see grandchildren beginning to do this kind of thing, I am envious. Intellectually I didn't feel wanting, but I just always felt that I would have gotten so much more out of my first two years of college if I had been a little more mature. Socially, this was certainly so - how naive I was! At the same time, I participated in extracurricular activities and fraternity life, all part of a growing-up process. For example, I was Managing Editor of the yearbook, president of the team mangers association, and played JV tennis.

*Q: So up to 1940 by the time you left high school, was WWII a focus of considerable interest? I mean, we weren't in it yet.*

SELIGMANN: Very much so. There again we had big debates, not so much with my parents but at the once-a-week dinner at my grandmother's, with my aunts being inclined to isolationism, while my brother and I were rather interventionist for that period.

*Q: Did the German- French ties crop up at all by this generation?*

SELIGMANN: No. Neither of my parents spoke any German, or their siblings for that matter. My grandmother as I say was the only grandparent living, and I doubt if she spoke much German, maybe a little Yiddish, but not much German.

*Q: Did you feel you what you were coming out of - was it, did you characterize it as sort of a German family or Jewish family or how would you balance it all?*

SELIGMANN: Well, we weren't terribly religious. I would say it was a family with German-Jewish background, but we never remotely considered ourselves as bound to Europe. My father and one of his brothers had served in the army in World War I; my mother lost a brother who was in the navy. Our ties with the old world were totally cut.

*Q: I was wondering whether you had sort of the German-Jewish, whether your family has sort of the German-Jewish outlook on the new arrivals, you know, the ones from the east somewhere.*

SELIGMANN: A little bit. We weren't identified with the families of "Our Crowd," in the sense we were not among the influential or wealthy Seligmans, but attitudes were closer to those of "Our Crowd" than otherwise.

*Q: You refer to the book called "Our Crowd" by Steven Birmingham, a classmate of mine in college. Here you are 15. Were you at all sort of, was it because of the school system or were you precocious or were there others in your same league?*

SELIGMANN: I was certainly on the young side, maybe the youngest in my class, but none of them were old; we were a young group, maybe within two or three years of each other. I would say my graduating age was more a product of the school system than any extraordinary talent.

*Q: Where did you go to college?*

SELIGMANN: We couldn't afford to have me live away from home, so that was a determinant. That narrowed it down to two choices. I applied for Columbia College and as a graduate of Townsend Harris, I would have automatically been admitted to City College, then called CCNY, before it became a university. What made the decision for me was very simple: I received (through examination) a New York State Regents Scholarship - I think it was \$100 or \$200 a year. Columbia College tuition in those days was only \$400 so I was able to go to Columbia.

*Q: You were in Columbia from 1940 to 1944, would that be it?*

SELIGMANN: I entered as a member of the class of '44, with which I still identify, but the war accelerated things, so I was able to get my degree in October 1943 before I went into the Army.

*Q: At Columbia, was Nicholas Murray Butler still the president?*

SELIGMANN: He was, but not for much longer. When as a result of the accelerated, three-semester (trimester) wartime programs, about 20-30 of our class of about 400, were able to graduate early, for the only time in his distinguished career, he personally handed out diplomas to us in a small ceremony. A nurse had to guide him - he was just about blind. Of the remainder of my classmates, some finished up the following year on a normal schedule; most went into the service, many to join navy programs on campus, a good many returning to finish up after the war.

*Q: Well, what were you working on at Columbia?*

SELIGMANN: Again, I started off without a clear career goal - and Columbia being a pioneer in espousing a broad liberal-arts education, there was no internal college pressure to make up my mind. I continued to study Latin and was one of two students in my class who took their foreign language-competency exam in Latin. Columbia had then, as it still has, an extraordinary core curriculum, the two basic courses being Humanities, a great books program, and Contemporary Civilization, centered on readings in history, political philosophy and economics. These courses keep getting renewed and reviewed but hang in there today as very small classes taught by eminent faculty. I had Lionel Trilling for humanities (incidentally I had his brother, Lester Trilling, in high school for English). I took Latin with the internationally known classicist Gilbert Highet, who was a don at Oxford at the ripe old age of about 34. I think there were two of us in the class in his office. He lived on the east side and I was on the west, so we walked back to 96th Street together, where he would take the cross-town bus, and I would walk home. Just an extraordinary level of people. Raymond Weaver for Shakespeare, Joseph Wood Krutch, drama critic for The Nation, for American Theater, etc. I took a science survey course to satisfy my science requirements - I think you had a semester each of physics, chemistry, geology, and astronomy. The physics course, God bless, was taught by John Dunning of Manhattan Project fame, wasting his talents on the likes of us.

*Q: Were you feeling maybe it was more the decade before in the '30s, but were you feeling any of the leftist socialist debate and all that was going on in the universities, in New York particularly with the socialists and the communists and what have you particularly coming out of, well I suppose the more eastern Jewish groups or something. Was that playing on then?*

SELIGMANN: Some of this doubtless swirled around me, but I was probably too immature, too naive, studying too hard to take much notice. Some of my friends, I think were caught up with the movement not in the sense of being leading activists, but were members of ASU, the American Student Union, which was communist dominated. I

doubt, however, whether they knew it was communist dominated, or even knew what communism was all about. On the other hand, I do not recall any of this with certainty, and cannot cite any example of it carrying over to the postwar period.

*Q: How about the war? You know, for many people of your generation, my generation too, the war was probably one of the greatest lessons in geography that one could have because you learned where Guadalcanal was and Tobruk and Rostov and all that. Were you following the war?*

SELIGMANN: Of course I was following the war, but the turning point was really when the United States was drawn in. I vividly remember trying to study and listen to a Giants football game at the same time, which was my wont, when they broke in with the news that Pearl Harbor had been attacked. Looking forward to military service as soon as I would become 18, one of the very first things I did was to consult with my faculty advisor in the belief I should start studying something that would do some good for my country. He advised I try physics, which seemed to be one of the “in” things in that category. So I did - for one semester. Then I consulted with him again, and he thought my country and I would be better off if I switched to Japanese. That decision more than any other probably shaped the course of my career. Up to then, I was drifting toward a possible law career, but was not identified as a pre-law student, and also had been enjoying a fair number of courses in social science, e.g., history, economics, economic geography, statistics, etc., but was not terribly directed. One of the most enjoyable courses I took as a senior was an advanced course in American history with Dwight C. Miner. I became totally absorbed in my term paper on “Diplomacy of the Confederacy,” which I still think would have made a pretty good book had I stayed the course in academe.

*Q: Well was there something about Japanese training at that time, because this must have been very rare to have a major university have anything, particularly on the east coast to have anything in Japanese?*

SELIGMANN: When the war broke out, there were only a very few that did. Harvard had a course designed pretty much for those people who already knew Chinese and wanted to expand their scholarly interests; Michigan had a rudimentary course; and, as you suggest, there were some schools on the west coast. By happenstance there was a group of people at Columbia with enough background to piece together a pretty good Japanese-language program. Dr. Noss was a former missionary, the son of missionaries, whose father wrote the first Ainu-English dictionary. There were two excellent Issei (first-generation Japanese-American) instructors, one of who had been on the Japanese Olympic swimming team back in the 1930s. And one older gentleman, Harold G. Henderson, an art historian, who wrote what was almost the first Japanese grammar in English. This was not, however, modern language teaching, which developed in large part as a result of the experience of military language schools. We weren't learning much spoken language, but the day-to-day requirements matched the intensity of the military programs and we got a pretty good grounding in the written language. For example, we started to learn kanji, the Chinese characters, including some of the more complicated

ones, almost immediately, as many as 15-20 a day, whereas the army and navy schools introduced them at a much more gradual pace.

*Q: Well now, how many were taking it then?*

SELIGMANN: Only a handful, an odd mix of people. Two or three like myself looking forward to military service, some older people out of curiosity. I don't think all together more than a dozen at the outside, probably less.

*Q: Was there any subsidy or push on the part of the U.S. government to subsidize this?*

SELIGMANN: Not at Columbia. No, they never had a government-related wartime Japanese-language program. They had all kinds of other programs. However, as age 18 approached, it gave me the entree to what I might do in the army or the navy.

*Q: Well, was there, you graduated in '43. How did you approach the military, or did they approach you?*

SELIGMANN: I did the approaching when I was still 17. I made my first trip to Washington, and talked to both the navy and the army people. They each wanted me for their schools. The Navy Language School was at Boulder, Colorado. What they said in effect was, "Come out to Boulder as soon as you graduate, enroll as a civilian, and then when you get drafted, we will do our best to get you back to the school and give you a commission." The army said, "We will give you orders to have in hand when you are drafted that will send you directly to the Military Intelligence Language School." That meant that I would start off as a buck private, not an ensign, and only after a year at University of Michigan, followed by infantry basic training and combined OCS and advanced language training would I be commissioned. I figured a bird in hand was worth two in the bush and opted for the army.

*Q: Oh, yes. You were obviously well at the age and depth of understanding bureaucracy.*

SELIGMANN: Well, I think the navy proffer probably would have worked. Many friends of mine ended up in the navy language school, but very few by this exact route. They were over 18 and the navy just took them. I was in this peculiar in-between position.

*Q: Well, you came in; how did you find basic training and all that?*

SELIGMANN: After turning 18 at the end of May 1943, I was initially deferred until the fall to enable me to finish college, but after all that, when I returned to get myself drafted in the fall I was rejected the first time - a combination of flat feet and a minor heart murmur. So, I had to go back a second time. True to its word, I was shipped directly from the induction center at Camp Upton, Long Island to the Military Intelligence Language School (MISLS) at Ann Arbor. The first year we enjoyed a semi-civilian life, living in dormitories at the University of Michigan, studying Japanese most of our waking hours, with a modicum of military training in the afternoons. There were about 100 in our class,

broken up into sections, depending on language ability. It was an odd sight to see us marching across campus to and from classes in groups of ten or so. Our teachers for the most part were Japanese-American volunteers from the concentration camps which...

*Q: We called them relocation camps.*

SELIGMANN: I did at the time but I don't anymore. I used to get angry when people called them concentration camps. The late Mike Masuoka, a well-connected attorney and marvelous leader of the Japanese American community, respected in Washington circles of all sorts, in a speech some years ago called them concentration camps. I was at a luncheon where he did so and I bridled at the time. But then I started to think about it. To be sure, concentration camps in Germany came to connote death camps. But a concentration camp is where you uproot people for no particularly good reason other than prejudice, and throw them into awful conditions - some of the "relocation camps" were in the middle of the desert. I think the term "concentration camps" is fair.

*Q: Actually I think the term started just before the turn of the century in the Boer War where the British took Boer settlers and put them into these camps. An awful lot died mainly because of poor medical conditions, but not of deliberate policy. I think that was the first time.*

SELIGMANN: Last year my wife and I took a trip by car up through British Columbia where we saw a bronze statue in the middle of nowhere in the woods on the highway near Banff. It was a settler in farmers clothing with an open hand stretched out palm up, questioning. The statue was entitled "Why?" and depicted a Ukrainian farmer who had been interned in that site in a Canadian camp during WWI. Anyway, that is a digression.

*Q: It sheds light on it.*

SELIGMANN: Our language teachers were well educated, mostly from professional or business backgrounds, and were proving their patriotism in much the same way as their younger family members were doing by volunteering from the camps to serve in fighting units in Europe and the Pacific. Despite all the horrible things our country was doing to them, there they were teaching us Japanese.

*Q: Well, one of the things one learns when one takes a language is about the culture. What were you learning that you think of now about the Japanese? This was the time, you know, the Japanese were certainly the enemy, and they were certainly a relatively unknown group. You had no particular knowledge of them before. What were you getting from these?*

SELIGMANN: When I started to study Japanese beginning in college 1942 and going through the summer of 1943, there was almost no material available either for studying the language or studying about Japan. There was a bookstore, called Orientalia in New York, where I used to go to buy up books to learn about Japan. I still have some of these.

*Q: Is it Chrysanthemum and the Sword?*

SELIGMANN: That hadn't been written yet. It was being written I guess. For example, the Japan Tourist Bureau had put out a series of about 50 paper-back volumes, reissued after the war as handsome little books, each covering a different aspect of Japanese life ranging from tea ceremony and flower arranging to family life and education. I remember a wonderful caption for a photograph of a family exercising outside their homes in the early morning, "Jerks at 7:00 A.M." I still have this set. There was a special issue of Fortune Magazine from the mid-'30s, very well done, a special commemorative issue of the Japan Advertiser for the coronation of the emperor. So everything I could lay my hands on I tried to get and study. A few of us wanted to know something about Japanese art. Professor Henderson didn't establish a course but met with some of us in his office and talked about it. The founder of the East Asia collection at Columbia, Dr. Tsunoda, a well known religious philosopher, would talk to us about religion, just informally as a professor to some students who were interested. So we were just grabbing for all this. Once we were in the Japanese army language school we learnt a lot more, but most of it of a practical nature, geography, some history, all to help us "know your enemy."

*Q: Was there sort of the army way, I mean know your enemy those Frank Capra films, but they paint things in black and white, mainly black, but did you, were you getting a fairly solid feel for the culture you were going to be dealing with?*

SELIGMANN: I think so. All our teachers were Japanese Americans, or first-generation, Japanese, and they interspersed a good deal of insight into Japan and its culture in the course of their language instruction. The classroom atmosphere was informal and they were eager to elaborate on cultural or historical references. The year at Michigan was pretty intense, in a way much harder than what followed, because we had three hours of examinations every Saturday, at the end of which they would post the grades later in the afternoon. Then there was a litmus test: if they didn't feel you were doing as well as you should be doing, they would kick you out. I recall that at one point, the second-ranking student in the class - I think it was the class ahead of mine - being sent to the infantry. He was a brilliant man, but it was felt he should have been performing better, and they set an example. It was a bit like the dreaded first year of Harvard Law, immortalized in "The Paper Chase." Once you were over the hurdle of the year at Michigan, OCS and advanced language at Fort Snelling, Minnesota, was much more enjoyable. Between the two schools we had infantry basic, very unpleasant, at Fort McClellan, Alabama.

*Q: What were they training you for did you feel?*

SELIGMANN: We understood from the start that we would most likely serve with Japanese language teams in the field, and our language training was specifically tailored to enable us to interrogate prisoners, who were few in number, especially at the beginning of the war, and to work with captured documents, as close to the battlefield as possible so that immediate use could be made of the intelligence. So, we learnt a lot of what we used to call heigo (not a real Japanese word), which literally means military language.

*Q: "Take me to your 155 mm rifle." Something like that.*

SELIGMANN: Yes, so we took weapons apart using Japanese nomenclature; we did close order drill in Japanese; we learned to read maps in Japanese - a lot of very practical material for that period, which I never made use of later in life.

*Q: Well, were you getting any sort of old salts who had been doing this in the field coming back and telling you what they were up to?*

SELIGMANN: No, the old salts we got for the most part were people who had wangled their way to the school as a respite either through bravery or chicanery. We were a funny mix in the language school, especially in the advanced language school. One of the old salts - probably not the appropriate phrase for the army - I well remember was a massive career sergeant, a white Russian, who we used to say was illiterate in four languages: Russian, English, Japanese - I can't remember the fourth.

*Q: Probably Chinese.*

SELIGMANN: I imagine so. He could really shoot a rifle, was fresh from the first bloody landings in the Pacific, and was apparently sent to the school as a reward for bravery. There were several like that. Then there were others, whose assignment to language training was inexplicable. One, best unnamed, who later became a prominent figure in life in Washington, was a real street fighter, gambling type from Brooklyn. These guys did not distinguish themselves in language work, but they were part of that same class. At the other end you had people who were sent there because they were presumptively good in languages. They had Ph.D.s in Greek or Hebrew or whatever. Two that I can think of, both of whom have passed away, became Foreign Service officers whom I got to know well: Stan Carpenter and Scott George. Then there were a good many known as BIJs, meaning "been in" or "born in" Japan, sons of missionaries or businessmen, who had been recruited for the school. They had spent childhood years in Japan and for the most part had a fair mastery of at least daily-use Japanese, even if they had had little or no previous exposure to written Japanese. And finally, there were others with background like my own, including some who had transferred from the ASTP (Army Specialized Training Program) at two or three universities where only spoken Japanese was taught.

*Q: Well, actually the intelligence gathering both on the navy and the army side the Japanese was really astounding, even though in much later times looking at this, it worked quite well. The Japanese if they were captured, few of them were, spilled the beans because they were not supposed to get captured.*

SELIGMANN: Exactly.

*Q: And also this indoctrination to commit suicide meant they usually left a lot of documents around, so you know, there was an awful lot of stuff to work on. One would think not.*

SELIGMANN: They were not trained in what to do if you were about to be or were taken

prisoner.

*Q: Well, by the time you got out, when did you finish this advanced training?*

SELIGMANN: We finished up at the end of June or beginning of July 1945, whereupon we were finally commissioned. This was at Fort Snelling, which was between St. Paul and Minneapolis. It was right next to where the airport is today. After what was to have been a last leave before shipping out, we were moved to what they called the turkey farm, where they used to raise turkeys, a cluster of tar-paper shacks at the edge of the post, and waited for orders. By now, there were enough language officers to meet the goal of having each of us head up a language team at battalion level. I say "us," but you must remember there were a hundred Caucasians at the school, and about 3000 Nisei non-commissioned officers, of varying backgrounds, but many highly educated. While I had built up a fair amount of confidence in my Japanese, and was among the top half dozen in the class I was by no means bilingual as were many of the Nisei. Some of the latter, of course, were fully Americanized and were no better in the language than we were, or were a lot worse. It was clear, however, that no language team would be able to function effectively without its Nisei members. They were just beginning to give commissions to selected Nisei when the war ended; as far as I know, the navy never did. This was really a blot on our military leadership.

*Q: Well then when you are talking about the summer of '45, certain things were happening out in the Pacific.*

SELIGMANN: To put it mildly. We were sitting around waiting for orders when the bomb was dropped. One thing followed another very quickly. By the end of August, not long after the surrender, I was assigned with a fair number of classmates to civil censorship school at Camp Stoneman, California. Most of the others in my class received orders that would also involve them with various aspects of the Occupation of Japan.

*Q: At Stoneman, what were you doing?*

SELIGMANN: It was a crash course in what you might call the mechanics of censorship. The United States during WWII had run a sizable operation, censoring all international communications. I don't think most Americans who did not correspond abroad were much aware of this, but anyone who received an overseas letter was aware because it was sealed with a piece of tape and a censorship stamp. So, the people initially assigned to run the Civil Censorship Detachment or CCD in Japan mostly came out of this background. They had been in the censorship business, but didn't know anything about Japan.

*Q: It was just...*

SELIGMANN: But they knew how to run a censorship establishment or thought they did. So, we were taught very briefly how you went about censoring mail. Similarly, you could apply wartime experience to telecommunication censorship. Besides postal censorship, and telecommunication censorship, the third major division was Press Pictorial Broadcast

(PPB). This was something pretty new and has been the focal point of a good deal of research and commentary on the Occupation.

*Q: I would think that you would find very quickly that censorship in wartime is to preclude information from getting exchanged, whereas when you are occupying a country it is just a whole different ball game.*

SELIGMANN: Just so. The objectives are far different. To some extent the techniques are similar, but your objectives, what you try to get out of the material, and what you do with your gleanings are very different. In any case, this course only lasted about six weeks, after which we again sat around waiting to get out to Japan, presumably by some kind of ship. One day they said, well your plane leaves from Hamilton Air Base tomorrow.

*Q: How did you go? I am just curious, because I flew, I left Stoneman to go to Korea.*

SELIGMANN: Oh, did you?

*Q: I went to Japan first during the Korean War, and we flew to Hawaii and then to Wake and then to.*

SELIGMANN: As I recall we had a few stops. There was Hawaii - you can't stop anywhere en route; then I think we stopped at Midway, Wake, Kwajalein, and Guam, and landed at Atsugi. This was on a bucket-seat C-47 the Gooney bird, which was the cargo version of the DC-3. If you wanted to take a nap, you spread an overcoat or anything you could find on the floor and slept on top of it because of the ribs where they tied down the cargo. It was a rainy night when we arrived on November 2, and I vividly recall a Japanese workman hammering away trying to put corrugated sheeting on top of the roof of what had been converted into a terminal building. I had been studying Japanese now for two-and-a-half years pretty intensively, and eager to try it out, I looked up at the workman, took a deep breath, and uttered my first words in Japanese on Japanese soil, "It's raining isn't it?" I can imagine the look on his face.

*Q: Where were you assigned?*

SELIGMANN: We were put up in a surviving office building converted into a company-grade officers billet, in the modern downtown office area that we deliberately did not bomb. The next morning I reported to CCD headquarters, located in the old Japan Broadcasting Company (NHK) building. They didn't know what to do with me and told me to come back Monday - I think this was a Friday - so a friend of mine in the same situation and I went down to the railway station with some rations and got on a train headed for Nikko, one of the great sights in Japan. There is a well-worn saying, "Do not say 'kekko,' meaning fine, magnificent, until you have seen Nikko." We stood all the way for about four hours in a dilapidated car with window panes out, along with black marketeers or just plain scroungers headed for the countryside to obtain food. The tombs of the Tokugawa shoguns were run-down, their paint faded, but all the more beautiful set

as they were among snow-laden Cryptomeria trees. Not a tourist was to be seen. We put ourselves up in a Japanese inn, which you weren't supposed to do both to restrict fraternization and in order to conserve local food supplies. Instead, we gave our host our rations and told him to serve us whatever they wanted, which they did. They were happy and we were happy. Then I came back Monday and was told I was to be assigned to Fukuoka, Hakata as most people called it in those days, in Kyushu. My immediate reaction was, "My God, you can't do this to me: you are going to send me someplace where they speak a strange dialect. I won't even be able to communicate." It turned out that was true for many older people in the countryside but most people spoke both the local dialect, Hakata ben, and standard Japanese. Initially I was assigned to postal censorship.

*Q: What were you censoring?*

SELIGMANN: In the first instance, immediately after the war, all outgoing and incoming international mail was impounded. Anything to do with militarism, or the conduct of the war, such as medals, swords, whatever, was confiscated. Then you had a checklist of things you were looking for such as illegal currency transactions. There was no new international mail for some time, however, and the main focus was a spot-check of domestic mail, with two principal overlapping objectives: things you were looking for for control purposes, and things you were looking for for information purposes. Mail sacks were picked up randomly through the areas of jurisdiction of the three censorship stations in Tokyo, Osaka, and Fukuoka. In Fukuoka we covered all of Kyushu and the westernmost prefectures of Honshu. On the control side, you were looking for black-market operations, any sign of organized resistance to the occupation authorities or their policies, signs of right-wing revanchism or revival of ultranationalism, secret societies, etc. On the information side, which soon became the more meaningful operation, censorship became one tool for judging public opinion: how people were reacting to the occupation or to specific policies, such as education reform, punishment of war criminals, political activity, etc.; what concerns of people would be of interest to those determining Occupation policy. Excerpts would be selected and first-cut translations would be made by Japanese local employees, who ranged from students who had some proficiency in English to older people who spoke English well.

A gentleman who decided to become my mentor in all things Japanese had been the principal of a commercial high school. He was a well-rounded, erudite man who in addition to censorship duties took it upon himself to teach me a wide range of Japanalia in the evenings and would write essays for us to discuss on everything from ancient poetry to folklore, to commentary on Japanese behavior - so it was a continuing education for me. I got to know him and his family quite well. He had resigned his position during the war, in effect withdrawing from the war, which you could do more easily in Japan than in Germany. But I have been digressing.

There were a number of long tables of "first-line" censors, mostly Japanese, but also including some foreign nationals, a majority former American citizens. The latter were for the most part, young Japanese-Americans, born in the United States, who were

brought back to Japan by their parents just before the war, many against their will. They had been going to school in the United States, but lived out the war years unhappily in Japan. Almost all of them wanted to go back, and many of them eventually reclaimed their citizenship and did so. Each table was headed by a senior Japanese censor, a civilian War Department Civilian (WDC), or a Nisei non-commissioned officer. Commissioned officers, like myself would supervise and pass on the recommendations of the senior censors. If we agreed, an intercept was worthwhile, we would say, "Let's write this up as a comment sheet." We would also correct English as we went along - a task I often took home with me at night. The comment sheets would be forwarded to CCD headquarters Tokyo, and then to CIS (Civil Intelligence Section), where they became part of the broader picture, often being incorporated into daily, weekly or monthly intelligence summaries. If you came upon something you might describe as operative intelligence, such as information that someone was about to run a smuggling operation, then of course you reported it immediately. There wasn't a great deal of this but there was some. I guess the one thing that we really expected after reading Ruth Benedict and based on everything else you knew about Japan, was some kind of diehard resistance to the Occupation - plotting in caves and stashing away of unsundered weapons. This didn't happen.

*Q: Was this something in a way that everyone was primed for in the American army and it just came all of a surprise that when you were there?*

SELIGMANN: Yes, I think it was a surprise to most of the Occupationeers. The history is still being written. One of the more influential books came out just quite recently, about a year or two ago by Dower, *Embracing Defeat*.

*Q: I have seen it.*

SELIGMANN: I don't agree with everything in it. He has some bones to pick and tends to be an ideologue of his own, but he credits some of this to the manipulation of the Emperor by MacArthur and the decision not to punish him as a war criminal, which of course, got everyone else to comply if you will. I think there is a lot of truth to that. You could argue about whether or not he should have been punished as a war criminal and some scholars who have come to the subject more recently feel that he should have been. I do not deny a case can be made, but on balance, I am inclined to think more good came out of not doing so.

*Q: It would appear so. How did you find, I assume when you arrived there, there was the usual non-fraternization rule and all that. Was that observed?*

SELIGMANN: It wasn't altogether observed—the number of mixed-blood children left behind testifies to that. Mind you, I think everything I have to say about the occupation has to be from the perspective of what the Japanese would call the frog in the well, besides which, I was quite young with not much of an experiential base for judgment.

*Q: I think it is interesting to see at that level.*

SELIGMANN: Lots of things struck me at the time, but you were asking about fraternization. One of the joys of censorship, particularly after I left Postal Censorship and moved on to Press, Pictorial, and Broadcast Censorship was that I had a wonderful pass. We were part of GHQ (General Headquarters) - by the way, the only part of GHQ outside of Tokyo, the implementation of the Occupation elsewhere being under Eighth Army Military Government. We wore the GHQ patch and reported directly to Tokyo not to anyone in Kyushu. To go back, I had this pass permitting me to go anywhere, anytime. That meant for example that you could go to a theater, otherwise not permitted, or could go to an inn in the countryside on a weekend. You could do all kinds of things. Even without that pass, it was inevitable that we would fraternize to some extent within reason. You couldn't help making Japanese friends among some of your employees. There were, for example, professors who were eager to establish American contacts and catch up with the outside world. Clearly there were a good many Japanese whose motive in making American friends was to obtain access to PX goodies, but I never felt the friends I made were in this category. One of the first acts some of my buddies and I engaged in was to wangle the rehabilitation of the Kyushu University tennis courts, working it out with their tennis club on condition that we have priority use. This is the kind of finagling that probably goes on in the military at all levels at all times. Leaving aside fraternization between the sexes, the majority of occupation personnel did not develop meaningful Japanese relationships, but there were a great many, including myself and my fellow language officers, who developed a circle of Japanese friends.

*Q: It was always amazing some who did. I came five years later or a little more, and you know, there were some people who never would leave a base. I mean that's what they did, and there were other people who would come, essentially a dirt farmer from Alabama who would be out there and had tremendous friendships and be all over the place. Personality played a big role.*

SELIGMANN: Well, you're touching on a subject I have often thought about - this is jumping miles ahead, but I might forget it.

*Q: All right, we'll put it in.*

SELIGMANN: I have always felt that what you said is so true, and applies no less to the Foreign Service. I have heard so many people say "Oh living in an American ghetto is dreadful. You can't possibly invite Japanese or Germans or whomever to your apartment for entertainment. You have to have a suitable representation house." But I have observed people with fine houses who never got to know anybody in the community and shopped exclusively in PXs and commissaries, while on the other hand, I have observed people in modest Embassy apartments who got to know all sorts of people and had no problem entertaining them in the "ghetto." I agree with you a thousand percent. It has more to do with personality than anything else. You can stay on a base; you can leave the base. It applies to the Foreign Service too.

*Q: Were you able to pick up, you really hadn't had that much experience, but down in Kyushu was there a different world there than in Tokyo at that time would you say?*

SELIGMANN: There was in some respects. To begin with, not just me personally, but all of us were relatively big fish in a small pond. Even in terms of my work, I wasn't reporting through a lot of channels professionally and wasn't hemmed in by a big SCAP (Supreme Command Allied Powers) bureaucracy. We didn't report to Tokyo any more than we had to, albeit we had to enough. But beyond that, in my relations with local people, when I moved into Press, Pictorial, Broadcasting, I got to know newspaper editors, publishers, etc., whom I would probably not have gotten to know at the same level in Tokyo. For example, I received a telephone call one day from Tokyo from Faubian Bowers, who had been MacArthur's interpreter at one point and landed up in charge of theatrical censorship in Tokyo. Bowers was one of a handful of western scholars of Japanese theater. He informed me that Matsumoto Koshiro, one of the preeminent Kabuki actors, was about to go on his first tour outside of Tokyo since the war. This would have been in late 1946 or early 1947. He told me my job was to make sure that Matsumoto, then in his eighties and unable to eat much in the way of solid food, got the milk and bread he required. I did so, of course, saw him perform, which was a memorable experience, and was able to meet him.

At one point I expressed interest in visiting a coal mine, many of which were concentrated near the steel mills north of Fukuoka. This was arranged and made a deep impression on me. I wrote home that I was able for the first time to appreciate the role of John L. Lewis in organizing American coal miners. As we descended into the depths of the mine, where Korean forced laborers and American POWs had worked during the war, the passages became narrower; mine pillars, in short supply, were cracked; and, as you approached the pit head, you were forced to bend over as the ceilings became lower and coal dust filled the air. I was as claustrophobic as I have ever been. These were all experiences that were probably easier to come by where I was stationed than in Tokyo.

*Q. Were you picking up any sort of relief that the war hadn't resulted in an invasion. When you think about it, the plans for the invasion on both sides, it was going to be literally a bloody mess, millions of people perhaps being killed. Did the people you were talking to on the Japanese side feel a sense of relief that things happened as they did? How were things felt?*

SELIGMANN: On our side, especially after the heavy fighting in Okinawa, we had every reason to believe that it would be a very difficult invasion and occupation. This accounted for all the precautions to look for signs of resistance. I was told that when the initial complement of our CCD unit landed in Nagasaki, they came ashore in jeeps with the windshields down and machine guns at the ready. Resistance of course did not materialize. The Japanese for their part expected the worst in the way of looting and rape, having been fully prepped by their government's propaganda to stiffen resistance to the anticipated invasion. They were grateful to have the war over; were impressed by the discipline of the "invaders;" and in short order were almost of a single mind in blaming everything that had gone wrong on the militarists and in welcoming democracy. Having welcomed democracy, they then said, "What is it?" Even looking back today I find it a heady experience to think that at a tender young age people were looking to me and my

colleagues to find out what democracy was all about, greeting us as mentors and heroes in effect. I keep reading revisionist history that drives me up the wall. It is very difficult for younger historians to capture the climate of the times. Arthur Schlesinger in his recent memoir refers to what Chip Bohlen called 20-20 hindmyopia, and goes on to say that too often the revisionists argue, “those poor chaps in the past may have thought they were acting for one set of reasons; but we, so much wiser *know* that they were acting for quite other reasons.”

*Q: Well you know, we are talking about a time that is hard to capture and right now the revisionists are trying to show that somehow or other there was no need, things would have been much better if we had not dropped the atomic bombs. Did you find much talk about Hiroshima and Nagasaki among the Japanese, I mean once you got to know them?*

SELIGMANN: Not much. Now, this is a very controversial issue in the sense that part of the Press Code and the Broadcast Code was that you couldn't talk about the bomb in the media. Books were suppressed that recounted personal experiences, and in recent years this has been widely condemned. People were certainly aware of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, and doubtless harbored all sorts of personal feelings about the bombings, but they were still full of war guilt and the time had not come when they expressed themselves openly, at least to foreigners. As best I remember, not too much was said even in private correspondence read by the censors. I visited Hiroshima I guess some time in mid-1946. We had a broadcast substation of our PPB operation there manned by a Nisei WDC. There were no allied forces in Hiroshima proper inasmuch as there was no place for them to be. They were in Kure outside the old Japanese naval base, an area occupied by British Commonwealth Forces, in which we had no tactical units. The first building rebuilt in Hiroshima was the Japan Broadcasting Company (NHK) building, in which we had an office. The impression looking out from there was that the rest of the city was just gone. Huge sections of Tokyo, were just about as gone, and a large part of Fukuoka, where we were, so the landscape was not that unique, but it was a great shock to think this had happened in a matter of split seconds. Nonetheless, it wasn't something people talked about in my experience. In later years, a sense of victimization grew whereby the guilt of the attack on Pearl Harbor came to be balanced out in many Japanese minds by Hiroshima and Nagasaki.

*Q: Did you find that I mean you as a young soldier having not been involved in the war outside of training and the Japanese people maybe there were your colleagues who had been, that it was more a matter of where do we go from here and not talking about how rough it was on Guadalcanal or something like that?*

SELIGMANN: Well I think that's true. By the same token, in my observation, the combat veterans were less inclined to look backwards and be vindictive compared with some of the young GIs, who weren't at Guadalcanal or wherever. So, you can't generalize too much, and units varied. Some behaved better than others. We had a series of tactical units come through Fukuoka as occupying troops ranging from Marines, the 6th division as I recall; the 32nd division artillery; and the 24th division. I heard that the 82nd Airborne, which was initially assigned to Kyoto, was reassigned to a remote area in northern Japan

because they had so few court martials. That apparently did not mean that nobody ran amok, but that few ever got punished for their misbehavior

*Q: Well, how about, one has to ask, at least I have to because I come from a certain era. I went into the Korean War, and I think I spent about two weeks occupying Japan and then I was protecting Japan because there was a treaty came in, and then I ended up in Korea. For a lot of young lads, Korea was, I mean Japan was wide open about my God, here was sex really out there. Was this a problem for you as an officer with your people and all that?*

SELIGMANN: Our's was a funny kind of unit. I wasn't in control of troops you know. We had a commanding officer. He was a major, later lieutenant colonel. We were a strange mix: maybe about a dozen commissioned officers, including some of the first WACs sent to Japan, a large portion of whom were assigned to civil censorship; a fair number of non-commissioned officers; and War Department Civilians. A majority of the non-coms and WDCs were nisei. I guess what this adds up to was that most members of the unit were well educated and mature, so there were not many disciplinary problems. Moreover, they were pretty discrete about both intramural and extramural sexual relationships. I regret I do not feel sufficiently informed to respond to your question beyond CCD's parameters, but as best I could judge, there were ample opportunities for GIs to indulge their sexual urges and the stage was well set for your arrival during the Korean War.

By a strange quirk, which I will never understand, after 18 months with postal censorship, I was called in by our CO one morning and was told that the captain who was running Press, Pictorial Broadcast Censorship was leaving and I was to take his place. So I ended up as a second lieutenant with higher ranking officers and civilians with higher simulated rank working under me.

*Q: What were you doing?*

SELIGMANN: I supervised censorship in our area of all newspapers, magazines, books, motion pictures, theatrical scripts, broadcasts. etc.

*Q: I wouldn't think there would be much of that activity going on so early after the war.*

SELIGMANN: More than one might imagine. Newspapers were published in every city of any size. The largest national dailies - Asahi, Mainichi and Yomiuri - all had local editions, but most of the stories they carried, as well as wire-service news disseminated from the capital, were submitted to CCD in Tokyo. However, local stories in those papers, either from their local bureaus or from local bureaus of national news agencies would be submitted locally. In addition, you had major regional newspapers in various parts of Japan, including Nishi Nippon in Fukuoka, with perhaps ten or more prefectural editions. And finally there were many smaller local papers. Their material would be submitted, initially for pre-censorship, and then as time went on, not too long after the start of the occupation, for post-censorship. A post-censorship violation might warrant a

rap on the knuckles in the form of a letter of warning, but too many mistakes could result in punitive measures, such as suspension or cessation of publication. That being the implicit threat, violations, or at least willful violations were rare.

Books were submitted for publication on almost every subject imaginable, most of them in non-controversial technical or pedagogical areas. Magazines sprouted like wildflowers and were treated much the same as newspapers - again the major, large-circulation monthlies and weeklies originated in Tokyo or Osaka. Broadcast stations were in business, but carried relatively little local news - we had one-man broadcast substations in Hiroshima and Kumamoto, where NHK's regional bureaus were located, largely as a convenience to expedite censorship of local news. Not many new films were being produced, but existing ones could not be shown without a censorship approval seal on the leader. The same was true of theatrical scripts, and even kamishibai, a kind of storytelling for children with pictures.

*Q: What would be in the newspaper?*

SELIGMANN: Essentially what would be in any newspaper.

*Q: But I would think that so many things would be almost out of bounds or something like that.*

SELIGMANN The press code, which spelled out what you could not talk about, and the analogous broadcast code were fairly limited in scope, although the items they covered were very significant. You could not criticize the Supreme Commander. You couldn't criticize Occupation policy. Now that didn't mean you couldn't talk about policies - indeed the Occupation relied heavily on the media to communicate SCAP directives - but you could not say the decisions were wrong or ill-advised. In the pre-censorship period, it was fair game to test the waters and see what you could get away with, and there was a certain amount of that. You couldn't talk about, as I mentioned, the atomic bomb. You couldn't criticize - and this became controversial - you couldn't criticize allies. That included Russia, and as time went on, we chafed with that one, but censorship was terminated before the Cold War got into high gear.

*Q: Were you seeing the beginning of the invasion of American culture? I would think when you are talking about pictures and articles that there would be an almost insatiable curiosity about the United States. God knows in those days as today, we could supply them with pictures, articles, what have you. Was this going on?*

SELIGMANN: Yes indeed. Again, most of this was done at the Tokyo level, but was implemented throughout Japan by 8th Army military government, which had offices in each prefectural capital, and by the major SCAP sections, especially Civil Information and Education Section. As the occupation went on, not in the first stages, they would bring over American experts to talk to interested Japanese, give lectures, and stimulate interest in public affairs, elections, women's rights, labor unions, and so forth. There was a good deal of that, and their activities would be widely reported. As far as the content of

what was going on, at least in the print media at that time, there is at the University of Maryland, a well-organized collection of documents which came about when censorship documents about to be destroyed were deposited there. It is called the Prange Collection. This is as good a source as any for chronicling the influence of American culture in the early occupation. A larger- scale effort to disseminate information about the United States and expand student and other exchange programs got under way just a bit later.

*Q: Did you find that you were in off duty time acting as sort of an information officer and that sort of thing in trying to explain what democracy was. Did you find yourself and your fellow officers and some of the enlisted men in that role?*

SELIGMANN: There was a missionary spirit that enveloped the whole occupation for many of us. That did not translate into going out in the evening and proselytizing, but yes. It wasn't that we were doing it in any calculated manner so much as the Japanese you got to know wanted to exploit you as a resource. Sometimes I felt I wanted a quiet evening alone, but felt obliged to accept invitations. For some months, I acceded to the request of the host of a local radio program of English-language lessons to be his dialogue partner.

*Q: How were the Nisei accepted? Did you see any problems there?*

SELIGMANN: No. I think they had a lark for the most part. They had no language barrier, and I think they were easily accepted, no resentment. I don't think anyone ever ran into difficulty that I am aware of. If that came, it came much later.

*Q: I take it you and General MacArthur were not on a particularly personal chatty level.*

SELIGMANN: Not really. As far as I can make out from everything I have read, MacArthur spoke to about a half dozen people in the course of any day and they were usually the same people. He held himself aloof from his own staff. He had his cronies, including Generals Willoughby, Whitney, Fellers, Marquat, and a few others like that. He deliberately cultivated a remote, godlike, emperor figure as far as the Japanese were concerned. He had six-foot or taller MPs for his personal bodyguard, who would line up 10-15 minutes before he left his headquarters in the Daichi building to go home for lunch at the ambassador's residence, where he lived, and when he came back to the office, so that the crowds could gather. As far as I know, he never left Tokyo. I think when the Korean War broke out, he went over to Korea once, but that was about it. He never moved around Japan to see how occupation was going or to get a visual impression, but accepted the word of those who told him. He didn't even go out to see Tokyo. A very interesting individual. No, I never felt close to the guy.

*Q: His wife died just last week.*

SELIGMANN: I saw that, 104 or something.

*Q: 104 years old. Well, while all this was going on what was Al Seligmann thinking about*

*doing in the future besides censoring.*

SELIGMANN: You are not pulling me out of Japan so soon?

*Q: No, no I was just wondering.*

SELIGMANN: Well, as I used to say 20-30 years later in the Foreign Service, I never had so much authority in my career before or after, and it is almost literally true. Here I was at the ripe old age of 21 running a fairly extensive operation and supervising a good many people, but still not sure where I was headed in life. Except that by now, I had a feeling that I wanted to pursue my interest in Japan, even though I still didn't know what I was going to do with it all. There is probably a lot I could talk about in the censorship business, but I had better move on.

*Q: Well if there is anything; I don't want to skip it because this occupation is a very interesting and significant period for foreign relations.*

SELIGMANN: Just to tidy up, I had begun to do some traveling locally - I had a jeep and an instant driver's license (not having driven before) and had made some good friends among the Americans who were a very interesting group of people. I have kept to up with some of them. One, with whom I played bridge fairly regularly was the education officer in military government, Jim Hester, who became chancellor of NYU, one of Life Magazine's 50 rising stars of America, and was the first rector of UN University.

There was a point system for discharge from the service whereby you accumulated points for every month of service, extra points for each month of overseas service, etc., and had long passed the point where almost everyone with 30 or perhaps fewer points was eligible to go home. An exception was made for dentists and Japanese language officers, who were being held until they had 42 points. As that day approached I still did not know what I was going to do. Then two things happened. First, I received a very attractive offer to stay on as a War Department civilian in the same job I was doing at a lofty civil service rating, which I didn't attain the equivalent of in the Foreign Service for many years. I think it was a GS-13 or something like that. That was pretty good considering that I started out in the civil service as a GS-7 or GS-9 before I integrated into the Foreign Service. The second thing was that I received a letter from my father enclosing an article about a newly created graduate school at Columbia University that he thought might interest me, the School of International Affairs. I still didn't know what I was going to do with life. I was intrigued by the first offer, but I think I made the right decision, certainly one I never regretted. I had this wonderful job, but then what: stay on in the occupation for ever and ever?

*Q: Which by its very nature has an end.*

SELIGMANN: Yes - well it didn't for a few language officers who remained in Japan until the end of the occupation and then continued on for years with various intelligence organizations, some of which never realized when they outlived their usefulness. One

such colleague did not come back to the United States until the early 1980s, just a year or two before he died. When he came back, he didn't know what to do. In any event, I decided to come back and look into this new school.

*Q: How was your Japanese by this time?*

SELIGMANN: Not bad. When we graduated from the Army Language School, we could read a newspaper well enough and could write pretty well. We could even read some of what they call grass writing or cursive writing (sosho). You had to do that to read documents in the field because that is what people scrawled. It is worse than the difference between script and printing, much worse - I have forgotten most of that, although I can still make my way through a newspaper. So, it wasn't bad. I was never doing the first level of censorship translation, but was often in the position of having to review and edit, in the course of which I would often compare with the original document.

*Q: So you went back in 194...*

SELIGMANN: Mid 1947, I left in April 1947.

*Q: Obviously you had the GI Bill.*

SELIGMANN: I had the GI Bill. I had no problem getting into the School of International Affairs. The first class that had just started in the fall of 1946 was to graduate in 1948. I was in the second class starting in the fall of 1947.

*Q: Could you describe the school and what was the point. What was it about?*

SELIGMANN: To a considerable degree the concept grew out of military area studies initiated during WWII. There had been no such school in the United States precisely like it before that. After the war, not just Columbia but one or two other universities started schools devoted to graduate studies in international affairs combined with a heavy regional concentration. Now there are quite a few. But this was I thought, very well conceived, very well worked out in advance. In the first and second classes there were less than 30, about 26-28 students, compared with about 250 or more today in what is now known as the School of International and Public Affairs. The curriculum was designed so combine a regional specialty, in my case East Asia, and a functional specialty, which could be economic affairs, international organization affairs, or government affairs. Thinking about a possible foreign service career or something like it, I chose government affairs.

*Q: Did you have any trouble sort of settling down to this new and getting back into the academic world after having had the raw meat of independence in Japan?*

SELIGMANN: No, not really. I had advantages i.e., real life experience, a little more maturity, and with the combination of the two, the ability to get much more out of my

studies than if I had, say, entered the School straight out of college. That does not mean that I didn't get a lot out of my undergraduate work, but I have always felt that if only I could take my first two years over again.... Partly because of the pressure of the war, by my junior year I had really dug into things.

*Q: Now, how long was this course before you...*

SELIGMANN: Two years.

*Q: What was this going to do for you?*

*This is tape two side one with Al Seligmann.*

*You have been there and sort of seen the elephant. Did you find that there was a good knowledge of Japan that you were getting out of this course? How about your Asian studies, the rest of Asia?*

SELIGMANN: The curriculum offered everything I could wish for. On the area side alone, Sir George Sansom, one of the worlds greatest Japanologists, taught us peons his course in Japanese cultural history. I remember this scholar, whose every word was carefully chosen and meaningful as totally unassuming. Sir George had served for many years in the British foreign service in Tokyo, but when a student asked him to move to move aside so he could copy Japanese names he was writing on the blackboard before a lecture, he responded coyly, "Oh you want to read my little old characters?" It was one wonderful course. L. Carrington Goodrich taught Chinese history. My mentor was Hugh Borton. I didn't really get to study with him until the second year because he was still with State Department, Asian Affairs, and during the war had been a leading light in the SWNCC (State War Navy Coordinating Committee) group responsible for drafting post-war occupation policy. Our assignment for a small seminar on "Problems of Japanese Peace" was collectively to write a Japanese peace treaty. We divvied it up, and as I recall, I wrote the portions on territorial questions and reparations. Now this is really heady stuff. Fresh back from Washington, Borton furnished insights we would never have obtained from someone with pure academic background.

*Q: What did you do about the northern islands?*

SELIGMANN: If I remember correctly, I did not address the islands nor were they much of an issue at the time, not being in the same category as territory seized by force by Japan and therefore coming under the terms of the Cairo Declaration like Korea and Taiwan or the Pacific Islands, where Japan had violated the terms of its League of Nations mandate. They belonged to Japan. In the Peace Treaty proper signed two years later, though not by the USSR, Japan renounced any claim to that part of the Kuriles obtained as a result of the 1905 Portsmouth Treaty, which by inference meant the southern Kuriles, i.e., the larger islands of Etorofu and Kunashiri, obtained in treaties with Russia in the 1850s and 1870s, were part of Japan. The U.S. fudged for some years in explicitly endorsing this position, but when I was in the Embassy in the mid-1970s, I

played a small role in our removing any ambiguity about where we stood. The smaller bits of rock, Habomai and Shikotan, had been administered as part of a Hokkaido village - Kingdon Swayne, an early consul in Sapporo, actually looked up the records. We were just looking the wrong way when the Russians moved in.

Going back to the mock "Columbia treaty," I favored the strategic trusteeship solution for the Pacific islands (Trust Territory), which was written into the San Francisco Treaty. The Trusteeship Council was just getting underway, and I prepared a separate fairly exhaustive comparative study of the League of Nations mandate system and the strategic trusteeship system for the Pacific Islands for Professor Leland Goodrich's course in International Organization. Goodrich had recently published with Hambro a text that remained for years the bible for students of the United Nations. This was another instance of hearing it from the horse's mouth so to speak. Martin Wilbur, a modern Sinologist was another professor on the area side, so we really had a good grounding.

Arthur Burns, later Chairman of the FRB, by the way, was one of my professors in international economics. There were two Arthur Burns: he was one of them; the other one, an Australian, taught developmental economics. We were supposed to have Philip Jessup for International Law, but Acheson called him back to Washington as his Legal Advisor. Instead we had Oliver Lissitzyn, a pioneer expert in aviation law, who was an outstanding teacher, keeping us on our toes with a "Paper Chase" case-study regime.

*Q: Well were you getting any reflections on the civil war in China at the time.*

SELIGMANN: Not personally.

*Q: No, I was just wondering in the course and all.*

SELIGMANN: Only through my course on international relations in East Asia with Nathaniel Peffer. I do not recall his background in any detail, but it seems to me he had been a correspondent in Asia before the war and had spent time in China. He had written extensively on colonial issues, cautioning as far back as the 1920s that if the imperialist powers did not recognize the rising force of nationalism, they would reap the whirlwind. He understood what was going on in China, and was attacked by those who later probed "Why we 'lost' China." I guess he would have been sympathetic to our old China hands. I was president of what we called the Society of the School of International Affairs, and one of the things I had to do was come up with speakers for our periodic evening meetings. I remember asking Peffer to speak to one of our meetings. He said, "No, you have all heard enough from me." Tongue in cheek, he suggested that we get Professor David Nelson Rowe from Yale, who was one of Chiang Kai-shek's biggest fans. And we did. Much to my chagrin - I think we were coming up to coming up to exam time - we turned out an audience of two or three, I had taken Professor Rowe out to dinner and built up the School and Society, but maybe that was all he deserved.

*Q: Was the Cold War really intruding at this point would you say?*

SELIGMANN: Barely underway I would say. Well, it had certainly gotten underway, but as far as the consciousness of students and the content of courses, it was just seeping in. We already had seen some developments on the Japan side that presaged what was about to happen. The Far Eastern Commission for example, which grew out of an initial Far East Advisory Commission, which met in the old Japanese chancery on Massachusetts Avenue, for a brief period at the outset listened to open debate by its members, including the Soviet Union. But that did not last long, and it degenerated into a relatively ineffectual body. The Allied Council in Tokyo, which also included the Soviet Union, fell into disuse as well. These were signs of the Cold War creeping into issues I was following closely - although in all fairness, Gen. MacArthur was not given to listening to outside advice, whether from the USSR or allies like Australia.

*Q: Well you graduated from there when?*

SELIGMANN: 1949.

*Q: This might be a good place to stop.. You are graduating from Columbia with a masters degree in international studies. Then we will pick it up next time, what are you up to and all that.*

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*This is the ninth of February 2000.*

*Q: Al. Let's talk about 1949. What were you up to?*

SELIGMANN: I was finishing grad school looking for a job. By the way, I had a taste of the outside world the summer before, just after I was married, doing research at the Institute of Pacific Relations.

*Q: This was Latimore's?*

SELIGMANN: He was associated with it - William Holland was the President or Chairman. It is the one that came up in the McCarthy hearings, if that is what you have in mind, but the organization went back to the 1920s with branches headed by prominent individuals in all major Asian-Pacific countries. For me, it was a way to keep the GI bill alive through the summer. I do not think I was getting paid but did research down there and produced a great big tome on the history of the Japanese press, with emphasis on the postwar period. It never saw the light of day, partly because I got sick at the end of the summer. Years ago I lent it to a grad student at Maryland and I am told he used it as the basis for his dissertation, but I never got it back.

As I embarked on my job search, Professor Borton armed me with introductions to everybody who was anybody in the field of Japanese affairs in Washington. I had never been to Washington before except for a one-day stand before I went into the army language school. I met John Allison, later Ambassador to Japan, in the Bureau of Far Eastern Affairs; Assistant Secretary for Occupied Areas Charles Saltzman; Secretary

General of the Far East Commission Stratton, who later became a New York Congressman; and others. All were very nice, very kind, but they didn't have any job openings on Japan. One thing led to another, however, and I was introduced to Cora DuBois, head of the Southeast Asia branch of the Division of Research Far East (DRF), who offered me a job as analyst for what was then known as French Indochina. I went to work a couple of weeks after leaving grad school.

*Q: Well you left I assume around June of 1949 and so by the summer of 1949, you were working for, was this the equivalent of what later developed into INR?*

SELIGMANN: Yes. DRF was part of OIR or the Office of Intelligence Research that later became INR, the Bureau of Intelligence Research. It had been the Research and Analysis arm of OSS when it was ceded to State at the end of the war, while the rest of OSS evolved into the new CIA.

*Q: How long, just to set the tone here, how long were you doing this?*

SELIGMANN: A total of six years. To back up a little, I had applied to take the Foreign Service examination in the fall of 1948, but came down with infectious mononucleosis and I couldn't make it. Not wanting to wait until the next round, I went into the State Department initially in the civil service.

*Q: You remember you weren't and no one else was really a real expert in Southeast Asia, particularly in what was French Indochina at that time. How did you get yourself, how did you weave yourself into that and develop into a you know, become knowledgeable?*

SELIGMANN: In a way, it was a repeat of my initial experience with Japan. There was precious little material available in the United States, most of it in French. I latched on to everything I could possibly find. There was an excellent handbook I think the British published during the war as part of a series on areas that were of allied interest. That was the bible. I went after things in French. Altogether I guess there were maybe a half dozen people in Washington working on Indochina in a serious way, including those in CIA. About four of us early on, managed to arrange with an Annamese student (the term Vietnamese had not yet come into vogue) to teach us Vietnamese in the evening. There were no English-language dictionaries, but we found one French-Annamese dictionary and in those pre-Xerox days made ponderous Photostat copies.

*Q: I am sure it was a pile about a foot and a half high.*

SELIGMANN: Just about. I plunged in and studied. Cora DuBois was an anthropologist by profession, who had been in OSS during the war. She knew the area well and had assembled a group of people who were experts on Southeast Asia, if not on Indochina. She had a broad approach to the role of DRF. In addition to day to day developments, my first big project, massive in scope for a neophyte like me, was to write one of a series of papers that she had prepared on agrarian reform in several Southeast Asian countries. That led me to documents produced by ILO before the war, highly critical of French

methods of running plantations. (On the other hand, I learned that the French had pioneered in pisciculture or fish cultivation and had done fine work in increasing rice yields.) Other sources pointed up the repressive nature of French colonial administration. Collectively, DRF took the unpopular view that nationalism was the dominating factor in the politics of the area, and it behooved the United States to associate ourselves with the forces of nationalism if we wanted to combat communism and to ride the wave of the future. Now this is just at the time when “who lost China” was becoming a popular theme of the day. That included the harassment of those China experts who felt that Chiang Kai-shek did not necessarily represent the nationalist desires of the Chinese people. So here again, especially in countries like Indonesia and Indochina, one had to fight hard to make the case that there was such a thing as a non-communist nationalist cause that could prosper and dominate if we supported it - as we eventually did in Indonesia and unfortunately never did in Indochina until it was much too late.

*Q: Well, the interesting thing is toward the end of the Franklin Roosevelt administration before Truman came on the scene, Roosevelt himself took a rather strong stand on Indochina. In other words we were not you know, the hell with the French. I mean Roosevelt did not take kindly to the French trying to reassert their authority, but then things had changed. As you were looking at this, what happened sort of between the 1945 and 1949 period?*

SELIGMANN: While I would not exaggerate the significance of Roosevelt's understanding of the situation - as far as I know, and I will stand corrected, the evidence rests in a couple of letters to his son, in which he indicated that we should not support the return of the French to Indochina - had he lived, it is at least conceivable that that would have been the main thrust of our policy, Regrettably we will never know. In his absence, there wasn't anybody around at the top with the foggiest understanding of the situation in Southeast Asia. We were totally Eurocentric in our thinking. Leaving the Philippines and Thailand aside, within the Department, EUR represented the metropole interests of the French and Dutch especially, and ran roughshod over the Office of Philippine and Southeast Asian Affairs (PSA).

*Q: So you really had about just Thailand.*

SELIGMANN: Thailand, right, and there you had a man who understood Thailand well, but Thailand wasn't a problem. Ken Landon, was in charge of Thai affairs and had been for ever and ever.

*Q: His mother was it?*

SELIGMANN: His wife, Margaret, who wrote “*The King and I*.”

*Q: When you were working on Indochina you were essentially at that point basically serving the metropole desk?*

SELIGMANN: No, more accurately fighting with it.

*Q: You know, this is good, but did Indochina fall within the Asian bureau?*

SELIGMANN: The desk was in the Office of Philippine and Southeast Asian Affairs in the Bureau of Far Eastern Affairs. Within the regional bureau, the situation varied somewhat. The Indonesian desk did have people who had served in Indonesia and understood what was going on. In the case of the French desk, I am sorry, that is a Freudian slip. In the case of the Indochina desk, it was manned by Francophiles - I think enough time has passed to be irreverent - to the point where the head of the desk, a very nice man, was Frenchified to the extent of keeping his handkerchief up his sleeve.

*Q: I mean did you find yourself as you came in being put on sort of on a bumptious team, small timers up against the big time referring to the European people and all that.*

SELIGMANN: To a considerable extent. Even internally within OIR we were fighting strongly entrenched, long-time French hands in the Division of Research Europe who took the position of metropole France. This was also true to some extent of the interaction between the Dutch the Indonesian analysts.

*Q: Of course we are talking about 1949 or we are talking about the creation of NATO, the beginning of the Cold War, the importance of France as being well plugged in to this apparatus.*

SELIGMANN: In my thinking, the first major misstep was taken just about the time I joined the Department. The French government staged a farce whereby they threw a bone to nationalist sentiment. The Emperor Bao Dai who had been living a playboy life on the Riviera, was sent home to Hue, ostensibly to head a Vietnamese state. He was patently a French puppet, however, and had no popular appeal in Indochina. George Marshall, an outstanding Secretary in many respects, immediately welcomed his return in the name of nationalism, but every Vietnamese nationalist saw through the French action. One of the difficulties in dealing with the situation was that the most eminent personage on the nationalist side, of course, was Ho Chi Minh. Some people said that Ho Chi Minh was not really a communist or that even if he was, he would turn out like Tito, defying the Kremlin. While the latter scenario was a possibility, I never argued that, and I don't think any of us in DRF did. The major point was that Ho's ideology need not have been determinant. You did not have to support Ho Chi Minh; you had to support nationalism. We took as a premise that Ho Chi Minh was a dyed-in-the-wool member of the Comintern. His vision, and it was well documented dating back to the 1920s, was a communist Indochina peninsula (which meant Thailand, Cambodia and Laos, as well as Vietnam). There were, however, active non-communist nationalists and we could have gotten behind them.

One paper, which should exist somewhere in the archives, that I remember preparing was an analysis of the Pau Accords, subscribed to by the heads of the French protectorates in Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia in which the French laid out for its colonies a path to "independence" via the French Union. The idea was that all the French colonies would be

represented with various degrees of influence within the assembly of the French Union. As you progressed up the ladder toward full independence, you accrued a greater voice in decision making, and when you finally achieved the ultimate goal of full independence, you became a part of metropole France. The French launched the scheme with great fanfare, and we accepted it uncritically, but it did little to assuage nationalist sentiment.

*Q: Algeria.*

SELIGMANN: Exactly. But the French argument at that time was, “Look, if you don't support us in Indochina, we will lose North Africa.” Of course we did support them and they lost North Africa. Later on they said, “If you don't support us we will pull out of NATO.” Well, we supported them, and they pulled out of NATO.

*Q: What was the situation on the ground in Indochina when you were there in 1949?*

SELIGMANN: Of course I never was there.

*Q: No, but I mean when you were dealing with it.*

SELIGMANN; Initially we were still dealing with two French protectorates, Tonkin and Annam, and a colony, Cochin China; Cambodia and Laos were separate colonies; Later they nominally became three separate countries under French tutelage. There were no major military engagements while I was working on the area, 1949-51, but the situation changed rapidly thereafter. One of the major intelligence interests was what China was up to. We closely observed the construction of roads in Tonkin and the potential for linking up with roads and the railway coming down from Yunnan.

*Q: Were you picking up something that became very apparent later on, it seemed to be forgotten at the time, and that was the innate hostility between China and Vietnam?*

SELIGMANN: That was a historical fact that entered into our considerations of the potential for getting behind the right nationalists, but unfortunately we never tested the waters. We had personalities on the scene there that I think hindered this effort. Our first minister was Donald Heath who was fully aligned with the French. Fortunately his deputy was just the opposite: Ed Gullion was a brilliant perceptive analyst of the scene. Whenever Heath would go leave, we would welcome fresh-air cables from Gullion that exuded a sense of reality. Jim O'Sullivan, I am not sure whether he was our last consul in Hanoi...

*Q: No, our last consul was Tom Corcoran.*

SELIGMANN: Corcoran, okay. I think they both served there. They both understood the situation very well. It was heartbreaking in a way. The Vietnamese had written a declaration of independence patterned after our own, and hoped for our sympathy and cooperation. Such a great opportunity. Ironically,, we are achieving today what we probably could have had fifty years ago with a lot less bloodshed.

*Q: Well, did you find that whatever was being done it was pretty obvious that whatever reports you were doing, the whole thing was either brushed aside, swept under the rug because of our tremendous concern about the French?*

SELIGMANN: No question. I had one day in court, which I don't remember in detail, when I gave a briefing to the Policy Planning Council outlining the situation and presenting our point of view. The only sympathetic voice, however, was that of John Payton Davies, who passed away last month. He was one of the old China hands, much maligned, but one of the few who survived.

*Q: What was the reading on Bao Dai?*

SELIGMANN: He was a puppet, a playboy, and was not really respected by the Vietnamese nationalists. He didn't mean much to the Vietnamese people. He never was like the King of Thailand who was revered by his people. Early in the game, as the war heated up, he scooted back to France.

*Q: How did we see the French hand in Indochina at that time? Was it heavy or...*

SELIGMANN: Their sole objective was to reassert their influence, milk the economy, and have life go on the way it always had. Unlike the British in South Asia,, they made no effort to build up a civil service and provided minimal opportunities for advancement: some doctors, a few lawyers. They were more like the Dutch in Indonesia, and went beyond the Dutch in that the postman, the cop on the beat was likely to be a Corsican. They just didn't give any influence or power to Indochinese (Vietnamese).

*Q: In your own mind and maybe some of those working with you, were you seeing the French as basically on the wrong side of history in how they were dealing with colonial matters?*

SELIGMANN: Oh, absolutely. And the Dutch. The British saw the writing on the wall, swallowed hard and faced the inevitable in withdrawing from almost all their Asian colonies. And we lucked out in Indonesia by switching horses if you will, choosing sides at the very last minute while it could still make a difference. The Dutch didn't like what we did, but they were a small country, so we could afford to do it. We were scared of France.

One person I met in Washington, I believe in 1951, was the Catholic leader Ngo Dinh Diem. He had a reputation as a pure nationalist who was both anti-French and staunchly anti-Communist - a few years later, after Ho consolidated his control in the north, Ngo led his flock en masse to the south. Ngo came to Washington and was going to spend time with the Maryknoll Fathers, I think in New Jersey. The same student who was teaching us Vietnamese arranged for me to have an tête-a-tête evening with him. I wrote up our conversation in a memo in which I concluded that here was a man who had impeccable nationalist credentials, was really a fine person, and, as you phrased it, was

on the right side of history, but unfortunately lacked the charisma ever to be a leader of his country. After he became prime minister, I used to reread it to keep myself humble, but in a sense it was true. He started off all right, with far more popular support than we gave him credit for having, but he let his relatives do him in

*Q: Well, did you find yourself sort of frustrated looking at this during this two years from '49 to '51? You kind of knew what we should be doing but nobody paid any attention, or was this sort of a learning period of how to write papers and do this sort of thing?*

SELIGMANN: My graduate-school training had prepared me well for the substantive part of the job, which came easily. It was also invaluable to start to obtain insights on how the Department and the intelligence community functioned. The lack of influence of our analysis, on the other hand, was intensely frustrating, aggravating to the point of disturbing one's peace of mind. The saving grace was that internally, within DRF, we were in almost total accord. One day, I had lunch with a colleague who was the Indonesia desk officer in DRF, Paul Kattenberg. Paul was similarly exasperated dealing with the Dutch desk to try to get a sensible policy for Indonesia. One of us quipped, "Why don't we swap jobs?" We agreed that wasn't a bad idea, went upstairs and presented the proposition, which was accepted. Incidentally, Paul tells me he does not recall the lunch episode, but he doesn't deny it either and that is the way it worked out in any event.

*Q: What was in it for the system? Were they trying to train people to make them more useful or you know sometimes it is the idea of keeping somebody in a thing for years? Why were they amenable to this switch.*

SELIGMANN: Whoever was in charge of the Southeast Asia Branch, either Cora DuBois or Jack Lydman, who succeeded her about that time, well understood our frame of mind and was sympathetic. Now, I do not know what she or he might have been thinking in terms of training but they saw no disadvantage in it.

*Q: What was the background of Cora DuBois?*

SELIGMANN: She was a prominent anthropologist from Radcliffe, one of the very first women graduates of Harvard University, held in esteem as one of a handful of outstanding women anthropologists. Her field work had been in Indonesia and India, and during the war she served with OSS. When the job of Chief of the Division for Research Far East opened up, she was by all odds the logical person to fill that position, but I believe no woman had ever been named division chief in the State Department, and she was passed over. She saw the writing on the wall and returned to a long, illustrious career in academe, at the University of California, Harvard, Cornell, and Chicago, if I am not mistaken. Perhaps she had a yearning to go back to academic life - I have no idea - but it was still years before women could compete with men - an exception being the Passport Office czar(in), Francis Knight.

*Q: Okay, you took over, you are doing Indonesia from what, 1951 to...*

SELIGMANN: 1953.

*Q: What was the state of play in Indonesia when you took over in this period?*

SELIGMANN: Before I came to the job, the situation was very similar to that in Indochina, in that we were still supporting the Dutch after what was called the first police action or first Dutch effort militarily to suppress the nationalists in 1947. My memory is less clear on the sequence of events in Indonesia than Indochina, but by the time of the second police action in 1948 we and much of the international community started to put pressure on the Dutch and came out in support of a fully independent Indonesia. There were significant differences between Indonesia and Indochina that made this possible. For one thing, the Communists in Indonesia not only had shown their hand when they attempted to take over the nationalist movement by force in 1948, but they were militarily defeated in the Madiun incident by anti-Communist nationalist troops. You can't help but be haunted by the thought that this might have happened, in my view would have happened sooner or later in Indochina, even allowing for the fact that Ho Chi Minh might well have remained a loyal supporter of the Soviet-led Comintern. In other words, with any sort of outside encouragement, the non-communist nationalist forces would have probably have overwhelmed the communists. Another important consideration for Indonesia was that we did not regard the Netherlands as having nearly the same strategic importance as France. Moreover, there was significant support for Indonesian nationalism in the Netherlands, whereas we were properly concerned about with the Communist threat to France, but wrongly concluded that it was necessary to back the French government's stance on Indochina lest its standing be weakened.

In any event, by 1951 Indonesian independence had become a reality. In the ensuing period the government was preoccupied with the trials and tribulations of establishing its institutions and authority and adjusting its relations with the former metropole. The thorniest international issue was the Indonesian demand that the Netherlands cede West Irian or West Borneo to Indonesia. The new government also had to cope with the reluctance of many regional entities, often aided and abetted by dissident factions in the Indonesian army, to reject central government authority and set up autonomous regions. Nonetheless, this was not nearly as turbulent a period for Indonesia as the preceding postwar years.

*Q: Well how about Sukarno? Where did he fit in when you were there starting in 1951? Was he the leader?*

SELIGMANN: He together and Mohammed Hatta were regarded as the fathers of the Indonesian independence movement. Like many other Southeast Asian nationalist leaders, they had played along with the Japanese promises of independence during World War II and had allowed themselves to be manipulated by Japanese Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere propaganda, but this aside, their nationalist credentials were clean and they were highly revered. The two men complemented each other in that Hatta appealed to more conservative Islamic parties and organizations, and also was thought of as representing the outlying parts of Indonesia, whereas Sukarno was identified with the

dominant Javanese leadership of the new nation. Later on, of course, Sukarno leaned increasingly to the left, but in 1951 he appeared to be the natural choice to become the first president of Indonesia, a position he held until Suharto took over in the mid-1960s.

*Q: While you were doing this you had mentioned that Paul Kattenburg had been frustrated. What was he frustrated about?*

SELIGMANN: Essentially the same things I was in working on Indochina, fighting the Dutch desk and not getting anywhere and trying to...

*Q: But where does the Dutch desk in 1951 when you took, was the Dutch desk I mean losing, beginning to lose influence?*

SELIGMANN: No question - and I imagine Paul would have been far less frustrated had he stayed with it. One thing that was different was that we were dealing with sympathetic officers in the regional bureau who were not associated with the Dutch desk. Wym Coerr was the Indonesian desk officer; Frank Galbraith, later Ambassador to Indonesia and our first Indonesian language officer, came back from Djakarta about that time to serve as his deputy. They understood the Indonesian situation and the force of nationalism well. So we had an easier mission. We could provide intelligence analysis to the bureau, which is what you should be doing, and then they may or may not have had their frustrations in promoting the policies they advocated. Moreover, compared with French influence on Indochina policy, the Dutch did not have the same clout in regard to Indonesia; raw materials were important, but the future of the Netherlands itself, a product of size and geography, depended more on what happened to its larger West European neighbors.

*Q: Well, from INR I would imagine that Dutch sources would be important for you. Were you getting good information there, or were you getting it from somewhere else?*

SELIGMANN: I have almost no memory at this juncture in regard to specific sources of intelligence. We relied on the usual open sources such as newspapers and broadcasts, as well as reporting from our embassy and consulates, CIA, DIA reports, etc., for our analysis, but I recall few details. On balance, I would say that OIR did not have a great deal to offer in the way of intelligence bearing on Indonesian policy beyond the capabilities of the regional bureau, i.e., FE.

*Q: What was your impression of what you were getting and the role of the CIA at this time, because not too long afterwards, CIA came a cropper in Indonesia, but at this point?*

SELIGMANN: I can't even remember the names of my contacts in the CIA at that time; whereas, I knew the people working in Indochina very well. I don't recall, although I must have dealt with them, both on a day-to-day basis and in the preparation of the occasional NIE (National Intelligence Estimate).

*Q: This is usually an indicator that it wasn't an overly involved group. What did we have then at that time, a consul general in Djakarta?*

SELIGMANN: Initially a consul general in Batavia, but after independence an Ambassador in Djakarta.

*Q: In 1951-53, what happened during that time?*

SELIGMANN: Possibly because I did not have any great sense of bureaucratic purpose at the time, and I brought no familiarity with the area to the job, my memory for detail is pretty fuzzy. As I mentioned earlier, much attention was paid to the prospects of consolidating central government authority and to the transition from preoccupation with the struggle for independence to the political and economic challenges of nation-building.

*Q: What was sort of as this was going on what was the prediction. You know when colonial powers give up, the metropole you kind of wonder is it going to be the night of long knives, what is going to happen when the Europeans pull out. Was this a matter of concern to us?*

SELIGMANN: It was. We were certainly concerned about access to natural resources, especially oil, and what might happen to foreign enterprises. Thousands of Dutch returned to the Netherlands, but many more remained. I don't want to say a great deal more, because I honestly do not recall my work during this period with any great clarity. There were questions such as the future of the Dutch shipping line, KPM, etc. The one issue that was quite dominant much of that period for the Department and for ourselves was the future of West Irian which was not resolved until over 10 years later.

*Q: Why did we care?*

SELIGMANN: Principally because of our relationship with the Dutch. We wanted to get off to a good start with Indonesia, but did not want to ruffle too many feathers. The Australians also weren't sure whether they wanted Indonesia on their borders. We felt it was important for the future of stability in the area and our relationship with newly emerging Indonesia that West Irian should be part of Indonesia

*Q: Well in 1951-53 as far as our policy for Asia as a whole was concerned, a war was going on in Korea, which was seen by many as the beginning of World War III, the opening attempt by the communists to start taking over bits and pieces that were vulnerable. How did we feel about Indonesia particularly the Chinese population there?*

SELIGMANN: I do not think they were regarded as an arm of the PRC There was more concern about how China or the USSR might try to influence the new government through offers of military or economic aid or through manipulation of the PKI (Communist Party of Indonesia) or other political organizations. The Indonesians themselves, like a number of Southeast Asian governments and peoples at that time tended to resent the entrepreneurial dominance of the overseas Chinese, and tended to take it out on them when things went wrong, often in the form of pogroms.

*Q: Well, in Malaysia though they had...*

SELIGMANN: Malaysia was different in that the Chinese constituted a much larger segment of the population, especially in Singapore, then still part of Malaya.

*Q: Malaysia was different. I was wondering though whether there was concern that this might turn into something.*

SELIGMANN: I think there was concern that what was happening in Malaysia might turn into something and certainly concern about Indochina, as you put it, turning out to be part of a broader war. As soon as the Korean war broke out in 1950, a 24-hour watch system was established in OIR to keep a close eye on critical areas in the world which we regarded as flash points. I seem to remember that there were seven such areas: Indochina was one; others included Berlin, Yugoslavia, and Taiwan. I served on this watch group, sometimes taking the ghost watch in the middle of the night. It was an interesting time.

*Q: Was the feeling that Hatta and Sukarno were people we could deal with at this time, people we could be pretty comfortable with?*

SELIGMANN: I think so. We were less comfortable perhaps with some of the socialists because socialism tended to be a dirty word. Through a friend of mine who had served with the Goodwill Mission in Indonesia in the early days of the independence movement, I met Soedjatmoko or Koko, as he was known, who was with the Indonesian mission to the UN. He was a socialist who became prominent in Indonesia, and I met him again much later in Japan, where he became Rector of UN University. But this being the McCarthy era, many people were uncomfortable with just the word socialism, even though most genuine socialists were anti-Communist moderates. The big difference was that we were now dealing with a government that we had no ostensible reason to be terribly scared of; after all, they had put down the communists, whatever happened to Sukarno later notwithstanding. You also had a Trotskyite communist party in Indonesia. I remember Marcuse used to work in OIR at one time...

*Q: Marcuse. He later became sort of the guru of the left wing at San Diego University.*

SELIGMANN: Good for you - I wouldn't have remembered. I knew it was somewhere out on the west coast.

*Q: I mean he was about as close as we got to a real left wing movement anywhere. The United States hasn't been really fertile ground for this.*

SELIGMANN: No, but I recall him saying in a thick accent, "What is Murba?" Murba - I don't know why that name sticks - was the Indonesian Trotskyite party.

*Q: Of course in a way Trotskyite parties were handy because they tended to nullify the other Stalinist parties, so the more of these groups you had, the better.*

Q: Right.

*Q: Well, in a way I take it you felt that you were sort of on the winning side in Indonesia while you were doing this.*

SELIGMANN: Indeed. You could talk to people in the regional bureau and have a productive conversation. It was a great relief. I could have a rational conversation while I was working on Indochina, don't get me wrong there, but there was no meeting of minds.

*Q: Well in 1953 where did you go?*

SELIGMANN: I finally got to work on Japan, which is what I had hoped to do from the start.

*Q: Had you taken the Foreign Service exam?*

SELIGMANN: No, I was still in DRF. I was getting promoted nicely and it was an interesting life but I was beginning to get bored with being desk bound. I still had in mind going overseas and started to do something actively about it. INR had established a number of analyst positions in missions overseas in its budget, one of these in Djakarta. So I had gotten myself assigned to this. It was a new concept, and I enthusiastically started to study Indonesian at the FSI with Dr. Embree. Unfortunately, after a few weeks, he left the FSI to go to Cornell, where he became one of the mainstays of their Southeast Asia program, and there wasn't anyone else to teach Indonesian, so that was the end of my language training; not long after, all the proposed overseas positions were cut out of the OIR budget.

*Q: You know, in my interviews - I have never dealt with Indonesia - but when you mention Cornell, in the 1960s and all people who dealt with Indonesia, I am talking about Foreign Service officers there, they practically spit on the table when you mention Cornell, because it became sort of a hotbed for those who claimed that the State Department was doing everything wrong and we were responsible for the overthrow of Sukarno, etc. Did you get any feel about Cornell at that time as being a political presence vis a vis Indonesia?*

SELIGMANN: No, but then I didn't know much about Cornell. I knew George Kahin, who had written the one really good book in English on Indonesian politics. Kahin later became the bete noir not only of people who wanted to pursue a hard line in Indochina but people who wanted to pursue a moderate line in Indochina. He died last week as you may have noticed. The obituaries in the papers all dwelt on his role in Indochina. I had met him a few times in Washington, where he was occasionally called in as a consultant, and regarded him as a respected Indonesian scholar. I think the views you refer to came later.

*Q: It came later...*

*Well, so in 1953 you were assigned where?*

SELIGMANN: Still within DRF, down the hall to the Japan desk in the Northeast Asia Branch. I filled in behind Bill Stokes, who went overseas at that time.

*Q: You did this from 1953 to...*

SELIGMANN: 1955.

*Q: 1955. This was we are talking about the immediate post-MacArthur period aren't we?*

SELIGMANN: Post-Occupation. The peace treaty was signed in 1952.

*Q: I know I went to Japan as an enlisted man in the air force, and I occupied it I think for about a week, and then I was protecting it after that.*

SELIGMANN: Right, and one of the big issues at the time that we did express views on was how far the Japanese should go in building up their armed forces. The other day I was leafing through the Foreign Relations series when I came across a memorandum, written I believe by McClurkin, Director for Northeast Asian Affairs in EA. The memo - I don't remember to whom was addressed or whether it was a draft or what - was circulated to us for comment. In it he advocated a substantial buildup of the Japanese armed forces. There was a marginal negative comment, initialed "ALS," suggesting it would be ill-advised to act in a way that would reduce Japanese dependence on the U.S. security umbrella or encourage Japanese who favored remilitarization. An asterisk led to a footnote stating that "ALS" was "an unidentified officer." So much for any claim to fame. We weren't at odds with the Japan desk on too many things, but it has been a fervent belief of mine that while we don't necessarily want a Japan dependent on the United States, we want a relationship solidly built on interdependence. If that means continuing to have heavy reliance on our military presence in the Pacific, and our cooperating with the Japanese in their military roles and missions, that is far healthier in the long run than an independent buildup.

*Q: It is interesting for various reasons how the two major enemies during WWII, Japan and Germany in this 1950s period, early 1950s on have been treated quite differently. I mean, the Germans very quickly entered NATO; we brought a German army into being quite quickly and with great success. Really as far as keeping it from becoming a militaristic force, I mean the old German-Prussian army just doesn't exist any more. But in Japan, for the last 50 years or so, it is really quite different. The Japanese have been sort of kept more dependent on us. Were you dealing with this looking over your shoulder at Germany as people were doing this and saying why this is different?*

SELIGMANN: The issue is one that has never been aired much publicly. Whenever it has been, it has been controversial. A Marine general in Okinawa some years back, very baldly stated that it was in the interest of the United States and the other nations in Asia to have the Japanese military dependent on the U.S. All hell broke loose, terrible reaction. But he was stating what I think has been on the minds not only of policy makers in this country but in the minds of Japanese leaders who are concerned about their past and their

relations particularly with the rest of Asia. In other words, the acceptance of Japanese economic presence, and any political voice in other parts of Asia depends very much on a U.S. presence in the area and cooperation between Japan and the United States. Other nations in the region do not want Japan as a totally independent military power.

*Q: I am sure that in their hearts of hearts, if we were to look at Mao Tse Tung's China, the Soviet Union as well as other parts, they are pretty happy to have us because it is a lot easier to deal with the United States than maybe a resurgent Japan.*

SELIGMANN: This is a part of the world where the interests of the great powers have historically always clashed: Russia, China, Japan, and the United States. Since the Korean War, which is a half century ago now, we have had peace in that area. It is a remarkable thing. I think a lot of people still don't want to rock the boat, whatever they say publicly. And the U.S.-Japan Security Treaty, which was anathema to all communist parties, including the USSR and China, came to be accepted as they understood this better. Even the Japan Communist Party which staged anti-American riots and burned American cars in the early 1950s, ceased to make this an issue as the years went by.

*Q: Well, in a way, there are certain times when you have what amounts to acceptance of something that you can't talk about too much, and one of those being nobody including the Japanese really wanted resurgence of a conceivably aggressive independent Japan mucking around in the area.*

SELIGMANN: Yes. Today there are a good many more internationalist-minded Japanese, moderate nationalists if you will, who feel that Japan should play more of a pro-active political role, and within reason that makes a lot of sense. But it is not going to happen fast. Going back to your comparison with Germany, the German precedent may well have been and may continue to be in the minds of Americans who make a pitch for a substantially stronger Japanese military, but there are fundamental differences between the two countries and such advocates often lack an appreciation of Japanese history and psyche. Germany by virtue of geography has become integrated in an increasingly unified Western Europe; has much more openly faced up to its prewar and wartime history, including instruction in the school system; and did not hesitate to make up with its neighbors. Some of this has not been possible in Japan, e.g., its strongest neighbors have been China and Russia (the USSR), while its other closest neighbors were colonies that still harbor resentment for their treatment by Japan. In this setting, the institutions that might provide a framework for a larger Japanese role do not exist and are unlikely to for some time.

*Q: When you were dealing with this research from 1953 to 1955, this is quite an important turning point for Japan, I mean with the Korean war Japan was not only a base for us but was also seen not just as something occupied but in a way an ally. Were you seeing this?*

SELIGMANN: I am not sure we had reached the point where we used the term ally much - there was quite a storm when a Japanese prime minister first used the term publicly

almost thirty years later - but yes, certainly allied in the sense of being a source of support during the Korean War. The war could hardly have been waged without Japanese logistical support. Japanese industry got a big lift from our procurement orders, repair of our equipment, ships and what have you, along with having some of their own seamen on supporting commercial vessels. That is when I guess you might say Japan came out of occupation serfdom. On the military side, with just about all of our combat troops based in Japan deployed to Korea, we initially created what was euphemistically called a "National Police Reserve," which evolved by degrees into today's "Self Defense Forces."

*Q: I have just finished reading a book called Acheson by a man named Chace. He talks about Acheson wanting, particularly as the Korean War began to develop, to stop the people under MacArthur from dismantling the industrial base Zaibatsu and so on. At one time they were trying to get it down to a cottage industry. Did you have a feeling that there was a change by the time you arrived, a change in attitude towards how we saw Japan?*

SELIGMANN: We were prepared to see them get back on their feet by then. Economic life was just beginning to pick up, but Japan was still a very desolate country. Not too long before John Foster Dulles had said this was a country that would never be able to export anything worth a nickel, not in those words but something like that. Acheson, this is Dean Acheson, or George Acheson?

*Q: Dean Acheson. This is of course, when he was Secretary of State about how he put a stop to what seemed to be a continuing dismantling of the industrial bases of Japan and was allowing it to sort of come back together again.*

SELIGMANN: Yes, well, of course the Korean War and the Cold War in general had much to do with that. This affected our reparations policy. We wanted to say let's get the issue off the docket, the peace treaty settled reparations, let it go at that and not carry this on forever.

*Q: Well, when you were in this 1953 to 1955 period, when you were working in the State Department research area, what slice of the action did you have regarding Japan? What were you doing?*

SELIGMANN: This was different from my work on Southeast Asia. We weren't arguing about the policy implications of our collective sources of information, but were engaged in more traditional aspects of research and analysis. We were much more in a support role, preparing papers requested by the Japan desk, working with the regional bureau to fill needs they had. Today I can't remember the papers we wrote, but it was a congenial atmosphere. In that sense it was less interesting for me, more reminiscent of work as a graduate student - which did not really meet my expectations of a career in foreign affairs.

*Q: Were we concerned if you recall with a union, I am thinking labor unions - was it Zengakuren? - I mean these types of things seeing that maybe something is going to come*

*out of this that we are not going to like?*

SELIGMANN: Oh, yes, very much so. Sohyo was the mass umbrella labor union federation and many of its most significant member unions, particularly those representing government workers, including the Teachers Union, were manipulated at the top levels by Communists or Communist sympathizers, even though the vast majority of rank-and-file members were far more moderate in their views or apolitical. This was also true of Zengakuren, which was the largest of the student organizations. More generally we were concerned about the role of the Japanese intellectuals, most of whom were Marxists in that period. You did have a very strong left-wing movement. The communist party itself was strong. Even now it gets about ten percent of the vote. The communist-supported candidate just got about 1.8 million votes in the Osaka gubernatorial election last Sunday. But today that does not mean much. Other parties supported him and it isn't communism as we knew it. But in those days it was a militant party supported by both the USSR and China. The split between the USSR and China had not yet occurred. Left-wing movements were perhaps the main focus of what we were looking at and trying to follow.

*Q: Well did we see movements in the Japanese political spectrum, did we see the Liberal Democratic Party as being the mainstay, sort of the same way we saw the Christian Democrats in Italy and Germany as being our boys?*

SELIGMANN: Yes, except the LDP as such didn't come into being until 1955, when there was a merger of the Liberal Party and the Democratic Party, the two largest conservative parties.

*Q: But I mean these were our people.*

SELIGMANN: These were our boys in the sense that whatever the background of some of the leaders who had been associated closely with Japan's war effort, the conservative parties also embraced many more liberal elements who had not been, and as a whole the LDP and its precursors subscribed to a common world view. Whether they were "our boys" in a more material sense as a result of behind-the-scenes support, is a question I was in no position to assess. The largest opposition group were the Socialists, before 1955 divided between the Left Socialist Party and the Right Socialist Party, a split that remained manifest even after the merger of the two into a single Japan Socialist Party in response to the formation of the LDP. Left-wing schisms were based almost as much on personality and history as on ideology, but there wide differences in political orientation among the socialists, ranging from pro-Communist Marxists on the extreme left to more moderate people in the right wing whose views were akin to the main stream of the non-Communist international socialist movement, including the Labor party in Britain and SPD in Germany. The communists throughout the world in that period were adept at manipulating organizations, They could turn out huge numbers for mass demonstrations, mobilize labor unions in elections, etc. This was a continuing source of concern that we watched carefully. Much of our work analyzed the political scene with these factors in mind.

*Q: Did we see the universities playing almost a traditional role that happens almost*

*around the world, the teachers leftists or Marxists; the students are that until they graduate and then they immediately go into or the better students go into business and get on the other side of the thing. Was this the pattern?*

SELIGMANN: Well that certainly happened in dramatic terms later on, during the riots against the security treaty. We are jumping ahead now to the late 1950s and early 1960s. In the mid-1950s I don't know that you had the same kinds of causes to bring the students out on the streets or whether they were in fact all Marxists as you say. I think there was a strong Marxist movement on campuses, but my memory isn't so good as it is later on. The teachers union in Japan was described as a "red-headed crane," and I doubt whether at any time the large majority of its members would have thought of themselves as far left-wing.

*Q: What about one of the issues which continues today vis a vis the Soviet Union and has been very helpful: the fact that the Soviets won't let go of the northern islands. Was that an issue at the time?*

SELIGMANN: That has always been an issue. We fudged our own position. I think partly because of our own continued occupation of Okinawa, and we had not reached the point where we were about to change that. That is quite a story unto itself. I think partly because of that, yes, we supported Japan's views but not very explicitly.

*Q: We weren't hitting heavily on the northern island issue.*

SELIGMANN: No—it had its own momentum. Habomai and Shikotan, the islands immediately north of Hokkaido, were nothing but a bunch of rocks in the midst of good fishing grounds, administered before the war directly out of a village in Hokkaido, so it was easy to endorse the Japanese claim. Soviet occupation was sheer negligence on our part at the time of the surrender. We should have sent some Marines or an Army platoon to sit there and the Russians wouldn't have said boo. As for Etorofu and Kunashiri, the other more important "northern territories," the Russians had moved in with our acquiescence. Unlike Taiwan and Korea, which were seized by the Japanese by force, however, Japanese ownership was negotiated in treaties with Russia going back to the 1850s and 1870s, i.e., they weren't seized by force but were traded off by Russia for various quids and quos the way people used to trade territory in those days. We did not explicitly accept the Japanese claim to them until the late 1970s.

*Q: In 1953 the occupation had just ended.*

SELIGMANN: Yes.

*Q: Were you seeing any problem in that disassembling of the American occupation?*

SELIGMANN: You know, I missed that period; it had been disassembled, but I wasn't there.

*Q: Were you getting any after ripples later on?*

SELIGMANN: In terms of American supervision and control, the disassembling process had been going on in many areas long before the end of the Occupation: Japan had had successive elections at all levels; the Japanese administrative apparatus was fully operative; the economy was slowly getting back on its feet, with the beginnings of foreign trade and investment; and even though the new Treaty made provision for a continued U. S. military presence and for U. S. military intervention to maintain domestic order if necessary, the Japanese had assumed responsibility for internal security from the beginning of the post-Occupation period. Arguments began to be raised to change this policy or that, a process that has continued in many fields, but at the outset there was not much pressure to undo most of the major Occupation reforms. You did have rumbles about the interpretation of Article 9 of the constitution, and whether it should be revised to reflect the reality of Japan's defense needs - a debate that persists today. Article 9 renounces war as a sovereign right and the use of force to settle international disputes, and goes on to say Japan will never possess land, sea or air forces. Then as now, Japan has gotten by with increasingly expansive interpretations of Article 9, without opening what many would see as Pandora's box. There is a new Diet committee to study revision of the constitution but it is also beginning to be faulted for dragging its heels.

*Q. Well, again it was the 1953-1955 period. Were there any problems as you saw it that you were having to deal with about the number of troops, what they were doing and that sort of thing, American troops?*

SELIGMANN: The demand for troop reductions, base consolidation and the like wasn't so vocal in that period because memory of the Korean War and the threat it posed to Japan was fresh, and it was happening naturally. We were reducing our presence: the number of bases and the number of troops. Moreover, the pace of economic development with accompanying urbanization, putting pressure on facilities in or near metropolitan areas, had not yet gained the momentum it did later

*Q: Was Okinawa an issue at all?*

SELIGMANN: Okinawa had been an integral part of Japan before the war, one of its 47 prefectures, but from the point of view of the Okinawans, a neglected one. Also there was strong feeling in Okinawa that they had suffered needlessly in the severe fighting there at the tail end of an already hopeless war. As best I remember, reversion was not yet a big issue on Okinawa. The "mainland," in turn, to use the term Okinawans applied to the rest of Japan, had just concluded a Peace Treaty in which the Japanese Government acquiesced in the provision whereby the United States would retain bases and administrative rights in Okinawa, i.e., in contrast to the Soviet Union position on the northern territories, we did not claim Okinawa permanently as a prize of war. Japan was not about to say, "Hey, we have to have Okinawa back right away."

*Q: Well, did you feel in INR dealing with Japan and the Japanese desk and all that you are now part of the big time?*

SELIGMANN: In the sense of being on the same team as colleagues in the regional bureau, although I did not feel I was having much to do with the formulation of policy or the day-to-day conduct of business.

*Q: Not dealing with those peripheral countries down to the south.*

SELIGMANN: Oh in that sense, no I don't think I ever felt that way. I thought you meant in being accepted as a partner in....

*Q: That is true but sometimes INR or whatever you called it at the time, you know, the desks, It depends on personalities, sometimes don't want to use you and all.*

SELIGMANN: It varied. When working on Indochina, personal relations were fine but I felt OIR was regarded as an unwanted gadfly. We cooperated and got on well with the Indonesian desk, but the officers manning it had far more expertise in the area than I had developed starting from scratch with no experience on the ground. The Japanese desk had the advantage of not having to coordinate with another regional bureau, i.e., EUR. For my part, I brought a fair amount of preexisting expertise and language ability to the job, but whatever research and analysis we produced probably only made a marginal contribution to the conduct of policy. I felt comfortable, however, doing what comes naturally, if you will, what I joined the department to do in the beginning.

*Q: Well now, in 1955 what happened?*

SELIGMANN: It happened in 1954, when the Wriston program was announced for the integration of substantive positions in the Civil Service and the Foreign Service. In retrospect it is hard to understand how we could have had gone on as we did for so long. Knowledgeable as he was, how could you have a Ken Landon as the long-time Thai desk officer when he had never served in Thailand with the State Department, even though he had lived in there for many years as a missionary. How could you have Foreign Service officers overseas who never been assigned in Washington, and had little knowledge of how the town worked or how policy was made. Looking back, it seems totally archaic. When the Wriston program came along, I and I guess many of my colleagues jumped at the chance. In my case I had always thought of joining the Foreign Service, so it was a welcome way of easing into it.

*Q: What rank did you come in as?*

SELIGMANN: I came in as an O-4, the old O-4.

*Q: The old O-4. Well then what happened in 1955?*

SELIGMANN: I wanted to get out to Tokyo, so I applied for Japanese language training. Mind you, I had studied Japanese intensively for 2 ½ years, but it was not the kind of Japanese I felt I needed for professional use in the Foreign Service. I had good military

Japanese, and to some degree good ordinary conversational Japanese, but I needed a lot of hard political and economic Japanese. I was assigned to the Japanese language school in Tokyo for a year for advanced Japanese language.

*Q: The language school was where?*

SELIGMANN: In Tokyo.

*Q: It later moved to Yokohama, didn't it?*

SELIGMANN: It moved a couple of times. It was in Tokyo and then it moved to Yokohama.

*Q: To Yokohama. You were in the language school from 1955 to 1956?*

SELIGMANN: Yes.

*Q: How did you find the training at that time?*

SELIGMANN: It was everything I hoped it would be. There were about six or seven of us at the school, including two from another agency and one Canadian, the first non-American to study there - Dick Gorham, a good friend, who later became Ambassador to China. The school was located in a nice old Japanese house near the baseball stadium at Korakuen - it subsequently moved to Shibuya. The atmosphere was pleasant: I had a small Japanese-style room, although I sat at a desk, not on the floor, and, most important, we had superb instructors. The Director of the school, Eleanor Jordan, a fine linguist, who had written the long-definitive FSI text, unfortunately left shortly after we arrived to accompany her husband, Bill Jordan, who was transferred to become the New York Times man in Moscow. The chief instructor had been a news announcer for NHK, the Japan Broadcasting Company, which was a stickler for pronunciation. We had daily drill in monitoring news broadcasts in addition to other approaches to the language; took numerous field trips to newspaper offices, courts, and the like; and at one point sat in on a course in constitutional law at Tokyo University. One of the most challenging and enjoyable parts of training were the extended trips I took to rural areas on my own, meeting with local leaders in various fields. I never considered myself the best language-school product, but I did pretty well, and got out of my year's training essentially what I had hoped for.

Life and times in the Foreign Service: we arrived with our two young children, and were put up temporarily in a hotel. No sooner had I gone off the first day to start in at the language school than the phone rang. It was Eleanor calling to ask Bobbie, my wife, when she was going to start studying (as a price of marriage she had already taken a year of Japanese at Columbia). When she replied that she didn't know how she could manage it with two pre-school children, Eleanor said, "Well, we are leaving for Moscow, so you can have my house boy. He likes to change diapers." So Bobbie also started to study part-time at the Embassy from the first week.

Finding housing was another matter. As language officers we were expected to live off campus, i.e., in non-Embassy housing, better to immerse ourselves in Japanese life and the language, but at a time when housing was in excruciatingly short supply and rents high, that was easier said than done. Fortunately, International House of Japan, built with Rockefeller support, just opened its doors at that time and the American Co-director, Gordon Bowles, was provided housing there. By luck, we were able to move into the house he had been living in, which was a large Western-style house on an estate in the heart of Meguro in the middle of Tokyo, owned by an old aristocratic family that had lost much of its wealth as a result of land reform. The owner, who lived in the adjacent Japanese-style house, and who became a dear friend, simply asked what we could afford to pay; we told her what our housing allowance was, and that was that. Bobbie, incidentally, taught English to her teen-age son, who became a senior Foreign Ministry official and Ambassador to Bonn.

*Q: Well, who was the ambassador when you arrived there in 1955?*

SELIGMANN: John Allison, who had played a key role in negotiating the Peace Treaty with John Foster Dulles. Of course, I was living a relatively isolated life, the language school being far from the Embassy. The fact that I knew many people in the Embassy brought me into some of the social life, but not into everyday Embassy life. My most vivid memory of Allison's tenure was his reluctance to apologize to the Japanese when the fishing boat *Fukuryu Maru* was dusted with fallout from one of our nuclear tests on Bikini atoll. We learned a hard lesson and usually, if not always, coped more sensitively with subsequent incidents where the U.S. was culpable in accidents at sea.

*Q: Did you know at the time you went there that or did you feel that you were sort of entering a service where you probably might get to another country or two maybe, but Japan was going to be your career?*

SELIGMANN: Not for sure. I knew I was entering a service that would take me to other countries and welcomed the prospect. As time went on, I was surprised I stayed in Japan as long as I did. At one point I had to fight to get to another country. They wanted me to keep working on Japan, and I fought to broaden my experience.

*Q: I know. I came into the Foreign Service in 1955, and John Sylvester came in with me. I think I saw John once in Vietnam. Other than that, John disappeared over the horizon in Japan. That was pretty much it.*

SELIGMANN: I saw John the other day. But, yes, it still is an area of intense specialization. A big part of the problem is that officers with training in other hard languages such as Chinese, Arabic or Russian can be assigned effectively to a number of countries, but Japanese can only be used professionally in Japan, at least without insulting interlocutors as you might in Korea or Taiwan. I don't know if you mind my mixing up ideas and sequence...

*Q. No, no.*

SELIGMANN: I had come to the Department well grounded in East Asian affairs academically, and well trained as well in the functional aspects of the jobs to which I was assigned; I always felt I was doing what I was trained to do. Jump ahead about 25 years to the time I was country director for Japan, and I found on my doorstep a delegation of three A-100 graduates.

*Q: A-100 being....*

SELIGMANN: The basic junior officer course for new FSOs at the Foreign Service Institute. They all had backgrounds not unlike my own when first assigned to Japan. They had served in various capacities in non-government jobs in Japan. They knew the language, had studied it at their universities, and were eager to put their Japanese to use. They had just received their first assignments and were crestfallen. Personnel had told them in effect, "You can't go to Japan: you know Japanese, you know the country, but are on probation and would have an unfair advantage unless you went to a post you know nothing about." Now there is a kind of a back think to this, but Personnel is well known for back think. That appalled me, but I knew what I was up against. All I could promise them was that they would not be forgotten, and "we," i.e., the Japan hands, would get them back to Japan. We kept after PER and we did, but it was an up-hill battle. I think PER's approach is all wrong.

*Q: There is this constant fight between trying to develop broad-gauged officers and develop expertise.*

SELIGMANN: You have to do both, but why, when someone is ready, raring to go with all the tools, not let them develop the other attributes you need on the job, get to feel at home with what they can do best before they lose their enthusiasm, and then amplify their expertise with exposure to other areas and functions. To me it's appalling that we don't do this, that we no longer seek out people with the best qualifications - perhaps the only major diplomatic service in the world not to do so.

*Q: Well, you are up against theory.*

SELIGMANN: I know.

*Q: Well, did you know where you were going? What was sort of the pattern that language training, of course you a bit different. You were more senior at that time, which would mean that you would not follow the normal pattern of a young officer coming in and maybe forced to a post and going on. Where were you going to go?*

SELIGMANN: I didn't know until the very end of the course. One of my colleagues at the language school was also a fellow language-school student from the army, Stan Carpenter, who unfortunately died fairly young quite a few years ago. It turned out there were two openings for us: one is as a political officer in the Embassy, and the other is as the political officer at the Consulate General in Kobe-Osaka, the only hyphenated post at the time or as far as I know, at any time. It was sort of luck of the draw - Stan landed up

in Tokyo and I ended up in Kobe-Osaka. For my purposes one assignment was as good as the other; they were both good jobs.

*Q: Well, you were in Kobe-Osaka from 1956 to when?*

SELIGMANN: Until January 1959.

*Q: What was when you went there, you say your job was political officer.*

SELIGMANN: Yes. We still had the luxury of such a position. We had offices in both cities; that is why the name of the post was hyphenated. When I arrived, we were on the verge of moving into a newly built building in Kobe and had just moved in o a new office building in Osaka, then perhaps the finest, but now one of the oldest - we moved out of it since. I spent more time in my office in Osaka than in Kobe, where I had a small office in the Consul General's suite. As an amusing aside, CIA decided to open a small suite of offices in the new Kobe building, down the corridor from me and put up a sign, "Political Section." It caused me no real problems, even though ostensibly it looked like I was the spook and they were the "real" political section - I don't think anyone was really confused.

Both Osaka and Kobe were fascinating cities whose relative importance to Japan as a whole was far greater than, say, ten years later. The headquarters of many of Japan's largest companies - all the major trading companies, major textile companies, pharmaceutical firms, etc., were in Osaka, and Kobe was still the nation's major port. It was a tremendous opportunity for a junior officer for two reasons. First, in part as a carryover from the occupation, and in part because the Japan-U.S. relationship was only beginning to change from "big brother, little brother" to a more normal partnership, a process that took some years, I had access to just about everybody, a heady experience. Secondly, I could do things that were more difficult to do in Tokyo, where you were forced to deal more with day-to-day requirements, answering the telegrams, etc., and had to clear one's work with at least two vertical layers as well as with other sections. The Embassy would levy requirements from time to time, for example when it prepared a report on elections or attitudes on a particular issue where it incorporated the findings of the consulates, but most of the time I could set my own agenda. So what I was able to do as never before or since was to get out and report in microcosm, often at the grassroots level on developments in the Kansai area, that is Western Japan, that reflected on national trends or foreshadowed national trends to come. I knew from my Washington experience how welcome this sort of reporting was. I had no trouble making appointments with governors and mayors, newspaper editors, leading professors, presidents of major companies and banks, some of whom exercised considerable political influence, etc. By and large my contacts were eager to express their views to an American government representative, and many of them became good friends. I was still pretty junior, but found no difficulty, for example, in having prominent people to our house for dinner - more often than not offering them the novel experience of bringing their wives along.

Apart from a sizable consular workload, the major focus of the consulate's work was

economic - I was essentially a one-man political sideshow. Lew Gleeck, the more senior, somewhat crusty head of the economic section, belonged to the old school that placed high value on guidance to junior officers, and even though he had no responsibilities for my work, was of inestimable help in sharing ideas, introducing me to key business leaders, etc.

*Q. Well in the first place, just to get a little feel, who was the consul general at this time - or were there consul generals?*

SELIGMANN: George Emory. He was newly appointed to the job and - now we are going to get irreverent - made my job easier in a way. George had been in the private sector before he served under George McGhee in the AID mission to Turkey. As I understood it, McGhee had wangled the Kobe-Osaka position for him, and somewhere along the line, somebody told him this was the second most important position in Japan. Now I don't think that would have sat well with the DCM. I know it didn't sit well with the Supervising Consul General, as he was still called in those days, because he was supposed to supervise the consulates and consulates general. But George Emory took it very seriously. He would not move out of his temporary quarters in the new apartment building they built for staff in Kobe until he could find suitable housing. Well, he set his heart on a house owned by Anderson Clayton, one of the big American cotton firms, that were important in the area at that time, a lovely house that ironically much later became the residence of the consul general. It was supposed to become his residence when the incumbent, who expected to be transferred back to Texas, went on leave. He came back, however, so Emory did not get the house. Instead, he combined two of the tiny apartments into one and then complained that he couldn't entertain because he didn't have appropriate quarters. That left Lew Gleeck and myself to do most of the entertaining. Emory didn't move around much. He would make a grand tour and pay calls on the governors of the 13 prefectures in the consular district, but steered away from substance.

*Q: Just to give a person a feel about this, take a day. You start out in the morning; what are you up to? What did you do?*

SELIGMANN: I started off by reading a number of newspapers at home or, if I was headed for Osaka, on the train. One thing I learned early in the game, however, was that while the papers were useful to develop leads, there was generally a story behind the story. For one thing, they tended to treat developments the same way, partly because of the press-club complex, whereby reporters assigned to cover a particular political party, major organization, government office, or the like generally consulted with each other on how they would play a story. Another approach was periodically to check in with contacts who had proved valuable to myself or my predecessors in the past. Often I set out not knowing just what it was I was after, but landed up stumbling on worthwhile information or part of what I could turn into a larger report, e.g., attitudes of the business community toward the coming elections. A major reporting vehicle, well-received in the Embassy and Washington was a monthly composite despatch, in which I devoted a page or two to about a dozen different topics. Occasionally, but not as often as I had supposed, I would be asked to send reports to the Embassy for incorporation into larger reporting pieces - to which the consulate contributions might be attached. In much of this, a good

model was my predecessor, once or twice removed, Dave Osborn.

I had the help of a senior local employee, Mr. Oishi, who had been in the job for some years and had especially good contacts with the local Japanese security agencies - so good that I wondered sometimes whether I might be at risk of unwittingly serving two sets of consumers. Partly with that thought in mind, I broke with the custom of some of my predecessors and preferred to conduct interviews on my own in the absence of a situation that called for taking him along, e.g., if my interlocutor had been his long-standing contact. My philosophy was that my language ability was far from perfect, but even if I missed one-quarter of what I was being told - not necessarily the norm - when I talked to a Japanese contact tête-à-tête in Japanese, he was likely to speak far more frankly and tell me twice as much than he would have otherwise. When I went on extended field trips in the consular district, which I tried to do perhaps three times a year, I would go on my own, which probably hurt the feelings of Mr. Oishi and put more strain on myself, but in the end paid off both in terms of information gathering and representation of the U. S. On the other hand, he was extremely helpful in setting up appointments, and based on previous experience, suggesting people to see.

*Q: What were you looking at particularly at this point?*

SELIGMANN: Just about all political trends. This was the height of the Cold War and there was great interest in left-wing movements, and, in the light of Japan's history, the right wing as well. I was amazed at how open a discussion you could have with even the more extreme members of other left-wing groups, including some of the trade unions and the principal political opposition, especially strong in the large cities, the Socialist Party. Much of our coverage of right-wing movements, which were noisy but not all that influential, was through Japanese sources, especially the PSIA (Public Safety Investigation Agency). Coverage of the Liberal Democratic Party, which has dominated Japanese politics from about that time on, was no problem and helped provide insights on attitudes toward the performance of the administration in Tokyo, factional maneuvering, and the like. It was also a good chance to get to know some of the up-and-coming politicians, a number of whom became prominent in later years. To give one example, Masa Nakayama, a Lower House member from Osaka who became Japan's first woman cabinet minister, invited us over to meet her son, a pediatrician and Osaka prefectural assemblyman. We became good friends and our families went on weekend excursions together. Subsequently he took over his mother's seat in the Diet and he rose to be Foreign Minister.

The business community at that time was far more active in politics than it is today, and certain of its leaders were regarded as the pointmen, so to speak, in exerting political leverage; they were delighted to discuss politics and some of my best reporting derived from conversations with persons such as the presidents of some of the trading companies and textile companies, ranking officials of the three major economic organizations, etc. Elections were always a focus of interest. I would generally prepare a district-by-district analysis, to the extent possible based on field trips, replete with predictions, that fed into the Embassy's composite reporting. This was a luxury that other constituent posts lacking

a political officer could not often afford, whereas Embassy officers in turn could not always get away from their desks as much as they would have liked.

I was also able to report in depth on sociopolitical issues such as the status of the burakumin (the current euphemism is dowa but still outcaste) community, especially significant in the Kansai area - hard to imagine today, but tens of thousands of this minority group of Japanese, subject to economic and social discrimination, lived in segregated areas of Kobe, Osaka and Kyoto, without paved streets or sewers, but nonetheless wielded some political clout. Another phenomenon we reported on well before it came to national, let alone international attention, was the rapid growth of Sokagakkai, a Buddhist sect with great appeal to the growing rootless urban migrants from the countryside. Sokagakkai proselytized with methods bordering on illegal coercion, e.g., boycotts of small shopkeepers who did not join, heavy-handed door-to-door visits, ostracizing of non-member schoolchildren and so forth. Out of nowhere it started to hold rallies in Osaka drawing tens of thousands of well-disciplined members with arm-banded marshals, marching youth groups and the like - all reminiscent in the minds of observers of the early Nazi Party. Then in 1956 it ran three candidates in the national Upper House elections, including a popular baseball pitcher, and to everyone's surprise, all three were elected. This show of well-organized mobilization and discipline worried political observers.

*Q: Yes, I was wondering whether we were, I think normally American professionals feel begin to feel disquieted when you have people on sort of religious grounds because it tends towards fanaticism and so forth.*

SELIGMANN: That's right, so we were very much interested. We covered that in considerable detail but I held my fire in judging Sokagakkai's political intentions: its pronouncements were too amorphous and probing with other political observers did not add much. Some time later, Jerry Schecter, a friend who was a stringer for Time magazine - subsequently, Time Bureau Chief in Moscow - said, "Hey what about Sokagakkai?" I gave him some leads for covering it, and we traded some of our information. If I remember correctly the article he produced helped bring the group to public attention in the United States. Much has changed over the years, but at the time it was a little scary, because in the next election in 1959 they ran six candidates and elected all six. They had built their strength up to where it is today with about 50 members in the lower house [in 2001 down to 32], and it has become an essential coalition partner of the LDP. For some years, the political party has operated as a separate entity, the Komeito or Clean Government Party, albeit with the same religious Sokagakkai base. They no longer have their big rallies; they have dropped their coercion tactics; their policies remain amorphous with no indication of extremism. That was the kind of thing we could report on that was not so easy to do working out of the Embassy.

*Q: This, of course, is the great advantage to consulates which is often lost in an embassy because people tended to get stuck with visitors, reports, the whole thing, and they don't get out.*

SELIGMANN: I remember that when Winston Lord was assigned as a junior consular officer, I believe to Kuala Lumpur, he had just resigned from the Department on the grounds that his talents would be wasted. I got to know him when we were working in the same office in the Defense Department shortly after that and told him, "You know, you made a mistake: that is the kind of place where if you want to do something, you just do it and you can make a mark for yourself - you will never have that sort of chance again." Of course, he didn't make a mistake. He did very well.

*Q: Did you have problems dealing with this religious group? Often they don't take kindly to foreigners. Was there xenophobic...*

SELIGMANN: I didn't meet with them directly. I relied mostly on government officials, newspaper reporters, and politicians who were observing them. Later on I dealt with them. Jumping ahead, but before we forget, their leader at the time was Daisaku Ikeda, a charismatic figure who is still the head of their international bureau (deposed as leader of the Sokagakkai proper after he became involved in a number of scandals, both monetary and sex. He established a reputation later on moving around the world, sponsoring major conferences, et al. He published a book on his dialogues with Arnold Toynbee. When I was back with the Embassy and we were fighting to get the revised Security Treaty ratified...

*Q: This is 1960?*

SELIGMANN: 1960-61. The question was the LDP being put in the position of having to ram this through the Diet unilaterally, with all of the opposition parties refusing to participate in the proceedings. That wasn't a good picture to present to the world for the U.S. or Japan. It turned out to be a pretty futile mission, but I made an appointment with Ikeda and tried to persuade him to have Sokagakkai at least abstain. In the end they didn't, but we made the effort.

*Q: What about the communists? Could you talk to the communists?*

SELIGMANN: I imagine it would have been easy to do so, that is they would have been willing to talk to me. But for the same reasons prevailing in many other parts of the world, our policy at the time to have no contacts with the Communist Party or its more blatant front organizations, e.g., the Sino-Japanese Friendship Association, the Soviet-Japanese Friendship Association, Gensuikyo (the anti-Atomic Bomb Association), etc. I thought this was well advised: we did not want to be manipulated by Communist propaganda and wished to avoid giving the wrong impression to others, especially the more moderate left. This was the height of the Cold War with large-scale financing of leftist front groups coming from the USSR and China, and while it runs counter to my basic conviction we should keep an open door for dialogue with just about anyone, it would have been the wrong thing to do. Later on in the embassy, I talked to communists when they came to present petitions. As is so often the case, probably around the world, they mostly turned out to be nice affable people, but we didn't get anywhere convincing each other, and you landed up accepting the petition with a minimum of argument, in a fairly cynical ritual.

*Q: Were we looking at the position of Koreans in the society at that point?*

SELIGMANN: Yes. That is a good question. The Korean community was split down the middle, and the vast majority belonged to Chosen Soren, which was the North Korea affiliated organization of the Korean community.

*Q: Why would that be?*

SELIGMANN: Well, they were radicalized, which was easy to do because of the discrimination against Koreans within Japanese society and the way the Japanese had treated them during the war, when many Koreans were brought to Japan as forced labor in factories and mines, often in appalling conditions. Many Koreans were repatriated to Korea after the war, but many were not. They had put down roots in Japan, but they remained politically radical. Yes, we reported regularly on Korean organizations and political activity, relying mostly on the Public Safety Investigation Agency. CIA, you know, often goes after the same information, as I discovered down there and in the embassy. CIA may well have traded information with Japanese intelligence agencies or collaborated with them in other respects - I just don't know - but for the sort of information I wanted, they were very open and it was very easy. I often felt over the years that I could get for free something that...

*Q: Well, one of the themes that comes through here from time to time with these interviews is that you are getting information for free, but often if CIA is paying for it, it has greater force when it is used with the powers that be, the decision makers back in Washington s because gee, we paid for it you know. So, I mean this must be better, when actually paying for there is a taint.*

SELIGMANN: Yes. I think sometimes the other way: if someone tells one of our officers something and it is clearly sourced and derives from a well-identified conversation, maybe that is more credible. It can cut both ways. Of course the funny feeling I sometimes had was, "Are they giving this to me because they are paying for it?"

*Q: Well, how about contacts within I guess it is University of Kobe, University of Osaka, in other words at the university level? Was this pretty much USIA was doing this?*

SELIGMANN: They were doing a lot of it, but there were professors with whom I would meet periodically, especially at Kyoto University which was the number two university in Japan after Tokyo University and had some prominent professors of international law interested in foreign relations, security issues, and what was going on in the intellectual movement in general. One Kyoto University professor I saw often, Masamichi Inoki, became one of Japan's foremost security experts for many years heading up the government financed Research Institute of Peace and Security in Tokyo. I can't say, however, that I was deep into the academic community.

*Q: Did you find the Japanese I mean at this point very much interested in what was going*

*on in the United States or elsewhere? Was this, I mean were we finding out a lot more about them than they were interested in finding out about us?*

SELIGMANN: Oh they were much interested in everything that was going on in our country. USIA, which then had an extensive network of branches and cultural centers throughout Japan, went about disseminating information in a planned, methodical way, but you could not help but be a source of information about developments in the United States that entered into countless conversations - and we also played our part in the selection of nominees for leader grants, and in making suggestions for the programs of those who were contacts of the Political Section. I had mentioned the business community, and here I have always felt and feel today that even though Japan's business leaders are in constant touch with American business leaders, both individually and through countless organizations, we are a bit delinquent in not cultivating top business leadership. Lew Gleeck, who was a model in this regard, and I probably could not do all of what we were doing then at the same level today. Now you have to be at the top to do it, but I think we should be spending more time with business leadership, talking to them about their attitudes, not just on business and economics but on politics.

*Q: One always hears about the Japanese bureaucracy is a unique experience in decision making and all that, but in your type of work, you really didn't come across it did you?*

SELIGMANN: No. Back in the Embassy later on, yes, but I wasn't negotiating anything down there. After all, representation, reporting, and negotiation are the essence of your job. In Kobe-Osaka I was engaged in representation to a considerable extent, and reporting to a very large extent., but not much negotiation. To the extent we had anything to do with negotiation it would probably have been the responsibility of economic officers supporting our negotiation of the first of many trade issues to come.

*Q: Did we have much in the way of military in your particular area?*

SELIGMANN: No. There was a little bit, and it pretty much closed down while I was there. The major installation that remained in our consular district was the Marine Air Base at Iwakuni. I didn't have much to do with them and it presented no major problem of the sort that gradually built up around some of our bases. The commissary near Osaka closed down so we placed periodic orders with the Embassy commissary, principally for liquor, and did most of our shopping locally - in a pinch you could always place an order for commissary goods with the local black market that would be filled promptly.

*Q: Well it was sort of a golden time.*

SELIGMANN: It was. Professionally, it was fulfilling and I learned a great deal; it was a wonderful place to raise children; travel was easy and affordable; and friends were easy to make.

*Q: I thought we might stop at this point and pick it up the next time in 1959 you left Kobe-Osaka, whither?*

SELIGMANN: To the embassy in Tokyo.

*Q: All right, why don't we pick it up in 1959 when you go up to the embassy.*

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*Today is February 22, 2000. Now you were in Tokyo from 1959 to when?*

SELIGMANN: 1962.

*Q: So when you went up there, what was your job?*

SELIGMANN: I was a political officer. It was a large embassy with a large political section. My specific task was to cover the opposition parties, especially the Socialist Party. By the way, there is a tale on why I went there in the beginning of 1959, not the end of 1958. I had a telephone call directly from Tokyo from Outerbridge Horsey sometime in the early fall of 1958 telling me to pack my bags and say my farewells, inasmuch as my orders were on the way and I should be in a position to get up to Tokyo without delay after they arrived. So I did what I was told. I didn't literally pack the bags, but I said all my farewells, had all my farewell parties. And then personnel in Washington dug in. They were getting angry with Ambassador MacArthur for running his own personnel shop without going through Washington channels and decided to show their pique by putting my assignment on hold. So it was a bit embarrassing, having said all my farewells to stay in place for another three or four months.

*Q: Well, when you got up there, MacArthur was the Ambassador.*

SELIGMANN: Yes.

*Q: This is Douglas MacArthur II. Can you describe your impression, I mean you were fairly junior, but how he ran the embassy and the embassy itself, I mean having come from a relatively small dukedom to come up to the kingdom.*

SELIGMANN: I suspect you asked that question with malice aforethought because there are so many MacArthur tales. It depended who you were. If you were "in," you could do no wrong. If you were "out," you couldn't do any good. The trail was littered with the bones of fine honorable officers who he somehow decided were out, not in. It was very rough on them. I was fortunate; I was in. I think there was a geographical constraint that bothered people. We worked in a wonderful old chancery, one of the first in the world we built as a chancery. It had large beautiful paneled rooms, with bathrooms shared with the office next door, but it could only accommodate a core staff, mostly the political and economic sections, and a few attaches; the rest were packed into an annex a couple of blocks away. MacArthur was very demanding, autocratic in the sense that he tended to preempt section heads and dictate the day's doings at the beginning of the day: I want a telegram on this, I want a telegram on that. He wasn't a model for me, but he could also be very thoughtful and kind.

*Q: Could you give an example?*

SELIGMANN: Of kindness?

*Q: Yes.*

SELIGMANN: Sure. My wife's father was terminally ill and she got a phone call that it was time to fly home to see him. It happened to be the same day that MacArthur was leaving for Washington to sign the new security treaty. He took time out to telephone me to ask whether we had enough money - of course you didn't have compassionate leave in those days. That was one of many instances. He showered praise if he liked what you did, but if it he didn't he could excoriate you, too often in front of others.

*Q: How about Mrs. MacArthur?*

SELIGMANN: Wahwee, the Veep's daughter, Vice President Barkley's daughter. Very similar. She scared many embassy wives to death, especially at a time when wives were still rated in efficiency reports and the Service expected to get two for the price of one, but she didn't scare my wife or me. We were frequently invited to the residence and treated well - no problems. She too could be thoughtful. For instance, at a reception if you were working the door, greeting guests and introducing them to the ambassador, you didn't get much time to enjoy the reception. Wahwee always saw to it that there were drinks and hors d'oeuvres placed behind the door for the officers there, small things. Once she got the wife of a newly arrived officer mixed up with someone she recalled being a Georgetown neighbor and invited her over for coffee. The wife in question had no idea why she was being singled out, but when she arrived, and Wahwee soon discovered her mistake, she invited her in and treated her graciously, making her feel at home. Of course, I could tell tales of an opposite nature, but I am sure you have heard many.

*Q: Well now, what was the position, you were dealing with the left. What constituted the left that you were dealing with during this time starting in 1959?*

SELIGMANN: The core was the Socialist Party, formed from a merger in 1955 of the Left Socialist Party and the Right Socialist Party, but for all practical purposes still badly divided. It was the major opposition party holding a little over one-third of the Diet seats. The left wing relied for votes principally on Sohyo, the trade-union federation, that embraced public service workers at both the national and local levels; it also found support from left-wing intellectuals in and out of the universities. A small, extreme leftist fringe was virtually indistinguishable from the communists. The right wing drew heavily on private-sector union support with its ideology articulated by a few more moderate intellectuals who saw themselves as part of the Socialist International movement. In addition, you had the Communist Party, which at that time only had one or two seats in each house of the Diet, but which was strongly represented in key positions in a wide variety of front organizations that it skillfully manipulated. The focus of our efforts in the embassy was renegotiation of the security treaty which was opposed, often violently, by

the left, with well-documented outside support from mainland China and the Soviet Union. My task was to report on what they were up to, and in so-doing, I found I had pretty easy access to key Socialist Party officials, including both Diet members and functionaries. My contacts with the Communists and representatives of their front organizations were pretty much limited to receiving petitions, a chore that came with the job. I was a great believer in receiving petitions as a way of letting off steam on the part of demonstrators, a process that usually involved preliminary negotiation as to how many petitioners would be permitted to enter the Embassy. They usually turned out to be amiable enough, and once in a while you could sense that one or more members of a delegation were receptive enough to warrant the effort to make a substantive point or two, but for the most part we found little to be gained from extensive dialogue and the petitioners did not press hard for their part. Ambassador MacArthur did not always agree. I'm digressing a bit, but it just reminds me of a time when I had accepted a petition from a group of Communist Party leaders, but MacArthur was so angered at the content, he instructed me to return it. I had never returned a petition before and was unaware of precedent on how one went about it. I decided the best thing was to call in a trustworthy embassy driver, to whom I gave explicit instructions to take the petition to party headquarters, ring the bell, and if nobody was there, slip it through the door. I don't know if they ever realized they got their petition returned or not, and I didn't care.

Going back to the Socialists, however, I got to know many of their Diet members with whom I would have lunch or who accepted dinner invitations to my house. This included a few on the extreme left who advocated nationalization of all major segments of the economy, the banks, the mines what have you, and promoted policies hard to distinguish from communism. Arguing with them never convinced anyone, but it gave us an idea as to their thinking and kept conversational doors open. Many moderate right-wing Socialists, on the other hand, were not much different in their thinking from the far right of the party which was like the Labor Party in Britain or the SPD in Germany.

*Q: Were we doing anything to convince them, I think of contacts with the American labor movement, visitors grants to the United States, you know, trying to show these people how one can deal with sort of the left?*

SELIGMANN: Very much so. The labor attaché and assistant attache, a language officer, worked closely with union leaders, mostly from the private sector, sometimes coordinating their efforts with the consulates, and sent a good many officials to the United States at the same time that American labor leaders were sponsored in Japan for programs worked out in conjunction with our cultural centers. Similarly, we made a special effort in our leader-grant program to reach the moderate left at both a national and local level, not only focusing on politicians, but especially on university professors and journalists. Many accepted, including some who later became leaders of the Socialist Party or prominent in their fields. These grants didn't always pay off, but they usually did. I am a great believer in grants. This runs through my post-foreign-service life as well. When you asked what I was doing, one of the reasons that I talked about efforts to maintain contacts with the left was that I was outraged when Reischauer, even before he was named ambassador, published an article in Foreign Affairs that received a great deal

of publicity, entitled "Broken Dialogue," in which he harshly criticized the embassy for not maintaining contact with the left wing. I took this kind of personally. To his credit, after he was named ambassador by Kennedy, and the Embassy files were opened to him, he acknowledged that this was not the case, and watered down some of his assertions in the Japanese translation of the article. As noted earlier, dialogue is one thing, convincing your interlocutors is another. In the end, Reischauer extended his dialogue no further than we had, even though he had an improved image compared with his predecessor, who was loath to hear out the other side.

*Q: Well how did you view the socialists, I mean from your perspective? Did you think that we had become so connected to the LDP that the socialists were almost beyond the pale, and it was hard for us to envisage a socialist government or not. I am talking about the embassy as a whole from your perspective at that time.*

SELIGMANN: There were certainly those who felt that way, and we clashed a bit on it. I felt the left wing of the party was beyond the pale but they were so impractical that they were never going to form a government nor would the majority of the Japanese people ever permit this to happen. On the other hand, there were right-wing socialists who saw themselves as a moderate, constructive opposition. Some were in it for career advancement so to speak. To give one example, Eki Sone was a career diplomat, who after the war was at odds with Yoshida, long-time Prime Minister, whom he personally disliked. Sone, wealthy with an aristocratic bearing, might well have risen to become Foreign Minister, but he threw his lot in with the Right Socialist Party, becoming its Secretary General. I remember one reporting telegram in which I said something about Sone - I don't remember the specifics. Bill Leonhart, who was DCM, called me in to his office and disagreed with what I had written, saying, "Sone is just a communist." When I replied to the effect that that was ridiculous, he got red in the face, and told me to get out of the office and not to come back. I was shook up but that too passed, and we remained friends. He felt strongly that the socialists were no better than communists. Or to give another example, at the height of the security treaty fracas, which ran pretty much from 1959 through 1961, Asanuma, who was Secretary General, later Chairman of the Socialist Party and had been head of the Right Socialist Party, made a trip to Beijing (Peking), in the course of which he signed a joint communiqué with the Chinese containing the requisite language of the day stating that American imperialism was the common enemy of China and Japan. Not only that, but when he got off the plane back in Tokyo, he wore a Mao cap. Now you have to understand that Asanuma was quite popular with a reputation for being a hearty, bluff, "man of the people," but not much of an intellectual: he led a simple life, lived in a small apartment, walked his dog in the morning himself, etc. Shortly after he came back from China, he asked to meet the ambassador together with his leading associates both right- and left-wing.. First, the ambassador said he wouldn't see them; then he changed his mind and said he would. He quickly reversed himself again, but they were on the way. I was the intermediary for conveying all this through the party's International Bureau, while sitting in the conference room around the table waiting for the ambassador to enter. When the party arrived at the gate with the press corps waiting, MacArthur did not have much choice.

Asanuma and his delegation of about a six representatives were ushered into the conference room where they were kept waiting for about ten minutes. When the ambassador came in, Asanuma started to greet him, but instead of letting him have his say, before he could get a sentence out MacArthur seated himself at the head of the table and asked, "Mr. Asanuma, when you were in China, did you say that American imperialism is the common enemy of Japan and China?" Asanuma started to reply two or three times, but each time the Ambassador cut in, "Did you or did you not say that American imperialism is the common enemy?" And each time his voice rose to a greater crescendo. I wanted to crawl under the table, as I believe did the one or two other Embassy officers who were present; it was embarrassing, and the meeting broke up in a total shambles without Asanuma ever getting in his two cents. Needless to say, this was all reported in the press without the gory details, but the gory details soon got around town.

*Q: What was the purpose of this meeting? Why did they want to see...*

SELIGMANN: Well, pretty much the same reason you deliver petitions: you take a stand and you want to show your supporters you are doing something. I don't think it was much more than his desire to go back and say, "I told the ambassador what our position was." To my way of thinking that is sounder than not being able to meet him at all and have him say, "He wouldn't even talk to me." To be sure there are some instances where you have to do that - nothing is black and white - but the approach here was counterproductive. (One unpleasant aftermath was that a year and half later Asanuma was stabbed to death on live TV at a political rally by a 17-year old fanatical ultra-rightist.)

*Q: Did this cut off lines of communication after that?*

SELIGMANN: No. I could never figure out exactly what was going on, but my contacts at a working level with the leading party bureaucrats in the international and policy bureaus, who represented both wings of the party, remained intact and they fed me all sorts of good information, including internal party documents. Perhaps it was a matter of schisms within the party or a desire to keep lines of communication open, hedging against the future.

*Q: You were saying if there was an article in the paper...*

SELIGMANN: Often the press would provide leads that needed to be pursued - in any event articles often were the source for demands from on high for a reporting message. I would telephone or make an appointment to see one of my party contacts, who more often than not would fill me in on details, give me some of the background, and frequently help me sort out what was real and what was window dressing. If policy pronouncements or other documents were involved, I would often be given copies, sometimes stamped "Confidential." I recall one internal JSP document that must exist in the archives somewhere that spelled out prefecture-by-prefecture the organization of the anti-security- treaty movement, the names of the organizations within each prefecture which belonged to the umbrella organization, and the names of the officers of each of

them, asterisking those who belonged to the Communist Party.

*Q: Did you ever feel that you were being used in the intra-party business to say sort of discredit...*

SELIGMANN: Absolutely. I had that feeling all the time: that the more moderate socialists would like to see the left-wing ideologues fall on their face. And yet, the left-wingers would see me too. I didn't get to close to the few whom I knew to be communist party members, but I don't think I was ever turned down if I asked to talk to an official.

*Q: Was there a tie into the socialists of Europe? I mean this was, we think of Scandinavia and there was always the Labor movement. The socialist movement in Europe has always been quite strong, very legitimate. Right now it dominates Europe, but at that time what was the tie?*

SELIGMANN: As I mentioned earlier, representatives of the JSP right wing attended the meetings of the Socialist International, where they met with the European socialists, which was salutary. It reinforced, gave courage to the moderates. From the perspective of other world socialists, however, Japan was probably a side show to their own battles with the extreme left at home.

*Q: Well, during this 1959-1962 period, as you mentioned it was dominated by the security treaty debate and all that. Could you explain what the security treaty was and let's talk about how it developed from your perspective.*

SELIGMANN: The original security treaty was negotiated in the eyes of many historians, I think rightly, as the price for the peace treaty with Japan, which went into effect in 1952. The whole process was hastened by the Korean War and the need to establish Japan as an ally and gain its long-term cooperation, in consideration of U.S. security interests in Asia. The original security treaty called for Japan to provide the U.S. with bases in Japan, and gave us pretty much carte blanche in terms of freedom of action within Japan, what you might call extra-territorial jurisdiction rights over our military personnel,, as well as freedom to use our bases and forces in Japan as we wished in the event of contingencies outside Japan. We had a large presence at that time both geographically, especially relative to the amount of arable or usable land in Japan, and numbers - about 100,000 servicemen. It was seen as a one-sided treaty, notwithstanding that it brought Japan under the U.S. security umbrella; it even provided that the U.S. could intervene to maintain internal order in Japan. Demands for the treaty's revision to make it more consonant with relations with a sovereign nation began to gather steam among Japan's conservative leadership by the mid-1950s. So, the United States was foresighted in agreeing at a policy level in Washington that it would be a mistake to wait for pressure to build up to abolish the security treaty, in which case we might end up without any treaty. There was a choice whether to revise the treaty or negotiate a new one - we probably would have settled for either course - but by 1958 we agreed with the Japanese Government's preference to negotiate a new treaty, a process that got underway toward the end of that year. That said, there was still a deep course of pacifism running in

Japanese waters, a carryover from the end of the war, reinforced by what we had preached during the occupation and by the new constitution, which renounced war as an instrument of foreign policy, I was not involved in the day-to-day negotiation of the treaty, although we in the internal political branch were much aware of it. The political-military branch worked on the negotiation with the ambassador, Bob Fearey being a key player. Essentially, we worked out a treaty that gave us what we needed: Japan would still provide bases and facilities for the use of U.S. forces, which we would continue to station in Japan, in return for which the United States undertook the obligation to come to the defense of Japan if attacked. While Japan was obliged to defend against an attack on U.S. forces in Japan, in deference to the Japanese constitution, there was no reciprocal provision for Japan to come to the defense of the United States if the latter were attacked. We also agreed to consult with Japan before using our bases in Japan for military action outside Japan and before making major changes in our deployments to Japan. The question of nuclear weapons was fudged, especially in regard to their possible presence aboard 7th Fleet vessels, as we fell back on our policy “neither to confirm nor deny.” Okinawa, where we retained administrative rights, was not covered by the treaty, so we retained more freedom of action there. You had the first stirrings of the movement to return Okinawa but it wasn't a major movement at that time.

Intellectuals, the left wing in general, and an unsympathetic press understood what we were doing all right, but they felt that the new treaty was tying Japan into a long-term military alliance with the United States that ran counter to the “peace constitution,” and risked dragging Japan into war should the Cold War with its Soviet or Chinese neighbors turn hot. Many of them sincerely felt that a neutral Japan could survive as the Switzerland of Asia, and they would rather throw themselves on the mercy of the world if you will. They did not represent the majority of the Japanese people, but it was a strong voice. The Soviet Union and Communist China in turn - we never said PRC in those days, and the language I use here is pretty much the language used at the time -

*Q: That's good. It captures the flavor.*

SELIGMANN: ...felt that this was indeed checking their ambitions, and went all out to support a mass movement in Japan, not just a political-party movement, to oppose the revision of the security treaty. We had considerable intelligence on the details of outside financing of the opposition movement, and it was not too hard to calculate the rough cost of mass demonstrations that repeatedly brought 200-300 or more busloads of demonstrators, many from remote parts of Japan, to Tokyo with lunch money; and stipends to enjoy the town a bit after a demonstration. So the lines were drawn. Added to the picture was the public image of the prime minister, Kishi Nobusuke, who had been a member of Tojo's cabinet and had served time in Sugamo prison as a class A war criminal. Kishi had been a career bureaucrat, a brilliant one, and was doubtless fully committed to democratic principles as being in Japan's postwar interest, but he left a bad taste with much of the public, including many LDP leaders. (Senior career bureaucrats played an important roles in postwar Japan, but just as I never met a former Nazi in Germany, I never met a former pro-militarist mainstream Japanese leader.) Kishi symbolized to many Japanese the military-zaibatsu-bureaucratic clique that had led Japan

down the path to war, which did not make him the ideal figure to negotiate the new treaty. It was difficult to sort out opposition to the treaty per se from opposition to Kishi as a person. What was clear, but not to the American people, as this thing built up to a crescendo, was that there was little anti-American feeling in it. I could have debates, anywhere from taxi drivers on up, the latter being as good as New York taxi drivers in turning around to argue...

*Q: In that traffic and doing it left handed too.*

SELIGMANN: ...but the tone was never anti-American. The demonstrations built up. They took a violent turn at times. They were mounted principally in Tokyo but outside Tokyo as well, involving in all hundreds of thousands of people.

*Q Were you finding the normal pattern: universities leading the way and all that?*

SELIGMANN: There was a structured Anti-Security-Treaty movement with branches throughout the country. The mass of participants came from the left-wing labor unions, the Sohyo unions, including the huge railway workers union, postal workers union, and teachers union with roughly 500,000 members each, as well as from a variety of front organizations. Leadership of the movement was largely political, Communist and Socialist, with the active participation of some left-wing intellectuals, including professors. Left-wing student organizations participated, but the universities themselves were not in the forefront. Through manipulation from the top, large masses of demonstrators were turned out on the streets, but most of them were relatively passive - the rank and file of teachers, for example, marched along dangling briefcases and chatting with one another, methodically echoing the slogans called out by the leaders over bull horns. A friend of mine once described wartime Japan as a nation of watchdogs, who did as they were told, and the mass of demonstrators impressed me as falling into this category - basically nice people who were not that politicized. The student movement was split, but the majority were extremists who could be relied on for wholehearted participation.

*Q: Could you talk a little about it because everyone I recall at the time was quite worried about Zengakuren being sort of maybe this is the way Japan will go.*

SELIGMANN: I don't think we ever felt this was the way Japan would go. Not all students were members of Zengakuren, and not more than a few thousand were in the forefront, snake-dancing and leading the demonstrators in the chant, "Ampo hantai" ("Down with the security treaty.")

*Q: I remember with the headbands.*

SELIGMANN: The headband signified your seriousness of purpose - a samurai put on a headband when girding for battle (or suicide). Indeed, they wore headbands. One of my good colleagues at the foreign ministry who is still active - he is ambassador to Moscow right now - when he was head of the security division of the American Affairs Bureau,

responsible for implementing the Security Treaty, used to joke, "You know, I was out there in the forefront demonstrating against the embassy." So, it didn't mean all these people were die-hard leftists any more than the radicals of the 1960s in the United States are all radicals today. A year or two later, it was said that large company recruiters on campus held nothing against student movement leaders, but to the contrary, credited them with showing initiative. The demonstrations at the time were threatening, however, culminating in the so-called Hagerty incident.

*Q. Did you have a piece of that action?*

SELIGMANN: In that I had the only television set on the floor and Whawee MacArthur, concerned about her husband's safety, was in my office to keep informed. What had happened was that President Eisenhower, on a trip that was to bring him to Moscow, Tokyo and Seoul, had already been forced to cancel the visit to Moscow when Gary Powers' U-2 was shot down. He still planned to come to Japan, a visit that had been arranged months earlier after the security treaty had been signed in Washington in January - security passes in Russian, Japanese and Korea had already been issued, with the Russian blacked out, and elaborate preparations had been made. James Hagerty, his press secretary, came on ahead as an advance man on June 10, but when he got into the Ambassador's Cadillac after arrival at Haneda Airport and started to drive off, about 2,000 Zengakuren demonstrators broke through the police line, surrounded the car, and started stomping up and down on the hood and roof. That was what we were watching on TV, and, of course, there were plenty of dramatic photos later carried by the press around the world. After a while the police restored order and they drove off to a helicopter that took them into town.

To back up and put the incident in context, it was directly related to Japanese ratification of the Security Treaty. The opposition parties had boycotted Diet debate on the treaty, which Kishi was desperate to have in place by the time of the President's visit. Under the Japanese constitution, if a treaty is approved by the House of Representatives, it automatically becomes law after 30 days, even if the Upper House fails to act. On May 19, exactly 30 days before Eisenhower was due, the Socialists, understanding that the LDP was likely to force a vote on the treaty, physically attempted to block the elderly speaker from reaching the dais to open the session. Toward midnight, a flying wedge of the more martially talented LDP members, however, managed to get him to his chair, whereupon in about a thirty-second action he convened the session and called a recess until the next morning. In the interim, police were called in to restore order, and the Socialists departed.

What just about nobody anticipated was that the Speaker, safe in his chair, immediately opened the next session and in about a minute called a vote on the treaty, which was approved unanimously by a voice vote of the LDP in the absence of the opposition. By happenstance, I had turned the radio on after coming home from a party and listened to all this as it unfolded. I resisted my first impulse immediately to call the Ambassador, and waited for a quick recap to make sure I had heard what I thought I had, and then woke up MacArthur to pass on the news.

*Q: Well was there discomfort at the embassy by the fact...*

SELIGMANN: We didn't expect that...

*Q: This had been sort of rammed through. I mean it sort of tainted the whole thing.*

SELIGMANN: It did. We were not too happy about it. In retrospect, you know, it is hard to tell. It set the stage for a potential visit that in the end did not occur, but it was not a parliamentary procedure one would ever favor. On the other hand, the unanswerable question is what would have happened otherwise: had Kishi shown less determination: would the treaty have survived? In the days that followed, the demonstrations grew in intensity, directed at Kishi's use of "tyranny of the majority," a favorite Socialist phrase, as much as at the treaty, and took on the added purpose of blocking the President's visit.

The day after the Hagerty incident, the largest demonstration of the whole period took place. While press figures were usually exaggerated, well over 100,000 persons participated. It was a Saturday and I had driven to the embassy early in the morning, but I wasn't about to try to drive out with a sea of demonstrators massed in front of the closed embassy gate, guarded by maybe a couple of hundred police. About five or six o'clock I decided enough was enough, so I walked out between the cordon of police and the demonstrators. Those in the lead were chanting and snake dancing; I turned to some of them and said in Japanese, "gokurosama deshita, which loosely translated, means, "Sorry for getting in your way." They all burst out laughing. You don't use humor lightly in Japan, but this worked. They turned to me and one of them replied, "kochira koso, - "Oh, no, it's our fault" - which only goes to underscore that there was not a great deal of anti-American feeling in all this.

The question before the house, then, was whether or not the President's visit should proceed. MacArthur came under pressure for not recommending that it be canceled, but took what I believe was the correct position that this was a decision for the Japanese Government to make. Kishi, in turn, procrastinated - I am in a small minority, but I felt he had some reason. In one of the larger demonstrations in late May or early June the daughter of one of the intellectual leaders of the anti-treaty movement had been trampled to death, not in a scuffle, but accidentally by fellow demonstrators, leading to the beginning of what subsequently built up into a torrent of self-reflection on the part of the media as well as more moderate opposition elements. My contacts in the Socialist Party assured me that if the President did come, there would be mass demonstrations, but they would be staged so as not to interfere with the visit! That never had to be put to the test. As the clock wound down, Eisenhower found himself killing time in Manila, when Kishi finally withdrew the invitation and announced his resignation.

*Q: Did you find, you know, one always thinks of the Japanese as with the Chinese being concerned about face and how they appear. To have an American president invited to a country and then particularly for the government but it also reflects on the people to say we can't take care of you. I mean this really sounds pretty awful, and I would think for a*

*sensitive people like the Japanese, this would bother them. Did you find this...*

SELIGMANN: Absolutely. It was the major reason the decision went down to the wire. The Japanese would much rather have had Eisenhower change his plans than to have to be the ones to say we can't guarantee your security.

*Q: Well did this theme play out, continue to play out while you were...*

SELIGMANN: After Kishi resigned, the bubble burst. The establishment of course blamed the extreme left for what had happened, but the left went through a period of introspection. Asahi, the most influential daily and a leader of the anti-treaty movement, ran an unprecedented mea culpa front-page editorial, other elements of the media were self-reflective and many Japanese were thoroughly embarrassed by the outcome. The opposition movement did not dissolve overnight, but it wound down and was never again hyperactive. In this respect, MacArthur deserves his due. The Treaty was in place, whereas a less motivated or less stubborn man might have backed away. As time has passed, the treaty has been accepted not only by the vast majority of Japanese people, but by all the parties that opposed it and all the countries in the region, including China.

*Q: Well it keeps Japan under restraint.*

SELIGMANN: Exactly, from their perspective, but they also see it as a stabilizing element in a historically volatile region.

*Q: You had a feeling that this cancellation, did this, did you see a change in sort of embassy attitude in dealing with the left wing. You know, these S.O.B.s in the left wing kept the president from coming here. I mean I am talking about our officers and all because something like this can develop an attitude.*

SELIGMANN: I didn't see much of that. Those on the scene or following events closely in Washington had a pretty good understanding of the situation with its complexities, although the Ambassador was doubtless bitter. I was scheduled to go on home leave just after the canceled visit, and contrary to my instinct that I would be asked to stay in place for a time, the Ambassador told me to go ahead; as he put it, one time was as bad as another. Going back to your question, while on leave I found that the demonstrations and the cancellation were generally interpreted at home as reflecting widespread anti-American sentiment, and the media, exemplified by an extensive story in Time magazine fed the flames. I found myself in Washington and with friends in New York spending a good bit of time trying to convince people this was not so. By the way, just interposing, we have talked about nothing but the treaty. I helped keep my sanity doing other things during that time.

*Q: Well, what were some of the other things you were particularly concerned with?*

SELIGMANN: The political section was divided into branches so I was not doing external affairs, but I dealt with the American Affairs Bureau in the Foreign Ministry on a

variety of matters. Working with USIS, I was responsible for renegotiating a Fulbright agreement with Japan, which put the program on a more solid, long-term foundation with expanded Japanese government support. This was shortly after ratification of the treaty, but a major unsung accomplishment was the conclusion of an agreement whereby Japan repaid a major portion of the emergency relief it had received from the United States during the Occupation under GARIOA (Government and Relief in Occupied Areas) and the earlier EROA (Emergency Relief in Occupied Areas) programs. For a long time the U. S. had asked for repayment of these costs, which is almost unprecedented - as far as I know, Finland had a reputation for being the only country to repay its pre-WWII debts to the United States, and I do not think any other country did so after the war. To many this seemed like pie in the sky. Maybe we could get something of a token nature but could you really expect repayment when Japan was still getting back on its feet? Phil Trezise, the economic minister, headed the negotiation, and asked me to join his team for political input. We did not have a great deal to go on beyond a non-binding statement by Yoshida as prime minister that Japan intended to repay its obligations. The Japanese side having agreed to enter into negotiations, not unreasonably asked for documentation of the expenditures, but to our embarrassment all Washington could provide were some batches of receipts in a warehouse. In the end we came up with a nice round figure in the neighborhood of one billion dollars, and the Japanese side agreed to repay almost half of that, roughly fifty cents on the dollar. I had some input into a provision the Japanese wanted to set aside \$25 million for educational and cultural exchanges. It took years and years to get Congress, which took the position that the repayments should simply go into the general account, to agree to implement that part. I never dreamt the Japanese would be so forthcoming - the bad taste of the fight over ratification of the security treaty probably had much to do with the outcome - but Phil Trezise deserves tremendous credit for attempting the impossible and succeeding. Otherwise, life went on: there were elections to cover, other chores to be done, numerous visitors, many of them interesting...

*Q: Well, with the visitors, did you find, I mean sometimes when you get to a place like Paris or London, I mean the interest is minimal in what is going on, and maximal in dealing with shopping, night life what have you, tourism. How did you find the visitors coming to Japan at that time?*

SELIGMANN: You had all sorts.. Sometimes if their interests were nocturnal, you'd turn them over to a trusted embassy driver, who knew his way around. When Senator Fulbright came out as he did for an Interparliamentary Union meeting, I was his control officer, having shepherded him on his first visit to Japan while I was in Kobe-Osaka. He was not only serious when it came to substance, but wanted to observe ordinary life. We were doing something or other downtown, when I reminded him that a briefing with the Ambassador was scheduled shortly before noon. He had no love for MacArthur and replied, "I've heard all that before. Is there a good place to eat around here?" When Eleanor Dulles was in town, the political counselor, Coburn Kidd, an old friend of hers, asked me to take her to a typical Japanese restaurant. My wife and I went with her to our favorite yakitori restaurant, a small insider's kind of place, down an alley near Kyobashi, where they took no reservations, and you had to wait on stools outside. She was a grand sport and loved every minute. Eating yakitori has since become a ritual with Jimmy

Carter and more recently George W. Bush (2002) doing the same, but they went to places used to foreigners.

*Q: In 1960 you had a very active campaign of Richard Nixon and John Kennedy. The Far Eastern thing seemed to concentrate on the Quemoy and Matsu islands off the Chinese coast. Did this election during the campaign season at all, did Japan come up at all? I mean was there any concern about one side or the other, how sound they were on Japan, or was it just not really a subject?*

SELIGMANN: I do not really recall. In general there is always a certain amount of nervousness in Japan when we have a presidential election. The establishment is always afraid that just when they have become used to dealing with one set of players they will have to get to know another, and that there might be unforeseen policy changes. As far as Japan entering into the campaign back home, I felt pretty far removed but remember nothing pertinent.

*Q: But I was just wondering, sometimes you have an election campaign and one can get...*

SELIGMANN: Oh yes.

*Q: I mean I was in Korea in the '76 campaign when Carter was talking about withdrawing our ground forces.*

SELIGMANN: I was going to say I was in Japan at that time.

*Q: The Koreans were very nervous.*

SELIGMANN: As were the Japanese.

*Q: But I was wondering whether there was anything comparable to that?*

SELIGMANN: I can't think of anything.

*Q: Which probably speaks to the point that there probably wasn't.*

SELIGMANN: I don't think so. It was a breaking-in period for the treaty. It had just gone into effect. We were feeling our way. New institutions had come into being as a result of the security treaty. You had a new high-level Security Consultative Committee, established in large part to provide a vehicle for prior consultation, which required a first meeting, even with an artificial agenda, to get off the ground. You had the biweekly meetings of the Joint Committee, which administered the SOFA, a new Status of Forces Agreement accompanying the treaty, which quite different from the original SOFA. It provided for Japanese...

*Q: The SOFA being a, do you want to explain what a SOFA is?*

SELIGMANN: It contains the details for working out our military relations on the ground. The "Security Treaty" itself is shorthand for the full title, "Treaty for Mutual Cooperation and Security." It is a short document, much of which talks about economic cooperation - there are only a few paragraphs on security. The Status of Forces Agreement, on the other hand, details what Japanese responsibilities are, what ours are, how they pay certain costs, we pay certain costs. It specifies, for example, that the Japanese will provide facilities for our bases and we will pay all operating costs, including labor costs - that was a provision I had occasion to revisit about 15 years later. The SOFA also covers such matters as jurisdiction over U.S. military involved in crimes. While there remained some restrictions on Japanese authority in such cases, the new SOFA was far more equitable than previous arrangements.

*Q: Well also I rather imagined this being sort of thrashed out before the election before a new administration came in meant that you know you didn't have to worry about political posturing of a new administration early on which often happens.*

SELIGMANN: There was no posturing in regard to a change of policy, but a good deal of what you might call benevolent posturing in the aftermath of the conflict over ratification of the security treaty.. Kennedy, for example, had never met Reischauer before, but was impressed by his Foreign Affairs article, which he had read, and appointed him as Ambassador to Japan. While MacArthur was well thought of by the Japanese establishment, his public image suffered by reason of personality and association with Kishi. Reischauer, on the other hand, was regarded as knowing Japan; spoke Japanese; was married to a Japanese wife; had no trouble listening to others; and had ties to the academic community. In short, he was a totally different personality. I don't think he changed any policies while he was there, and I doubt whether he would have been able to have gotten the new security treaty in, place, but he was probably the right man for the time in that he presented himself as a sympathetic figure interested in broadening dialogue - while we never lost touch with the opposition, he renewed it at a higher level.

*Q: Well the appointment of Reischauer to Japan and John Kenneth Galbraith to India and George Kennan to Yugoslavia was considered, these were sort of major beacons, and this was going to be a new Kennedy administration. Later on the same old political hacks sort of appeared, but these ones stood out, and they were highly touted at the time.*

SELIGMANN: That's right, and Reischauer made a very fine impression, although he scared the Japanese establishment to death. They were not happy. They thought this guy is just going to listen to everything the left wing intellectuals have to say and get carried away. There was in fact something of an educational process. For a while Reischauer kept a chart in his office which showed the LDP's voting strength going down and the Socialist Party's going up, with the lines intersecting some time around 1970, leading him to tell visitors that the socialists would be in power by 1970, which I and my political-section colleagues felt was sheer nonsense.

*Q: Well, how did you find, I mean here you were sort of the point man in the embassy for dealing with the left. How did Reischauer, I mean, when he arrived there, how did you*

*work with him, interact with him?*

SELIGMANN: I never worked all that closely with him on a personal level. He preferred to see people by himself, and relied heavily on some of his former students and a former close friend and academic colleague, Burton Fahs, whom he brought in to head USIA with the title "Cultural Minister," displacing the Economic Minister from his quarters so that he could have the proper ambiance to entertain intellectual leaders. All said and done, while the moderate left now had easy access to the top levels of the Embassy, they were pretty much the same people we had established close relations with at a lower level, and I saw little evidence of broadening our outreach to the more extreme Marxist wing of the opposition, be it intellectuals, politicians, or labor union leaders.

*[Q: This is tape four side one with Al Seligmann.]*

SELIGMANN: One of the more dramatic developments prior to the ratification of the security treaty that I skipped entirely was the split in the socialist party, which resulted in the formation of a separate Democratic Socialist Party (DSP). It had long been rumored that such a development was in the offing, inasmuch as the right wing of the party deplored the use of violence and the idea of boycotting Diet proceedings. When the split occurred, however, it had all the appearances of a spontaneous event. One of my less enjoyable chores was to cover Socialist Party conventions. There is nothing more multifying: Socialist Party functionary friends commented that I was probably one of the few persons inside or outside the party who ever read the policy documents they gave me that were often the focus of convention debate. I had been at this boring annual convention all day long - I believe sometime in 1960 - and went on to a social event in the evening. There had been something in the air, however, which I could not put my finger on, and late evening I decided to return. The only other observers in the balcony besides myself were officers from the German and Israeli embassies, both interested in the socialists. At about two in the morning, Suehiro Nishio, who had the backing of the moderate private-sector trade unions, took to the podium and made his move, announcing that he was resigning from the party. His right-wing colleague Kawakami, who was also a long-time bitter political rival, got up and made an impassioned plea for Nishio to stay in the party for the sake of unity, etc., but the deed was done. Long in the making, the break itself occurred in the height of political passion and was seen by many as premature in the sense that planning was far from complete. It was happenstance that I was on the spot and in a position to fire off a cable that scooped the media reporting back home. Incidentally, there were rumors that the United States had something to do with this development, but if so, I was not privy to what might have been going on. The new Democratic Socialist Party was initially unable to take more than a handful of Socialist Diet members with it, but it gradually grew in strength over the next few elections, and dramatically placed in perspective the unsavory extra-parliamentary tactics of the extremists.

*Q: Well just on a social level, sometimes these conventions, one has the feeling that when the labor party goes down to Blackpool or wherever they go, they can whoop it up at night or something like that. Did you have the equivalent geisha party?*

SELIGMANN: Unfortunately, no. These were terribly dreary affairs. Endless meetings that I was not involved with in the background, and they always had their meetings in a shabby old building which was the martial arts hall.

*Q: Well by the time you left in 1962 I take it you could see a fairly clear line for the next few years anyway of the rocky road to our relations had been taken care of with the new treaty and all.*

SELIGMANN: And by some of the other measures which were taken by Kennedy, with input from Reischauer, which were well timed and had a life span of varying degrees with positive results for U.S.-Japan relations. The first was the establishment of something called the Committee on Trade and Economic Affairs, made up of the key economic cabinet ministers on both sides and chaired by the Secretary of State and Foreign Minister. The first meeting was held in Hakone, a resort not terribly far from Tokyo in late 1961. It was quite a show with the secretaries of State, Treasury, Labor, and Commerce; the Chairman of the President's Council of Economic Advisers; and their Japanese counterparts. This particular institution fell by the boards, or at least was downgraded to a deputy-secretary level at the time of President Kennedy's assassination.

*Q: People were in the air on the way.*

SELIGMANN: Exactly. So they decided they must never again risk having so much of the Cabinet traveling together at the same time. The other institution that was innovative - and I am sure that the ambassador in view of his proclivities and interests had a lot to do with it - was the U.S.-Japan Conference on Cultural and Educational Exchange, CULCON for short, that still meets every other year. Unfortunately, we have never had exactly the same approach to it as the Japanese. We saw it initially as a meeting of eminent leaders in cultural and educational fields of both countries, and our delegation at the first of these meetings which I attended, also at Hakone, included Robert Penn Warren...

*Q: "All the King's Men."*

SELIGMANN: ...Arthur Schlesinger, Aaron Copeland, my mentor, Hugh Borton, by now President of Haverford College - about seven or eight in all. The Japanese side then as now, tended to take a much more bureaucratic approach, giving the lead to the Vice Minister of Education, but it was a fine idea, and has given endorsement to various worthwhile initiatives. Another benchmark development was the visit of Bobby Kennedy, the Attorney General, to Tokyo in 1962. In a sense the Japanese saw it as the proxy fulfillment of the presidential visit that had been canceled, but he also personified the image of vibrant, youthful leadership that his brother was projecting to the world. He was an inspiration to younger Japanese, and inspired some of the younger politicians to adopt PR techniques they had never dreamed of. Up close, Bobby could be cold and demanding, sometimes unrealistic, but this was not what the public saw. Examples I remember were a request to round up some orphans for touch football at the residence, and asking to go ice-skating with workers early in the morning, not exactly a Japanese

custom. Dave Osborn managed his extraordinarily successful visit with great aplomb.

*Q: By this time, by 1962 when you left there, you had been dealing with the Japanese equation, the American-Japanese equation for some time now. Have you seen a maturity on both sides with knowing how to deal with each other because I mean these are two, the bureaucracy, I mean everything is really there are different reflexes within both of these entities. The professionals who are dealing with them, do they know how to deal with it by this time did you think?*

SELIGMANN: Perhaps better than at any time thereafter - or maybe "better" is not the right word, "more comfortably." The relationship was still an intimate one, and the primacy of the United States in importance for Japan was beyond any challenge. That may still be true today, but Japan for many years has been an important player in the foreign relations of just about all of the most important nations of the world.

*Q: Were we trying, maybe it wasn't your job, I mean you were part of the apparatus trying to get the Japanese to begin to look at the world as a major power. In other words, have their embassies deal with Indonesia, Philippines, what have you? Were we pushing that at all or just letting them figure it out?*

SELIGMANN: I don't think we were pushing the Japanese in those terms at that time, although we have from time to time in later years. Many of us felt it was best to let nature take its course as far as Japan emerging as an international player was concerned and that a close interdependent U.S.-Japan relationship was healthy not only for both countries, but for Japan's neighbors. A good many Japanese shared this belief. By the same token, we gave some priority to urging better relations with other allies in the Pacific, such as Korea and the Philippines, where reparations issues festered and much ill will was left over from the time of Japanese occupation. Bill Gleysteen, then in the political section, spent a good bit of time and effort on Japan-Korean relations, coordinating with our embassy in Seoul. Before long, we did lean on the Japanese to increase foreign aid, especially in Asia, to supplement our efforts.

*Q: 1962 you are back; you went where?*

SELIGMANN: In 1962 Joe Yager, who was then Deputy Assistant Secretary for Far Eastern Affairs, in the course of a visit to Tokyo, told me that he wanted me to come back as the deputy Japan desk officer. I replied that it was a good job and I appreciated the offer, but that I had been working on Japan for seven years in Japan plus two years in Washington before that and it was time for me to go somewhere else first. Actually, it was time to return to Washington, but I hoped for another overseas assignment. We parted without commitment, and then I received a nice letter from Joe saying as I recall, "Your piteous plea touched my cold heart," and that I was being assigned to Bangkok as deputy head of the political section.

*Q: You were in Bangkok from when to when?*

SELIGMANN: 1962-1965.

*Q: What was the sort of political situation when you got there in 1962?*

SELIGMANN: Field Marshall Sarit had engineered one of the famous Thai coups not too long before that. (I found out later that the ousted prime minister, Phibul, was living quietly in exile not too far from our house in Tokyo.) Sarit was pretty much a dictator, surrounded by military colleagues who ran much of the government but by no means all of it, and many of the more profitable business enterprises. The Thai were pragmatic about their economic affairs. They permitted technocrats to do a reasonably good job of economic planning and management of the country's finances, and similarly left the management of the Foreign Ministry to professionals; Thanat Khoman, an impressive skilled diplomat, was foreign minister at the time. In contrast to my work in Tokyo, I was concerned principally with external affairs; other officers in the section covered domestic politics and the Chinese community, there were separate counterinsurgency and political-military sections, the latter being heavily involved in military assistance and matters related to hostilities in Vietnam.

*Q: Who was the ambassador when you were there?*

SELIGMANN: When I first arrived, it was Ken Young, who had come out of Standard Oil - a fine man with good knowledge of the area. He was followed by Graham Martin.

*Q: I would think that when one thinks of Thailand, I mean obviously it has got the rest of the neighbors. It has got Burma, Cambodia, Laos. I am not sure about Malaysia?*

SELIGMANN: Malaysia, which was on Thailand's southern border, loomed as a potential hot spot. Malaysia was created during this period as you recall, incorporating post-independence Malaya and Singapore. That quickly became a major issue for the whole area.

*Q: Okay, let's take the political concerns. The Vietnam War was beginning to develop for us. What were you looking at?*

SELIGMANN: I was not involved directly in the buildup of infrastructure related to the Vietnam War; other parts of the embassy were doing that. I certainly was aware of some of what was going on: building airfields; running all kinds of economic programs in critical parts of northeast Thailand; and consulting closely with our ambassadors in the other countries in the area, including Vietnam, where I once accompanied Martin for a brief meeting, my only visit to Saigon. We were interested in one way or another with Thailand's relations with all its immediate neighbors. Historically Thailand had very poor relations with Cambodia. No love was lost between the Thai and Cambodians, and not too long after my arrival, Thailand and Cambodia broke diplomatic relations. We were not on much better terms. After President Kennedy's death in November 1963, Sihanouk made one of his less inspired pronouncements: he hoped that Sarit and Kennedy would

meet in hell. When a year later I attended a conference in Cambodia for East and West diplomats, sponsored by the Quakers - the first in Asia similar to a series held in Europe in an attempt to encourage a modicum of dialogue despite the Cold War - Roger Sullivan from Singapore and I decided that if Sihanouk in his scheduled remarks made some such odious remark, we would have to walk out. In the deed, his speech was anodyne, but after it was too late to walk out inflammatory "full text" of the wily fox's remarks was distributed. As for Burma, you didn't know if you were going to have another white-elephant war, and the Burmese accused the Thai of supporting various insurgencies. KMT refugees in north Thailand were running an opium operation with a small private army. And in north Malaysia, you had an ethnic Chinese Communist insurgency.

*Q: Was that spilling over?*

SELIGMANN: It did to some extent and concerned Thai officials. It was an inaccessible jungle area and the Thai worried about the loyalty of the Malaysian population in south Thailand. Then Malaysia was created, which included not only Singapore but what was called East Malaysia, Sarawak and Sabah, which Indonesia claimed should be part of Indonesia. Sukarno moved to his confrontasi policy with Malaysia over the territorial issues. So it was an interesting period. We were in the middle of it.

Bobby Kennedy came through Djakarta and talked the Indonesians into a mediation effort, and then came on to Thailand, where he persuaded Thanat to act as mediator. We were not a party to the dispute and did not sit at the table, but worked closely with Thanat behind the scenes while he tried to bring the disputants together. Singapore became independent around that time adding another complication to the talks - I can't remember the timing of Singapore's independence...

*Q: I am not sure exactly when but it was in that period.*

SELIGMANN: Then the Philippines joined in for kicks, claiming that parts of Sabah belonged to them. So, they got themselves to the negotiating table as well. The principal persons involved included the Indonesian foreign minister, Subandrio, one of the most charming scoundrels in the world; Philippine Foreign Minister Lopez, who was a pure opportunist; and Razak, the Malaysian foreign minister, who was a rather nice gentleman. I was the leg man for Graham Martin, in all this, running around between embassies, the Thai foreign ministry, and delegations, when negotiations were under way.

*Q: Well in all this, I have heard Graham Martin being described as sort of Louis XI as the spider king, manipulating, and if you were his leg man your dealing with Graham Martin...*

SELIGMANN: You never knew what was going to happen. I am not sure I ever knew the substance, but one Sunday he received instructions immediately to see Thanat Khoman and deliver a message to him. In the first instance, my job was to find out where Thanat was. Having established via his private secretary that he was at his beach house at Hua Hin, several hours away with no telephone, Martin rounded up a small Air America plane

to get himself and Thanat's secretary, Somphong, later ambassador to Washington and Tokyo, down there. There were other senior diplomats, but in those days the secretary to the foreign minister for practical purposes was the number-two man in the foreign ministry. I was sitting in Martin's outer office planning to go home once they were on the way, when he walked by, looked at me, and said, "Aren't you coming?" So with no time to call home, I got on the plane, which landed on a grass strip, only to find there was no transportation. Somphong commandeered a rickety old fire engine, however, so with the ambassador sitting up front with the driver, Somphong and I hung on the back, and off we went. I wish I had a picture of the startled foreign minister coming out on the verandah in his black lounging pajamas to see this strange entourage pull up at his doorstep.

*Q: With a fire engine, yes.*

SELIGMANN: More significantly, you know, Martin did not go bonkers until he got to Saigon. I won't comment on that - lots of other people know better than I what happened there. I found he met your description of being conniving and devious, but when it came, for example, to the negotiations to end confrontasi, he was resourceful in somehow always finding an angle to keep talks going. His strong belief, to which I subscribed, was that one war was enough at the time. We didn't need a war in Indonesia to compound our involvement in Vietnam. The Australians may have thought otherwise. I felt flattered when the Australians sent an emissary from Canberra to Bangkok with the express mission of telling the Americans to stuff it. They wanted to "give Sukarno a bloody nose." I was a specific target of that effort - I didn't know anyone had ever heard of me but the reporting cables apparently get around.

At one point the foreign ministers were meeting in Bangkok and just couldn't agree on a key issue - I vaguely remember that it had to do with holding a referendum to determine the destiny of East Borneo - and they were all set to go home. Ambassador Martin got the inspiration to get Lopez, who really had very little to do with any of this...

*Q: From the Philippines.*

SELIGMANN: Yes, from the Philippines. ...to be the proposer of some new idea having to do with election observers or some such that would keep the talks going. I tagged along as he jumped into his car without calling ahead to visit Lopez at his hotel or guest quarters - I can't remember. When we arrived, we were told that he wasn't there and that they did not know how to reach him. Wondering what to do next, I told the ambassador I had overheard a secretary making a reservation for Lopez at the Carleton, a night club - not a lavish one, really a restaurant many of us frequented that had a band and dancing in the evening. So off we go to the Carleton and there is Lopez out on the dance floor with some Thai girl. Martin cuts in on him, takes him over to a booth, and informs Lopez that he, Lopez, is the genius who has come up with this wonderful idea. Lopez agrees to be the genius and agrees to commission Martin to convey this to Subandrio; the Malaysian Foreign Minister Razak; and Thanat. That done, we went to see Subandrio, who reluctantly agreed to stay on. We couldn't get to see the Malaysians, however - they had

all gone to bed, so we left it for the morning.

It was my custom to meet almost every morning with Anand Panyarachun, Somphong's predecessor as Thanat's private secretary - Anand became ambassador to the UN, ambassador to Washington, and served as prime minister of Thailand for a brief period. It was such an awful trip to the foreign ministry in the clogged traffic of Bangkok in the heat, that we had developed a pattern whereby I would come into the Embassy, read the cables, go to his house, which was close by, at seven or seven-thirty and get a fair amount of business done over coffee. Anand left right after for the Foreign Minister's house, accompanying Thanat to the foreign ministry. The next morning I filled Anand in on the night's events, informing him that we had been unable to get in touch with Razak, and asked whether he could help. So off goes Anand, and as he went around a rotary (traffic circle) on the way to Thanat's house, he spotted the Malaysian entourage in the circle exiting on the road to the airport. Thinking quickly, Anand, as he reported later, did a circle and a half and followed the motorcade to the airport. When Anand informed Razak that Subandrio had agreed to the "Lopez proposal," he first said he regretted that the baggage was already on the plane and it was too late, but Anand convinced them to turn around and come back. The extra day of negotiations did not produce anything worthwhile beyond agreement to think about the proposal, but that was the sort of maneuver that Martin was capable of pulling off. By the way, when I wrote all of this up in a reporting telegram, Martin did not change a word except to add at the beginning, "It has been a very weird day," and at the end, "To be continued."

*Q: That was great. Were we concerned about the Thais doing anything that might, movement towards the Chinese or anything like that at that time?*

SELIGMANN: Not particularly at that time. It was in the Thai tradition to hedge their bets and keep lines out, but Thanat and the other Thai leaders were proud nationalists, even if many, including Thanat, were of Chinese descent. He saw Thai interests and U.S. interests converging on many critical areas, including relations with Thailand's neighbors, which were colored by historical enmity and rivalries. In that sense we could work closely together, whether it be Vietnam, Laos, Cambodia, Burma, or Malaysia. The Malays, for example, constituted a significant minority within Thailand, and Thailand supported Kuala Lumpur's efforts to suppress the Chinese-led Communist insurgency in north Malaysia. Similarly, Thailand feared Indonesian imperialist ambitions, which it saw manifested in the confrontasi policy. In general, the Thai were leery of communist machinations, whether it be the Soviet Union or China. So we really did see eye to eye on most foreign policy issues.

*Q: Well were we concerned, were the Thais concerned in this period? You left when in 1965? Usually June?*

SELIGMANN: That summer.

*Q: Yes. Were we concerned up to the time you left about events that were happening in Indonesia? I mean Sukarno seemed to be turning more to the left. This was before what was it September, October I guess when the coup came and Suharto took over, but prior*

*to that Sukarno seemed to be on a roll and moving his country. Were the Thais concerned?*

SELIGMANN: Very much so. Sukarno had made his famous “Live Dangerously (vivere periculoso)” speech. He was more and more manipulated by the communists. Yes, both we and the Thai were certainly concerned. At the same time, there was much opposition to the whole mediation effort between Indonesia and Malaysia because critics would say you just don't understand where Sukarno is headed. I think we understood well, but figured it was important to buy time; one war, Vietnam, was about all we could handle at one time.

*Q: We had this peculiar situation in Indonesia through most of this period where you had Ambassador Howard Jones, who was considered by many in his own embassy to be well meaning but an apologist for Sukarno. Were you getting...*

SELIGMANN: My nickname for him was “Pollyanna Jones.” “Just give me one more hour with Sukarno, and I will bring him around.”

*Q: Yes, I mean, this was very much I mean when we got reports from Djakarta, did we tend to look to see who, did we tend to discount what Jones was saying?*

SELIGMANN: Absolutely. I once wrote a telegram as a joke - that was when you still had green telegrams and you could bang them out on your own typewriter. I entitled it “Meeting between Thanat Khoman [a bridge enthusiast] and Ambassador Martin as it would have been written by Ambassador Jones.” It started off something like this, “When I entered Thanat's office, he was in a dark mood. The Thai contract bridge team had just lost in the semi-finals, and he was not ready to listen to anything I had to say.” It went on in that vein until the last paragraph, which read, in effect, “As I was leaving, Thanat stopped me at the door and said, ‘Mr. Ambassador, you have been too persuasive.’” Well, that was okay as far as it went as a parody, but Martin happened to come into my office - he had a habit of walking up and down the corridors, not waiting for the telegrams come to him, but going to the telegrams. He would take something you hadn't finished and say fine, or tear it in two or whatever. He picked up my bogus telegram, and said, “Great. Let's send it.” I pleaded (successfully) with the ambassador that it was well and good for him to say that but I had a career to consider.

I visited Djakarta during this period, taking advantage of funds available to Bobby Kennedy's young leader program - I was the Embassy “Youth Coordinator” - but also to talk about common political interests. I stayed with Frank Galbraith, then DCM, later ambassador, but to be able to talk, he suggested we go for a walk, which we did after dinner, around Merdeka Square. It was too risky to talk in the house where he said he could not trust the servants and which was probably bugged. Yes, it was a tense period.

*Q: Yes, well, I mean, there was this concern that permeated that whole area of Howard Jones and not being the right man to deal with Sukarno and where Sukarno was going and all. It was a difficult time.*

SELIGMANN: I am not the person to comment really. There are others who were much more closely involved.

*Q: I have interviewed for example Bob Martens and Marshall Green.*

SELIGMANN: Paul Gardner.

*Q: Yes.*

SELIGMANN: My feeling was that the silver lining to all this was that we did buy time. And we did avoid a conflict. Maybe we lucked out in the events that followed...

*Q: Sometimes you kind of wait and have an over reach. Was there concern during this 1962-1965 period that there might be the equivalent of what happened in Indonesia, a clash between those identified as Chinese and those who were identified as Thai or had things had they pretty well amalgamated by this time?*

SELIGMANN: Like Indonesia, Thailand and the Philippines as well had a history of anti-Chinese riots going back before World War II, reflecting resentment of the dominant entrepreneurial position of the overseas Chinese. Concern about the politics of the Chinese community as well as Thai-Chinese relations accounted for the presence of a Chinese language officer in the political section. Whereas anti-Chinese demonstrations have continued to occur in Indonesia, however, there were none while I was in Thailand and there have been none since. Perhaps much of the contrast is accounted for by the absence of sharp religious differences, albeit the Thai subscribe to Hinayana, as opposed to Mahayana Buddhism, but, also, related to that, there has been far more extensive intermarriage and integration of Chinese into Thai society - to the point that many Thai leaders, if you trace their not-distant ancestry, turn out to be full-blooded Chinese.

*Q: How about India? Did India play any particular role?*

SELIGMANN: It was a pro-Soviet neutral, but was not much of a player in Thailand. Under instruction, we had no contacts at that time with the Soviet embassy. If I wanted to communicate with the Soviet embassy, I discovered I could do it very nicely. My Indian colleague always wanted to get together, so I would see him and occasionally deliberately say things that I wanted the Soviets to hear. One time I literally caught him in the act. We had finished lunch, and as I got into my car parked on the opposite side of the street and made a U-turn, there he was talking to a Soviet embassy officer.

*Q, How about, having come from Japan. Was there any Japan-Thai connection at that time?*

SELIGMANN: They had an active embassy and I knew many of the staff personally. Their principal interests in the area were commercial, with investment beginning to supplement growing trade. As what might be seen as a related matter, the Japanese also

supplied a well-known beauty as mistress for Sukarno, which doubtless motivated him to visit Japan from time to time and may have emboldened the Japanese to make one or two false-start mediation efforts of their own between Indonesia and Malaysia.

*Q. Yes, one of the major commercial functions of anybody who dealt with Sukarno was to make sure that you had usually allied hostesses.*

SELIGMANN: Rumor had it that for the United that entailed cooperation with Pan Am and a certain stewardess.

*Q. Were the Japanese, had they started putting the motor scooters into Thailand?*

SELIGMANN: Probably - they seemed to have a corner also on the market for the ubiquitous "long-tailed" motors on the small boats that plied Thailand's rivers and more shallow waterways. There were a great many Japanese salesmen around of all sorts, but mostly dealing in relatively small things - they were just getting into the big stuff - but even then they were close to becoming the number-one, if not, the number-two trading partner for almost every country in Southeast Asia, including Thailand. We were still number one, I think.

*Q: Well I was interviewing somebody who maybe it was Bill Brown who was ambassador to Thailand at one time, somebody who was saying one of the big problems with the Thais was that they turned out wonderful sort of liberal arts majors who you know, were good in government and all but were never very good in turning out people who ran businesses, you know, masters of business administration and all that. Did you notice that at the time?*

SELIGMANN: It wasn't something I was really paying a lot of attention to. It was probably true. But then, you know, the Thai are laid back to a large extent. They are not entrepreneurial and tended to let the Chinese tend to run commerce - of course, in Thailand you get to the point where you can't distinguish between Thai and Chinese.

*Q: Well, you left there in 1965. I think this might be a good place to stop this time. Where did you go?*

SELIGMANN: I went back to Washington after 10 years. One outcome of my assignment was the opportunity to acquire supervisory experience, my first real chance since army days. Toward the beginning of my tour, the chief of the political section suffered a heart attack, so for close to a half year I was acting counselor. Now, although the prospects looked good for an FE assignment, that was not to be my fate. Allen Whiting, Director of the Office of Research East Asia (REA) in INR had come out on a visit. I had the misfortune of being his control officer, and he wanted me back as one of his two deputies - originally as the Northeast Asia branch chief, but he sweetened the pot. I was more than ready to go back to FE and INR was my last choice, largely because I had spent six years in OIR and wanted a job in the Department that offered the prospect of more action. The FE Bureau fought for me, but INR had had too many of its

assignment preferences thwarted, and this time the decision went up to Under Secretary Crockett who sided with INR.

*Q: Okay, well, we will pick this up next time 1965 when you are off to INR.*

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*Today is March 10, 2000. Al, 1965, whither?*

SELIGMANN: Okay, I am leaving Bangkok and headed somewhat against my will for INR (Bureau of Intelligence Research) to become head of the Northeast Asia branch, and concurrently one of two deputy office directors. I spent two years there.

*Q: 1965-1967.*

SELIGMANN: Right. I dealt with almost every country in Asia except the two that were occupying most of the Department's and REA's attention, Vietnam and China. I didn't have an awful lot to do with either of them.

*Q: What were the in the rest of Asia during this time? The Vietnam War was cranking up and China was going to the Great Leap Forward and the Cultural revolution.*

SELIGMANN: It was both: great leap forward, and cultural revolution, probably more of the latter at that time, but as I say, I didn't have much to do with the tea-leaf reading. Vietnam was important to the other countries in both Northeast Asia and Southeast Asia, and their reaction to events there was of interest, but I did not find it an altogether scintillating job. Having been closer to policy decisions in one way or another for some time, what might have been exciting at the outset of my career, was now a bit boring.

*Q: Well let's talk during the 1965-1967 period, what was going on in Japan that would have concerned us?*

SELIGMANN: Well, Japan of course was in the middle of Asia's true great leap forward, double-digit economic growth. They had just hosted the 1964 Olympics, generally regarded as the turning point for the economy's take-off, and were making impressive, awesome progress. Our alliance was pretty solid in the aftermath of the turmoil originally surrounding the security treaty; the Liberal Democratic Party was firmly entrenched in power; and while the socialists were still a major opposition party, they posed no credible threat to the government.

*Q: ...the socialists to be a threat at that time. I mean was there anything about the socialists other than we...*

SELIGMANN: It was still the height of the Cold War, and the party was regarded as pro-China, whatever that meant, but it remained divided between moderate democratic socialists and more extreme left-wingers. Demonstrations against this or that, including U.S. involvement in Vietnam took place regularly, but they had taken on a somewhat pro forma character. My boss, Allen Whiting, was preoccupied in the effort to shed light on

the real facts of the Vietnam war and worked closely in this regard with Ball...

*Q: George Ball.*

SELIGMANN: George Ball, who was the center of the voice of dissent, or if not dissent, at least questioning about the efficacy of our Vietnam policy. I had one minor blowup during that period over an episode that occurred while I was away on a trip in Asia. An REA paper was produced in my absence under Whiting's guidance that said that the Vietnam War was threatening our relationship with Japan and attitudes were turning strikingly anti-American, jeopardizing the security treaty, etc. Even if my sympathies might have been and were beginning to be with those who questioned the official line on Vietnam as opposed to what intelligence facts bore out, what that paper said about Japan simply wasn't true. I was a bit angry about that.

*Q: Was this feeling that this paper was, somebody had an attitude towards Vietnam and was trying...*

SELIGMANN: It was a distortion of any objective reading of the situation in Japan.

*Q: But basically he was playing... it was a Vietnam paper rather than...*

SELIGMANN: That was my feeling. It could be justified only by the argument that the end justified the means, but that should not be the role of intelligence. In that such a paper had no influence, it was a minor thing.

*Q: But it gives, was there the feeling - I realize you weren't dealing with it but you were the deputy there - was there the feeling that INR was being either bypassed or I mean was it hewing to the line or what was coming in that you were getting about Vietnam that you recall?*

SELIGMANN: I had very little to do with Vietnam and was probably kept out of Vietnam related business, not being identified in any way as a dissenter. I think my personal views were in a transitional stage, and that I probably switched from being a good loyalist when many others did, two or three years later.

*Q: How about Korea?*

SELIGMANN: Again I was not the Korean expert, and confined my efforts pretty much to a supervisory role of suggesting possible topics for papers and editing, but otherwise relying on the broad depth of knowledge about Korea of analysts who had served there and knew it well. Winifred Hall was our Korea analyst. Park was still exercising his dictatorship.

*Q: Very much so. He was going until 1979.*

SELIGMANN: So I don't have a lot to say about those two years really. My main

impression in retrospect was boredom. One thing that had changed from OIR days was that as a result of my overseas experience, I knew personally a good many of the officers in the FE bureau, shortly to become EA, so that if I did have something to say, I had easy access. It became more common for the Office of Northeast Asian Affairs to ask us to do things for them. The personal relationships were very easy.

*Q: Well in 1967 you were able to get away from...*

SELIGMANN: Yes, this came as a total surprise. Pressure for the reversion of Okinawa to Japan had been building up for some years. The writing was on the wall that we could not continue to exercise complete authority in Okinawa as distinct from the rest of Japan where administrative authority had been turned back with the peace treaty in 1952. Rather than let tensions build up to the point of no return, where we would not be able to negotiate the things we wanted in Okinawa, it was far better to come to some negotiated settlement. Alex Johnson, our Ambassador in Tokyo, and Dick Sneider, the first "Country Director for Japan," determined to get ahead of the game. Out of the blue, I got a telephone call from Dick asking whether I would I go over to the Pentagon to be a special assistant to the DAS for Policy Planning in the Office of International Security Affairs (ISA), with the specific mission of being the point man to help prepare the ground for Okinawa reversion.

*Q: Sounds like a sacrificial lamb.*

SELIGMANN: I did not feel that way, inasmuch as I fully shared his assessment and that of the ambassador. This was attractive to me partly to escape INR and because it was an issue I personally believed was important. I had one reservation. Mort Halperin, the deputy assistant secretary for policy planning in ISA was a 29-year-old former professor from Harvard (currently the director of policy planning for the State Department). I didn't know him at all, and had an initial vision of a brash young outsider, likely to push people around. How would we get along? To my delight we hit it off from the start and I quickly came to admire Mort, as I still do. He was soft spoken, thoughtful, quick, and considerate of people. He had a natural flair for bureaucratic maneuvering and established excellent relations with key Pentagon players at all levels, spotting ways to build alliances and force decisions so that action papers did not get bogged down.

*Q: Well, you were doing this from 1967 to when?*

SELIGMANN: To 1969. This was a fascinating assignment for various reasons. The Okinawan issue was one of them. Another was still another chance to work in a different culture, the culture of the Pentagon, an educational experience in itself. Then for reasons that unfolded as I stayed there, I ended up working on much more than Okinawa - at one point just about the whole world. It opened up all kinds of horizons. The small policy planning staff in the Pentagon brought together a remarkable group of people. Mort Halperin's deputy, who was working principally on the Vietnam papers, was Les Gelb, later managing editor of the New York Times and head of the Foreign Affairs Council. Lt. Col. Paul Gorman, whom I ran into the other day, was the commander of the Southern Command at the time of the invasion of Panama. Reg Bartholomew later held various

high jobs in the department and had several embassies, including Rome and Madrid. Winston Lord, the most junior officer, ended up working with Kissinger of course and went on to greater things, including Director of Policy Planning in State and Ambassador to Beijing.

*Q: Well, let's stick to Okinawa first and then we will move to other things. When you arrived, I mean one of the things I heard is that the military particularly obviously the Marines, the attitude on Okinawa was we won this with our blood and it's ours. By the time you arrived there, you talk about coming out of the State Department how did you feel the Pentagon or the Marines were at that point.*

SELIGMANN: The attitude you describe was not peculiar to the Marines, who generally speaking tended to keep their political attitudes to themselves in my experience better than the other services - some of the best "purple suiters," i.e., joint staffers, turned out to be Marines. While the rank-and-file Marines have accounted for many incidents involving the local population over the years, with a few notable exceptions, the more senior officers I have encountered have been circumspect in their political views. The High Commissioner in Okinawa was an Army General, and General Caraway, who held the job until 1964 was known for his hard-line comments. By the time I arrived in the Pentagon, the debate was well underway between those, principally in State, now joined by ISA, and at least an important segment of the civilian leadership of the Department of the Army, responsible for administering Okinawa, who felt that if we did not move soon to return Okinawa to Japan, whatever the detailed arrangements, we might well cause a crisis that could jeopardize the viability of the Security Treaty itself. The Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS), in turn, were concerned that if we made any significant concessions in regard to administration, we risked limiting freedom of action to use our bases. With the pace of American involvement in Vietnam picking up, their arguments resonated with many political leaders. An interdepartmental group had been set up to try to thrash out an Okinawan policy, but the ISA and JCS versions of what a DOD position should be were far apart.

*Q: I suppose what you say about the Marines comes from the fact they fight on the ground and in the air and obviously they are taken there by naval means, so they...*

SELIGMANN: Yes, and they are not a wholly independent service but under the Navy - at the higher levels I have found some very broad minded Marines, not necessarily across the board, but that is parenthetical. The other thing I found out early in the game was that even though the Pentagon had about thirty thousand people working there - you were lucky if you got a window, and I was in good company with generals and admirals all over the place without windows - if you were going to get a job done, you had to identify the handful of people crucial to any one issue. If you cultivated those relationships, and you got to know them, you could get an awful lot done. In fact you could run circles around people who didn't know how to do that. I learned that from Mort Halperin As in any part of the bureaucracy, clearances were a vital part of the game, and I worked closely with the staff of the Deputy Assistant Secretary of the Army, responsible for administration of Okinawa; Phil Barringer, long-time director of the overseas bases

branch in ISA; Systems Analysis; and J-5.

*Q: J-5 is policy plans.*

SELIGMANN: Right. Within ISA you also had the Office of East Asian Affairs, with its own Japan desk, headed by a Colonel Tom Constant, with whom I remain friends today. The Office of Systems Analysis, was a creation of Secretary MacNamara, who tried to apply techniques he had used to advantage when he was with Ford Motor Company, especially in regard to the war in Vietnam. Similar approaches, however, were pertinent to determining how essential it was to retain full authority in Okinawa, compared with “homeland treatment,” i.e., the same conditions as the rest of Japan. Many in the uniformed services regarded SA as a secret weapon of the liberals, and took umbrage at its penchant for asking hard-headed questions challenging accepted common wisdom that called for quantifiable answers. Some of the people there were easier to work with than others, but they could be helpful allies in moving policy along. ISA had also commissioned a key study by the RAND corporation on our conventional bases in Okinawa that showed reversion would not impede our operations significantly.

As a result of the continuing interdepartmental work on Okinawa, it became increasingly clear, especially as Japanese pressure for reversion built up both publicly and in diplomatic channels, that we would have to make some fundamental changes in our policy, but we remained at loggerheads with the JCS as to whether it would be possible to have Okinawa restored to Japanese administration with no special qualifications distinguishing it from the rest of Japan. A major stumbling block, of course, was nuclear-weapons storage, allowing for our immutable policy of neither confirming nor denying the presence of nuclear weapons there or anywhere else. A good deal of essential groundwork for the decision was in place, however, when Prime Minister Sato visited Washington toward the end of 1967, where his agenda included a strong demand for reversion. Inasmuch as the Johnson administration was still far from ready to make the plunge, we bought time with language that acknowledged the Japanese position, intimating that administrative rights would be returned in a few years. As an added sweetener, an agreement was signed providing for the return to Japan of the Bonin Islands (including Iwo Jima). While far from the rest of Japan, the Bonins before the war had been administered as part of Tokyo Prefecture, but since the surrender had been under our control, essentially the same as Okinawa, except there was no longer any local Japanese population there to speak of. I had a large hand in drafting the agreement, and while we made it a point within the USG and with the Japanese to note that it created no precedent for Okinawa, it was pretty clear that in many ways it did. If nothing else, it showed that we would not necessarily continue to occupy indefinitely those areas of Japan proper not returned to date.

We entered 1968, then, with the Okinawa problem far from resolved but with a good bit of steam vented. And as the months passed, it was also clear that in a presidential-election year, no further action could realistically be expected before 1969. Immediately after the election, however, events moved rapidly. Mort Halperin, for one thing, had gone to New York to work with his old Harvard colleague Kissinger, now Nixon’s principal

foreign policy advisor. Well before taking office, Nixon approved a new foreign-policy decision-making process, designed by Kissinger, built around NSSMs (National Security Study Memorandums) and NSDMs (National Security Decision Memorandums) that were to follow them. The NSSMs asked for policy recommendations on specific issues, often accompanied by pointed questions that were to be answered in the process. A principal virtue of the NSSM was that it put before the President through the National Security Council all major alternatives. There was no attempt to censor a player in the game who wanted to push a particular point of view or dissent from a majority recommendation. The President would have it there in front of him. Another advantage was that deadlines were set that kept policy moving forward, instead of getting bogged down in intra-departmental or inter-departmental bureaucratic battles. The system did not work as intended for long because after a while you were left with the feeling that Kissinger as National Security Advisor was using it as a form of busy work to keep State and Defense, in particular, occupied while he managed the major issues from the White House. In the initial days, however, it worked beautifully.

The first NSDMs, directives setting up the NSSM system, as well as the first series of substantive NSSMs were all ready to be issued immediately after the new administration took office. Policy Planning, for example, was tasked long before January 20 with drawing up a list of 50-100 questions on just about every important foreign affairs issue. These were sent to New York and most of them appeared in one of the first NSSMs that called for answers from State, DOD, the JCS and CIA - perhaps Treasury for some; my task was to coordinate the DOD responses. Another early NSSM asked for policy alternatives on Vietnam - I did not have much to do with that.

In Mort Halperin's absence, Les Gelb had been acting director of Policy Planning, soon to be renamed the Office of Policy Planning and NSC Affairs. I carpoled with Les, and one morning during this interim period, he turned to me and said that he was overburdened, trying to keep up with his Vietnam responsibilities and asked me to fill in for him as acting deputy director, sans Vietnam. He probably also knew that Kissinger planned to take Mort with him to the NSC. As the pace of Okinawa related work slowed down appreciably in the preceding months, I had already become engaged in a number of questions having little to do with Japan, or even East Asia, but this added spice to the job.

NSSM-5, on Japan, addressed three issues, the principal one, without which there would probably not have been a NSSM, being Okinawa. The other two were the future of the security treaty, and textiles. The renegotiated security treaty ratified in 1961 remained in effect indefinitely, but after ten years could be renounced by either party at one year's notice. There was no significant outcry in Japan to tinker with the treaty, which was functioning well enough, but some of our military, thought we should make an effort to renew the treaty for another ten years. To make a long story short, this was an issue where the argument to leave the treaty on a year-to-year basis after 1971 prevailed easily without any real battle. After all, an alliance treaty, is not worth the paper it is written on if the will isn't there to keep it going. The other issue, more difficult, was textiles.

*Q: Particularly with Nixon winning a very close election, he felt he owed the textile*

*states, South Carolina, North Carolina, Georgia a great debt. I mean this was very high on his domestic political agenda.*

SELIGMANN: Right. So that was part of the same NSSM: how should we negotiate restraints on Japanese textile exports. The textile issue dragged on for years and in some ways was more intractable than Okinawa. At one point, in a well-publicized incident, Nixon presented the U.S. position on textiles to Sato at a meeting in Hawaii. Sato responded, “zensho itashimasu” or “We will give it every favorable consideration.” That is a polite way of avoiding a commitment in Japanese while leaving the door open a crack. When the Japanese did not deliver, this led to a great blow up with accusations that Sato did not keep his word. That is where language gets into the game. But anyway, to get back to Okinawa, I think the military were pretty well agreed that something had to be done, but they weren't about to yield on some of the essentials, the core question being the presence of nuclear weapons. To remain reasonably cautious, as far as I know, our policy remains neither to confirm nor deny that there are nuclear weapons anywhere. On the other hand, there was no one around who didn't think that we had them in Okinawa. It was clear the issue was not going to be resolved if those favoring reversion simply said we must return Okinawa on what was called “homeland-level” terms, i.e., on terms no different from the rest of Japan, and the JCS arguing that we required special concessions for Okinawa. The device for resolving the deadlock in effect became part of NSSM 5. ISA drafted a memorandum whereby the Deputy Secretary (Nitze) instructed the JCS to detail the missions of all special weapons on Okinawa and quantify the impact it would have on our capabilities if they were not available, as well as alternative possibilities that would compensate for some or all lost capability. It was a fairly lengthy and involved but explicit tasking paper that called for quantifiable answers, without necessarily affecting the positions of the people who provided the answers. When the whole package went up to the NSC for decision, it was there in black and white, together with the respective positions of State, DOD and the JCS so that the President could make the ultimate decision on reversion. Cynics could argue that the same decision might have been made anyway, but this procedure certainly facilitated the process. In any event, the NSDM stating that Okinawa would be returned on the same terms as prevailed in respect to our military presence in the rest of Japan was made, as I recall, in early spring, and that was that, although the Japanese were not apprised of the resolution of the nuclear issue until the fall, and much remained to be negotiated before reversion itself took place in 1972.

*Q: Well did you find, I mean one of the great advantages as everybody knows is one, if there are going to be discussions, whoever sets the agenda is sort of in control, and whoever drafts various things is again in control. One of the things supposedly State Department people are good at is drafting. This is one of the skills. Did you find that this was something you were blessed with? Did you find this an advantage?*

SELIGMANN: Absolutely. Not just in regard to Okinawa, but many other matters. Generally you could always find a way to let someone else express his viewpoint and still present your position so that logic prevailed - logic of course being your own views. That is facetious, and clearly did not always happen, but clear drafting was a major asset that helped you find allies for your cause. Not just in the Pentagon but later on within our State establishment, people would come to you to help them get things done if they

thought you could draft it effectively.

*Q: Well, this is often... This is being a little philosophical, but one of the great attributes of somebody is being a very good drafting officer in political things. I mean they might beat their wife or do this or that, but gee they can draft. Often it is used by people saying they report well, and in a way the reporting is interesting, but the guts of the matter is drafting for agreements and things that you are saying. I mean that is where things get done rather than just reporting on conditions in country .”*

SELIGMANN: That is why I thought this job was so exhilarating. I had my hand at this in a few relatively minor ways previously in Japan and Thailand. I was doing it in spades here in Washington.

*Q: Well I was told that Kissinger would sometimes use these various options. You know there is a classic thing. One, we abjectly surrender, two we start World War III or the middle one which was we do the plan. Did you find yourself were there much or were there real decisions in there.*

SELIGMANN: There is a tendency to do that, and I think that became more obvious as the system went on and Kissinger went his own way. But there were real decisions. The question was could you live with a modification of our total control over use of bases, or could you not. That was a real decision. The drafting gave options, and I think those who drafted the opposing views effectively made a strong case. I don't think they were necessarily making the unacceptable options case, even if we felt they were.

*Q: Well, these went where?*

SELIGMANN: The players? The State Department prepared its own answers to these questions. Defense prepared its answers. The JCS prepared its own answers as a separate document. The chairman of the Chiefs was a member of the NSC.

*Q: How were they getting, I mean something like on international affairs requires a considerable knowledgeable staff. Where were the joint chiefs coming from, I mean where were they getting their information?*

SELIGMANN: My memory may be failing me, but I am not sure they answered questions on all matters. Military people presenting their views on military matters carried weight. They weren't answering what the political climate would be, or if they were, it carried less weight. As for their background, most of those concerned with, say, Japan, had served in Japan and had acquired a degree of expertise; some had not, but the same could be said of much of the civilian side of DOD.

*Q: But dealing with Okinawa, did you run across that hardy breed our people in the State Department find their toughest opponent, not the Soviets but the Pentagon lawyers particularly on the status of forces agreement. Did you run across this?*

SELIGMANN: Not especially, no I don't think so. The head of the overseas bases branch

of ISA was particularly reasonable, and if I am not mistaken, Jim Siena, the Deputy Assistant Secretary of the Army, responsible for Okinawa, with whom it was also easy to work, was a lawyer. The status of forces agreement had been renegotiated with the security treaty. That was not in question, except in the sense that if you opened up the possibility of renewing the treaty for a specific period, you might encourage demands for changes in both the treaty and the SOFA.

*Q: So it was not a question.*

SELIGMANN: The question was whether you put restrictions on the return of administrative authority, which you could say in practical terms would amount to a different SOFA arrangement just for Okinawa. There were certainly those who said we should leave matters the way they were: Okinawa wasn't like the rest of Japan anyway and we should remain in complete control. That was an extreme position. Others said, yes, you should return Okinawa, but not on exactly the same terms as Japan: keep some extra authority for the U.S. to override anyone else, especially in regard to crimes committed by servicemen and the like. The position that was adopted was to operate exactly like we did in Japan, where we also had important bases. The argument was that if you pushed any other course, you were going to get booted out in the long term, the security treaty might go by the boards, and you could be left without anything. In the end, just as in the rest of Japan, we paid for the upkeep of our bases, although that changed considerably in time, and the Japanese provided us with the facilities. The situation continues to be different in that there is a much heavier concentration of bases and military personnel in Okinawa than the rest of Japan, and soon after reversion the discrepancy became more pronounced as we consolidated many base facilities elsewhere in Japan.

*Q: During the time you were there, 1967-1969, did you find yourself being State's man in the Pentagon or more the Pentagon's man in explaining their views to State, I mean as time went on?*

SELIGMANN: Good question. When I took the assignment, I felt I was being asked to do so as State's man in ISA. This was set up as an additional position to the on-going State-Defense exchange program, which included other jobs in ISA, with the three services, and with the Joint Staff. As I observed how others operated, it became clear that while they were an important resource tool, and their political judgments were valued, much of the time they acted in a liaison capacity and were not really in on decision making. Before long, I realized that to be most effective, I needed to act as part of a DOD team, and I made that clear to my State colleagues. My loyalty was to the Department of Defense in the first instance. There were other State people assigned to Defense who didn't have half the opportunities I did. The fact that ISA was on the same wave length as State on most issues helped a great deal as did the ability of Mort Helperin and Dick Sneider to work closely together. Also, I attended the weekly PM (Bureau of Political Military Affairs) staff meetings in State, where (now in a liaison role) I could serve as a two-way source of information.

*Q: How did you work with Dick Sneider? He was my ambassador in Korea. He is not a man to... he is not a compromising man. Unfortunately he is gone, but a very strong person. I have great admiration for him, but how did you find working with him?*

SELIGMANN: I had known Dick Sneider for quite a while. Actually, my first acquaintance was not with Dick, but with his wife. One day I was studying Japanese in the library as a college senior before going into the army when a girl who turned out to be his fiancé came up to me and said she knew a guy who was studying Japanese - that turned out to be Dick, whom she had known at Brown and was now a year ahead of me at the army language school. Our paths next crossed in grad school, where once more he was in the class ahead of me, and then we were in OIR together. We were on good personal terms and Dick didn't scare me. I could talk with him and if he would bark from time to time, I was still able to talk back or argue, if so inclined. More often than not, however, I agreed with him; felt the policies he advocated were the right ones; and admired his ability to get things done.

*Q: Did you find with your military colleagues, I mean were you mainly dealing with civilians or with military or both?*

SELIGMANN: The J-5 man on their Japan desk, was an air force colonel, Stub Wurfel, who was a talented officer. I do not know whether it was reward or punishment in terms of his career, but when Dick Sneider became DCM in Tokyo, Stub was picked up by him to work in the Embassy on the implementation of the reversion agreement. Once the reversion decision had been made, I sat down with Ed Freimuth, a senior civilian in the Department of the Army, and in a marathon session, drawing on Ed's long experience in Okinawa administration, drafted a document listing all the myriad details that would have to be addressed before a turnover took place: these ranged from a change in currency from dollars to yen, to the disposition of prisoners, to which side of the road one would drive on (we started off sticking with the right, which the Japanese subsequently changed to the left). In practice the list stood up pretty well.

*Q: We know the Nixon-Kissinger combination was paying an awful lot of attention to the Soviet Union and to Vietnam and obviously European affairs. Did you feel that in a way you had to get what you were doing past the National Security Council and Kissinger, but essentially if you didn't get too far off the reservation that you all were in control of things as opposed to having somebody up above sort of meddling in it?*

SELIGMANN: Yes, I think so. You had a feeling that there was a predilection in the White House to move ahead on Okinawa. Whether that came from Kissinger himself or was cultivated by people who advised him, I am not sure, but the fact that both Dick Sneider and Mort Halperin were now on the NSC staff suggests a combination. Alex Johnson certainly exerted a powerful influence as Ambassador in Japan. Another thing, Okinawa did not arouse the kind of Congressional interest that some other issues did. As you say, the Vietnam War was on. Vietnam enters into this in a sense because there was much popular feeling around the world against US involvement in Vietnam. You didn't want to threaten the security relationship by digging in and saying we will not move on

Okinawa, by now an important public issue in Japan. Leadership on the Japanese side was pledged to work out the reversion of Okinawa. So if you said no, it would almost inevitably have precipitated a crisis in our relationship with Japan.

*Q: Well were we concerned, because at that time while you were doing this, we had B-52s taking off on a daily basis and bombing Vietnam. Did that cause a problem?*

SELIGMANN: We didn't bomb directly as a rule from Okinawa, but Okinawa was important to our operations. Kadena Air Base had special significance as a throughput base: even if you did not bomb directly from there, planes could stop and refuel on the way out. Also, Okinawa provided major logistical facilities for supply and repair. All this went on, certainly with the knowledge of the Japanese government, and with general public knowledge in a subdued way without arousing a huge amount of opposition. That would not have gone on forever.

*Q: Sometimes as we are talking here you suddenly realize that we are talking about how the Okinawa situation is going to be settled when you get the Pentagon and the State Department and the National Security Council all involved, but there is another side to this, and that is the Japanese. What was the input of the as these decisions were made, what were we getting back from the Japanese? Was this Sneider's place?*

SELIGMANN: The Japanese reaction was very positive to the decisions on Okinawa reversion. On the other hand, the Japanese Government to my knowledge was not kept apprised of progress in the U.S. decision-making process before the reversion decision was made public. Consequently, the Japanese exhibited a good deal of nervousness, manifest in the despatch to Washington of private emissaries of the prime minister and the like, arguing for early, nuclear-free reversion. There was no question of not continuing the security treaty. There were some voices in Japan which said we should renegotiate - if we had failed to return Okinawa, those voices would have become louder and louder - but reversion in general had a positive effect. The nuclear question continued to be debated in Japan. In respect for our neither confirm nor deny policy, the best we could do was say that Okinawa had been returned on the same terms that applied elsewhere in Japan. Everyone understood what that meant. In 1992, the Japanese government invited all the players in the process to come to Japan to celebrate the 20th anniversary of consummation of reversion - I was included as were some of the people I worked with in the Pentagon. They were very thoughtful and did not include just the top people. The scale of the celebration, including a reception by the Crown Prince and Crown Princess, lunch with the Prime Minister, etc., symbolized the importance the Japanese Government attached to reversion as a landmark development in our relationship. As for quid pro quo, we were trying to maneuver so that an agreement on textiles might be facilitated as part of a non-explicit package, but while there were times when it seemed to come close, it did not work out that way - happily, I was not involved in that issue.

*Q: Well do you think the Japanese were comfortable with this neither confirm nor deny thing, because in a way it sounds very much like we will take this under, we will give this*

*favorable consideration in Japanese or something like that, somewhat ambiguous.*

SELIGMANN: No, I think it was pretty well understood. Questions remained as to what might be aboard ships, but that was nothing new.

*Q: The ships seemed to come up quite often.*

SELIGMANN: Well those questions probably still remain.

*Q: This is tape five side one with Al Seligmann. Was the agreement signed while you were in the Pentagon or had you moved on?*

SELIGMANN: By the time the agreement was signed I had moved on, but internally the decision was in place.

*Q: It was in place.*

SELIGMANN: At the time still highly classified with many details to be worked out. Once the policy was announced publicly at a summit meeting, I believe in the fall of 1969, then you had the negotiations on the modalities, which took place in Tokyo. The Japanese actually took over administration in 1972. Before I left the Pentagon, however, I became involved in other affairs.

*Q: What were some of the other things you were involved in at the Pentagon during this 1967-1969 period?*

SELIGMANN: One of the Japan-related things was in a sense related to the negotiation process with Japan on this package of issues. That was an initiative on our part, readily accepted by the Japanese, to improve the quality of our dialogue on strategic issues, security issues. There was in place under the terms of an exchange of notes accompanying the security treaty a body known as the Security Consultative Committee (SCC), which was designed both to serve as a vehicle for any necessary prior consultation as well as for discussion of strategic issues. While it had been activated and had met occasionally, its membership - the Japanese Foreign Minister and Director General of the Japan Defense Agency on the one hand, and the American Ambassador and CINCPAC on the other - precluded regular or free discussion. Not only did the schedules of the principals make it difficult to arrange meetings, but the membership was unbalanced. It was proposed to supplement the SCC with a Security Subcommittee (SSC) at a slightly lower level, with the aim of having more extensive discussions in depth on security questions of mutual interest. The first such meeting was held in Tokyo in 1968, but because such consultation was still sensitive in Japan, the meetings were held in camera and were attended by only about six persons on each side. Ambassador Johnson, who chaired the US side, went to the meetings, held at a small government guest house, in an unmarked car. Although I had drafted two of the papers to be discussed, one on anti-ballistic-missile defense (ABMs) - I do not recall the other - I made the trip but did not get into the sessions. No effort was made to keep subsequent meetings secret, and after a few years it reached the point where there were about as many Japanese media

reporters covering them as there were participants. I attended several more SSC sessions in various capacities in later years and was pleased to see them evolve into a useful vehicle for both sides to air political-military issues.

*Q: Again I am still sticking to the 1967-1969 period. Were there any other issues particularly with Japan that... you were saying the anti-ballistic-missile thing.*

SELIGMANN: That was a world-wide issue in a sense. There was strong advocacy for an ABM system - star wars didn't start with Star Wars. It started back then. Some of the problems, political as well as technological, haven't changed a great deal. Originally the ABM concept was very much a star wars concept. We were going to have an array of missiles to intercept incoming missiles all over the world, as well as to defend missile bases. We quickly came to the realization that this wasn't exactly practical, so we came up with the idea that you could have a theater missile defense. And while you couldn't defend against an attack by the Soviet Union, maybe you could defend against an attack by China, so we would create an ABM defense directed against a Chinese threat, with the cooperation, we thought, of Japan. That would require the establishment of an over-the-horizon (OTH) radar in Japan. Selling our position brought me to places I never would have visited otherwise. As part of a DOD team in Madrid I briefed a group of Foreign Ministry and Defense Ministry officials on the political justification of ABMs. The briefing was related to some of our base problems in Spain and a larger effort to bring the Spanish into closer military consultation. I made a separate trip to repeat the performance in Bonn, and, as noted earlier, the ABM was a centerpiece of our first SSC session in Tokyo.

*Q: This is before Spain was in NATO of course.*

SELIGMANN: Yes. Inasmuch as they were not in NATO, the administration in the course of a high-level meeting had promised the Spanish a series of special briefings on various subjects and this was part of the follow-through. The ABM did not get off the ground, but it is not a bad idea, if you are going to ask for cooperation of a country on the assumption that it is your ally and you want it to pursue the same goals, to treat it as an ally and a partner, and take it into your confidence. I also remember crash writing the answers (and some of the questions) for an interview on ABM defense with Paul Warnke, Assistant Secretary for ISA, that appeared in Life magazine.

Then, I represented Policy Planning on a joint State-Defense project, known as the Wood-McClintock study, set up before the elections in the latter half of 1968 to examine U.S. overseas basing in the 1970s, with the aim of making recommendations to the next administration. Robert Wood was a four-star general brought out of retirement, a very wise man, broad gauged, and Rob McClintock was a senior U.S. ambassador with Latin American experience, and elsewhere, Cambodia...

*Q: And Lebanon.*

SELIGMANN: Lebanon, right. They headed up a group of Defense and State officers,

some working on the study full-time, others like myself, part-time while doing another job. That meant towards the end of the study, I only worked about six hours a day on that and eight hours a day at my Policy Planning job. We accepted as a premise the doctrine of the times, that we should have the capability to wage 2 ½ wars, two major ones and a minor one, at the same time. We examined potential contingencies, which called for a good deal of political input, and then looked at our basing posture all over the world to determine what we needed and what changes were called for for political or technological reasons, projecting out about 10 years through the 1970s. With very tight deadlines upon us, I recall one Washington's Birthday, dictating from morning to night to a superb secretary in a very empty Pentagon the first draft of what would become a key chapter setting forth the bottom-line recommendations on worldwide basing, region by region. Of course, in so-doing, apart from East Asia, where I had worked on sections that were incorporated, in effect I was patching together the work of other participants, but trying to give it a consistent, coherent format and style. The study entailed countless briefings and some field trips, in the course of which I met colleagues I had not known in State as well as in the Pentagon, learning a lot about other parts of the world.

I was also gaining worthwhile administrative experience. ISA had a layered structure in which each of the deputy assistant secretaries was a civilian, with a military office director as his number two. In Policy Planning and NSC Affairs, the DAS was Mort Halperin, later Les Gelb, and the Director, my immediate boss, whose office was next to mine, was Bill Lemos, a bright, amiable two-star admiral. He gave me a good deal of free rein and apart from substantive work, delegated responsibility for a fair share of supervisory tasks, clearances, personnel work, and the like. All in all, it was the most challenging job I could have wished for and offered much more than I had anticipated.

*Q: So your cup runneth over.*

SELIGMANN: It did. I never got home at a sensible time, worked every weekend, and rarely had dinner with my kids.

*Q: Did you find, I noticed when I served in Vietnam that the military rewards military officers who say can-do. In other words, if you were given a situation, yes we can do that. We can pacify this province when they weren't able to pacify. Did you find that this can-do attitude on the part of the uniformed military, particularly carried over into the international affairs at all, or was it a different mind set there?*

SELIGMANN: You mean speaking of the military?

*Q: Yes.*

SELIGMANN: Across the board, with rare exceptions, it carried over in one significant way: deadlines were taken seriously. This meant a great deal if you were trying to get clearances or move recommendations, even with dissenting views, along to top levels for decision. There were more civilians in my immediate environment in DOD, in ISA, than there were military assigned there, but in terms of career advancement, it did not

necessarily hurt them, despite the military penchant for command assignments. Paul Gorman, a Lt. Colonel in Policy Planning, became a three-star, maybe four-star general. Sometimes a helping hand is needed to make sure an officer gets recognition, especially if he sticks his neck out to favor positions at variance with his home service, or is in an “off-beat” job. The Japan desk officer in J-5 picked up by Dick Sneider for assignment to the Embassy team was a case in point.

*Q: Well then, in 1969, where did you go?*

SELIGMANN: In the first instance, I didn't go voluntarily. Like all State-Defense exchange assignments, mine was supposed to be for two years. Some time in the early spring of 1969, unbeknownst to me, Paul Warnke asked Phil Farley to extend my assignment for another year. Asked by PER what I would like to do, I said it depended on alternatives, but I was amenable to staying on in the absence of an enticing assignment. Phil Farley felt that two years was the maximum any officer should remain in an exchange assignment on the ground that it would otherwise be detrimental to his career, but after a bit of tug of war between PM and ISA I was formally extended. Then for some reason there was a lag in some of the appointments in the new administration, and Warnke's replacement as Assistant Secretary for ISA was not named until May; meanwhile, Paul Warnke stayed on. In due course, Warren Nutter, a conservative economics professor from the University of Virginia, was put in the job. He in turn named as deputy assistant secretary for Policy Planning and NSC Affairs a Chinese professor - I can't remember his first name - Wu. I was rolling along enjoying my work when one night in late June - I had been working late - Wu called me into his office. In a disarmingly friendly way he said that this was a totally new environment for him. He had been a professor, did not know his way around the bureaucracy, and would appreciate any advice I could give him. I took a deep breath said I had no vested interest in my job, inasmuch as I would be returning to State in the coming year, so I would speak frankly. I told him that there was a prevalent feeling that outsiders like Mr. Nutter come into the job feeling that staff who had been working with the previous administration were not fully supportive and did not want to do things the way they wanted. I told him he had a talented staff, many of whom had worked for a number of administrations, Republican and Democrat. Their loyalty was to their work and their country. They needed to feel appreciated in that way. He thanked me profusely for my advice, which he said was most useful.

One week later, the navy captain who was executive officer to Nutter wrote a short memorandum that arrived on the desk of Bill Lemos, which simply said that Mr. Nutter believed that Mr. Seligmann should return to the State Department on the completion of his normal two-year tour of duty. Everyone assured me it wasn't personal, and I don't think it was. He decided to get rid of all State people, which included John Dexter, deputy for East Asian Affairs, who was also sent “home.” Nutter in a short time developed a reputation for paranoia and watered down ISA's influence on policy not so much through action as inaction, so in State's eyes I came out of this more of a hero than a victim. By chance I had had a telephone call about a week before from Miriam Camps, the deputy director of the newly reorganized Policy Planning and Coordination Staff (the

old Policy Planning Council) in State, headed by Bill Cargo. She asked me to come over to take the position of the senior East Asian man, replacing Ralph Clough, an extraordinarily able officer who had been caught up by the silly rule that if you didn't get promoted in 10 years, you were out. Having made 0-1 at an exceptionally young age, he had been in grade 10 years and hadn't made career minister. I met with Miriam to talk about the job, called her back as promised, and said that I was flattered by the offer, especially to take the place of someone like Ralph, but that thinking it over, I was having too much fun; having been extended, on balance I preferred to remain in place. Within minutes of the arrival of the note from Nutter's Exec, I picked up the phone, called Miriam, and said, "Miriam, fun isn't a factor any more." So when I was graciously asked by ISA how long would I would like to have before leaving - a month, two months - I said I would be happy to leave the following week. They were very nice about it in a way because I had been selected to attend a week-long NATO conference at Oxford, for foreign ministry and defense people from all over the world. I was urged to attend, which I did, along with my wife, spouses also being invited, and then went to work at State immediately afterwards.

*Q: So you were then in State for... it was really called policy planning and coordination?*

SELIGMANN: Yes, it was called policy planning and coordination for a few years.

*Q: And this is in 1969 to when?*

SELIGMANN: 1971.

*Q: Who was the head of policy planning at this time?*

SELIGMANN: Ambassador Bill Cargo, a senior career officer with European and South Asian experience - he became ambassador to Nepal after Policy Planning. The concept was a new one, as I understand it, the brainchild of Elliot Richardson, the new Deputy Secretary. As opposed to the Policy Planning Council, it had two halves. The planning side, where I was assigned, was headed by Miriam Camps and turned out papers in line with the traditional work of the Policy Planning Council. The Coordination side was new, and worked on developing positions on issues of a more short-term operational nature for inter-departmental discussion at the undersecretary level. We were also designated by directive of the Deputy Secretary as the coordinator of the State Department's input into NSSMs, which included the tasking, commonly to the regional and functional bureaus, of the responses to NSSM requirements. I do not recall whether this job fell to Planning or Coordination or both; although I was supposed to be on the planning side, I also worked from time to time with Art Hartman, who headed Coordination. Especially when it came to NSSMs, I continued to do some of the same things in State that I had been doing in Defense. I was even a bit surprised that on occasion country desks were just as happy to leave much of the drafting to Policy Planning - I remember this being so for a NSSM on Malaysia and Singapore.

*Q: When you came in this 1969-1971 period, this was at the height of Henry Kissinger*

*really taking control of many of State's functions, bypassing Secretary of State William Rogers. Were you feeling this?*

SELIGMANN: Yes. I mentioned earlier that during this period the process took on a busy-work flavor. I had the feeling that one NSSM after another was thrown at the concerned agencies, State principally among them, as well as Defense, to keep everyone occupied while the White House made policy. On the other hand, working on some of the papers was interesting in its own right.

*Q: Well, did you have the feeling that maybe while working on these papers that they were being taken over by the NSC and an NSC stamp was put on it, that sort of thing? I mean did you feel...*

SELIGMANN: I find it hard to recapture enough to give an honest answer to that. I didn't think our input was being used as a real vehicle for decision making any longer. On the other hand, where there were no big policy differences, ideas as well as language might well be used by the NSC. Sometimes NSDMs were issued that announced policy, and sometimes NSSMs disappeared into a black hole.

*Q: Did you find that you were working in order, I mean were you seeing that you wanted to make allies over at the NSC to make sure, you know, if you had policy recommendations. You, I am talking about your whole group, that you really had to work with the NSC to make it go, or were you just out of it?*

SELIGMANN: It probably varied on an individual basis, although I am sure we all kept in touch with NSC staff members. On balance, however, I think we were out of it when it came to policy decisions. On the other hand, for the parts of the world I was principally interested in, there wasn't any big conflict, so that was all right. I got involved in things like Philippine basing, for that one working on the coordination side. There were practical issues in regard to Subic and Clark, some of which were not resolved until later, but the writing was on the wall that we could not keep everything we had indefinitely. It was a question of how to proceed over how long a period. I think the work we did may have had some influence.

There was one significant effort on our part to influence Vietnam policy, which got nowhere. Brainstorming with Elliot Richardson, who was eager to get State into the business of offering policy alternatives, we came up with the idea of preparing a paper on alternative outcomes, including economic sweeteners, and bringing in a high-level officer to put it together. Remarkably, it got over the first hurdle, which was to secure Kissinger's endorsement (busywork?), even though I don't think any of us harbored great conviction that the project would go anywhere. Dave Osborn, who was just leaving his post as Consul General in Hong Kong was brought back to manage the study. While Dave had a fine conceptual mind, he was also a computer whiz, ahead of his time. His approach was to computerize both political and economic data and come up with alternative outcomes showing costs and benefits. The idea of using new technology to solve political problems has had appeal for a long time, but this approach dismayed those

of us who thought we just might get a toe in the policy door. Dave assembled a small staff; engaged in an huge amount of programming; took far too long at it; and came up with a product that was too esoteric in the end for anyone to pay attention to it.

*Q: Well, I think this is part of the problem with computerized things. The idea somehow or other this will really bring things together. Most of the time it is going to end up with somebody drafting something, and it is going to come out of their absorption of knowledge by talking to other people who are dealing with the problem in a way.*

SELIGMANN: D'accord. We had high hopes at the beginning, but Dave presented a product which in effect said, I am not taking a position: here are your choices. That doesn't work very well, and didn't get anywhere - although I don't think it would have gotten anywhere at best.

*Q: Something I didn't ask, but would have covered maybe both periods, but when you were at the Pentagon, did you get at all involved in the Pacific Islands, the mandated islands? Was that something that came up?*

SELIGMANN: Not to my knowledge - just the reversion of the Bonins, which had been part of Japan proper.

*Q: Going back to Pentagon time, in dealing with the Bonins, were you looking over your shoulder at the northern territories, the northern islands that the Soviets were sitting on and thinking if the Soviets were being so solid on keeping them, this was helping us because we were in a way sticking a thumb in the eye of the Soviets by showing them: look we are willing to talk about this and you are not going to return Japanese territory that remains in Russian hands today.*

SELIGMANN: The Southern Kuriles. Yes, that was one telling argument, and it was certainly seen that way by the Japanese: we were being good guys and they were continuing to be bad guys. When I mentioned the anniversary celebration of Okinawa reversion, the Soviet Union was still in existence, the northern territories were still a major issue, one that continues to rankle today, and I am sure Japan had the Soviet Union very much in mind. In fact, the celebration was so much a Tokyo affair that the Okinawans evinced a certain amount of resentment at being brought into the picture as something of an afterthought.

*Q: We have certainly been helped by our opponents.*

SELIGMANN: Yes, no question.

*Q: While you were with policy planning, did you feel the hand of William Rogers at all?*

SELIGMANN: Once. I think William Rogers is underestimated in terms of ability just because he did not accomplish much. He got to the point where he just left most of the lead in foreign affairs to Kissinger and kept his golf clubs in the back of the car, if you

will. At one point, a supplemental budget involving principally the Middle East, but some other areas as well, was bogged down in Congress with what appeared to be little chance of approval. I think tongue-in-cheek, Kissinger turned to Rogers and asked him to try to get the budget through. By happenstance, David Abshire, Assistant Secretary for Congressional Relations, had his office just down the hall from Policy Planning. I had gotten to know him casually and had worked with Warren Zimmerman in his office on a few things. Abshire was tasked by Rogers with drafting the testimony for the supplemental, and Warren asked me to help in the drafting. One evening we went over to Rogers' house, which I had never visited before or after - Alex Johnson, now Under Secretary for Political Affairs was there - and we went over the testimony. Rogers applied himself to the challenge and contrary to the common wisdom, succeeded in getting the supplemental passed. Kissinger doubtless didn't think he would or he probably wouldn't have let him try. I was very favorably impressed, but it was an exception, and that was too bad.

*Q: In interviewing Warren he said at one time Rogers told him, "Look you can write my speeches, but I don't want to be put in the headlines or something like that. Keep me low profile."*

SELIGMANN: He was the ideal man for Kissinger. No question.

*Q: Well, any more of this policy planning? Were there any other issues we should talk about?*

SELIGMANN: One thing that continued to go on that I think it was an increasingly important forum for our relationship with Japan had been in existence for some time: annual (or were they semi-annual?) policy planning talks with the Japanese at a deputy assistant secretary level, held alternately in Japan and the United States. We usually tried to find someplace where you could hole up without distraction, such as Airlie House or the Smithsonian retreat at Belmont outside Baltimore, and similar settings in Japan. These were useful discussions that involved DOD people too. We could talk frankly, and the participants went on to important positions in U.S.-Japan relations. I wrote some of the papers for these talks and coordinated the arrangements for the U.S. side. I continued to attend Security Sub-Committee meetings. I also represented Policy Planning at the weekly EA staff meetings.

*Q: Did you find a change in the Japanese in say the foreign ministry? I mean were they beginning to look out more and beginning to look at the world in bigger terms?*

SELIGMANN: Yes. The agenda for these talks touched on other parts of the world, although the principal focus remained Asia: Vietnam, Korea, China, etc. We didn't talk a lot about Europe, but Japan in general was beginning to think more globally.

*Q: Well, would you sort of leave to one side textiles, in other words trade issues? Was that elsewhere?*

SELIGMANN: Yes, that was elsewhere - E and EA in State - I was not involved. Later on, when I was Japan country director, trade issues were high up on my agenda.

*Q: Either in these talks with Japan or just in policy planning, was the subject of recognition of China ever brought up, or was this completely taken as something not to be concerned about.*

SELIGMANN: I do not recall the details, but we must certainly have discussed China at each meeting, whether or not we addressed recognition head-on. In any event, these were occasions where there was a good deal of free-time conversation on almost everything under the sun.

*Q: It probably would be something that would be more or less because it ended up in the hands of Kissinger and NSC.*

SELIGMANN: Yes. I don't remember Policy Planning getting into the issue - it may be a matter of memory, too.

*Q: I would be dubious that it did because this would be something I would think that, I mean obviously Kissinger wanted to play this very close to his chest.*

SELIGMANN: And he did.

*Q: So it wouldn't be encouraged anywhere.*

SELIGMANN: It wouldn't mean we couldn't write a memo or a study, but I do not recall anything.

*Q: How about in Policy Planning, did you work mostly on Asia or...*

SELIGMANN: Mostly Asia. An exception was the follow-through on the Wood McClintock study on overseas basing. The Symington Subcommittee in Congress held extensive hearings on the subject, and I was part of the team that coordinated State's testimony and attended the hearings. Toward the latter part of my assignment, I was pleased to have a very interesting next-office neighbor, Mike Armacost, who had come to Washington as a White House fellow.

*Q: Yes, he was teaching at Pomona College.*

SELIGMANN: Right, and he worked together with me on Asian policy, which was fun. After a year, Pomona wanted to get him back, which was the pattern for the fellows, but Washington had gotten into his blood and he stayed on, of course going on to an impressive Foreign Service and post-Foreign Service career..

*Q: Well, then in 1971, is there anything else we should cover in this thing during this Policy Planning period?*

SELIGMANN: I made a number of intensive trips for Public Affairs, giving me a chance to gain experience in public speaking as well as to see parts of the country with which I was unfamiliar. Whatever the subject I was supposed to address, I inevitably spent a good bit of time, whether it be with print media, TV, or in response to audience questions, defending our policy in Vietnam. One other semi-public-affairs episode sticks in my mind. I had been scheduled to attend a conference at Australian National University on Asian Pacific Security Policy in the 1970s at just the time the Nixon doctrine, later known as the Guam doctrine, was announced. It was a sensible policy that made it clear enough that we would honor our commitments in the region, but responding to domestic pressure on Vietnam, emphasized that we expected our friends and allies to defend themselves in the first instance. The latter, i.e., our friends and allies, however, panicked at first and interpreted the doctrine, again against the backdrop of Vietnam, as a step toward withdrawal from Asia. I literally left for Canberra the day the doctrine was announced and had in my pocket a copy of the advance text; the full text was not yet available at the conference when I arrived. The conference brought together an interesting group of government officials and think-tank academics from the region - I may have been the only USG official. Needless to say, I was quickly put on the defensive and ended up being a far more active participant than I had anticipated.

*Q. So in 1971, whither?*

SELIGMANN: Berlin. I have been saying some unkind things about Kissinger, but I thought one of his better concepts was GLOP.

*Q: Global Personnel, the idea was to get Asian hands to do some other part of the world.*

SELIGMANN: Right and vice versa. I thought this made an awful lot of sense. I had been trying to get away from Asia and had asked for an assignment to another region, but without success. As the time to return overseas approached, I was paneled for an excellent position in Asia, as political counselor in Manila. Then at last I had a chance for self-GLOP, thanks to friendship with Jim Sutterlin that went back to the time we were in Tokyo together. Jim was now German country director and offered me the job of deputy political advisor, i.e., the equivalent of political counselor, in Berlin. The assignment to Manila was broken and almost immediately, in the spring of 1971, I embarked on what may have been my hardest job in the service, a four-month intensive FSI course in German. My name notwithstanding, I spoke no German whatsoever, and soon found that there was a vast difference between starting to study Japanese at 17 and embarking on German with a family at 45. Thanks to the excellent staff at the FSI, however, I was pleased with what they were able to accomplish.

*Q: So we will pick it up in 1971 when you are off to Berlin.*

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*Today is 21 March 2000. Al, Berlin. You were there from 1971 to when?*

SELIGMANN: 1975.

*Q: So what was your job there?*

SELIGMANN: I was deputy political advisor. Berlin, as I am sure you know from others, was a peculiar place administratively. Title-wise to use that horrible “wise” phrase, everybody had at least two titles and sometimes more, and none of them were what they appeared to be on the surface. The deputy political advisor was the political counselor in charge of the political section. Berlin, however, was not an embassy. It was a “mission,” United States Mission Berlin. The chief of mission was the ambassador in Bonn, and the deputy chief of mission was the Commandant, who was a two-star general. The real head of the State Department mission was the minister, who was also the deputy commandant with the additional title of assistant deputy chief of mission. The post as a whole was considered administratively to be equivalent to an embassy. Okay, that should be clear as mud.

*Q: Were you the chief of the political section?*

SELIGMANN: Yes. By the way it turned out that it was one of the largest, if not the largest political section in the world, which I didn't realize when I took the job.

*Q: This is we are now about three years into the Nixon administration, his first term. What was the status of Berlin? I mean how was Berlin at the time you arrived there?*

SELIGMANN: We were at the opening stage of what was familiarly known as Ostpolitik, opening to the east. Considerably before I arrived, the process had begun with the negotiation of the Berlin agreement. This was a negotiation by surrogate, in effect, between East and West Germany, the surrogates being the allied powers on the one hand, Great Britain, France, and the United States, and the Soviet Union on the other, consulting closely in turn with their respective German allies, but also making sure their own rights and interests were protected. By the time I arrived in the summer, we were nearing the tail end of the talks on what the Europeans commonly called the Four Power Agreement (Berlin Agreement). The negotiations were difficult. It was tough slogging all the way, with haggling over each comma. Then what the Soviets failed to gain in negotiations, they would try to reclaim in translation, so you had to keep an eagle eye out to make sure that whatever you thought you had negotiated did not get unstuck.

*Q: Well, who was doing the negotiating?*

SELIGMANN: It was carried out on different fronts. The four ambassadors were involved, the allied ambassadors in Bonn and the Soviet ambassador to the GDR, resident in East Berlin. Within Berlin, there was close consultation with the Berlin government, the Berlin Senat, because much of what the agreement was about involved the West Berliners. The agreement was designed to provide a number of improvements in access between West Germany and West Berlin and between West Germany and West Berlin

and East Berlin. West Germans had been able to visit East Berlin; West Berliners had not. There were many other provisions, some involving minor territorial adjustments, all designed to ease tension and better relations between the two Germanies. In the back of everybody's mind was the thought that this might be the beginning of a more general improvement in relations between east and west, and it did in fact lead to the admission of both Germanies to the United Nations, and mutual recognition. Seen in retrospect, it was the beginning of the thaw in the Cold War, culminating in the tumbling of the Berlin wall almost twenty years later.

*Q: Well, you were not you know, one of the priests of Berlin. I mean we had developed almost a Berlin cult. How far the tailgates could be lowered and all this. This is not done facetiously. This is done because of the concern about salami tactics. You had to be very strong. I would have thought you being the new boy on the block would have found that there were a bunch of people dealing with Berlin not only in our mission but also in others who had been around for a long time mumbling in their beers and grumbling about we were giving away the store and you know, I mean it was the change. Did you find this sort of thing?*

SELIGMANN: Absolutely.. I was the new boy on the block as you suggest, surrounded by old Berlin hands mostly fluent in German, who had had a fair amount of experience in Berlin and/or Bonn. When it came to giving away the shop, there was much more concern in the U.S. Mission about what might be given away in Washington or Bonn or by our allies, than anything likely to emerge locally. Dave Klein, the minister, was prepared to hang tough and his spirit was infectious. One of the things that made this job such a joy for me was the way I was received by Dave, who was supportive and encouraging. The kind of detail you alluded to fell into the category of what my British colleague used to call "Berlinery." Apart from negotiation of the Berlin Agreement, a myriad of day-to-day developments called for constant awareness of detail and precedent. You got caught up in that very fast, and even though you might not have been working on Germany for five, ten, or fifteen years, you learned very quickly. You became immersed in this, and it became part of your life. And each time you thought you were beginning to master "Berlinery," our Legal Advisor or Public Safety Advisor or Senat liaison officer would come up with a bit of esoterica or precedent about which you were unaware. You gained an appreciation of the importance of good archives.

The very makeup of the political section demonstrates what I am talking about. Nobody, in the section had an ordinary title. There was the public safety officer - these are all Foreign Service officers by the way - who in theory was in charge of the police in the American sector of Berlin. Of course in practice he wasn't, but he maintained the closest liaison with the police and every police promotion had to be signed by him.

*Q: Yes. I have interviewed Bruce Flatin.*

SELIGMANN: He had that job, although not while I was there. Okay, you had the political-military officer. His duties were more like those you would anticipate from the title, but he also combined many of the functions implied in my own title of deputy

political advisor. He was really the political advisor to the Berlin command. Not the Commandant Berlin, but the brigade commander of the troops in Berlin, working on all the problems that go with a military presence in a large city.. It was a full time job. You had generally superior caliber military personnel in Berlin, who had passed through the so-called Berlin screen: a certain IQ level and behavior record so as to minimize untoward incidents in a politically sensitive place.

*Q: Oh, absolutely, I mean...*

SELIGMANN: You had one of the two or three remaining overseas State Department legal advisors, as opposed to legal attachés, in Berlin. On a number of matters reserved for allied occupation control, they still drafted legislation, in addition to which they scrutinized for approval legislation passed by the Berlin Senat. To be applied in West Berlin, any treaty signed by the FRG had to have the explicit sanction of the Allied legal advisors. We used to have legal advisors at a fair number of major posts, but Berlin and Bonn - perhaps London and Paris - were the only posts left to which they were still assigned. In the more traditional role of legal advisors, they played an important part in drafting the Berlin agreement and the implementing documents.

The old Allied Council building remained in the American sector. The British, French, and Americans met there regularly at various levels, starting with the commandants, and including about four or six other categories such as my own deputy political advisors. An empty chair was left for the Soviets; a portrait of the current Commander of Soviet Forces in Germany hung on the wall with those of the three Western Allied Commandants; and a place was left for the Soviet flag on an empty flagpole - but of course, the Soviets never came. When we met with them, it was usually one on one at another location, with the Western ally in the chair representing the other two - and it never included military representatives. To get around their unwillingness to acknowledge the authority of the Allied Council and its components, the Soviets were amenable to meet at an appropriate level with their counterparts represented by the allied power in the chair for the month.

*Q: How long did that go on?*

SELIGMANN: As far as I know until the reunification of Germany and the end of the "occupation" of Berlin, but I am not certain. You couldn't disturb the arrangements made in 1945 lest the Soviets have a pretext for saying other four-power agreements or arrangements were no longer valid. That was one of the reasons for this close scrutiny of everything that went on. If we were meticulous, I would say the British were even more so. For example, there were to be no German aircraft in Berlin. On one occasion, a model helicopter made of wood was on display at a German trade fair. It couldn't fly but the British went up in smoke and insisted that it be removed. We thought this was pretty silly, but it was in their sector. We would battle over things like this as well as more serious matters. The protocol officer was also in the political section. His job was not to decide who sits where at the table, although curiously enough, he got into a little of that. The main job of the allied protocol officers was to serve as a low-level liaison channel to

the Soviets through the Soviet protocol officer stationed in the Soviet embassy in East Berlin. If you had a problem and you didn't want it to escalate, you sent your protocol officer over to talk to the Soviets and see if you couldn't iron it out, or whoever was in the chair would take on the task. The Senat liaison officers had second offices at the Berlin city hall. The Berliners being pretty feisty, they wanted to stretch the limits of their authority, but the allies had to make sure they didn't exceed them. Now that might have gone against the grain of what we would have liked, but nevertheless it was important. On the other hand, sometimes we would have to argue to try to rein in the French, particularly, who wanted to keep a tighter hand on the West Berlin authorities than we did.

*Q: Well, I would have thought with the public safety officers acting on promotions, the allies watching this all these things...were the West Berliners restive under this or did everybody know the game so what could have been sort of a difficult, almost semi-colonial position was accepted by all because this was part of the price they had to pay to be free.*

SELIGMANN: The Berliners understood the game. We were still welcomed and liked. Our presence was something the Berliners very much favored and supported and expressed infinite concern about being maintained. Much of what I have been talking about was not oppressive in any way as far as the life of the Berliners was concerned, and aware of West Berlin's isolation from the FRG, the allied military presence, especially that of the U.S., which had the only force that was a bit more than symbolic, was something they liked to see. City officials were not always happy at having the Allies look over their shoulder. And, yes, the residents of Zehlendorf did not like to hear our tanks rumbling in the streets in the early morning on their way out to maneuver in the Grunewald - that was the kind of thing we had to worry about and in response to complaints try to work out a compromise, e.g., have the tanks set out at a better hour or not so often or take another route. But while I was there the 25th anniversary of the Berlin airlift was celebrated. The emotions that poured out in support of the allied forces at that time was impressive. In fact our air force commander at Tempelhof was the so-called candy bomber, Colonel Halverson, who was known for dropping chocolate bars as his plane came in during the airlift.

*Q: Did they fly in a C-54 and all of that?*

SELIGMANN: We probably did. I know that the open house at Tempelhof drew hordes of Berliners, including many old ladies who had helped unload the coal and other supplies that were flown in by the lift and were eager to gush over any uniformed American in sight.

*Q: When you got there in 1971, was it understood by mutual consent that because of the negotiations that were going on, this was not a particular period of testing on the part of the Soviet forces and the allied forces?*

SELIGMANN: Not in the sense of risking a major crisis, but there was a certain amount of testing. We still played all kinds of games. For example, we still had our military

mission based in Potsdam outside of Berlin in East Germany, just as the Soviets had a military mission based in Frankfurt - we would rotate our people in and out of West Berlin, where they were quartered and they would stay at the Mission house in Potsdam for a week or so at a time. The four missions (the British and French had their own) were supposedly free to move around the respective host countries and observe, but they were not free to go into classified military installations. Both sides being in the intelligence business, however, they tested the limits. For example, when an American major attached to our mission was found too close to some air facility, he was returned to us trussed up like a pig on a pole. That's demeaning and embarrassing. He shouldn't have been where he was, but that was the game. They knew it, we knew it, and this sort of thing went on. You had occasional testing of air-corridor procedures, or the nightly duty train to Frankfurt would be halted in East Germany for an hour or two, but, again, no major incidents while I was there. Part of the political section's bailiwick was the BASC (Berlin Air Safety Center), which functioned day-in, day-out, and was one of a few vestiges of Soviet presence in West Berlin. Three Allied and a Soviet air controller sat around a table in the old Allied Command Authority building, the only active office in that sprawling, otherwise ghost-like edifice. They handed cards back and forth noting departures and arrivals from the four airfields serving greater Berlin so that you didn't have collisions. That functioned well, even though the Soviets from time to time would scrawl on a card that they could not guarantee air safety, e.g., if they objected to some expansion of air service by the allied carriers that operated the only civilian air services in West Berlin - or they might announce the closing of an air corridor for maneuvers, which we would protest and ignore. As I indicated, these threats were not consummated on my watch. You still had Spandau prison, down to one prisoner, Rudolph Hess, who regrettably (for the sake of historians) wouldn't talk about what his wartime mission to Britain was all about, at least until released. The Soviets would not agree to that (presumably to keep this bit of a West Berlin perk going) and Hess died without divulging the story. The allied powers, including the Russians, each furnished a team of prison wardens and each month alternated a company of military guards. It was the custom to have the changing-of-the-guard ceremony followed by a party hosted by the outgoing side. Our parties got smaller and smaller, but the Russian party remained lavish with endless drinking designed to immobilize the attendees for the rest of the afternoon. The Soviet's would invite a long list of military and civilians from each of the allied missions, but we scaled down our attendance until we had a token representation: the legal advisors, responsible for the political side of Spandau and one or two others to keep him company. I went to one party for the experience, but refused to go to any more.

*Q: Who was the head of the mission while you were there?*

SELIGMANN: David Klein, a German hand who had also served in Moscow. He has published a book the Berlin Agreement which I should have read but have not. I thought Dave was a remarkable man, feisty but understanding of the underlying issues. He was a guardian of non-erosion if you will, of existing rights and was not going to see them whittled away, especially at the expense of the West Berliners. In the negotiation he stood up to American officials at various levels who were so enamored of the concept of Ostpolitik that they tended to get impatient with arguments over language or seeming

minutiae that they saw as holding up progress. He felt correctly that if you were not careful, you could lose in the details some of the improvements you were trying to achieve.

*Q: Well, I think there was the feeling by some, that behind Henry Kissinger's maneuverings and all there was a general feeling because he was a creature of the Vietnam, you know, pulling out of there at the time, essentially that the United States' commitment abroad including Germany was diminishing, and in a way it was almost a pessimistic thing that the United States didn't have an unlimited amount of time to be around so we better cut a deal while we could. I don't know if that was concern or was this felt at all?*

SELIGMANN: It may well have been looked at that way. I saw it more as his desire to be a hero and the author, the achiever of Ostpolitik, and therefore let's not bother with all of this trivial detail. What does it matter anyway. For example, toward the very end of the negotiation, he made a trip to Moscow. Without consulting anybody he signed off on a joint communiqué in which he let the Soviets slip in a reference to some point on which we had struggled for weeks to pin the Soviets down on language, in effect reversing what had been achieved. My memory is fuzzy on the details, but it may have had to do with the strengthening of ties between West Berlin and the FRG. We were appalled and eventually retrieved the situation, but he just did not see any need for this sort of "haggling."

*Q. Who was the chancellor of Germany at the time?*

SELIGMANN: Willy Brandt. Ostpolitik is a phrase associated in the first place with Willy Brandt.

*Q: What was the feeling that you were getting from your colleagues about Willy Brandt?*

SELIGMANN: I think many German conservatives felt there was a little bit of what I was just talking about in Willy Brandt, in that he wanted to get on with the job and get Ostpolitik on the road, but even if they argued he should take a stronger stance, I don't think anyone felt he was seriously going to sacrifice Berlin interests.

*Q: Of course he had been mayor of Berlin and he had stood firm at that job.*

SELIGMANN: True, although some might have argued he was tainted by a Bonn perspective in which West Berlin was perhaps a smaller part of the picture.

*Q: Well, there is always the accusation that the United States in its diplomacy wants a quick fix and quick results, and sometimes we can be led down the garden path a bit because we lack the patience to hang on. I suppose this is a concern.*

SELIGMANN: By and large we stood more steadfast than the British were inclined to. The French in turn could be pretty stubborn about making any concessions to the Soviets. Everyone had their own motives. After all the French-German relationship was

something special, as was the British-German relationship. We were in a sense more dispassionate about some of this. So there was a lot of interplay there on many matters.

*Q: What was your impression of let's say the British representation and working with them.*

SELIGMANN: At my level it was very good. I had excellent relationships with my successive counterparts, whom I found for the most part like-minded. At some levels it was more difficult. As acting political advisor I had gone to Bonn to attend a meeting of the "Bonn Group," created by the three allied embassies to mastermind the negotiations. I no longer remember the subject, but we emerged from the meeting with some matter pending that had to be referred back to our respective capitals. I know we in the Berlin Mission were not entirely enthralled by the recommendation. On the plane back to Tempelhof, Teddy Jackson, the British Polad, started to tell me that when I got back I would have to get off a telegram saying XYZ. Aware that this was not likely to be what Dave Klein would recommend, I ignored the fact that he outranked me, turned to him, recalling John Quincy Adams's famous quote, and said, "You know, I am not a cockboat in the wake of a British man 'o war." So we had that kind of interplay. By the way, one of the unique features of Berlin was you had a very open, frank, occasionally caustic channel of communication known as "IBs" or Inner Berlin messages. These were encrypted telegrams,, just like those sent to Washington, except they were exchanged among counterparts in the three allied missions and didn't go outside of Berlin. I hope some of these will be open reading if they are not already because they provide unvarnished, sometimes humorous insights into relations among the allies.

*Q: What about dealing with the French?*

SELIGMANN: We had nicknames for some of our more obstreperous colleagues, but my counterpart was fine. I had no problems; he was easy to deal with. There were others who were not. The minister as I recall was a very good and easy man. The political advisor was difficult.

*Q: Well, it is just that so often basic policy, the French you know by our light seemed to deliberately go out of their way to take a different course. Taking something like Berlin, this was not a place to play around.*

SELIGMANN: They didn't play around but they made life needlessly complicated. You sometimes had the feeling that the French would not agree to something just because the British and Americans agreed to it.

*Q: How would you operate, I mean you, yourself? What were you doing? What would almost a typical day be?*

SELIGMANN: There was a good deal of variety built into the job by virtue of the broad range of responsibilities of the individual members of the political section. Especially where the allies could not agree among themselves or where there was a problem with

German counterparts, the deputy political advisors often attempted to resolve problems at their level. This made for a full agenda, especially when the U.S. was in the chair every third month. I might be asked by our Senat liaison officer to intervene with a higher ranking Senat official, short of what would be the equivalent of the mayor or deputy mayor. On the military side, I worked closely with key staff officers and the brigade commander - the commandant's office was just down the hall, so there was a good bit of easy, informal interplay. We had a full reporting load with the usual editing and review responsibilities. Despite the peculiar structure of the mission and the absence of a normal diplomatic corps in Berlin, in order to reinforce the status of West Berlin, we encouraged as much foreign representation as possible in the form of allied "military missions" that had been maintained by some countries since the end of World War II, or consulates - this often meant trying to persuade these representations not to close down. The FRG foreign ministry had a representative with the rank of ambassador in Berlin. The minister would see him, but others of us would talk to him too, socialize at parties and what not. You did everything you would do in a normal political section except you were preoccupied with these very special conditions.

Once the Quadripartite Agreement was signed in September 1971, the pace of work picked up considerably, inasmuch as it would not go into effect until the crucial inner-German agreements were finalized, specifying the many modalities required for implementation. This meant daily close consultation with the Senat, which of course, was working closely with Bonn on the negotiations. In addition to facilitating transportation between West Berlin and the FRG and visits by West Berliners to East Berlin, there were also some minor territorial adjustments to be made. It also meant working together with political advisor, Buck Borg, on negotiations with the Russians on arrangements for the establishment of the consulate general and commercial offices they were permitted to set up by terms of the agreement.

*Q: I would think that there would be I mean sort of you know, we might do the normal diplomatic things, but in a way you were all on a team. I am talking about Germans, French. I mean you had it was much more collegial than just sort of separate powers dealing with each other.*

SELIGMANN: Absolutely. The basic objectives, after all, were the same. By the same token, there were nuances. Here were the four powers negotiating a Berlin agreement that we all felt would lead at least to mutual recognition of the two Germanies. While unification seemed a long way down the road, we pledged allegiance to it on the allied side - I don't think the Russians ever did. I used to quip, and I think there is still some truth in this, that probably with the possible exception of the United States none of the other parties involved, meaning the French, the British, and the Russians really wanted it I wasn't sure about ourselves.

*Q: At one time I remember you know, we had two very firm policies. One was the unification of Germany and the other was the unification of Korea, and the question was I think, the longer we can keep them apart the better. I mean these were two tigers that we didn't particularly want to let loose.*

SELIGMANN: Yes. I think we were ambivalent on the subject. I am not sure about the others.

*Q: Did you have much dealing with your Soviet counterpart?*

SELIGMANN: Quite a bit, yes. I had more later on in my tour when I was moved up to be the political advisor. At that point I dealt with the Soviet political advisor, but I did see my counterpart, his deputy fairly often. As is so often the case, he was a KGB man and therefore much more cosmopolitan, pleasant and easier to deal with than some of the career diplomats.. The Soviets would turn it on and off. You might have very easy relations for a time, and then they would try to make a point by tightening up and making life tough; if not causing an incident, at least taking advantage of one. Incidents happened all the time and it was how you managed them. You could do so smoothly at a low level or you could escalate them and make it difficult. It was almost like football. They would put in their offensive team or their defensive team. At one time, they sent back to Berlin as their political advisor an old German hand - I can't remember his name anymore - who had a reputation for being extremely nasty and tough. They did it to make a point.

*Q: In the normal relations with Berlin at that time the whole thing with its apparatus besides the negotiations were sort of going on in a way over your head, was it a pretty static time? I mean it was none of the or was there any great testing or...*

SELIGMANN: Not so much military testing - I mentioned the occasional probing of allied rights in the air and land corridors - as legal testing. Apart from improving conditions for the West Berliners and easing communication, a major purpose of the Berlin Agreement was to put an end to challenges to the status of West Berlin. The Soviets, for example, often objected to the application of FRG laws or treaties to West Berlin, even though special procedures had been followed for allied approval to assure there was no intrusion on certain reserved areas, such as air rights. These challenges always had to be answered or you would risk acquiescing in a Soviet or GDR position by default. Once the inner-German agreements were in place and the final protocol activating the Berlin agreement was signed by the Foreign Ministers in the spring of 1972, there was still a breaking-in period before everything ran smoothly, but by and large it worked well.

There was a less tangible area that we and the Berliners were much concerned about, that is the future of the city. As long as Berlin was a focal point of cold-war tension, the Berliners were assured full attention from the western allies. They were also the recipients of a variety of subsidies from the FRG. Also, for a time, thanks in large part to the presence of Siemens, Berlin was still the largest industrial city in West Germany. But not much investment was coming into West Berlin, it was an artificial situation, and people worried whether the agreement wouldn't result in the city being neglected or forgotten in the greater scheme of things. There were ideas that West Berlin should become an East-West trade center, a concept that never materialized. There was also much emphasis on the city's cultural assets: theater, museums, the Philharmonie and our

own RIAS (Radio in the American Sector) orchestra, which was first rate. Aspen Institute, after the agreement, established a branch conference center in Berlin, headed by Shep Stone, a prominent old Berlin hand. So there was much interest and support for all of these cultural activities, backed by Dave Klein's personal engagement. Let's see, what was the other part of your question?

*Q: Well, I was wondering, most of this was in a way was a fairly normal period, not one of great testing on the part of particularly the Soviets trying to close down highways or change things around.*

SELIGMANN: Occasionally the American duty train, which had run every single night since 1945 or whenever this started between Frankfurt and Berlin would be held up. (The French and British had their own duty trains: the former running once a week to Strasbourg, and the latter during the daytime on a short run to Braunschweig or New Brunswick, i.e., Checkpoint Alpha, but ours was by all odds the most important.) Once in awhile they would stop that. The train would stop at the checkpoints on the GDR border where it was boarded by the Soviets, who occasionally held it up on one pretext or another. Then tensions would flare up and our operation center would alert the Mission duty officer. Usually the train rolled on before too long, but if it was delayed an hour or more we might protest to the Soviets at the working level. At least while I was there, such incidents never escalated. In the air corridors, the Soviets might alert us to maneuvers by their air force, which we protested, noting that we held them accountable for air safety. They might then follow up with some "near misses," but, again, while I was there, not so near as to become major incidents. (In earlier times there had been much more serious incidents.) You also had the question of exfiltration, GIs smuggling East Germans out of East Berlin in their cars. The East Germans and Soviets knew this was going on and we did our best to discourage it, making it clear that such activity would be the end of anybody's career, because the GIs were doing this for the most part, not for humanitarian purposes but for money. Once when I was political advisor, the Soviet political advisor called on me, a bit unusual to begin with, bringing along an album of pictures showing a car with U.S. military plates being stopped by East German police in East Berlin just short of Checkpoint Charlie; the trunk being opened; and an East German "escapee" being found. It was pretty clear the whole operation was a setup. This being a don't-roil-the-waters period, the Soviet Polad was considerate of our embarrassment; did not thump the table; and made his protest more in sorrow than in anger, but they held the GI concerned. As tension built up while we demanded his release admitting no wrong-doing, the boy's father flew in from Hong Kong. Our general policy was to contain an incident; try to iron it out at the lowest possible level, starting with protocol officers; and move up the line only as required. Of course, we kept the embassy in Bonn and, if necessary, Washington informed each step of the way, but as long as they were satisfied with what we were doing, they did not micromanage incidents. In this instance following repeated representations, the culprit was released after two or three days.

*Q: How about the Berlin Wall per se. I mean were there escapes around there? Were things pretty well sealed up in East Germany when you were there?*

SELIGMANN: They were never totally sealed. Once in awhile there would be a spectacular escape into West Berlin of some sort, by balloon, or underwater across the demarcation line where it was a waterway, but that sort of thing had become more and more difficult. Escapes across the GDR's non-wall boundaries were marginally easier. One of the interesting things in the Berlin agreement was that by inadvertence, when they divvied up Berlin into the four sectors, we did not immediately occupy Steinstucken, a little island village geographically detached from the rest of Berlin but administratively part of the American sector. Later we caught up with this lapse and helicoptered an MP detachment there to signify we regarded it as part of West Berlin. Subsequently, arrangements were made so that the postman, doctors, certain tradespeople, etc., could travel back and forth with special permits. The Berlin agreement provided for a corridor of access, which turned into a road-width extension of the wall.

*Q: This is tape six side one with Al Seligmann. You were saying as part of this agreement, was the agreement signed while you were there?*

SELIGMANN: The agreement proper was signed in September 1971, and the final protocol putting it into effect was signed in June 1972. Finding a venue for the signing in September was a bit of a problem. They settled on the old Allied Kommandatura building, which had not been used except by the BASC since the Russians walked out. The only trouble was that the building was in disrepair, and there was nothing much left in the way of furniture, et al. Being located in the American sector, it fell our lot to furnish at least a few rooms of that vast building; we scrounged about to the point that some of the dining room chairs in our house were borrowed along with furniture from other houses - my wife helped with the flower arranging. At one point while we were still haggling over last-minute language adjustments, two things occurred: first, the British Foreign Minister (Heath) was grouse hunting in Scotland and "unreachable" for consultation; then Ken Rush, our Ambassador, who had made a quick turn-around trip to consult with President Nixon in San Clemente, returned exhausted and was ordered by his doctor to stand down. Although he was quite ill, no one believed it and Rush was credited with an astute bout of diplomatic illness. Last-minute obstacles cleared away, the agreement was signed, but the incident illustrates the attention paid by all parties, particularly the Berliners themselves, to every detail.

*Q: You caught Berlinomania or whatever it was.*

SELIGMANN: Very contagious. I became a true believer in no time, which was easy, fighting for a good cause.

*Q: Well, it worked.*

SELIGMANN: It worked. The inner-German agreements arranged the modalities, procedures for visits, transit, exchanges of territory, and the like, much of which had to be tested in practice: for example, how many Deutsche marks do you have to exchange for east German currency when you go to visit East Berlin. As I mentioned earlier, one of the provisions permitted the Soviets to open certain offices in West Berlin, so we had to

provide office space as well as housing for their Consul General. The British and French were happy to have them locate in the American Sector, which meant we had to take on the job. The Senat came up with property they either owned or could make available, which we would look at and then show the Soviets. We acted generously for our part, but for a while, I felt like a real estate agent.

*Q: Well, did you find that you all were acting as the screeners, advisors working on the details. I mean they would be worked out supposedly at a higher level, but you were the people on the ground for a lot of this stuff and looking at it very closely?*

SELIGMANN: Right. At the same time, partly because Dave Klein was minister for this period and had the big picture very much in mind, we acted purposefully, and were not just out to be nit-pickers

*Q. Did the Watergate business affect, I mean was there concern because Nixon left in 1974. I mean there was the year of 1973. Was there a concern this quite strong president in foreign affairs and we were in the middle of some crucial agreements on Germany. Did this have any effect on us?*

SELIGMANN: It was strange, you know. We were all following Watergate closely, but at the same time it seemed much more remote than if we had been in Washington. This much was certainly true in Berlin as it was in many other parts of the world: our German friends couldn't understand what we were doing to this fine man, Nixon. He had accomplished so much and had such a good grasp of foreign policy: why were we foolish Americans undermining this man?

*Q: Oh, yes. I was in Greece and getting the same thing.*

SELIGMANN: That definitely was part of the climate. As far as affecting policy and where we were going in a more fundamental serious sense, I don't think it became an issue, but there was concern it might. There was another eye-opening internal aspect to Watergate. I soon discovered that many of our top military officers felt vehemently that Nixon was being undermined by subversive political forces; Watergate was not a good subject for dinner-table conversation. The thought even crossed my mind that some sort of military intervention in politics, a development I had always considered inconceivable, could not totally be ruled out.

*Q: Were you watching the ebb and flow of the population? Was there a concern that West Berliners might, too many might leave and all the young people and all that?*

SELIGMANN: It was happening and once the agreement went into effect, that concern escalated if anything. While West Berlin was an attractive place to live and work, new jobs were not opening up and opportunities seemed limited compared with the rest of Germany during what was otherwise a period of economic growth. Frei Universitat, Free University, while attractive in many ways, was a haven for draft-dodgers because Berlin still remained after the agreement as before, a demilitarized city: a young person who was there would not be drafted. The two seemed to go hand in hand. It became a hotbed of left-wing activity to the point that professors were leaving who didn't want to have much

to do with this. So, yes, there was a feeling there was no future for Berlin. Now that everything was peaceful and security was guaranteed, no one was going to pay any attention to Berlin. A spirit of vibrancy was lacking.

*Q: Were the Helsinki accords negotiations going on about this time or not.*

SELIGMANN: I don't recall.

*Q: Well, probably they may have come...*

SELIGMANN: A little later I think.

*Q: Yes, I think they were under Ford. How did you find...was there us and them as far as our embassy in Bonn? How well were we working together at that time?*

SELIGMANN: Pretty well. There was tension during the negotiation, less afterwards, but there was always a certain amount of tension between Bonn. Part of it was personality. Both Jock Dean, who played a key role in the negotiations and Dave were strong willed people. More fundamentally, we in Berlin felt we were guardians of the Berlin birthright and that if you weren't careful Bonn (and Washington), in the name of detente might underestimate the significance of what might seem on surface to be minor concessions.

*Q: Were you getting a lot of Congressional delegations or people coming over and getting their picture taken at the Berlin Wall?*

SELIGMANN: Not much of that.

*Q: I mean, this is...*

SELIGMANN: And that was part of the problem. Americans didn't come to Berlin. They didn't fuss over Berlin.

*Q: You were beginning to feel you were a little off the way.*

SELIGMANN: Eleanor Dulles might. Kissinger finally made his Berlin visit, as I recall in 1974.

*Q: Odd that he didn't make it for so long.*

SELIGMANN: We thought so. Even then, there were some interesting episodes. For one thing, we had to plead for him to have the traditional meeting with the American troops. No ranking U, S, official could visit Berlin and not include such a symbolic event. He didn't want to do it, but pressed hard, he reluctantly agreed to a brief meeting with a contingent in the courtyard of the mission. He wouldn't go and see them. By happenstance, both General Cobb, the commandant, and the minister (the deputy commandant) were at the NATO war college at the time of the visit, so I was acting

commandant. I had received strict instructions that Kissinger, known to be paranoid on the subject, did not want to be exposed to any threat and did not want to be out on the streets of Berlin any more than could possibly be helped. We had originally wanted him to drive around the city but insofar as was feasible, but we kept him on the staatbahn, as the autobahn is known in Berlin, and on other direct routes lined with security police behind every bush. The German authorities had a big lunch at the Orangerie in Schloss Charlottenburg. Everything went smoothly, but when I got back to my office about an hour after he departed, I had a call from Ambassador Hillenbrand asking what went wrong. He said that Kissinger had complained that he had not had an opportunity to interact with the Berliners. I explained what had happened, and gratefully, he backed me up. One other incident. Kissinger turned down a request for a meeting with the press, but said he would have a plane-side press conference at Tegel airport before he left. The press contingent was waiting around the plane when he drove up; Kissinger hopped out and ran up the steps and the plane immediately took off, leaving the unhappy press stranded.

Toward the end of my tour, following the mutual recognition of the FRG and GDR and our consequent recognition of the GDR, we opened our mission in East Berlin, our embassy to the GDR (we were careful never to say “in the GDR,” inasmuch as we hewed to the end to our theology that Berlin was one city under four-power occupation.) We in West Berlin were not much involved in the actual setting up of the mission, but we were prepared to help to the extent we could, provide logistical support and whatnot. John Sherman Cooper was named as our first ambassador, but Mrs. Cooper didn't want to have anything to do with West Berlin. She understood the Berlin theology and all, but he was the ambassador to the GDR, and she did not want to dilute his standing. So she flew to Paris to have her hair done, and would do no shopping at the West Berlin commissary or PX. The British and French were pragmatic about this, but it made it difficult for the rest of the staff in East Berlin. One day when the minister was absent from post, I got a call from Mrs. Cooper. She wanted the army band in Berlin to come over and play at the embassy's July 4 reception. I thought that was a marvelous idea because it met our tenet that there was only one Berlin. So I readily agreed and set it up - no problem. But then Brandon Grove, the DCM called with follow-up instructions on what they were to play: I said the Star Spangled Banner was fine, and the Star Spangled Banner, followed by the GDR national anthem. I said that they could play anything else, but they could not play the GDR national anthem because that would indicate we regarded East Berlin as part of East Germany. The issue escalated, Mrs. Cooper called Ambassador Hillenbrand, but he backed us up.

*Q. This strikes me as the theology really going astray. We had an embassy in a place which was not considered part of, I mean an embassy to a country in a place which was not considered by us to be part of that country.*

SELIGMANN: That is correct.

*Q: I mean, it sounds like Alice in Wonderland.*

SELIGMANN: Yes. Well, much of this was Alice in Wonderland.

*Q: Well, how did we square this particular circle?*

SELIGMANN: As far as the band was concerned, they came over in dress uniforms on an army bus, which doubtless raised a few East German police eyebrows at the checkpoint, but all went famously. As for the larger issue, as far as I know, we never did resolve it until the wall came down. I am not familiar with the pragmatic relations between the Embassy and the Mission in the rest of the period up to 1990. I should find out because it would be interesting if any of this changed. Embassy children in due course were allowed to take a bus to the army school in West Berlin, but this was an exception at the time. Dave Klein had to return to the States for personal reasons for an extended period after the arrival of the Coopers. I called on the Ambassador at his office, and tried several times to extend hospitality to the Coopers but with no success.

*Q: But the basic point was that although we had an embassy in Berlin, we still were very careful not to acknowledge that this was a separate...*

SELIGMANN: Not to erode allied rights, because you risked eroding what we had negotiated: use of the access routes as opposed to the transit routes between West Berlin and West Germany and other things. To give an example of testing the Berlin Agreement: it provided for direct access through East Germany to Eastern Europe. Say you wanted to go to Poland or Czechoslovakia, foreigners could always do this with passports, but until the Berlin Agreement, the allies would not accept stamps from the East Germans in diplomatic or official passports at the border of Berlin. We could only travel on transit routes passing through Soviet controls, not on access routes. With the recognition of the GDR, there was no reason why allied officials shouldn't travel directly to Czechoslovakia, Poland, wherever. It was months, however, before the British, French, and ourselves could agree on a procedure to test the waters. If possible, we wanted to use the checkpoints at the access routes headed toward Hamburg and to the south, while avoiding, at least initially, the border at Dreilinden, where the allies had always passed through Russian controls on the "transit route," as opposed to GDR controls on the same road in its capacity as an "access route." The French, I think, were adamant that you must travel only on the access routes. All of us agreed that would be ideal, but the deputy political advisors (I was still in that position) finally worked out a compromise whereby if we were turned down on the access routes, we would go through GDR controls at Dreilinden. It was also agreed that I would be the guinea pig, traveling with my family to Poland. So, GDR visas in hand, we arrived in the dark at about five in the morning at the checkpoint leading to Hamburg. A sleepy East German official came out of the control booth, scratched his head, took our passports and went back in. After about fifteen minutes, during which he presumably called some higher official, he came back with our passports and stamped visas and asked in a friendly way why we wanted to head toward Hamburg, which was hardly the direct route to Poland. We told him that we liked to see the countryside in the early morning and planned to connect with the ring road, equivalent to a beltway, around Berlin, and then head for Poland. He shrugged his shoulders and sent us on our way. We drove first to Krakow crossing the GDR border to the south, and all went well until we turned up on the way back from Warsaw at the

checkpoint at Frankfurt-am-Oder to the north. In the interim, the GDR officials concerned had done their homework, and when we said we wanted to reenter West Berlin at the same checkpoint we had used before, they refused and marked our visas good only for exit at Dreilinden, a procedure acceptable to the US Mission from the start.

*Q: Well, what about East Berlin? We made quite a point didn't we of getting our people into East Berlin and out to make sure we weren't losing access rights?*

SELIGMANN: Absolutely, although the British and French did not permit their military, or at least their enlisted men, to enter with their own cars. We had modalities worked out long before my tour, which we continued to observe after the Berlin Agreement, whereby you showed a so-called flag card issued through the Soviets to the East German guards, without opening your car window, thereby preserving the fiction that we were not submitting to East German controls on a border within Berlin. We would occasionally go over to opera, theater, or a museum, or just go sightseeing. With the Berlin agreement in effect, you could also travel in East Germany, which some of our people began to do. We went to Potsdam on a GDR visa. Before the agreement, it had been possible for at least a year or two to obtain via the Soviets a GDR visa on a separate piece of paper, i.e., not in our passports, to visit the Leipzig spring and fall fairs. Once in Leipzig, you could obtain extension visas to visit other parts of the GDR. Mission staff covering East Germany did this regularly; we made one such trip, going on to Weimar and Dresden.

*Q: Was the Soviet army as you traveled about very evident or did they keep them pretty well tucked away?*

SELIGMANN: We didn't do that much traveling in East Germany; when we did, they seemed reasonably well tucked away. Within East Berlin, you had the feeling you were being followed wherever you went. My very first trip there was a bit harrowing. At the time our military license plates gave away just who you were by the simulated rank and initials: in my case ALS 003 (this changed later on for security reasons). Never having soloed before through Checkpoint Charlie, we did so on a Sunday morning when there would be little traffic just to see what East Berlin looked like. Before long I found myself being tailed by a Soviet jeep: first it would stay half a block away and then six inches. This went on for some time. It was very unpleasant. I pulled into a parking lot, and he followed me into the parking lot. After a while we gave up and went home. That was early in the game right after we arrived, leaving us with the feeling that they were sending a message that they knew who you were and what you were doing. It was, however, the only time we had such an experience.

*Q: Did you have any contact with East Berlin officials? I mean were you dealing with East Berlin officials?*

SELIGMANN: Never. That was a no-no that did not change while I was there. You dealt with them to the extent of showing your flag card at the checkpoint. It changed just a bit after the agreement. Whereas we previously kept the car window tightly rolled up and flipped the page of the flag card in response to a gesture to do so, after the Berlin

Agreement went into effect, we would roll down the window just a bit and the guard might ask if we were going to the opera; on the way back he would ask if we had enjoyed the performance. So relations were a little more civil and less stiff. But even after the agreement, my daughter was out to visit, and a friend had given her a postcard to mail to a friend in East Germany. She told her she was going into East Berlin and would drop it into a postbox while she was there. On the way back to Checkpoint Charlie, we stopped by the curb where there was a large post box in front of what I believe was the main post office; it was a Sunday and there was no traffic in sight. An East German policeman appeared out of nowhere and said, "You can't stop here." When I protested that we were only stopping a moment to mail a postcard, he drew himself up and said that "in unsere teil der staat" ("in our part of the city") you had to follow the rules. I thought this was great, inasmuch as it substantiated our view that it was one city with four sectors. Apart from officials, you could visit other East Germans and we had a few contacts through introductions. That could be painful, because we had the feeling on at least one occasion, that they wanted help in getting out. We were not about to play games and jeopardize our position.

*Q. I suppose you had the usual problem with GI's getting drunk and getting in difficulties that way?*

SELIGMANN: Occasionally, but not too often. I mentioned exfiltration. There were a couple of other incidents that were more serious. Going back to early occupation days the three allies sent armed MP patrols daily into East Berlin, asserting our rights of access to a single city; the Soviets similarly had a jeep go over to the West. I am not sure whether this continued until the Wall came down but I suspect so. One of our patrols was probably where it shouldn't have been, near a GDR kaserne (barracks.) The next thing you knew it was blocked by a GDR jeep in front and in short order by another behind it. It was one of only two times while I was in Berlin that we opened the Emergency Command Center for other than drill purposes. By chance, on both occasions I was acting commandant. (the only place in the world where a Foreign Service officer can be a commandant). Some of the military wanted immediately to put another armed patrol into Berlin to demonstrate our access rights. I vetoed this, suggesting instead that we prepare such a patrol immediately, have it ready near Checkpoint Charlie in sight of the East Germans, but hold off while we protested, starting at the protocol-officer level. I do not recall whether we escalated the level of our protest beyond that, but in an hour or two, the patrol was permitted to go on its way. We kept the embassy and our allies fully informed, but I was pleased that Bonn let us work our way out without intervention. Something of a similar order happened one other time, but I do not remember the details. These were the kind of incidents which if handled carelessly had the potential of becoming nasty incidents, but nothing resembling a nasty incident happened while I was there - both sides were in a restraint mode.

Once I had to "rescue" our high school principal, who was caught by our MPs, not by the other side, black-marketing. It was a profitable business to go over to East Berlin to buy clocks for resale in West Berlin. He got caught bringing in a couple of grandfather clocks. The trouble was he was an outstanding principal, far better than his predecessor, highly

regarded by students and parents alike. If he had been no good as a principal, I would have had no problem at all: off with his head. I believe we let him off with a reprimand and deprived him of his right to visit East Berlin, but kept him on as principal.

*Q: You left this, was there anything else we should discuss on this? Did your job change really much after our embassy was set up in East Berlin?*

SELIGMANN: Not a great deal. We kept in close professional, if not social touch, but continued for our part to deal through the Soviets rather than directly with GDR officials.

*Q: You left there in 1975. Did you think there would be a united Germany in the foreseeable future in your estimation and maybe your colleagues?*

SELIGMANN: I think most people felt that someday there would be a united Germany. I think nobody felt it would happen any time in the near future.

*Q: I am talking about 15 years later.*

SELIGMANN: It was already an anomaly to have a military presence in a city like Berlin 30 years after the war, but who could tell in 1975 whether our troops would be there for another 30 or 60 or 100 years. There was just no way of knowing. At least that was my feeling.

*Q: I don't think anybody who had, you know, knew the situation thought of this as being over the horizon.*

SELIGMANN: No, and I don't think any of the Germans did either as far as I know.

*Q: What about political life in Berlin?*

SELIGMANN: It was vibrant. The socialists were in power, although that didn't persist. There were strong political feelings; Willy Brandt either in Bonn or Berlin was not universally liked by all the powers that be. There were very strong anti-socialist feelings on the part of the conservatives. So there was good political competition. It was a stable situation in the sense that there was no domestic political unrest.

*Q: Well, in 1975, whither?*

SELIGMANN: I had hoped to stay on perhaps another year in the political advisor slot, but to my pleasant surprise was promoted out of the job. My predecessor Buck Borg was in line to make (the old) FSO-1, so I simply ruled out any possibility I would be on the same promotion list. While recouping from a bout of pancreatitis in the Canaries, however, I received a telegram that we both made it, so we had no choice. The new minister, incidentally, replacing Dave Klein, was Scott George, who had been in my class at the army Japanese language school. I went back to the senior seminar which seemed to me to come at just the right time.

*Q: What did you do in the senior seminar that was particularly worthwhile there?*

SELIGMANN: I am sure you have heard this over and over: more than anything else you deepened your knowledge about the United States. I can't tell you how valuable that was to me in subsequent work in the Foreign Service for the rest of my career to be able to speak with a renewed sense of confidence about our country. It paid off not only in working with non-Americans abroad, but in relations with visiting Americans of all sorts and resident Americans overseas. It was an unforgettable experience to see a mega-ranch, visit a coal mine, visit factories, talk with state and municipal officials, civic leaders, union officials, etc., and here in Washington to meet in a small group with outstanding government and non-government leaders. After the Foreign Service, it paid off in subsequent work involving the organization of various exchange programs for both Japanese and Americans.

*Q: I was in the session just before you were, 1974-1975. No I found everyone still feeds off this. I mean one of my greatest recollections was going through Detroit and seeing the devastation because after riots and fires and all that, it looked like something that I had seen right after WWII.*

SELIGMANN: We went to the south Bronx where if not the riots, vandalism, arson, and gang warfare had left in their wake a similar landscape.. We talked with the Congressman who represented that district and took us around. These were incredible experiences, yes. Then the opportunity to do a case study.

*Q: What did you do your case study on?*

SELIGMANN: A large number if not most of my colleagues who picked a subject that took them overseas either did their case study in places they had already been, where they wanted to visit old friends and catch up, or at posts they wanted to be assigned to, where they might pave the way for their next assignment, or, if they felt more certain about their prospects, measure the windows for drapes so to speak. Like most of those who worked on domestic issues, I decided to pick an area entirely new to me. I was pondering possibilities when I had lunch in New York with Jim Sutterlin, now Deputy Secretary General at the UN. Jim, who had enabled me to get to Berlin, again set me on course. I don't know whether he had his tongue in cheek or not, but he suggested that I work on the Western Sahara, where the UN had become involved. The Spanish had announced they were relinquishing authority as the colonial power, and were on the verge of pulling out. A small independence party, the Polisario, was in no position to take over administration, and Algeria and Morocco, arch-enemies, were asserting competing claims over the vast, largely empty territory, phosphate being the biggest prize. Mauritania was about to jump in as a third player and try to pinch off a piece of it.

I was intrigued and found unexpected support for the project in the Department, where responsibility for the area was divided between the Near East and African Bureau, the European Bureau, and IO, with no office coordinating policy. Between the time I decided on my case study and the time I went out to the area, Spain completed its withdrawal; Morocco staged its "green march," in which tens of thousands of Moroccans crossed the

border into the Western Sahara, where many of them remain today; and Algeria and Mauritania were threatening to pursue their claims, with the former aiding the Polisario. I went to Rabat, Algiers and Nouakchott, as well as to Madrid, where I talked with the former Secretary General of the Sahara administration - I did not attempt to enter the Western Sahara proper, where I would have stood out like a sore thumb, but talked with our army attaché in Dakar, who was able to travel there as part of his duties in the area. Apart from the fascination of seeing a completely different part of the world and getting to know colleagues I probably would not otherwise have encountered, I obtained insights into the workings of the UN. To my pleasant surprise, the classified paper I produced received high marks from the Department bureaus and embassies concerned.

*Q: Then it would be 1976. Whither?*

SELIGMANN: I had hoped that the political advisor job in Berlin being considered a DCM job at a class I post that I would get another DCM job. I felt ready for it, but none was offered. Instead, I was asked to go as political counselor to Tokyo. Now this brings up what I regard as a basic question in personnel management . I was taking what I thought was a significant job in the grade at which it was supposed to be filled, the old O-1 before the advent of the senior Foreign Service. I saw nothing wrong with that and still don't. I believe, however, that the Foreign Service hurts itself badly by putting so much store in jump assignments. I think it destroys morale; I don't think it is good for careers. I just think it is a bad thing all around. If there are to be exceptions, they should be exceedingly rare, but now it has gotten to the point where if you don't get a jump assignment, there is a suggestion that something is lacking, That is ridiculous. It wasn't so in days of yore and it shouldn't be.

*Q: And it doesn't make sense too. I mean grade inflation and that sort of thing. I think this probably is a good place to stop. We'll pick up next time when you are in Tokyo as political counselor. You were there from when to when?*

SELIGMANN: 1976 to 1980.

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*Q: Today is April 11, 2000. Al, we are back 1976 to 1980, is that right?*

SELIGMANN: That's correct.

*Q: You are off to Tokyo as political counselor. Who was the ambassador when you were there?*

SELIGMANN: When I arrived it was Jim Hodgson, former Secretary of Labor, for about a year and then Mike Mansfield.

*Q: How was Hodgson as ambassador?*

SELIGMANN: He was very easy to get along with. He didn't engage deeply in the operations of the embassy, but more or less let it run itself. It was a fairly relaxed time. Hodgson used to refer to the period as "windless days." I got to know him better later on when he was a member of the U.S.-Japan Advisory Commission, and I was executive director. When we met again, I remarked,, "Jim, the wind is blowing strongly now." He, of course, agreed. He enjoyed a relatively calm period in our relationship shortly before trade issues whipped up a storm.

*Q: You were political counselor. Could you describe the political section and what you were concerned with at that particular time? Let's start in 1976 and if any changes came, we can...*

SELIGMANN: The section was divided into three branches: external affairs, headed by my deputy, with particular emphasis on China, Korea and the Asian region; an internal affairs section which covered internal politics and internal developments within Japan; and a political military section dealing with an endless stream of issues related to our military presence as well as a number of new developments that soon took center stage on the political side of the house. The section also had responsibility for the Translations Services Staff that turned out daily press summaries and monthly magazine summaries, as well as ad hoc translations. I had talented people working with me.

*Q: Who were they?*

SELIGMANN: Most have gone on to be ambassadors. Nick Platt for a year was my deputy followed by Dave Lambertson, both of whom got their own posts. Tom Hubbard in external affairs. Bill Breer, Howard McElroy and Don Keyser in political-military affairs, Mark Minton, Craig Dunkerly, Chuck Kartman...

*Q. Chuck Kartman?*

SELIGMANN: Yes. Now handling the talks with North Korea. Bill Breer was later DCM in Tokyo and is now the Japan chair at CSIS.

*Q: Yes, I have interviewed him.*

SELIGMANN: I have probably left a few out. Talented people, which made my life easy. Within a week of arrival, we all faced the chore of moving from temporary offices into a brand new chancery. Fortunately, all the details had been worked out in advance by Nick Platt, so I was spared any space planning. Many of us who had worked in the old chancery regarded the new building as an architectural monstrosity - clearly we needed a much larger building, but we could have done better. Before I began to settle in, I was informed the day after I arrived that labor-cost-sharing negotiations were to start the following week, and I would be heading up the US negotiating team. That was interesting, inasmuch as I hadn't heard a word about it in Washington.

*Q: What did that involve? What was that?*

SELIGMANN: For years we had been having a great deal of friction with the local Japanese employees of our armed forces in Japan. It was customary in Japan for government as well as non-government employers to negotiate annual year-end bonuses, as well as pay increases in this period of prosperity. It was a period when wages were high, there was full employment, and the exchange rate was not working in our favor. Our budget being what it always is for such matters, this had become a nasty business, where we held the line, making concessions only after USFJ (United States Forces Japan) employees went out on strike, with resultant bad feeling all around. We argued with the Japanese government that our forces were there to help defend Japan and they should assume some of these labor costs. The Japanese pointed to our status of forces agreement (SOFA), which stated all too clearly that the Japanese would provide facilities, bases for our forces, and we would pay all the operating costs, specifically including labor costs. Nonetheless, partly reflecting a different attitude toward contractual arrangements than ours, i.e., if conditions change, renegotiation may be in order, the Japanese had agreed to talk about this. When the Japanese agree to talk about something, it usually means they are prepared to do something, although we didn't know what that something was when we started out. I am no lawyer, but it was pretty clear we had no solid legal base to go on, even though I thought we had a fairly good political case. The best thing going was the trade deficit, which was beginning to cause a great deal of economic friction between Japan and the United States. I am sure we would never have gotten to first base otherwise.

*Q: In a way was it, I mean we could plead poor mouth.*

SELIGMANN: We could plead poor mouth, which didn't sound so good, but that isn't exactly the way we went about it. I think the Japanese saw it, whether we did or not - I did at least - that being forthcoming in matters like this, which contributed to the U.S. presence in the Pacific, could help with Congress and the public by demonstrating that this was a true alliance, a true partnership - the word "alliance" was still taboo at that time. I had a little leeway to put our act together, inasmuch as the first meeting was a pro forma organizational session chaired by the DCM and the Director General of the North America Affairs Bureau; my counterpart was Hiroshi Kitamura, the latter's deputy, later ambassador to Canada and London I immediately got together at the embassy the USFJ J-5 and labor officer and the three labor officers of each of the services from Yokota (air), Zama (army) and Yokosuka (navy). To preempt a fight over priorities and provide an opportunity to get all demands on the table, I asked for wish lists of what they would like to see covered. I consolidated these in a single initial negotiating brief to which no one on the U.S. side could possibly object, including a host of items: special allowances, health insurance, overtime, administrative costs - just about everything except basic pay. The underlying argument I used was my own invention: even though the status of forces agreement obligated the United States to pay all these costs, there was nothing in the SOFA that said Japan could not pay them if it wished. This got laughed out of court initially, but with the passage of time came to prevail. In effect that is the way it came out over the course of time. There were other issues coming up. but I might as well pursue this one.

*Q: Do this one.*

SELIGMANN: We started off, as usual in that kind of negotiation, getting nowhere for a long time, listening to each other's respective positions. In the interim, the Foreign Ministry had work to do to coordinate its position with the Defense Agency and, more importantly, with the Finance Ministry. Gradually, the Japanese began to find that certain costs could be described as other than "labor costs," e.g., "health and welfare costs," or "administrative costs." In the end they came up with a package that amounted to some 30-odd million dollars a year, not a huge amount of money, but a start. In return, however, they wanted the United States to make a commitment that there would be no further demands in this area. Also they wanted the U. S. to agree to a period of labor peace for two or three years, during which there would be no prolonged haggling over bonuses and the like. We were prepared to go along with the second request from the start; indeed, it was an objective for us as well. We always came through to some extent in the end anyway, as in most labor-union negotiations, but we always made it difficult. We could not, however, agree that this was the limit. We appeared to have reached a stalemate, and also had to overcome strong feeling in the Pentagon that the amount offered was insufficient. We were approaching the point where we were going to have another round of bitter labor negotiations if we didn't get something done. In regard to the amount, Yukio Sato, head of the Security Division of the North American Affairs Bureau, now Ambassador to the United Nations, took me aside and said something that I understood, although it was hard to sell back home, "Listen to the background music." I took this to mean, "Accept what we are offering now and there will be more in the future," i.e., this was an opening wedge. Maybe you have to live and work in Japan to read it that way, but the Pentagon was another matter. I pulled out every stop I could think of to try to bring the Pentagon around through high-level messages from the ambassador and the like, and I made the pilgrimage myself a couple of times to Yokota to try to persuade the Commander USFJ and his chief of staff, who fortunately were understanding and sympathetic.

We remained at loggerheads, however, in regard to Japanese insistence on writing into the agreement a clause that stated this was the limit possible under the SOFA. Thereupon I drew a leaf from my Berlin experience, drawing on a gambit we had used once or twice with the Russians, even though I was not personally involved. In a *tête-à-tête*, I suggested to Kitamura that when the agreement was initialed in the Joint Committee, the body that met every other week to administer the nitty-gritty of the SOFA and other matters related to our military presence, he state for the record that this was the maximum Japan could provide under the terms of the SOFA, and that we in turn state for the record that we did not agree. He took the proposal under advisement, and the next day agreed. With that in hand, Washington gave us the go-ahead and we had an agreement.. The short-term postscript was that whereas we understood matters would slide for at least a couple of years, the next year, without any prompting on our part, the Japanese volunteered to take on further costs, approximately doubling the amount to over \$60 million a year. Over the years additional cost-sharing agreements have been concluded whereby the Japanese have assumed virtually all our support costs, including utilities, and all local pay; the figure varies depending on budgets and the exchange rate, but the last I heard it came to

\$85,000 per U.S. serviceman or about \$4 billion a year. I think it is an interesting lesson on how one deals with Japan. They are not a litigious society. Much is based on faith, handshakes, personal relations and confidence in and respect for each other. If you show that respect and you show that you have the confidence and leave it up to them, they will often come through in unbelievably generous ways. This has happened again and again although they rarely get any credit for it.

*Q: You were mentioning that the Pentagon was very difficult to deal with. What about the Japanese military establishment? Are these decisions made at the political level so you are not up against a Japanese defense apparatus?*

SELIGMANN: It is a good question. It comes up in regard to another issue we will talk about. At this stage, the Foreign Ministry felt strongly that they ran the show on all political-military matters. They would listen to the Japan Defense Agency (JDA), which while headed by a Director General who was a Cabinet member, had less than ministry status, but the Foreign Ministry felt it should make all final decisions with political ramifications. This was born out of the post-war scheme of things, civilian control over the military being an important concept, which of course had not been accepted before World War II. The foreign ministry was and is run by people of a liberal bent in the best sense of the term, meaning they were wary of giving too much influence to their own military. This was resented by the self defense forces, who sometimes were made to feel they were second-class citizens in the bureaucracy. I made it a matter of high priority in my own dealings to maintain direct relations with the JDA without going through the foreign ministry where that was appropriate. I certainly wouldn't go around the back of the foreign ministry on something they should be aware of, but wanted both the JDA civilian leadership, which tended to come out of other agencies such as the Finance Ministry and Police Agency, as well as the military leadership to feel that we understood their problems. Generally, of course, I dealt with the civilian side of the house. In regard to issues themselves, what few differences we had were usually limited to matters where the JDA and USFJ were in accord. My contacts with the JDA paid off. On one occasion, the day the Director General (Minister), an old political contact, was to depart for a visit to Washington and some European capitals, I received a last-minute call from his office suggesting I might wish to pay a farewell call. This was rather unusual and when I scurried over, I noticed a waiting room full of Japanese officials and one or two foreign ambassadors. I was immediately ushered in a side door to his office, however, to find him quite relaxed, reading a newspaper; he wanted to clue me in on some significant commitment he intended to make, the details of which I have forgotten.

*Q: Now, did those self defense forces have sort of professional ties within the military, in other words going beyond dealing in Japan? You know, so often particularly you think of the Israelis and all, but others who have good military contacts and they come back to the United States and they hit the Pentagon before they go anywhere else. Was this at all going on with the Japanese?*

SELIGMANN: We were and are Japan's only ally. Apart from the heritage of the occupation and the initial post-occupation period when we helped build up the Self

Defense Forces, we have traditionally maintained close military-to-military ties. Nonetheless, a number of developments had gradually taken place to alter the picture. Whereas for years almost all of Japan's military leaders spoke pretty good English, this was no longer the case. For our part, we had drastically reduced our military presence, and partly in response to Japanese pressure for base consolidation and the return to Japan of facilities sitting on much desired land, had concentrated them at a few major installations. The SDF, in turn, tended for tactical and other reasons to be stationed in areas such as Hokkaido or Kyushu, where there was little opportunity for frequent contact with our military. We still were collocated or were next-door neighbors at a few facilities, especially true of the navy and some of the air force, but the top military leaders on both sides, with some exceptions, were no longer on the first-name basis they had been for many postwar years. The navy and air force routinely conducted joint exercises, but because of budget constraints and geographic separation, this was less and less true of the Ground Self Defense Forces (GSDF or army), which accounted for perhaps two-thirds of the Japanese forces. We were not growing apart in the sense of thinking separately or acting separately, but we were not seeing that much of each other and the opportunities to go to service schools and the like were more limited than they had ever been, partly because of the extraordinarily high costs we charged - eventually, State, working with the Pentagon managed to get Japan so-called "NATO treatment" or discounted tuition. I could see a burgeoning or nascent problem, because, I felt that if there is any one place in Japan where the seeds of nationalism might take root, historically, traditionally it might be with the military. If you read this morning's New York Times, you know what I am talking about.

*Q: No, I didn't.*

SELIGMANN: The governor of Tokyo, while not an extreme rightist, has a reputation as an outspoken nationalist; he is the man who wrote "The Japan That Can Say No [to the United States]" that caused such a fuss a few years ago. Speaking to the Self Defense Forces, he apparently mouthed some blatantly nationalist sentiments that could cause political problems. I don't for one moment suggest that his audience lapped all this up - that was not my experience with the SDF people I dealt with - but he was playing to what he assumed was a receptive audience for his ideas.

*Q: Apart from the labor-cost negotiations, what other things were you involved with?*

SELIGMANN: Another major item on the political-military side was negotiation of what became known as Guidelines for Defense Cooperation. Our military staff and the Japanese military staff had been working together on contingency planning, which from the U.S. point of view was an altogether natural thing to do with an ally. We do it with all our allies, and anyone in this town is aware that the basement of the Pentagon is full of plans. We have plans for every contingency under the sun. In the case of Japan you would plan for a Korean contingency or a Taiwan straits contingency or whatever. It doesn't mean that you expect that to happen, but you plan for it. When something does happen, it never happens the way you planned anyway, but the planning process has facilitated how you react. However, in Japan, you had all the baggage of the pre-war and

wartime military, which made this an extraordinarily sensitive area. Some time before my arrival, one of the magazines or newspapers had come up with the "revelation" that there was an exercise known as "Three Arrows," in which United States and Japanese military were planning for a contingency, I think on the Korean peninsula. The idea that such planning had been going on in secret became a political scandal, so it ground to a halt. After that, the Japanese were unwilling to engage in further joint planning. The question was how do you work with your military friends in this situation. The solution agreed to either in the Security Consultative Committee or the Security Subcommittee was to have a public set of guidelines for defense cooperation that would permit planning to go on and would spell out the planning parameters. Sometime in 1977 or 1978 we began negotiation of these first guidelines. I was the embassy representative on the U.S. negotiating team, but the negotiations themselves were left pretty much to the U.S. and Japanese military staffs. The Japanese approach was to obtain as explicit a commitment from the United States as possible to just what forces would be committed in just what contingency. Our military were not unwilling to go along with this kind of thing. On the other hand, I felt that even though the guidelines required nothing more than departmental approval in Washington, they were to be approved at the cabinet level in Japan. We were not negotiating a treaty and could not sign an agreement that went beyond the scope of the security treaty itself; to do so would probably be unconstitutional. That issue was never raised by anybody but myself as far as I know; I did flag it at one point in a message to Washington which met with no disagreement. We were all agreed on fundamentals, still stated in the guidelines, that if Japan was subject to attack, the Japanese would in the first instance respond with their own resources, and if that did not work, then the U.S. will come to their assistance. And of course without specifying it, the nuclear umbrella was still in place. The two military staffs, however, wanted specific commitments, e.g., in X circumstances, the 24th division will be flown in from Hawaii, etc. I held that this sort of thing belonged in a plan, not an intergovernmental agreement that lacked the status of a treaty. In the end we worked out more general language along lines I drafted. The guidelines, made public and approved by the Japanese cabinet, permitted planning to resume and have remained in effect. By direction they were confined to measures to defend against an attack on Japan, but they were expanded two years ago by a new set of far more extensive guidelines on ways in which our armed forces would cooperate in meeting contingencies outside of Japan.

*Q: Meaning Korea.*

SELIGMANN: Not just Korea. It could mean the Taiwan Straits, although the security treaty deliberately fudges the definition of what is the Far East. But the new guidelines now provide a framework for cooperation short of participation in direct combat for contingencies other than an attack on Japan proper,

*Q: Were you feeling in the 1976 to 1980 period, just after we got out of Vietnam that the Japanese felt that the Americans seemed to have become undependable now. We can't be assured what they might do and they wanted to nail this down more than had been the case before.*

SELIGMANN: I think there was a period of great uneasiness after Nixon announced the Guam doctrine and right after the end of the Vietnam war, but by the time I got to Tokyo, I think we had weathered most of the storm. No doubt, however, some of that feeling was behind the desire to get the guidelines pinned down.

*Q: But 1976 was an election year and Carter was making noises saying he was going to withdraw troops of the 2nd division from Korea.*

SELIGMANN: All remaining combat troops.

*Q: One division had already gone. So the 2nd. division was the only one left there. I know because I was in it. I arrived right in July in Korea at the time. This was supposed to have sent shock waves, the fact when he was elected was very disturbing to the Asian powers. How did you find this?*

SELIGMANN: The Japanese government all but panicked Prime Minister Fukuda either came to Washington himself or sent a special envoy to plead with Carter not to do so. Carter seemed to feel almost simplistically that he had to keep a campaign promise, even though there did not seem to be that much pressure for him to do so. Eventually he backed down, limiting withdrawals to 3,000-4,000 men, but it was a very bad period. It was perhaps more worrisome to Korea but the Japanese were just about equally upset.

*Q. Well, Carter did not come through as a very sound person, did he, on foreign affairs in the Far East early on?*

SELIGMANN: No. I think the Japanese liked him as a person. It was almost the opposite of the Nixon situation, where they approved of much of his foreign policy, e.g., China, and could not understand why we had problems with him. They felt American presidents had responsibilities for the rest of the world, read "us," and domestic US politics should take second place.

*Q: Well, these plans that we made public, well, not the plans but the framework, did they look pretty good? I mean were they sort of innocuous?*

SELIGMANN: From a U.S. point of view they were both innocuous and unnecessary. They met a Japanese need, however, and worked out fine, permitting the kind of planning the Japanese and ourselves wanted to do to go ahead without roiling any waters.

*Q: Were there any other we have sort of had the labor costs, the plans, anything else you got involved in during this time you were there major things?*

SELIGMANN: I served as the deputy US representative of the Joint Committee, chaired on the US side by the Chief of Staff USFJ and on the Japanese side by the Director General of the Foreign Ministry's North American Affairs Bureau. Apart from the management of incidents and the usual flow of minor problems, the major agenda item was base consolidation, contingent in many instances on the Japanese constructing

alternative facilities, e.g., housing, hospitals. Most of this was worked out by the military and our PolMil officers - I would only get involved if they thought I should. During this time we created still another consultative mechanism, the SCG (Security Consultative Group), chaired by the DCM and the Director General of the North American Affairs Bureau. This was designed to permit mid-level decisions without bringing in participants from Washington, where a binational imprimatur was needed. It served for example as a body to set up the modalities for negotiating the Guidelines and formally to approve them.

The domestic political situation was in a state of turmoil in the wake of the Lockheed scandal that had toppled the government of Prime Minister Tanaka, an otherwise popular leader, now under investigation. Just before the December 1976 general election, a number of younger LDP Diet members defected to form a new party, the New Liberal Club, that did exceptionally well, to the point that the LDP lost its majority for the first time since 1955 and was forced to govern in coalition with the defectors. This resulted in a heavy load of domestic political reporting in the light of foreign media speculation that the end of conservative rule was in sight.

We had the usual never-ending stream of third-country and UN related issues, including toward the end of my tour, the hostage situation.

*Q. You are talking about hostages in Iran.*

SELIGMANN: Yes. On most international issue, including the USSR and China, we saw eye to eye with the Japanese, but in the Middle East, we were not always in synch. The Japanese were more dependent on Middle East oil than we were, although oil is fungible - if someone doesn't get oil, everybody hurts. For example when you had the oil crisis in 1976...

*Q: 1976-1977: Carter was in by that time.*

SELIGMANN: Yes. Prime Minister Miki immediately went over to Iran and other countries and was just delighted to be designated a "friendly country" by Iran, a designation they did not hand out lightly. That influenced getting their oil to flow again, and Miki is said to have exulted on the plane on the way back to Tokyo. This was not in the best of taste and did not sit well in the United States.

*Q: Were we leaning on them to be unfriendly?*

SELIGMANN: No, because we understood their problem, but we felt he was a bit obsequious, playing up to the Iranians. It wasn't a serious difference in the overall scheme of things. As I might have mentioned earlier, on my watch we took a more explicit position than we had hitherto on the question of the northern territories, which prevented Japan and continues today to prevent Japan from having a peace treaty with the Russia. I think that helped us in our general relationship with Japan.

*Q: Well, I would think there would be always a subliminal delight in the fact that the Soviets were hanging on to these things. In other words diplomatically it protected our flank up there. I mean we didn't have to do anything about it.*

SELIGMANN: That's true. Moreover, there is a long-standing historical distaste or distrust for Russians in Japan. One incident while I was there which I think we all kind of relished was the landing of a MIG fighter, which was flown into Hokkaido under the Japanese radar by a defecting Soviet pilot.

*Q: It was state of the art at that time.*

SELIGMANN: Yes. I was having a relaxed Sunday afternoon when I got a frantic call from our defense attaché. He was so cryptic and careful on the telephone that I really did not catch on to what he was trying to tell me. He said something like, "One of those aircraft landed up at Hakodate in Hokkaido." I thought he was referring to a U-2, which flew on missions from Kadena, that occasionally had to make emergency landings as a result of weather conditions or for other reasons. This was something that had to be informed to the Japanese but did not strike me as anything to get excited about - it was no big deal. Once the message got through, of course, all kinds of things started to happen. First of all, the intelligence powers in Washington were sure that the Japanese were going to let the Soviets take the aircraft back home, and we would never have a crack at it. It never occurred to us in the Embassy that there would be any problem.

*Q: Were you all trying to get to them and say, "Don't worry; leave it alone?"*

SELIGMANN: Yes. But, you know, they were nervous as could be and weren't listening. This went on for a couple of days, and then a colonel, I think stationed at Misawa, sent a direct message back to the Pentagon without clearance with the embassy, saying that the Japanese were going to turn the MIG back and we had better turn the heat on them. We were furious from the ambassador on down, and in the end the colonel got reamed. It was enough, however, for the embassy to receive an instruction to make a high-level representation to get assurances that we would have a chance to look at the plane. I accompanied Tom Shoesmith, the DCM to the Foreign Ministry's guest house, where the Vice Minister was hosting an evening reception. He came out and after Tom made a brief pitch about how important this was, etc., simply replied, "Don't worry." For our purposes, that was all the assurance we needed, although, needless to say, our military continued to worry. What happened after that was all fun and games. The Soviets naturally were screaming that the plane and the pilot should be returned without delay. As an immediate pretext for not complying, the Japanese charged the pilot with entering Japan without clearing immigration and further complained that the plane had been brought in without going through customs. They permitted us to take the plane completely apart, and when we were finished, packed it up in crates and sent it back.

*Q: This is tape 7 side 1 with Al Seligmann.*

SELIGMANN: The Soviets sent them a bill for damages, which the Japanese countered with a bill for shipping charges. That was the end of the incident. Also in the category of

cold-war incidents, we had a very high level KGB operative defect.

*Q: How did that work out?*

SELIGMANN: This was in the middle of the night, and was handled properly. The duty officer came over and knocked on my door, not using the telephone, which was the way to do this, and told me what was going on. I went into the embassy in the wee hours, and had to face the station chief and his colleagues, all of them wanted to get this guy on a plane from a U. S. base to the States within an hour. I said that this could not be done under any circumstance without notifying the GOJ and deferring to their wishes; they would have to wake up the ambassador if they wanted to go ahead. There was a lot of fuming and storming, but in the end again, it worked out fine. With elaborate security precautions in place, he went out legally in effect, not surreptitiously. To have acted otherwise would have been a slap at Japanese sovereignty. All of these incidents illustrate the need to have a little faith in your allies and friends, respect their desires, and prevent others who are over- eager from trampling all over them.

*Q: Well, also, there is a track record isn't there? I mean the Japanese produced well. I mean I had some experience earlier on in Greece. If that sort of thing had happened in Greece, My feeling would be get them the hell out. Get somebody out; don't give a damn because the Greeks weren't going to be cooperative at all, mainly trying to get out of the line of fire.*

SELIGMANN: I would agree. What you do in one country does not necessarily apply anywhere else. I would be only speaking about Japan although you would probably say the same thing about West Germany.

*Q: And then there is Greece. Mike Mansfield came in, and he was a grand old man of the Senate and all, and he stayed there, you were there for the beginning. He was there for about what, 12 years.*

SELIGMANN: Twelve years. I went away and came back six years later and he was still there.

*Q: Yes. How did he take on, this was his first time as ambassador. Early on, how did he grab hold?*

SELIGMANN: The Japanese have sometimes had trouble with our appointments as ambassador, even though they almost always work out in the end. From the start, they were very flattered to have a man of Mansfield's stature and reputation named as ambassador to Japan. There may have been a bit of concern because of the Mansfield amendment...

*Q: Would you mind explaining what the Mansfield amendment was?*

SELIGMANN: The Mansfield amendment, directed not so much at Asia as at Europe,

called for a substantial withdrawal of U.S. forces from Europe. That happened without real adverse consequences, but some Japanese thought he might advocate a similar drawdown in East Asia, especially in the light of Carter's pronouncements on Korea. Apart from that possibility, which never materialized, they were extraordinarily pleased at what they saw as an indication of the importance of Japan to the U.S. that his appointment represented. He had a knack of saying, doing just the right thing. I remember his very first press conference, maybe the first week after he arrived. The embassy auditorium was packed, with mostly Japanese reporters but also all the foreign press in Tokyo. They expected a long introductory statement, but he got up and said, "I'm the new boy on the block, shoot!" That threw the Japanese into a panic, few of them having any notion how to translate these colloquial phrases. They learned early on that he was not a man to waste words. From the start, he announced unequivocally, "The United States-Japan relationship is the most important bilateral relationship in the world." Before long, this was slightly embellished with the additional phrase, "bar none." This sentence was repeated in just about every public statement he made while in Japan and became established as a trademark to the point that his audiences waited for it. As a politician he understood how effective that could be. We in the embassy in time came to refer to ourselves as the "bar none ranch."

*Q: How did you deal as political counselor?*

SELIGMANN: He pretty much let the embassy run itself, and dealt through the DCM. I rarely took an issue to him directly, except when I was acting DCM, and can recall no instance when any substantive or non-substantive difference arose. He ran the weekly large staff meetings, which provided a good opportunity to get endorsement or take a sounding on a matter. On the other hand, he didn't take kindly to small talk, and I always felt sorry for section heads who felt compelled to come in with an agenda whether anyone wanted to listen to it or not. So we worked principally through the DCM, who would sign off on most matters.

*Q: Tom Shoemith.*

SELIGMANN: It was Tom Shoemith and then Bill Sherman.

*Q: How did you find the people you were dealing with on the Japanese side? You know, you have been in and out of there a number of times. In this 1976-1980 period, had there been any evolution, were they seeing things differently, or was it pretty much operating the same way it had before?*

SELIGMANN: Our relationship had emerged from what has sometimes been called the "big brother, little brother" period that followed the Occupation for some years. The revision of the security treaty marked the beginning of the end of that stage, and Okinawa reversion could be seen as marking the end. We had moved into a partnership relationship, with mutual recognition that our two economies combined accounted for 30%-40% of world productivity. That brought with it an increasing amount of trade friction and on all fronts a natural tendency for Japan to speak for itself. Sometimes this was interpreted by commentators and businessmen as "arrogance," but I saw no

significant sign of that during this tour. Japan remained highly dependent on the U.S. military presence in the Pacific and while a major donor of foreign economic assistance, was still hesitant to assert political leadership; most of its initiatives were confined to Asia. On the political front we saw eye to eye on most issues, which made for easy-going relations with the Foreign Ministry. At the same time, the Japanese began to react less kindly to preaching on our part. I recall sitting in on a meeting with Foreign Minister Sonoda and a prominent visitor (Secretary of Defense Brown?). Without waiting for anything specific on the agenda to come up - I think this was while we were negotiating cost-sharing - Sonoda departed from script and surprised his own side by saying, in effect, "Don't tell us what to do; tell us what you need." Sonoda was known for being blunt, but to make sure I understood (his Japanese was not that clear and the interpreter had bungled a bit), the head of the Security Division phoned me later to make sure we had it straight. We had, but the incident was indicative of nascent shifts in the Japanese approach which we needed to take into account.

Some changes had taken place on an operating level, in that rank was more significant in determining access to government officials, political leaders, business leaders, etc. The United States was still primus inter pares, however, and our language officers enjoyed a considerable advantage in being able to see almost any politician short of the very top levels. I also profited from friendships and connections established earlier in my career, and was often able to deal at a higher level than I would have been able to coming in cold. This was also true on the political scene, where junior politicians I had known were rising in the ranks. The embassy, incidentally, tried to get me the title of minister - we had an economic minister - in consideration of these factors and the tendency of other large embassies to have a multiplicity of ministers, but was turned down by the Department, a position that was sensibly reversed after I left.

*Q: Did you feel that the foreign ministry was getting a good reading of what was happening in Washington? One of the things that sometimes happens in the Foreign Service, you can almost get a better reading from what is going on in Washington, particularly Congress and all by listening to your host foreign affairs establishment because they are working the field which we don't work. In other words they are looking at the White House and they are hitting the Congress and all, and you know we sort of hear it kind of the way it should be rather than the way it actually is. Were you getting any of that?*

SELIGMANN: That is a good point. Going back to the time I was in S/PC, it had been customary during our policy planning talks with the Japanese to have one informal evening over drinks, during which we discussed out respective domestic political situations. These became unproductive and boring, however, particularly because the Japanese were far more circumspect than we were in talking about their own politics. In preparing for one session, I suggested that as an experiment, we make the initial presentation on Japanese politics and that they start off on U.S. politics. This turned out to be more insightful and lively, so we kept it that way. When I was back in Washington, after this Tokyo assignment, I thought the Japanese embassy was doing a pretty good job covering the field. While it has varied some, depending in part on facility in English, they

have generally assigned their most able diplomats, not only as ambassador, but down the line, and have been able to establish good personal contacts with top officials and members of Congress, as well as working-level officials in all key agencies and Congressional staffers. Togo, who had been the point man for renegotiating the security treaty, was ambassador in the late 1970s, and the first to occupy a magnificent new residence that was an asset in representation. So, to answer your question, they were well clued in on the Washington scene. Above all else, Japanese who talked to him had a great asset in Mike Mansfield who was about as well informed on the Washington scene as anyone.

*Q: Did Okinawa play much of a role at this time?*

SELIGMANN: The major issue of reversion was behind us. We had to contend with occasional off-base incidents involving our military personnel, more often than not young Marines, and we were still under considerable pressure to reduce our presence. Artillery practice that called for the periodic closing of a major highway on the island, demands for the return of land in and near downtown Naha, and the call for reduction of our extensive maneuver areas were all thorny issues, and twenty years later we are still trying to work out base reductions without jeopardizing military requirements. Considering the disproportionate weight of our presence in relation to population and usable land, it is important that we stay ahead of the game. The Okinawans themselves have always been torn between the boost our presence gives a poor economy and the feeling that they are being called on to make sacrifices beyond those of the rest of Japan.

*Q: Was there concern during this time about the Soviet Union because you had the Soviet attack in Afghanistan that would be sort of unprovoked, and then the Soviets, this is December 1979. But also I think around this time or earlier on the Soviets were making noises about using Camranh Bay as a major base.*

SELIGMANN: There was also a sizable buildup of Soviet Forces in the Soviet Far East, including the northern territories. They had not had much in a military presence there before, but now they put a division, I believe, into the southern Kuriles.

*Q: What was the thinking then, I mean from our own thinking and what you were getting from the Japanese about this?*

SELIGMANN: There was not much feeling that the threat to Japan had increased substantially, but it reinforced the feeling that the Soviets were the enemy. Japan's fringe extreme rightists made the most of the Soviet stance with their noisy sound trucks, and the police maintained tight security around the Soviet embassy, but overall the major effect was to reinforce our partnership, our alliance.

*Q: How about China?*

SELIGMANN: With Nixon's visit to China, we had come to see things about the same way. The Japanese had felt for a long time that we should be more forthcoming in

establishing relations with mainland China. When we did so, of course, we administered one of what came to be called the “Nixon shocks,” by failing to consult or inform Japan in advance. The Japanese still had visions of quick profits through massive trade and investment - dreams some entrepreneurs harbored for Siberia as well - but realism was setting in on both fronts.

*Q: Korea?*

SELIGMANN: Japan has always seen and probably always will see Korea as a dagger aimed at the heart of Japan. Whatever happens there can have severe effects in Japan. A Korean contingency had become perhaps the major rationale for maintaining our bases in Japan, more so than the defense of Japan proper, and a Japanese nightmare, which persists, is the thought of tens or hundreds of thousands of Korean refugees flooding into Japan if stability is not maintained on the peninsula.

*Q: Were we doing any pushing on the Japanese to, say, be nicer to the Koreans or were they pretty nice? It has never been an easy relationship.*

SELIGMANN: It has never been easy, and I don't think they have been terribly nice. This was not one of the periods where we were in the middle, however, as we were at times in the 1950's and 1960's. Discrimination against Koreans, failure to grant Japanese citizenship to second- and third-generation Koreans born in Japan, textbook euphemisms about Japan's colonial record in Korea, etc., remain questions that have to be resolved by the Japanese by themselves or bilaterally.

*Q: Well, on nuclear matters, how did that play during this period? Any problems or just sort of status quo?*

SELIGMANN: You always have had the problem of what we agreed or didn't agree about port entry of naval vessels and whether they did they or did not have nuclear weapons aboard. I can't remember the timing, but at some point the mayor of Kobe decided to take a New Zealand type approach, demanding assurances there were none on our vessels calling there, so we just stopped calling at Kobe. I am not sure where we stand with that today. Japan had its own internal problems in developing nuclear power. Everybody wanted cheap electric power or electric power from sources other than fossil fuels, hydropower being almost fully developed, but nobody wanted a reactor near them. There was a question of what to do with their one nuclear powered merchant vessel that never really worked out commercially - the GOJ was ready to give it up, but no port would take it in, so it was an orphan for awhile. I am not sure whether it was then or later on when reprocessing became a major issue, especially the security in-transit of used fuel sent for processing to Europe. These were not, however, what I would put in the category of major issues.

*Q: Well, is there anything else we should discuss do you think?*

SELIGMANN: Endless visits, presidential on down. One that I won't forget was a transit

stop by former President Nixon. He came through Narita airport en route to a triumphant return visit to China, but Ambassador Mansfield could not go to the airport because of a long-standing commitment to address the faction of former Prime Minister Miki at their annual meeting several hours from Tokyo. In the absence of the DCM, I went to Narita to greet Nixon bearing a letter from the Ambassador regretting that he was not there. All this had been discussed with the Secret Service in advance, so that there would be no surprises. When Nixon arrived, I was shoved out of the way by his ex-Marine aide, while they commandeered my car to take him but not me to the nearby (c. 50 yards away) Air France lounge, which had been reserved for his use during his layover. After about thirty minutes, I said I would like to deliver the Ambassador's letter, and was told to proceed at my own risk. I knocked on the door, Nixon told me to come in, looked up from the pad where he was apparently working on a text, took the letter, threw it unopened into his despatch case and quizzed me on why the Ambassador was not there, how far away his meeting was, etc. Then he went back to work without a word, thereby dismissing me. Nice man. The Secret Service agent-in-charge apologized for what had transpired. When I told all this to Mansfield, he was upset and asked his old friend, Leonard Woodcock, ambassador in Beijing to keep him posted. As I recall, he reported back that Nixon had made no remarks about his reception at Narita, and Mansfield did see Nixon off when he came through Narita on his way back.

*Q: Yes. I mean, a lot of things were happening. Were you getting any reaction from the Japanese about President Carter, kind of wondering who is this guy and what is he doing? Were they uncomfortable with him?*

SELIGMANN: Initially they were, but that wore off when it became clear we were not going to pull out the bulk of our remaining ground forces in Korea. He paid a visit to Japan, which went smoothly enough, but I recall one episode that was disappointing. The embassy staff had assembled in the chancery forecourt on the assumption that he was going to talk to them as scheduled but he decided not to do so. Finally Roslyn came down from the residence and filled in nobly. This was more important for our Japanese local employees than for the Americans, but it was kind of funny that he would do that. I don't think the Japanese felt very strongly about him one way or another. In the end he was hostage to the hostage issue, immobilized by it.

*Q: Well, in 1980, whither?*

SELIGMANN: Perhaps it was my own fault but I had no truck for the bidding system, and did not pursue it with PER beyond formally registering my list of druthers; I still think it is a dreadful way to make assignments. I felt that I was due a DCM post, and having been in one, albeit for a relatively short time, in Berlin, I had the naive idea that virtue would be rewarded - not that I was at all unhappy with what I had been doing - but nothing seemed to be coming through. We were at the end of a holiday trip to Indonesia, when I got called to the one telephone at the Legian beach resort in Bali to take a call from PER that they had decided I would be a diplomat-in-residence. That was not something I was awfully eager about, but I was resigned to it. As consolation, they said they understood how I felt and wanted to give me first choice among the institutions

where assignments were to be made, which included Portland State, one of the University of Wisconsin campuses, the Maxwell School at Syracuse, the Center for Advanced International Studies at Miami University at Coral Gables., and perhaps one other. To me there was no question but that the Maxwell School was the best of those mentioned, but then I thought about the winter and opted for the University of Miami, which after all, is a little like going to a new country anyway.

*Q: Absolutely.*

SELIGMANN: So that is what happened.

*Q: Were you there 1980-1981 more or less?*

SELIGMANN: Yes, for the academic year.

*Q: What was it like? I mean did you find yourself sort of in the Latin American world there, interests and all that?*

SELIGMANN: To put it mildly. There was not all that much interest in Asia in South Florida, but in terms of outreach, which was an important part of the assignment, that may have been a good reason to be there. Many companies doing business with Latin America, including foreign firms, had their headquarters or major branches in Coral Gables, and of course the influx of Cuban refugees had injected new life into Miami - at least the first wave. We arrived just at the end of the Mariel boat lift, which brought in more good people, but also criminals and derelicts whom Castro was pleased to get rid of. Latin American studies figured prominently at the Center for Advanced International Studies; Ambler Moss, Ambassador to Panama, had been at the Center a year or two earlier, and returned later to become director of the North-South Center that was created when the Center was reorganized.

We were fortunate in having in having introductions to a number of civic leaders, one from Mike Mansfield to Milton Fisher, an internationally minded business leader, who in turn provided me with opportunities to meet other leaders in the Chamber of Commerce, and some politicians. One thing led to another and my fellow faculty members went out of their way to be hospitable, so we landed up with a stimulating social schedule as well as opportunities for me to speak not only to audiences in other parts of the university, but also at other universities such as Florida International University (a state university), and organizations in other parts of Florida. June Dryer, a China specialist, who I believe is still at UM, was the only other Asian specialist at the Center. During the second semester, I gave a seminar on the making and implementation of foreign policy. I ran into a little trouble when I tried to impose standards at a university more famous for proverbial courses in underwater basket-weaving and the like, but had a few interested, good students, which is what many teachers hope for at best. We also decided we probably didn't want to retire in Miami - people were nice, but life while pleasant, was a bit sterile with limited cultural opportunities.

*Q: Well, did you find that the Hispanic culture, did that intrude on what you were doing?*

SELIGMANN: I wouldn't say intrude, although it was all around us, not so much at the university or even Coral Gables as in Miami itself. My best student was a second generation Cuban-American. I had talked to her class and obtained an exception for her to attend my seminar as an undergraduate. I encouraged her to go into the Foreign Service, but I imagine the pressures of traditional family life may have prevented her. She would have been good. On the other hand, I discovered that giving a "gentleman's B" to a Honduran businessman was like throwing down a glove at his feet.

*Q: In 1981 what were they cooking up for you?*

SELIGMANN: Once more I hoped to go out as a DCM somewhere, but landed up as Japan country director. While not a bad job, I felt I was moving laterally.

*Q: Were you beginning to feel a little bit too much Japan?*

SELIGMANN: To some extent. As a result of my Berlin experience, I felt I had more to offer.

*Q: I think this is one of the problems on the... Did you ever find yourself, you or some of your colleagues that maybe knew Japan so well that maybe you were beginning to lose sight of American interests? I mean you knew Japan, how they would react so rather than say, well, that's all fine, but this is how we react... You know, localitis is the term, I guess. Did you begin to get worried about this?*

SELIGMANN: I never felt at anytime in my career that I was doing anything but represent American interests - even in Berlin where we often identified with the West Berliners, we felt that was strongly in our interest. I saw my knowledge of Japan and Japanese as tools to make me more effective. What I was conscious of and became increasingly conscious of on the Japan desk was the charge leveled by so-called "Japan-bashers" outside of government as well as in the bureaucracy that anyone who tried to correlate economic, political and security policy, or interpret Japanese positions was a member of the "chrysanthemum club" who had sold out to Japan and was not representing American interests. That was a source of aggravation, but one could not be too thin-skinned about it. As America entered the boom times of the 1990s and our trade deficit with China came to rival that with Japan, this sort of carping faded to the background, but it was at a high pitch in the 1980s.

*Q: Well, you got there just when the Reagan administration came on board.*

SELIGMANN: Right.

*Q: Were you experiencing the usual learning curve that new administrations go through? Newcomers from academia have wonderful ideas and then all of a sudden they are up against reality, and it takes a little while for things to sort of settle down to where they*

*probably would always have had to go.*

SELIGMANN: Interesting that you should speak about a learning curve - almost too perceptive. As prelude, one of the first things Reagan did even before taking office was to announce he was keeping Mansfield on as ambassador in Tokyo. That was a great decision that made me quite hopeful, but by the time I took over as country director in late spring, a new crowd was coming in, not so much in State, where George Schultz was wise and experienced, but in the Pentagon and the economic agencies, including Treasury, Commerce and STR. The currency of the day was "Japan should do more," whether it be trade and investment concessions, or defense buildup. These were all people that felt that State was too soft. Sometimes they had a good case for requesting Japanese action, sometimes they did not, but the rhetoric was indiscriminating and strident. The Department representative to the first SSC meeting in Honolulu for the new administration was Bing West, Assistant Secretary ISA, who was accompanied by Rich Armitage, ISA Deputy Assistant Secretary for East Asia. Without any coordination with State, these two repeatedly took the floor to chastise the Japanese for failing to carry their weight, not spending more on defense, not acquiring this weapons system or that system, and failing to increase the size of their forces, positions I felt were dangerous in the long run and stupid in the short run. They showed no awareness of what the Japanese had accomplished to date, but more significantly came on so aggressively that it was clear to the embarrassed Department and Embassy representatives that their pitch was counterproductive. The Japanese obviously felt the same way. The final morning of an SSC meeting was customarily a brief session devoted to summing up, deciding how to deal with the (principally Japanese) ubiquitous press, and providing an opportunity for leftover free discussion. Minoru Tamba, head of the Foreign Ministry security division, later Ambassador to Moscow and Deputy Minister, was only fourth or fifth in rank on the Japanese side, but to our surprise asked for the floor. I have never seen a Japanese quite so angry in my life. He made an impassioned rejoinder telling West and Armitage in effect that they were way out of line. The meeting ended on this sour note, and a day or two after returning to Washington, the political counselor of the Japanese embassy came over to protest the way the meeting was conducted. Going back to your comment, I heard him out and without defending the DOD approach, remarked to the effect, "You have to make allowances and realize they are going through a learning experience. These are people who have not dealt with Japan much before, and it will work out," etc. Somehow, my remarks bounced back to ISA, which I had not anticipated, thereby making my relations there difficult for the next few months. To give him credit, Rich Armitage over the next year or so radically moderated his position and especially his style, turning into an effective PolMil diplomat, who worked closely with State. West disappeared from the scene before long.

*Q. This is the problem. The great negotiations are not with other countries; they are within our own bureaucracy.*

SELIGMANN: I have been talking a good deal again about security matters, but I guess 80% of my time was spent on economic issues. I was contending with a similar gang in Commerce, Lionel Olmer and Clyde Prestowitz, both of whom have also calmed down as

the years have gone by, but who were terribly preachy, the latter almost vituperative, in their private and public comments during this period. There was a lot of hard feeling, as the trade deficit kept mounting. The automobile issue was hot but got worked out as the Japanese put restraints on auto exports, and we found we were not producing the smaller, fuel-efficient cars that the American consumer wanted to buy. The size of the Japanese trade surplus, while not necessarily much larger than that with a number of other countries relative to the amount of total bilateral trade, kept breaking records and drove U.S. policy.

Don't get me wrong. We had many legitimate complaints in regard to Japanese trade practices, mostly non-tariff barriers, and the Japanese were their own worst enemies when it came to aggravating, over-regulation. They, in turn, were understandably upset with the hyperbole and acrimony with which we pursued specific issues and our failure to give any credit when progress was made. One of the commonest charges of the day, in and out of government, was, "Japanese markets are closed." This was hard to believe when Japan took more American exports than any country in the world except Canada, more than Great Britain, Germany, and Italy combined. Similarly, at a time when Japan had the fourth largest defense budget in the world and was providing ever-increasing support for our forces in Japan, they were accused of getting a "free ride" on defense. As is so often the case, barriers to expanding agricultural exports, especially beef, citrus products and rice, were high on the list of agricultural gripes. Judge William Clark, the Deputy Secretary, who was a large lemon grower in California, once called in Ambassador Okawara, to berate him because Japan had placed a temporary ban on lemon imports as the result of a Medfly (Mediterranean fruit fly) scare, flies having been discovered in California, leading to strict inspection at state borders, etc. Substance aside - you could argue whether our fumigation techniques should have satisfied the Japanese - this was not the sort of thing you would normally take up with an ambassador. I sat in and Okawara, a long-time friend, who understood the Washington scene, took it gamely enough.

One thing that had changed radically by the time I took the job was that the significance of Japan to the United States had increased to the point that major decisions were likely to escalate to the Under Secretary or Secretary level. The first Japan country director was Dick Sneider. The original concept of country director was that he would be the coordinator of policy or policy in Washington for the country concerned. I had observed Dick in action and admired the way he operated. He would summon the Japan desk representatives from various agencies to a conference room, sit at the head of the table, and hear everybody out. They would talk issues back and forth, and Dick would then say how it would be done. I tried that once, and quickly found it no longer worked. It wasn't that I was not Dick Sneider - I am a different personality, and probably could not have pulled it off the way he did anyway - but the main thing was that if you told Clyde Prestowitz what to do, he'd say, "Well, I'll talk to Olmer or Baldrige."

*Q: Secretary of Commerce Baldrige.*

SELIGMANN: Yes, or the DOD representative would say we will take it up with

Secretary Weinberger. No country director in State was going to determine policy for Japan. The best thing we had going was that George Schultz, who had had a good deal of experience dealing with Japan, understood the situation well, and was prepared to go to bat on important issues. He was an effective advocate but you could not bother him with every problem on which there was disagreement. Early in his tenure his old friend Saburo Okita, an academician who had been given much credit for Japan's double-digit economic growth during his service with the Economic Planning Agency, and who had briefly served as foreign minister, called on the Secretary. Schultz received him in a cardigan by the fireside in his private office and commiserated that he probably would not have many occasions like that in the future, inasmuch as he expected to be mired down in the Middle East like his predecessors. Also during his first weeks on the job, Schultz convened a breakfast meeting on the eighth floor of Japan experts in the private sector, such as Bob Scalapinio and Jim Morley, seeking their advice. It was a good meeting at which all present regretted the degree of emotionalism that had worked its way into U.S.-Japan bilateral negotiations. One recommendation that came to affect me personally was that we establish a standing group of binational leaders to make recommendations to the two governments. Schultz also cultivated excellent personal relations with his Japanese counterparts and made it a point to have bilateral discussions with them whenever they were together at multilateral forums such as the OECD - I counted up eleven bilateral meetings with Shintaro Abe alone.

Inasmuch as many matters were going to be settled in the White House, we were fortunate in that the Japan man on the NSC staff at that time was Gaston Sigur, a knowledgeable and skilled operative, who had attended the army Japanese language school. We did not overlap in those days, although I got to know him later, and was able to work very closely with him. Toward the end of 1982 we had a new Japanese prime minister who belied the prevalent image of the time of faceless Japanese leaders. Yasuhiro Nakasone was a controversial figure in Japan, partly because he had a reputation for speaking his mind unequivocally and exercising personal leadership, some of the qualities that made him much liked abroad. He had a good sense of how to deal with foreigners. To give one example, when he was named prime minister, one of the first things he did - he had been practicing for the job for years - was to pick up the phone and speak to the Korean prime minister in Korean, a brilliant gesture. Nakasone wanted to come to Washington as soon as possible after taking office, which meant working all-out over the holiday season for a visit immediately after New Year's. Gaston did most of the staging of the visit, which meant that he saw to it that position papers had a constructive tone, and the Japan desk was able to have ample input. The President and Nakasone took the unprecedented step of going on a first-name basis, establishing what became known as the Ron-Yasu relationship. (It had a slightly discomfiting legacy, in that Japanese prime ministers ever since have felt compelled to do the same in response to advice from presidential advisors, even though most Japanese do not feel comfortable with this American custom.)

*Q: Well, how did things work out with the Pentagon people and particularly the trade people on our side? Did you sort of have to last them out when they saw they weren't getting anywhere?*

SELIGMANN: It was a prolonged period of difficult friction that did not end on my watch. We kept threatening 301 actions, and the imposition of arbitrary restraints on Japanese imports. We bounced from one issue to another. As soon as you would resolve one, another would pop up. If not specialty steel, autos. If not autos, plate glass. If not plate glass, practice rights for American lawyers in Japan, and on and on. The sheer magnitude of trade and the trade deficit was the problem. Even though we enjoyed a substantial surplus on the service account, the numbers were huge.

*Q: Were you looking at Japan and having any concern about whether Japan would prosper in the long run, that the government wasn't really doing much for its people.*

SELIGMANN: What you are talking about was to a large extent the product of the exchange rate, layered on an inefficient distribution system with too many middlemen, and residual trade barriers. Much of this has changed in recent years, but food and housing costs are still excessively high by American standards. On the other hand, there was no serious inflation, the Japanese were used to a different standard, they received large salaries and bonuses, and they were not given to complaining. Moreover, some Americans were beginning to call for a much stronger yen, which would (and did) aggravate the problem for foreigners living in Japan.

*Q: Were you looking at the social underpinnings of Japan at this time? Were there any concerns?*

SELIGMANN: Not really. For some years, asked in polls where they saw themselves fitting into society, 90% of the Japanese responded that they were members of the middle class. People were generally content; incomes continued to rise; there was virtually no unemployment; and there was a relatively narrow gap between rich and poor. The bubble had not come anywhere near bursting at that point. Yes, housing was tight, but it was better than it ever was, and Japanese were traveling abroad in droves. In general people were satisfied with their lives. In discussing trade issues with both Japanese and Americans, I often commented that a large part of the problem was that most Japanese did not realize they had a problem.

*Q: What about the political thing. Was the LDP still doing its thing or were the socialists moving up?*

SELIGMANN: The socialists stopped moving up a long time ago. The LDP had suffered the last time I was assigned to Tokyo from the Lockheed scandal, by no means the first major scandal in Japanese history and by no means the last - the Lockheed scandal, which entailed large bribes to politicians and businessmen to influence the selection of the next major commercial aircraft, had repercussions for U.S. businessmen in that it was the catalyst for the Foreign Corrupt Practices Act, sometimes criticized for putting our overseas businessmen at a disadvantage! Corruption as I mentioned, was not a new phenomenon, but you continued to have successive scandals of one order or another, culminating in the early 90's in a period of turmoil in the political scene which is not yet

over. Much of the public was fed up with the behavior of politicians, or at best apathetic, but by the same token there was no plausible alternative party sitting in the wings ready to take over as in some countries. So for the moment at least the LDP continued in office as it had since 1955. There were some fresh faces, and some not so fresh faces, but it was not always easy to come up with people who weren't tainted with scandal. Nakasone himself was considered to be in the grey zone: they were never able to pin anything on him.

*Q: You were saying the problems were mainly trade problems...*

SELIGMANN: Yes. Congress would pass sharp resolutions on trade, there was much talk about imposing import quotas, or setting an arbitrary limit on the trade imbalance and that kind of thing. None of it actually went very far - it was used as leverage to extract more trade concessions from Japan. Talk aside, tariffs were not much of an issue, except for a few products, principally agricultural - Japan's tariffs were among the lowest in the world. But the onion-like peeling away of one layer of restriction and regulation after another went on. One often cited entry into the trade issue hall of fame was unlikely to make or break empires, but you would never guess it from the attention it received, and it illustrated the problem: aluminum baseball bats, used in softball, something I was unaware of before. In Japan a metal baseball bat first had to have a safety seal of approval, obtainable through an obscure bureaucratic process before you could get MITI (Ministry of International Trade and Industries) import approval. It never occurred to anyone that a foreign firm would have the audacity to try to export metal baseball bats into Japan. But when an American firm tried to do this, it found there was always a catch 22: if you tried to get the safety seal of approval, you found the bats had to be imported first, but that was not possible without the safety seal - they claimed that the head might fly off and hurt somebody. This dragged on for years before we were able to get aluminum baseball bats into Japan, after which we sold quite a few. If it wasn't that, it was how do you import cosmetics? It seems there was a list of approved ingredients for cosmetics. It wasn't that what you used was not safe, but if it wasn't on this list, import was not permitted. It took a long time before it was even possible to have access to this elusive list. When it was finally produced, there was no procedure for complying with the law by getting ingredients added to the list. This kind of thing could drag on for years. Most of these internal regulations designed to be protectionist at a time when Japan was down and out had long outlived any reasonable justification. They drove our chamber of commerce crazy, our embassy economic people crazy, and drove me crazy. I felt it was a mistake to argue with basic economics or the terms of trade, which is what arbitrary quotas or ceilings on the trade deficit translated into. Moreover Japanese sellers were no more to blame for penetrating our market than American buyers. When it came to lack of transparency and arbitrary NTBs, however, I had no hesitation in telling my Japanese friends that they were just making the whole trade conflict difficult.

*Q: How did you find the Japanese embassy operated during the time you were country director?*

SELIGMANN: I thought they did pretty well in reporting back to Tokyo. The embassy

here understood the issues far better than most of the ministries in Tokyo, so I thought they did a good job in analyzing domestic pressures in the U.S. and the politics of the situation - at least that was my impression. There were other issues we tried to work on which were not traumatic at this time, double taxation, social security, that kind of thing - and some that were difficult, like whaling. One of the thorniest issues was to get Japan included in the exceptions for energy supply we were prepared to make for the Europeans in regard to the sanctions on the USSR we imposed after their invasion of Afghanistan. The Japanese had a considerable investment in gas and oil exploration in the Kuriles. It wasn't that there was any special opposition, but EUR tended to plow ahead on their own. Fortunately, Tom Niles, the responsible DAS, was sympathetic and we had Larry Egelberger's support. Not a major issue, perhaps, but one of those rankling episodes where the Japanese felt we were not treating them the same as our European allies, despite lip service to the importance of the relationship.

During my relatively brief tour on the desk, I made quite a few trips to Japan, as well as Ottawa (G-7 meeting) and Paris (OECD), to accompany the Secretary, the Vice President, and one or two other officials, as well as to attend Policy Planning talks and meetings of the SSC (in Honolulu). These of course involved the usual load of briefing papers, talking points and the like.

*Q: Well, how long you were there from 1981 until when?*

SELIGMANN: Until 1983. Despite the sensible attitudes of the Secretary and his old friend Alan Wallis, Under Secretary for Economic Affairs, internally I found a little difficulty because the assistant secretary in EA tended to side with the working level of other agencies and even went so far as to take Japan to task in conversations with diplomats from other countries.

*Q: Who was that?*

SELIGMANN: John Holdridge.

*Q: Yes, well, he was very much a China hand.*

SELIGMANN: ...who played a large role in the normalization of relations with the PRC. He disliked Japan intensely, and perhaps with reason. I knew John well and always liked him personally - but this is supposed to be objective, not subjective. After one frustrating experience, I asked his special assistant at the time, "What relative or friend of John's lost his life in WWII?" He replied that his father was in the Bataan death march. That explains a lot. You don't need much more than that.

*Q: His father was a professional army officer.*

SELIGMANN: So it is easy to understand, but it was becoming very difficult to get support at that key level. Following the Secretary's breakfast meeting with outside experts that I mentioned earlier, the Japan desk was asked to make some specific suggestions for a new mechanism that could help smooth bilateral relations. There was a

precedent in the Japan-U.S. Economic Relations Group, popularly known as the Wise Men's Group, headed by Bob Ingersoll, former ambassador to Japan and later Assistant Secretary for EA, and former Ambassador to Washington Ushiba, with three other eminent private citizens on each side; their report had been published two or three years earlier. As the title indicates, it was centered on economic issues. We came up with a menu of different possibilities, including the idea favored by Scalapino and some others of a semi-permanent standing bilateral group, or alternatively, a second "Wisemen's Group." The Secretary decided to go ahead with something like the latter, only this time - and this is where he showed that he was politically astute - he wanted it to be to be a presidential commission. He felt that if you didn't get attention at the top, forget it. You could have all the reports in the world but it was the engagement of the president and prime minister that counted. Probably for the same reason, he rejected the idea of a standing body, knowing that Washington was full of committees and commissions whose half-lives had long expired. The upshot after some back-and-forth exchange of memos, was to put forward the idea of setting up a presidential commission that would work with a counterpart group appointed by the Japanese prime minister to make recommendations on all aspects of the relationship. White House approval having been obtained, it was decided formally at the Reagan-Nakasone meeting in January 1983 to establish such a commission, the details of which would be worked out between the Secretary and Foreign Minister. When Schultz met with Foreign Minister Abe the following month, they agreed that some seven representatives of different segments of society would be named by the president and prime minister to a United States-Japan Advisory Commission. Under the so-called Sunshine Act (Federal Advisory Commission Act), an indirect product of Watergate and its aftermath, you can't have a Presidential commission without a U.S. government representative serving with it to assure compliance with certain rules, such as publicizing meetings in the Federal Register, having open meetings, publishing recommendations, etc. (The Sunshine Act was not designed to cover a binational commission, so it became a challenge to work within the framework of a piece of domestic legislation, but we managed to cope.). Asked for recommendations for the job of executive director, I put down the names of perhaps a dozen persons, active and retired FSOs as well as some military officers who I thought would be good for the job. After considering the list, Tom Shoesmith, deputy assistant secretary responsible for Japan, asked me, "What about yourself?" I said I hadn't considered it, but would think it over. I realized that I was in a good job that had become a stepping stone to the DCM position in Tokyo, but the rather unpleasant atmosphere both internally in EA and externally was beginning to get to me. I didn't mind the work - almost as soon as I left, three staff members were added to the desk whom I could have used desperately at the time - but that is neither here nor there. A couple of days later, I somewhat impetuously agreed to take the commission job. So I didn't stay on the desk as long as I might have otherwise.

When the Executive Order establishing the Commission was issued in mid-May (with an equivalent announcement in Tokyo), I left the Japan desk. In some ways the commission assignment was a heady experience. I had the chance to work closely with some truly outstanding Americans and Japanese; had a great deal of latitude in regard to both administration and substance; and a real opportunity to influence policy in many respects.

The Chairman of the U.S. side was David Packard, the chairman of Hewlett-Packard, former Deputy Secretary of Defense and a close friend of George Schultz. His deputy was Jim Hodgson, former Secretary of Labor, with whom I had served for a half year when he was ambassador in Tokyo. The others were Douglas Fraser, former president of the UAW; Jim Bere, Chairman of Borg Warner; Donald Rumsfeld, President Searle & Co., and former Secretary of Defense; Daryl Arnold, president Western (citrus) Growers Association; and Bill Timmons, president of a major Washington PR firm, with close White House contacts. We did not get Bob Scalapino, who was on Schultz's original list, and Dave Abshire, President of CSIS, who was originally selected, was replaced when he was named ambassador to NATO.

The Japanese side was headed by Ambassador Ushiba who was also co-chair of the previous commission. His deputy was former Foreign Minister Okita. Others on the Japanese side were Akio Morita, Chairman of Sony; Yotaro Kobayashi, President of Fuji Xerox; Seizaburo Sato, Professor at Tokyo University; Isamu Yamashita, Chairman Mitsui Shipbuilding; and because we had the head of the UAW on our side and autos were such a big issue, the head of the Japan auto workers union.

I went to work from a bare desk on the first floor of the State Department, scouting for an office, hiring a deputy and secretary from the private sector, and otherwise getting organized. Thanks to Dave Abshire, who came up with an attractive office at 1800 K Street that was under CSIS contract, I was able to resist GAO's efforts to locate us in cavernous unoccupied space in one government building or another. My counterpart on the Japanese side was Tadashi Yamamoto, Director of the Japan Center for International Exchange, who had served in the same capacity for the Wisemen's Group (it was inevitable that in Japan the Commission would be immediately known as "The Second Wisemen's Group"); Yamamoto was the man the Japanese always called on to manage their side of undertakings such as the Trilateral Commission, Williamsburg Conferences, Shimoda Conferences, etc. We had known each other for a many years, worked easily together, and quickly went about setting an agenda.

David Packard was a remarkable man in many ways. He would give all his attention to the matter at hand, and during my work with the commission, I had immediate access to him anytime I wanted, remarkable considering his busy schedule. A very modest man, his own office, which I visited a couple of times in Palo Alto, was smaller than that of the average DAS, the only room with a wall in a sea of wall-less partitions. When he arrived at Airlie House for one of our meetings, he discovered he had picked up the wrong bag at Dulles, but before we could decide who would make the exchange, he had driven back to the airport arguing that it was his mistake and no one else should have to take care of it. One wonders how many ranking government officials would do the same. He reminded me of Mike Mansfield in regard to qualities of leadership and independent thinking. In the first couple of weeks after the Commission was announced, Dave asked me to dinner at the Madison and spent two or three hours going over plans. The principal point he made was that he recognized the necessity of having a report or reports - with minor emendations he approved our outline—but, echoing George Schultz, insisted that the most important thing was to come up with recommendations that he could present

personally to the President and Secretary. He also made it clear that unlike so many Washington commissions and other institutions, he did not anticipate continuing the commission beyond its one-year mandate.

*Q: Well, you were doing this from when to when?*

SELIGMANN: We got off the ground in May 1983, and the final report was delivered in October 1984. The first joint meeting, at which the members were greeted by President Reagan, was held in the Cabinet Room at the White House in late June 1983. Needless to say, this received a good deal of publicity in Japan, far more than in the U. S., but helped immensely in both countries in getting off to a good start. There were five joint meetings in all: three in the Washington area; one in Tokyo; and a final meeting on Maui. In keeping with the Sunshine Act, the U.S. side also held two public meetings, with invited speakers, which gave special interests a chance to be heard - I wasn't sure how this would work out for a binational commission, striving for united views, but it turned out it was entirely feasible. There remained the question of how the U.S. members could meaningfully consult privately with each other, but it seems there was nothing to prevent them from dining together in preparation for joint meetings, or on one occasion, from getting a briefing at the Rand Corporation at Santa Monica. We also commissioned a half dozen or more studies, some at the behest of one or more members, all approved by Dave Packard, on such subjects as trade, science and technology, security issues, agricultural trade, alternative scenarios in future bilateral relations, etc. Papers were also produced on the Japanese side, and we drew on some of this material in the final report.

*Q: What were the principal things you were recommending?*

SELIGMANN: For starters, it was decided at a meeting in September 1983 that an interim report emphasizing a few key issues that demanded immediate attention should be delivered to the president and prime minister prior to their October summit meeting in Tokyo. This report took note of the friction building up in the relationship, the tendency to scapegoat, and the importance of managing relations in a spirit of partnership. It also covered specific trade and investment issues, security questions, science and technology, energy, etc., but the key recommendation singled out in the press release and briefings called on the two leaders to take urgent measures to strengthen the yen against the dollar and make it more of a global currency. The report flagged the disparity in the steady growth of Japanese exports to the U. S. compared with the growth of U. S. exports to Japan as the root cause of most of the friction in the relationship, and addressed the litany of the more troublesome specific issues. It declared, however, that any attempt to establish an artificial trade balance goal could - the Japanese side would have preferred "would" - hurt both economies. Accordingly, while calling for further trade liberalization and transparency on the part of Japan and increased productivity on the part of the U.S., special emphasis was put on the exchange rate.

By mid-1984, following a couple of intensive drafting sessions with Yamamoto and his staff via fax and at sessions in Tokyo and Hawaii we had the essence of a final report in place for consideration at a last joint meeting of the members in July. In the final stages,

Dave Packard had come to espouse the imposition of an unspecified limit on the trade imbalance as necessary to compel further market-opening measures, and I was instructed to put language to this effect in the draft. It seemed to me, personal opposition to that approach aside, it was a foregone conclusion that if we did so, it would be impossible to bring the Japanese aboard - and both sides were determined up to that point to avoid dissenting opinions. I quickly found out that when Dave Packard said something he meant it and did not intend to say it twice. I fudged the draft language I sent to Dave and was immediately told to remove any ambiguities. Of course I complied, but then nature took its course: Ushiba got in touch with Dave, told him there could be no agreed report with that provision, and we watered it down. Balancing the report's considerable list of recommendations for Japanese transparency and removal of barriers to trade in goods and services, as well as investment, the report called on the U.S. to reduce the debt, balance the budget and increase savings.

Relatively little discussion on security took place at any of the Commission meetings, Rumsfeld being the most interested member on the U. S. side, and Sato on the Japanese side. Accordingly, most of the recommendation in a rather lengthy security chapter were prepared at the staff level; for my part I had the benefit of consultations with Admiral Crowe, then Commander-in-Chief Pacific, and Admiral Foley, Commander Pacific Fleet, as well as USFJ. Finally, the report included sections on Science and Technology and on Communication, embracing educational and cultural exchange as well as dialogue between leaders in both countries.

All of the above represented the elements of what one might expect in a report of this nature. The most important distinguishing feature, however, and that emphasized in both the report and public and private presentations was introduced by Dave Packard and enthusiastically accepted by all. At the very outset, the report declared that improved management was the key to reducing bilateral friction. It called on the president and prime minister personally to exercise leadership in this regard; noted that issues tended to become prematurely politicized and bogged down in bureaucratic squabbling; and made a number of other specific recommendations for high-level intervention and consultation. Ushiba took the initiative in including a well-publicized recommendation that instead of waiting for trade issues to pile up for eventual, painful "package" solutions, Japan should create a proactive commission to set an agenda for strengthening the world economy - something like this was in fact put in place in Japan shortly thereafter.

The release of commission reports normally are not earthshaking events, but I believe this one had a good deal of impact, especially in Japan, but also in the United States. For one thing, it was a unanimously accepted set of recommendations, about a hundred or more, some major, some less significant. In this regard, we had taken pains from the start to avoid a "we" versus "they" atmosphere. With Dave Packard's endorsement, we set up the seating for all meetings following the inaugural session so that, although the respective chairmen faced each other, American and Japanese representatives alternated instead of sitting on opposite sides of the table, and in the report proper, with the exception of the principals, the names of the members were intermixed alphabetically. True to his intent, Dave presented the report personally to President Reagan with Secretary Schultz and

Treasury Secretary Regan present, while Ushiba presented it the same day to Prime Minister Nakasone. At an early Cabinet meeting, Nakasone charged all ministers concerned to follow up on the recommendations and tasked the Chief Cabinet Secretary with coordinating the effort. We had put together a suggested program for the American members to meet with business organizations, the Congress, and other concerned groups to promote key recommendations. Dave Packard, Jim Hodgson and one or two others did make a few speeches, but these were all busy people who wanted to get on with other activities. The report itself was widely distributed, often under appropriate covering letters, and for my part, I made a number of appearances around the country to talk about the report's recommendations. There were periods after that in the early 90's when I felt strongly that that kind of effort was again called for, but immediately dismissed it from mind because unfortunately, neither in Japan nor in the United States did you have leadership that was interested in a macro-approach to U.S.-Japan relations.

*Q: Well, did you think that George Schultz made good use of it?*

SELIGMANN: One of the key recommendations on improving management of the relationship was that taking into account the differences in the way in which our two governments were structured, in Japan the Prime Minister should be responsible for coordinating bilateral relations, while in the United States, the Secretary of State should coordinate Japan-related policies. Counterpart contacts should be encouraged and expanded, but the Secretary should insist that major policies be developed under his direction and see to it that once established, they be pursued with one negotiating voice. It is unrealistic to suppose that this will ever happen in practice across the board, but this was much in line with the Secretary's thinking and helped strengthen his hand. Looking back, I am surprised at just how many - the vast majority - of the recommendations have seen the light of day, and at how many of the issues that seemed so troublesome at the time have been resolved.

*Q: What was your impression of the academic establishment in the United States in Japanese studies?*

SELIGMANN: Some of the people were very good. Bob Scalapino was and is terrific, probably the preeminent person in Asian studies in the United States. Ezra Vogel at Harvard; Hugh Patrick at Columbia, who served on the first Wisemen's Group; Dick Samuels at MIT; and Jim Morley and Jerry Curtis at Columbia were among the outstanding names that come to mind. Most of the leaders in the field - and I am speaking largely of political science - were well rounded in more than one Japan related discipline. We were, however, beginning to see a development that continues today of increased specialization, especially on the economic side, that in my opinion adversely affects our understanding of issues.

*Q: Well, did you find yourself disconnected from the State Department establishment?*

SELIGMANN: In both positive and negative ways. On the positive side, I enjoyed running my own show, even if it was not a huge one. And it was a welcome change to

work downtown in the real world, being able to buy a pencil across the street without going to the GAO store, etc. I kept in close touch with my friends in State, especially in EA; made it a point to keep them informed of what we were doing; and discussed drafts and the like with them. The Bureau, in turn, was circumspect in avoiding any attempt to influence our work. Probably in terms of career, separation was not a wonderful thing - out of sight, out of mind.

*Q: What happened, I thought this might be a good place to stop. We will put at the end here where did you go after this?*

SELIGMANN: Downhill. I was hopeful that with the backing of all the wonderful Commission members I would get a good assignment, and it didn't transpire, so I went to the Board of Examiners as sort of a holding...

*Q: The Times call it a parking place. I did that for a year, too.*

SELIGMANN: Maybe if I had stuck it out longer, something good would have come up - possibly I got impatient too fast, considering that some of my fellow examiners who did stick it out ended up with good assignments.

*Q: How long did you do that?*

SELIGMANN: A little over a year.

*Q: And then you retired?*

SELIGMANN: Then I retired.

*Q: Well, we might as well plow on ahead then. Were there any observations you'd like to make about the examining process?*

SELIGMANN: Yes, I think it is filled with serious fundamental defects and said so at the time. Inability to see any serious effort to improve matters was another reason I left when I did. I put in writing what I thought was wrong with the process, but it was not well accepted by the director of BEX (Board of Examiners).

*Q: This is 1984-1986 about?*

SELIGMANN: Yes, from the fall of 1984 through most of 1985. (I also did some public speaking under USIA sponsorship during this period, including one overseas trip to Japan and Malaysia, to talk about the Advisory Commission report.)

On the one hand we were trying to prove that we were drawing our entry class from as many different institutions as possible; that our entry class reflected population diversity insofar as feasible; and that we were geographically as representative as possible. We also had to contend with the settlement of a class-action suit to bring more women into

the Foreign Service that mandated that we bring in a certain number of women each year, regardless of qualifications. I could live with all this, but what troubled me was that in trying to accomplish these laudable goals, we were doing ourselves a harmful disservice by not at the same time trying to get the best people. I tried to come up with some ideas how you might do that, and made some specific proposals. One of the troubles, as you are aware, was the terrible lag at each stage between the time a candidate took the written examination, passed the oral examination, completed the security check, and entry into the Foreign Service. This could go on for two years or more. If, apart from filling quotas, we wanted also to attract some of the very best applicants, we had to realize that we were competing with other government and non-government organizations that were after the same people. One of the suggestions I made was that a certain percentage of positions, say 5% or 10%, be set aside on an experimental basis for candidates who appeared on surface to be truly outstanding: those with the highest scores, regardless of institutional, geographic or other considerations. They would be red-flagged and given priority for the oral examination, and, if they survived, for the security check. You could call this still another quota, analogous to university early admission. They would know where they stood early in the game so that the Department would stand a better chance of hanging on to them. I suggested we initially try out the process with 10-12 candidates, and make public what we were doing so that no one could complain about it. If it had not become a dirty word, you might be able to talk about an "elite" quota. I felt you could do something to bring in the very best at the same time you were getting diversity. I wrote a memo to the head of BEX setting this all down, I thought in moderate terms and tone, but nothing was heard of it, whereupon I sent a copy to Ron Spiers, the deputy secretary for management, whom I knew personally. The next thing I knew, I was called on the carpet by the director of BEX who had received an inquiry from Spiers asking what he had done about the memo. He wanted to fire me because I had bypassed him - which I had in a sense, knowing there was no other way of getting any action.

*Q: Well, what had he done, sat on it?*

SELIGMANN: Yes. In general, BEX was defensive about everything they did, but I felt we were not just hurting the Foreign Service, we were hurting the United States by not bringing the very best people into the Foreign Service.

*Q: The problem about the BX process is that when you get right down to it, you might have fairly good examiners, although it is a mixed bag, but the people who implement it are generally either sort of bureaucrats or it is not your first team. They feel their orders are strictly to make sure you get enough minorities, get enough women in and that is it.*

SELIGMANN: That's right I have nothing against trying to do all that. Every morning we were interviewing I got up and said, "Oh, God, give me a good minority candidate. I want one. I want a good candidate."

*Q: Yes, and I mean there are all sorts of demographics working against some of this. I mean you can get some, but the biggest problem is that we don't offer enough, particularly on the minority side - on women we are probably doing fairly well - but with*

*minorities - we are talking about essentially blacks, to a lesser extent Hispanics - to get a very good candidate, they are going to get twice or triple the pay in business because they are sought after as examples, but we can't accept that.*

SELIGMANN: That's why I thought a fast-track system for a limited number of candidates might help on that score as well. As a result of the women's class action suit, you had a different problem: women in their 50s who had finished a career in teaching or whatever would apply for entry, saying, "Oh, I would like to do something different." You know, that is all right and maybe they are very fine people, but how many useful years are they going to give the Foreign Service, after they learn how to do the job?

*Q: Well, this is the thing. Also, there is a training process, learning how to go in and... It is not for everyone. No, and everybody knows it.*

SELIGMANN: Right.

*Q: So, there you are. Well then, So I take it this wasn't the happiest time for you.*

SELIGMANN: Oh, it wasn't that unhappy. My fellow examiners were good company, most of whom felt about the way I did. The trips to examination centers in other parts of the country were also a nice respite. I didn't enjoy some of the examining procedures, which in the effort to be impartial and quantifiable had become much too mechanical. I felt terribly constrained by the inability to just talk to people, or follow up a question and draw them out and get a better feel for them, but that was all prohibited. You all had to be by the...

*Q; I served in the board of examiners in the uninhibited and the inhibited, and the inhibited was really designed not to get the best and the brightest but just to make sure you wouldn't be sued by showing prejudice. So it got very mechanical. You would throw the dice to find out what questions to ask, you know, I mean it was...*

SELIGMANN: Right. You couldn't follow up.

*Q: The exam was designed by lawyers.*

SELIGMANN: I don't want to sound like a chronic complainer, but another memo I wrote with minimal results pointed out that the ambiance of the waiting room for candidates, the entrance way, and the examining rooms had call the glamour of a rundown diner: broken chairs, clocks falling off dirty walls, etc. I suggested that the examiners could live with what they had for their own dilapidated offices, but that we should bear in mind how other agencies such as CIA and private companies presented themselves.

In the fall of 1985, I woke up one morning and realized that I had been at the top salary grade for some years; had passed the point of maximum retirement benefits two or three years earlier; and that even though I had been extended in the senior Foreign Service and still had at least a year or two to go, I would be better off financially by retiring and

taking another job - needless to say, shortly thereafter one of the largest pay increases ever was enacted, removing the cap on senior executive service salaries.

*Q: What have you done since? You retired in...*

SELIGMANN: I made my decision toward the end of 1985 and retired the beginning of 1986.

*Q: Just briefly what have you been up to since then?*

SELIGMANN: Almost immediately, I embarked on an interim project for the National Conference of State Legislatures (NCSL), organizing their first exchange program with Japan, with emphasis on education. While I was still doing that, I accepted a job as the Japan representative of The Asia Foundation and returned to Tokyo for four and a half years with the Foundation.

*Q: Well, what does the Asia Foundation do, or what was it doing while you were doing this?*

SELIGMANN: The Foundation has offices in about 20 countries in Asia engaged in what is loosely described as nation building: trying to put in place the underpinnings of democracy, democratic infrastructure, by assisting in innovative ways to increase literacy, provide books for school libraries, build up parliamentary libraries, training judges, work with women leaders, etc. It varied country to country. The largest program while I was there was a population-control project in Bangladesh. The foundation as you may know, almost came to an untimely end. At the time CIA's funding of various activities, including some student organizations, was exposed, it came to light that a good part of the Asia Foundation's budget also came from CIA. The projects themselves were listed in published annual reports and had never been secret, but the source of funds - then and now a mix of private and public funding - was not clear. When it became known in the mid-1960s that CIA was the source of public funding, the foundation almost folded shop. Long-time president Haydn Williams fought the good fight, however, on the merits of the organization's work, and after some years of hand-to-mouth funding by Congress, jumping between the USIA and State budgets, the Asia Foundation Act was passed, which put it on a completely open basis with money appropriated directly as a line item, supplemented by funds raised from corporate and individual donors. Cognizant that anyone interested who was paying attention knew the history, when I discussed the foundation in Tokyo, I would often take the initiative in explaining this background to be sure the air was clear. I had no difficulty with that.

On the other hand, I started in effect with a blank slate, inasmuch as my predecessor, who left a year and a half earlier, had been there 15 years, and few projects were on-going. In San Francisco, the Board of Trustees had established a small committee to determine whether or not to continue a program in Japan, considering the high operating cost. Wisely, I think, they concluded that you couldn't have an Asia Foundation without a program in Japan. The upshot was that they decided to keep the office with the albatross

added around my neck that I would have to raise money from Japanese sources - which turned out to be an interesting education by itself.

*Q: Why don't we set up one more session and we will talk about the Asia Foundation?*

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*We are going to pick up now with sort of your post State Department career. You went to the Asia Foundation. When did you go there and how long were you with it so we have the time frame a bit?*

SELIGMANN: I accepted the position while in the midst of the NCSL project, went to San Francisco for three days in May, during which I tried to master the administrative intricacies, get to know the home-office staff, meet some of the trustees, and write a budget. I left for Tokyo with my wife in July 1986 three days after returning from Japan with the NCSL delegation, and stayed with the foundation until the end of 1990.

*Q: What did the Asia Foundation consist, I mean what did the Asia Foundation do in those days, and what was your role?*

SELIGMANN: Many of the projects in Japan in the early days were analogous to projects elsewhere in Asia, trying to build up private democratic institutions in law and education, sending legislators abroad for exposure, and the like. Japan had been cut off from the outside world so to speak for quite a long time. Many prominent individuals in Japan even today, although they are dying off, attribute the start in their careers to grants from the foundation. One of the largest projects, still active in most other countries, was the Books for Asia program, which provided large quantities of donated books, some slightly dated, some overruns, to universities and other institutions. Librarians and university officials in Japan frequently applauded the contribution these grants made to stimulating English literature and American studies, bringing social studies up to date, etc. Most of these programs had outlived their usefulness in the sense that the institutions had taken root and could stand on their own feet, a tribute to their success, whereas educational institutions could now afford to purchase their own books - I found when I got out there, we were having to beg universities to take the books off our hands.

When I arrived, the largest on-going project was a unique operation known as the Translations Service Center (TSC). A team of skilled American and Japanese translators selected opinion pieces from newspapers and Magazines to which we subscribed and translated them into colloquial English, avoiding the pitfalls of literal translation, while conveying as accurately as possible the intent of the writers (with whom they were vetted). These were distributed through the home office in San Francisco to perhaps a hundred newspapers and some magazines in the United States. They were only occasionally printed by major dailies like the New York Times or Wall Street Journal that had their own foreign correspondents, but were frequently carried by smaller papers and several of the major regional papers such as the Cleveland Plain Dealer, Atlanta Constitution, and the like. In view of the tremendous understanding gap between our countries, this program, costly as it was, still had validity.

Otherwise, I had the opportunity to draw on the totality of my Foreign Service experience to propose and implement projects that might have taken years to see to fruition in government. In other words I was to a very large extent, my own boss. We had a very small office. Leaving aside the part-time TSC staff, I was the only full-time American. If there was any annoying drawback, it was the inability to bounce ideas back and forth within the office. In the Japanese scheme of things, my staff of four to five (it varied) were reluctant to make suggestions, and when I tried out ideas hoping they would raise objections or give me some inspiration, what I almost invariably got was agreement. I had plenty of opportunity, however, to exchange thoughts with both Japanese and American friends and colleagues I had known over the years.

In designing fresh elements for a Japan program, I used as a starting point some of the observations I had made during my State Department years working on Japan. One was that the relationship had long since ceased to be under the purview of a relatively small group of experts. The U.S.-Japan relationship had grown in scope and importance to the point that it had to be taken into account in almost all significant areas of foreign policy as well as a wide range of domestic policies. Moreover, it was affecting the lives of people in both the United States and Japan who were poorly informed about the other country, but who might have a voice as opinion leaders in what happened to that relationship. This is something that Bobby Kennedy at one point felt strongly about on a broader scale: the need to reach rising leaders. I felt there was need to do that more than ever. Even though literally millions of Japanese visited the United States each year and not quite so many Americans, but still hundreds of thousands, if not a million Americans came to Japan annually, almost all of them did so in narrow contexts: as businessmen conducting business, for professional or technical conferences with counterparts, or as tourists touring.

*Q: At Waikiki and off to Guam.*

SELIGMANN: Or even if they get to the mainland, with a few bold exceptions, they see the monuments, and the national parks, following the tour guide's flag, but unless resident in the United States, don't really get a chance to understand our society. With these considerations in mind I designed a number of fresh projects, fully realizing that with a limited budget and staff, we would only have so much impact. We put together two delegations of first- and second-term Diet members, a number of whom had never set foot in the United States, while the experience of most of the rest was limited to the sort of visits we were talking about. In selecting them, I relied heavily on the advice and introductions of more senior members of the major political parties whom I had gotten to know over the years and whose judgment I respected, also consulting with former colleagues in the Embassy. To be sure there had been other Diet-Congressional exchange programs, principally sponsored by the Japan Center for International Exchange - Ambassador Foley was one of the first such exchangees and a frequent repeater, inasmuch as JCIE liked to mix veterans with newcomers. These were fine programs - I have hardly ever met an exchange program I did not like - but there were two drawbacks. The visits were confined to Washington and centered on meetings with counterparts, who

in turn could rarely spare much time, and the visits lasted no more than three or four days. Consequently there was no real opportunity to get any feeling in depth for American society.

We demanded a two-week commitment from our participants - observed in the breach by one or two individuals - which is only possible at a formative stage of career. In addition to the mandatory visit to Washington, including meetings on the Hill and with USG officials, we arranged for travel to at least two or three other regions and, heavily influenced by my Senior Seminar experience, worked in farm and factory visits, meetings with journalists, local businessmen, local political leaders, minority leaders, and so on. We also worked in some cultural events and a one-night homestay. In one instance, a left-wing Diet woman who stayed with the family of an Iowa school superintendent, landed up sending her son to high school there, staying with his family, followed later by a second son. An unanticipated fallout of these trips was that the delegation members, some of whom had never had a conversation with the participants from opposing parties, became good friends and held periodic reunions, which I was sometimes invited to attend. All-in-all I felt we succeeded in broadening understanding of the United States in ways that would have a long-term positive affect.

*Q: As long as you get a certain balance.*

SELIGMANN: Yes, a representative balance. Obviously, the majority were from the government party, the LDP. Also numbers are important. If you get too many people, nobody has a chance for meaningful dialogue at meetings. So I came up with the magic number of seven as about the right number to make a project cost effective, considering all the organizing and moving around of people, guide-interpreters, and the administrative side of it in Tokyo and San Francisco. The majority of participants have gone on to do very well in their political careers in the past intervening ten or fifteen years.

We then decided to run the same sort of program for prefectural assemblymen. For many years after World War II, the most common route to a political career in the Diet was through the bureaucracy. Now, however, following the pattern in the United States whereby perhaps thirty per cent of Congressmen come out of state legislatures, as many as 30-40% of Diet members were starting off as prefectural assemblymen. Here we aimed higher, choosing politicians who had already made their mark at that level - even if they did not go on to the Diet, they would remain influential in their prefectures.

We also inaugurated programs to bring local American opinion leaders to Japan. Previously, the only Americans who were sponsored as grantees by the foundation were specialists brought out to meet with special audiences. For example, there had been a long-standing program in Japan to support American studies in the universities, and in conjunction with our bicentennial, we arranged two series of lectures by prominent professors of constitutional law. San Francisco had also put together an exhibit of political cartoons with two leading cartoonists prepared to meet with counterparts in other countries, for which we were happy to make arrangements in Japan. But we had never

brought over a group of opinion leaders just because they were opinion leaders from a particular area.

*Q: Why don't you explain what you mean by opinion leaders?*

SELIGMANN: The answer is necessarily subjective. I had in mind individuals who were respected for their status within their professions or occupations and therefore were in a position to influence others in their community. Countless opinion leaders at the national level had visited Japan in one capacity or another, but I wanted to put together groups from states where the relationship was of increasing importance but this was not widely recognized and there was little knowledge of Japan. I decided to pick a group from a state that was not too large or too small. Now quite a few states could meet that definition.

*Q: Missouri or something like that.*

SELIGMANN: Missouri came to mind. That was definitely a possibility, and was on our short list. The one I picked initially was Wisconsin. My concept was to get representatives from business, agriculture, the state legislature, academia, journalism, et al. By happenstance Donna Shalala, then Chancellor of Wisconsin University, was in Japan for a couple of months on a grant from the Japan Society.

*Q: She is now Secretary of Health Education and Welfare.*

SELIGMANN: Right. I had breakfast with her and explained what I had in mind. She said she would be delighted to help, and gave me an introduction to the associate vice chancellor of the university, who undertook to put a group together. He came up with just the right people, including besides himself, three state legislators; the chairman of the National Committee on Agricultural and Rural Development Policy; the editor of the Milwaukee Journal; the mayor of Wausau City; and the executive director of the Greater Milwaukee Committee. They spent two weeks in Japan, during which they stayed in three or four diverse prefectures, met with Chamber of Commerce officials, newspaper editors, visited a farm because agricultural trade issues were prominent in our relationship that time, had a homestay, etc.

A second program put together an analogous group from Iowa, including the president of a small agricultural bank, whom Khrushchev had bounced on his knee when she was a girl. We also ran a pilot program similar to the state programs for leaders in a single prefecture (Shizuoka).

*Q: I would like to get both sides of the coin. On the Japanese side when they went to the United States, what were some of the things that stuck with them, you know, something that they were getting from these trips that they probably wouldn't have gotten from seeing movies and getting the news and all that about the United States.*

SELIGMANN: A mixed bag of impressions. The vastness of the country of course, strikes all visitors to the United States. The friendliness of ordinary people, their warmth and hospitality, made a big impression belying some common media images. They were

surprised at the general lack of concern, especially outside large cities, with foreign affairs. At least half the Japanese commented favorably on the extent to which volunteerism has permeated American society. The home stays we arranged were almost unanimously singled out by both Japanese and Americans as the highlight of their respective trips, something they would probably never forget. This was a time when much was being written about how Japan was taking over the world, and American visitors had their eyes open for ideas they could apply at home. One group that visited facilities for the aging at a ward (borough) level in Tokyo admired the possibilities for an intermediate level of home-maker assistance as well as community recreational facilities. They also were astonished at the degree of sophistication in the application of robots on the plant assembly floor, now more prevalent in the U. S.. In general, however, they came away with far better understanding of how Japanese institutions operated, but found little that they thought could be transplanted at home. The NCSL group studying education, for example, were envious of the high degree of average achievement, especially in math and science, but quickly saw that individual initiative, in which Americans pride themselves, was often sacrificed. They also realized that what worked in a homogeneous society like Japan, would not necessarily work at home, including the friendly imposition and acceptance of discipline in the classroom. (Parenthetically, the latter has broken down badly in Japan in recent years.)

The drawback to organizing this sort of exchange program is that it is labor intensive: in the selection of the participants; in arranging tailor-made programming in consultation with them; and in follow-up. I am not a USIA type, but I have the impression that the US government has gotten into something of a rut, turning the programming for international visitors over to a number of private contract organizations. They punch the keys and out comes the program. Volunteer groups around the country are delighted to receive visitors and offer hospitality, which usually results in a good experience, but it is not the same thing as engaging the participants in the planning process and providing personal introductions when feasible - and of course this cannot be done on a large scale. The other major problem is to prove cost effectiveness. Home offices are eager to quantify results, e.g., the number of placements of TSC articles, or the size of audiences for lectures, but the payoff for exchange programs is more often than not years down the road. I could come up with a good deal of empirical evidence that such investments are worthwhile, but could not do so in the short term for any particular program. So that was one set of programs so to speak that we got involved in, and I was pleased with the way they worked out. Don't ask me what has happened to this sort of Asia Foundation programming in Japan because I know the answer: they ground to a halt.

*Q: Is it the thing that as a relationship gets mature that people forget you need to keep sowing the seeds?*

SELIGMANN: Partly. It is unquestionably hard to convince people that the more they think they know each other, too often the opposite is true. It was also because my successor was lazy and did what too many people do in the non-profit sector, poured his money into conferences where the same people repeatedly met the same people.

*Q: Yes, this has always struck me. These conferences seem to be rather sterile.*

SELIGMANN: They are sterile in the sense that what people learn is of only marginal utility. Maybe they go away with one or two new thoughts, but they don't meet new people and rarely influence new people after the conference. In fact they get so friendly that everybody knows what everybody is going to say. So many seminars and symposiums have seemed to me to be a frightful waste of money, at least compared with potential alternative projects.

Another area where I was able to innovate was programming for the Japanese Self Defense Forces, with the goal of expanding international horizons. I mentioned earlier that regular intimate contacts between them and their American counterparts had fallen off drastically over the years and that this was particularly true of the Ground Self Defense Forces (GSDF), partly because we no longer had any ground forces in Japan, apart from the Marines in Okinawa. Unlike their air and navy counterparts (ASDF and MSDF), the GSDF had no personnel in non-military schools. With the specter of potential nationalism in the background, I felt it was important that future GSDF leaders have greater exposure to the United States and to international affairs.

With the endorsement of the Foreign Ministry, which shared this outlook, and the top levels of the Defense Agency, who, including the Vice Minister, again were people I knew from my previous career, we arranged the first fellowships in international relations for field-grade officers at first-rate schools, such as Fletcher, SAIS and Columbia's School of International Affairs - we wanted them to be on a par with other Japanese ministries such as Finance and the Foreign Ministry. The first fellow, a lieutenant colonel, hand-picked by the JDA for his potential, spoke only a smattering of English on arrival, but made great progress over the summer, stayed up until the wee hours studying every night and graduated near the top of his class at Fletcher. He is now a two-star general at the Japanese Embassy, and the elected head of the Washington defense attaché corps, in addition to being a frequent attendee at international meetings and a prolific writer on security matters.

*Q: Did you have any problem dealing with the Asia Foundation, because you know, it makes great sense but you are dealing with and we understand it in the Foreign Service, but dealing With Asia Foundation sort of academically inclined, there has been for a long time almost the same aversion towards the military that you are talking about on the Japanese side.*

SELIGMANN: I had no problems whatsoever. I had full support - by the way, Haydn Williams had been a DAS in the Navy Department. One of the nicest things about working for the foundation was that I had good understanding and full backing for my projects as long as the money held out. My quarrel came later with the administrative red-tape, which was time consuming and annoying, but that was something else. A second program for the SDF was much like some of the other exchange programs, and was partly in response to requests, which we rejected for lack of funds, to include the other services in the fellowship program. We put together inter-service groups of about seven or eight

field-grade officers, sending them on a varied program for about two weeks around the United States - not to military bases, everything but military bases.

*Q: Sort of like the senior seminar.*

SELIGMANN: Probably inspired by it. See what America is all about, experience home stays, and the like. This worked out beautifully. By the way, after the first two years of GSDF fellowships, the JDA came to me and asked us to send two fellows a year. When I replied that we did not have the funds, they offered to share the cost, which we of course were happy to do; thereafter they occasionally sent a career civilian as one of the fellows. It was heartwarming that when my wife and I left Japan at the end of 1990, all the former participants in these two sets of programs came together from around Japan to attend a surprise reception for us hosted by the present and former vice ministers.

*Q: It is so important to get people out and around in each country. It is hard to understand the United States - you talk about the inscrutable oriental, but the United States is very difficult to understand. It is such a large society - the bigness, the roots of where we have come from and how things work - in order to understand this you have got to know how we operate and all.*

SELIGMANN: Well, there were other things, but I think those were the areas that I felt most strongly about. There are lessons in here I think, for any Foreign Service officer. You could take your experience and turn it to new areas. It is something other people don't necessarily have to the same degree. Another aspect of working for a private foundation overseas that I enjoyed to my pleasant surprise was not having a life support system: no PX, commissary or government medical facilities; the only thing that rankled was inability to enter the Embassy without an escort.

*Q: Well, you did this until 1990.*

SELIGMANN: Yes.

*Q: Then what happened?*

SELIGMANN: I was enjoying my work and could probably have stayed on as long as I wanted, but felt it was time to leave. I alluded before to the administrative red tape. largely a matter of filling out endless forms. If I had had a larger staff, like many of the other foundation representatives, with someone to just fill out forms, that would have been fine, but I had to do it all myself. The other thing was that I wanted to spend more time with my family and do other things, including travel. I made my decision about a year before we left, indicating I was in no hurry but would like to return when a successor had been picked. Back in Washington, I continued part-time for a while with the same sort of work. I organized the first exchange program for the Japan America Society of Washington to send to Japan a group of District of Columbia leaders, as opposed to representatives of federal government or national organizations in Washington. I accompanied a rainbow group of seven DC leaders. The selection process for someone like me, who lives in the Washington area, but not in the District and knows little about

the District was educational. We had four black leaders, one Hispanic and two Caucasians, representing different sectors: business, the DC government, the City Council, the Washington, DC development organization, a school principal. I also ran a mission for the President of World Learning.

*Q: Okay. Well, thank you very much. We have learned a lot about Japan and Berlin.*

SELIGMANN: I am not sure there was that much that was not known.

*Q: It all adds up.*

SELIGMANN; One footnote. To use John Emerson's phrase, a Japan thread has run through my career, and whatever I accomplished had the interests of the United States and Japan in mind in that order. To my pleasant surprise, the Japanese government in 1993 honored me at a ceremony at the Japanese Embassy with one of the highest decorations bestowed on foreigners - perhaps a prophet is not without honor save in his own country.

*Q: Thank you very much.*

*End of interview*