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

JAMES L. WOODS

Interviewed by: Charles Stuart Kennedy
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INTERVIEW

Q: Today is October 31, 2001. This is an interview with James L. Woods on behalf of the Association for Diplomatic Studies and Training. I'm Charles Stuart Kennedy. To start with, tell me when and where you were born and something about your family.

WOODS: I was born in Columbus, Ohio, in 1932. The family were poor working folks, I guess - railroad workers, farmers... It was the Great Depression. My mother worked in a shoe factory, etc.

Q: On your father's side, had they been in the United States long, or were they recent...?

WOODS: They'd been three generations, I think. My mother's side, I think, goes way back. We lose track in the Civil War.

Q: Were they basically from Ohio?

WOODS: My mother's side had been burned out in Virginia in the Civil War and moved into Kentucky and then Ohio. My father's side had come in from Italy in the late 19th century and settled in Ohio.

Q: The name was then changed to Woods.

WOODS: Well, my mother remarried and my name changed to Woods.

Q: Did you grow up in Columbus?

WOODS: No, I grew up all over Ohio, little country towns to start with and then moved to Youngstown. My stepfather got a job in the steel mill as a fireman in World War II at the outbreak, so we moved to Youngstown in '41. That was out of the village and into Youngstown. He worked in the steel mills through the war. We stayed there five years and then in '46 moved down to Columbus, where he had a job as an auto body repairman/mechanic/painter. So I went to North High School in Columbus, a good high school, and graduated in '49.

Q: Elementary school was mainly in small towns?

WOODS: Well, through the fourth grade, yes, and then five, six, seven, eight and nine were in Youngstown. That's a medium-size city. Then, of course, Columbus...

Q: In Youngstown how did you find the schools? What subjects interested you?

WOODS: I can't remember any subjects frankly. I was good at anything I wanted to do. I wasn't particularly interested in school, or disinterested. I guess school was like going to work: you did your job and then you went out and did something else when you got your homework done.

Q: How about sports?

WOODS: Not at that time. In high school I was very interested in basketball but wasn't good enough to make the team. My father had been a star halfback on the State champion football team in Massillon, but I was too small for football in those days. I guess my only hobby was reading.

Q: What sort of books did you like to read?

WOODS: Just about everything. I spent a summer reading histories of the Civil War when I was in around, I guess, the seventh or eighth grade. Adventure stories and animal stories, and I liked science fiction and got into that early on.

Q: There were some great magazines: Astounding Stories...

WOODS: Yes, *Amazing Stories* and so on, I read all of that stuff when I was 12 or 13.

Q: An interesting thing was - I was just recalling the other day, talking to somebody who also was doing that - that they had these bug-eyed monsters on the covers and all, but actually we were reading very good stuff. These were people who later became sort of classic science fiction writers.

WOODS: Some of the technology predictions were, I think, good preparations for the future.

Q: You graduated from high school when?

WOODS: '49, North High School, Columbus, Ohio.

Q: Had foreign affairs or America's role in the world affected you at all?

WOODS: Of course, we had just gone through World War II and I had gotten extremely interested in that. The neighborhood kids, intellectual branch, back in Youngstown, we had all formed our armies and fought our own wars. I was Albania for some reason. I would say, other than that, not really.

Q: I was just thinking that Youngstown and Columbus had quite an ethnic mixture.

WOODS: Youngstown did. I wouldn't say Columbus did particularly, or it had a very different kind. Youngstown was very much a hodgepodge of mostly whites although there were some all-black neighborhoods too, but the white neighborhoods were mixed up, mostly from Eastern Europe and southern Europe. So my closest friends' parents had come from Poland and the Ukraine, Hungary, Ireland, and so on. House by house, you had to be rather careful as to how you traveled around as a kid, to make sure you crossed the street back and forth to avoid getting beat up by some alternative ethnicity that was there.

Q: I've started to realize how neighborhoods from a boy's perspective have completely different geography than, say, from the postman or anybody else.

WOODS: Yes, small and vulnerable.

Q: When you graduated from high school in '49, I take it neither of your parents had gone to college.

WOODS: No, I think in the whole history of both sides of the family, one uncle went to college and became a teacher at Ohio University. Other than that, nobody; and most of them never got out of high school. My father and mother were high school grads. Pop started briefly at college because he had an athletic scholarship, but they took that away when they discovered he had played some professional football briefly, so that was the end of that. So basically most family education had ended at the high school level, but when I went to North High in Columbus, which is close to Ohio State, most, 80 percent, of the kids went on to college. I don't know where it came from, but it was always assumed when I got out of high school I would go on to college. There was never any discussion of it; somehow it was just that when I got to that point that's what I would do somehow, and it turned out at North that everybody was going to college anyway and I suppose half of them went to Ohio State. I had done very well in a lot of the scholastic aptitude tests. The other thing was that, because my interests were, I guess you would say, academic… I liked my studies although I had no particular focus; I liked taking competitive exams. I joined the chess club and was in some of the school plays and so on and so forth - I fell in, therefore, with a small group of school intellectuals rather than the school jocks or the party crowd. Among them were a number of children of university professors, professors of history, mathematics and political science and so on. One of my best friends was a chap named Harvey Mansfield, Jr. His dad was chairman of the political science department at Ohio State and also president of the American Political Science Association, and he took an interest in me and sort of kept an eye on me. He suggested maybe I would be interested in trying political science. Harvey Jr. went off to Harvard and got his doctorate and ended up as chairman of the Government Department. I got a small scholarship to go to Ohio State. I was living at home, working part-time and, when I got to it, joined ROTC, so between that I was able to support myself through college. I ended up majoring in political science, including some courses in international relations, but that still wasn't the main focus. The best, most prestigious teachers there were E. Allen Helms, who was one of the top professors in the country on political parties...

Q: You were saying that your political science professors were more toward internal politics...?

WOODS: Well, I was all over the place. I didn't have any focus on international relations per se. I did have the standard comparative government course, and I remember taking a course on the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe under Benes, the son, I guess, of the president of Czechoslovakia, who did not impress me at all because I thought he vastly exaggerated the strength of the Soviet Union and told him so. He told me I was an idiot and the Soviets were going to take over the world, etc. So I wasn't particularly imbued at that point with a lust to get into international affairs as a specialty, but I had a lot of interest. Actually I did my senior's honor's thesis on federalism - federation and confederation around the world - so that gave me some additional interest in comparative

politics. But the upshot was I ended up *summa cum laude* and Phi Beta Kappa, won the political science departmental award, blah, blah, and planned to go straight on to grad school. I had it in my head that I would get my doctorate and become a teacher, but the Korean War had started - actually at that point they were reaching a cease-fire - and I was called up to go straight into the Army.

Q: You graduated in '53?

WOODS: Yes, I graduated the first week of June, and two or three weeks later I was on my way to Fort Knox.

Q: What ROTC were you in, the Army?

WOODS: Yes. Well, I had been in the Naval Reserve for a year, and I had a year in the Air Force ROTC, but I got my commission based on my last three years with the Army ROTC. They sent me off to Fort Knox for the armor officers' basic course and then, January or February of the following year, on to Germany.

Q: That would be '54?

WOODS: Early '54 on to Germany, and I spent the next 17 months in Germany. Meanwhile I had gotten married shortly after they called me into the Army. I got married in September of '53, and in the spring of '54 my wife Janice took the *America* across the Atlantic and we moved into local housing. That was called "living on the economy," but in a few months we did get government sponsorship and housing. We were stationed in Bad Kissingen, Germany, which was the Second Battalion headquarters of the 14th Armored Cavalry Regiment based at Fulda, Germany, so our duty was border patrol on the East German border directly opposite the main Russian armored forces that would in the event of war come through the Fulda Gap.

Q: The Fulda Gap ran very heavily in everybody's mind that was in Germany.

WOODS: Our regiment had the job of patrolling the Fulda Gap area and on down to the Czechoslovakian border. So I guess that also heightened my interest in international affairs.

Q: I'm just trying to capture the spirit of the time. You were there '54 to '55.

WOODS: I got there in the spring of '54 and was basically, I guess, about 17 months there, as a Recon platoon leader.

Q: What was the feeling about whether the Soviets would come through or not.

WOODS: I think the feeling was we just didn't know; therefore, we thought they might. I had a couple of my troopers picked off on patrol by them, released unharmed a couple of

days later. They were obviously out there. I was becoming more interested in what you might call national security policies, an interest which sort of developed, I suppose, partly out of World War II, then the Korean War, then being assigned to Germany. One of the questions I had on my mind was: Here we were in the front lines, and when we would go out on maneuvers or fall out for we didn't know what it was, maneuver or not, and we had basically half strength, and most of the optics weren't working; critical personnel were missing; there were not enough spare parts for the tanks… When the soldiers were bitching about all this, they said the basic plan is turn the damn thing sideways, set it on fire, and head for the Rhine because we couldn't have fought five minutes with the equipment and the personnel that the Army had provided. We were thinking, if this is the front line of defense, what's going on here? Part of the explanation was that they had been sending just about everything they could to Korea. So you had the classic two-war dilemma: one was on and the other was possible.

Q: This happened during Vietnam too.

WOODS: So the troops in Germany had been screwed badly, and obviously we were just a trip wire.

Q: Was Elvis Presley in your area at that time?

WOODS: I wouldn't have noticed.

Q: About that time, I guess, he served in Germany.

WOODS: So that gets my interest and, of course, being in Germany and learning a bit of German. Where we were stationed, Bad Kissingen, was a very small, historic old spa town, very famous in Germany. Our daily activities took us out in the countryside, and our maneuvers took us all over Germany. That was a very broadening experience. At the end of the tour, the Army offered me, again, a regular commission. They had offered me one when I went in but in artillery, and I said, "Oh, I've just spent two years training in armor. I don't know anything about artillery." They said, "Yes, but we have enough armor officers. We'll turn you into an artillery officer." So I said, "No, thank you. That makes no sense." Then when I was getting out, they offered me a regular commission again, but by then I had fellowship offers and decided just to go straight back to grad school.

Q: Were there any discussions about America's role or anything like this, or...?

WOODS: Not other than the Army's canned troop information lectures, most of which make no sense, so I would say no, not really. We didn't even have a good newspaper. All we had basically was the *Stars and Stripes*.

Q: Well, there was a <u>Herald Tribune</u> but...

WOODS: Never saw one of those in two years. We were just focused on doing our job, which was actually quite demanding but very enjoyable for a young guy.

Q: Did you ever see your Soviet counterparts?

WOODS: No, they were held back. The only ones we would see would be the East German *volkspolizei* in their towers or occasionally on patrol on their side of the mine strip – the *vopos*.

Q: Then you got out in '55, was it?

WOODS: Yes, June '55.

Q: So in June '55 you decided to go to Cornell?

WOODS: Let me think. I'm getting mixed up here. My first fellowship offer was to come back to Ohio State. I can't recall if I had an offer from Cornell at that point or not; I think it was the following year. I think that's right. But I did have a fellowship offer from State, so I went back there for a year in political science and the summer of '56 and then returned in the summer of '57 to finish my master's thesis. So I had a regular year and then two summers, '56 and '57, at Ohio State.

Q: What was your master's thesis?

WOODS: Japanese rearmament. I had a very good Japanese advisor, Dr. Kazuo Kawai, a very distinguished Japanese professor. So I wrote what I think still looks like a rather sound master's thesis on the future state of the Japanese self-defense forces, and that was quite interesting.

Q: How were you seeing the Japanese?

WOODS: I was seeing them the way they now are, and without a nuclear option, for their own reasons. At that point, of course, the self-defense forces were quite modest, but they were in the process of beginning to acquire heavier weapons. I got into the issue of the Japanese constitution and the reservations that were built in against a military in any kind of, certainly, offensive action. What you can see, though, from the beginning was the tension between the desire to abide by the constitution, because they really had an anti-war outlook, but yet to have a professional, at least self-defense kind of peacekeeping force and eventually to play some kind of role in the international community, and I think that's still where they're at today.

Q: You're looking at the Far East and you'd been in Germany. Were you looking at an area to specialize or were you still looking at sort of the mega-picture?

WOODS: At that point I was not looking at an area, although I had become more

interested in the Pacific than anything else, partly because of Kawai. In the course of that year I had applied for graduate fellowships - I guess that's right - and then I got an offer from Harvard, a pretty good offer, and then a better offer from Cornell. After talking it over with Dr. Mansfield, I decided to go to Cornell. He was not only a graduate but a good friend of the president, Dr. Sproull. So I ended up in the government department - they didn't have a political science department at Cornell; they had government - which was, as in Ohio State, rather traditional and co-located in both places with the history department, and they believed that that was sort of a logical connection. That is not true of many of the political science departments.

Q: I've discovered that somehow the political scientists and the historians are like cats and dogs.

WOODS: It depends on the institution. We had lots of history students in our courses, and we would occasionally take a diplomatic history course or something on the other side, and it was a very good mixture at Ohio State and at Cornell, but there are other schools where the political scientists are sort of interlocked with sociologists and statisticians and so on and it's gone off in what I consider a stupid pseudo-scientific direction.

Q: I have found, when I go to the library, if I pick up a book and I see too many charts and some words I don't understand, it's usually written by a political scientists. I very carefully put it back on the shelf and move on.

WOODS: We didn't have much of that. They were traditional, and one foot was anchored in history and the other in comparative politics, diplomacy, international relations, and a good dose of, yes, party politics, but it wasn't at that point statistically oriented. People were not spending entire careers doing sociometric analyses and algorithm-driven election predictions.

Q: You were at this point pointed towards a Ph.D. and teaching?

WOODS: Well, a Ph.D. and probably becoming a professor somewhere. So I went off to Cornell and got into international relations. At Ohio State I had to take - this was interesting - a graduate-level seminar in economic theory, you know, from Adam Smith to John Maynard Keynes and a bit of Kindelberger, and that was interesting because it was basically economic history, the history of economic theory. There was myself and one historian in the class and the rest were all economists getting their doctorates. We were the only two students in the class who did well, myself and the historian. The rest of them not only didn't do well particularly but they didn't like it, because they wanted to go out and do mathematical projections and analysis of marketing and transportation systems and everything but the basic theory of economics and how it got there and frankly what its failings and contradictions are. But I found it very stimulating and so I sort of picked up some interest in international economics as well. So I guess this again was providing more impetus for the eventual focus on international affairs broadly defined. But within it

I was still very much interested in the national security component, which Ohio State did not yet have.

Q: In fact, was there even a term 'national security studies' in those days?

WOODS: It was developing, yes. It was floating around by that time. I think Harvard probably started it. There were courses in it at any rate. Of course, there was Herman Kahn and thermonuclear war. Huntington must have come out with *The Soldier and the State* about that time. And at Cornell there had been a professor, Elias Huzar - I'm not sure how you pronounce his name - who wrote *The Power of the Purse*, which became a classic on civil control through control of the appropriations, but he wasn't there when I got there. Cornell had an outstanding faculty: Clinton Rossiter and Andrew Hacker, for example. They ran a joint seminar which I took, and there was some attempt to address the military as one of the key institutions in America and where was it now - at that point in the post-Korean War period. We hadn't yet blundered into the Vietnam War. So I took all kinds of courses. My major focus was international relations. Mario Einaudi, whose son Luigi is still very prominent in Latin American affairs, ran the comparative politics course. I took the basic course work in international law under Herbert Briggs. Briggs at that point was the author of the standard casebook on international law at the graduate level, a brilliant but very down-to-earth kind of guy, and I went on to take his graduate seminar in international law. Robert Cushman was in his final year teaching constitutional law. He was at the very, very top of the heap in constitutional law in the country, so I took his closing year of constitutional law. Again, it was case study. So I took that and a mixture of other courses. I passed my German exam, my French exam. I passed my comps in the spring of '59 and wanted to get on to the dissertation, still thinking that I would probably end up in academia but beginning to think about the U.S. government.

I missed something - I probably should flash back. In my senior year of college I had decided to take the Foreign Service entrance exam, and I had to go down to Cincinnati in the spring of '53. It was then a three-and-a-half-day exam, the half day being language. And I found it very interesting.

Q: I took the same one.

WOODS: I got through it with a very good grade, an 80-something. Nothing happened for some months, and after I was in the Army, at Fort Knox, I got a letter saying, "Would you like to come to Washington for the oral interview?" So I drove up to Dayton and got a military courier flight into DC Bolling Air Force Base and went over and went through the oral interview, which I found peculiar.

Q: How did you find it peculiar.

WOODS: It's three on one, and it was basically playing mind games, a little bit of bullying, polite bullying, and "Would you like a cigarette?" Of course, I didn't smoke

anyway, but I could see that there was no ashtray. It was this kind of crap. But it was okay. I went back to Knox and got another letter saying, "We've decided it would be better to wait till you're out of the Army, so when you're out of the Army please look us up," but I never did. When I got out, I had other things to do and I wasn't at that point wanting to go into the Foreign Service. I'd also had offers from Ford and Coca Cola to join their management intern programs - those came in when I was in grad school at Ohio State - so I was beginning to think of different possibilities. Flash forward now to '58, I decided I would really like to work on a military or national security related topic, and I decided on *how the U.S. built its overseas basing structure*. My advisors at Cornell said, "There's nobody here who can really guide you on this, but we can find somebody somewhere else if you're serious." I got a pretty nice fellowship for one year from the Social Science Research Council in New York City, and Professor Fox, W. T. R. Fox, at Columbia agreed to be my dissertation advisor. So I moved the family down to Alexandria and started working in the National Archives and actually had a couple of meetings with Fox, put together a bunch of files and so on, and, of course, got totally lost. I was in the World War II archives and the Korean War archives and got totally out of my depth and out of focus. While I was doing this, I noticed that there was something called a presidential management internship - I guess then it wasn't presidential; it was just a management internship program offered by the predecessor, I guess, to OPM, whatever it was at the time - and that if you could pass this exam, which was very, very competitive, you would get offers from different U.S. government agencies. So I took the exam and continued to flounder around in the National Archives writing drafts of this and that and getting nowhere really.

Q: What was Fox's background? Why was he able to...?

WOODS: He was a very good military historian. I don't fault him. If I had kept in closer touch... I didn't know what I was doing. Well, I do fault everybody, especially myself. The topic was entirely too vast. I should have picked *the U.S. military base in Greenland* or something but not how the U.S. developed its overseas military basing structure, which would have taken a platoon of Ph.D.s the rest of their lives. I didn't know what I was doing, but it was all interesting. So meanwhile, I took this exam and, lo and behold, in the spring of '60 I found I had passed and I started getting offers from a number of agencies. I got quite interested in two, the Bureau of the Budget, as it was then called, and the Office of the Secretary of Defense, OSD. I had long interviews with both of them and decided, well, I will work on the dissertation in my spare time and take a government job. OSD offered a one-year training program where they would rotate trainees through two months of general orientation and then four or five rotation tours with different components of OSD - the Office of the Secretary is a big affair; there's about 2500 folks - and then they would place you in some kind of job. The Bureau of the Budget said, "That's all bullshit. You come in, we'll put you in an office, and you'll be at work the next day. You don't have to go through all this orientation stuff. Learn by doing." I thought about it. Learning by doing at the federal level with no orientation struck me as stupid, so I said, "Thank you very much, but I could use a little background before I start to waste the taxpayers' money," so I joined OSD.

Q: This was in...?

WOODS: The summer of '60, June or July of 1960, I think July the first. I joined OSD as a management intern, GS-9, with the theory that I would work on my dissertation part-time, which I did actually for a couple of years. But that work was less and less. So there I am in the federal government. Took a number of tours within the Office of the Secretary of Defense - the Comptroller's Office, where they actually wrote the budget presentation speech, and the Historian's Office, Installations and Logistics, Research and Engineering and International Security Affairs - well, actually sort of International Security Affairs, because at that time the military assistance program was a component of but not entirely subservient to ISA. It was called the Office of the Director of Military Assistance.

Q: ISA being...?

WOODS: International Security Affairs, Office of the Assistant Secretary - I guess Jack Irwin was the Assistant Secretary when I was an intern. Paul Nitze came in as the Assistant Secretary thereafter, and then Bill Bundy followed him. So I had a tour with the Office of the Director of Military Assistance Planning Office run by a brilliant, clever, scheming bureaucrat named Henry J. Kuss, basically the guy who invented "foreign military sales" for the United States as an organized program, and also a lot of other very exciting programs back in the '60s. Henry's dead now. He liked what I was doing and he offered me a job with the Military Assistance Directorate, which was within ISA but a self-contained organization with a four-star general at the head of it in those days - in fact, the senior active four-star officer in the U.S. forces, General Williston D. Palmer, 60-something and still single, whose brother was commander of the U.S. forces in Europe, also 60 and still single. So I went to work for ODMA, initially in the Planning Office, where, because partly of my interest, I became planning officer for CINCPAC - Commander-in-Chief Pacific - and as early as the fall of '61 started traveling to the Pacific, sometimes on ODMA military assistance related business but usually as part of an interagency team, because as one of my duties, oddly enough, they decided they needed somebody to sort of be the interface with AID because there was a close connection in some areas - the use of foreign currencies to build host country military facilities, for example, and defense budget support, which in those years was a multibillion-dollar program and actually was for defense budget support, and DOD had a big say. It wasn't AID - I think it was ICA in those days; then they brought in Fowler Hamilton and created AID. So, AID had to coordinate with us and we had to coordinate with them. There was a lot of bickering over especially the foreign currency accounts, and General Palmer didn't - I think Fowler Hamilton was the Administrator at that point - particularly appreciate AID, mainly because they wouldn't answer his letters, and he tried to get State PM to straighten them out.

Q: State Political Military.

WOODS: Right. I was writing papers for ODMA on these problems, and Palmer went

over to State for the first time in his life, and he came back and said, "It's like sticking your finger in wet dough. I'll never go back there," and he never did.

Q: What was the problem? Was it AID or was it...?

WOODS: It was really AID not doing what they were supposed to do, but State was supposed to, I guess, kick AID from time to time to keep them conforming to policy, and they're very hard to budge. So, I guess, having failed at that level and having vowed never to go back to State, he designated me as the formal point of contact with AID staff to sort these things out, and they designated a counterpart at AID, who became a lifelong friend although I don't see him all that often, Princeton Lyman, who eventually ended up in State. So Princeton and I started working together, I guess, around 1963.

Q: Whom I've interviewed…

WOODS: Then later when he was in Korea working for AID, I saw him there a couple of times, and then we kept bumping into each other, in Africa and now at the Corporate Council on Africa and so on. So basically I was doing that: CINCPAC plans, coordination with AID, had gotten involved with some of the other fellows in the Planning Office in some work on counterinsurgency. In our office we had helped draft what became the White House policy, presidential directives for counterinsurgency and military civic action programs, around the world. Larry Harrison was the principal drafter. Larry went on to a very brilliant career in AID in Latin America. So I had gotten involved particularly in the counterinsurgency aspect, and I was working with some of the bright young officers on the Army staff, one of whom later became Commander of the Special Forces, and we were working up policy within the Pentagon and the White House for what became the Special Group Counterinsurgency.

Q: You talk about counterinsurgency? What was supposed to be coming out of this in the contact really with other countries?

WOODS: After Kennedy was elected and came in, he decided that the existing NSC/OCB structure was too cumbersome. I remember we had NSC/OCB offices in State and Defense just to keep track of all the paperwork. They no longer exist. The Operations Coordination Board had been created under Eisenhower so that there would be a fiscal connection and a follow-up office for NSC actions. It would introduce fiscal discipline by having a price tag attached to our policies and an office which would at least once a year revisit all the policy papers, get them updated, get people to say what they'd been doing to carry out the policy, and so on and so forth. But I'm sure, like all things, it had become pretty tired. Anyway, Kennedy looked at it and said, "Get rid of this thing," and so he wiped out the Operations Coordination Board. The action shifted to a Special Group in the White House under Robert Kennedy. I think there was probably a part of that for covert actions; anyway, it was called the Special Group Counterinsurgency. I think Bob Komer was the main staff officer, at least the most active one. Special Group had top-level representation, like the head of AID would go to the meeting and Nitze would

definitely go to the meeting, and Robert Kennedy chaired it. They selected 12 countries around the world. Komer called it the "arc of crisis" or some bullshit term to get everybody focused. It started in Korea and went around, as I recall, through Turkey, or maybe Turkey and Greece, Iran. They selected 12 countries and for each of those an internal defense plan, I think they called it, was to be prepared with supporting inputs from State and Defense and AID. The idea was for all of these countries to have what was called a Long-Range Assistance Strategy, LAS, and there then was to be a supporting military assistance strategy and diplomatic strategy and on and on. I don't know if they met weekly or monthly - I can't remember - but they got quite a reputation.

Q: You were talking about coordination under the Kennedy Administration...

WOODS: In the White House, yes, the Special Group. Of course, I didn't go; I was too junior. We just sat around and waited for the principal to come back. It was very, very interesting, though, because it was quite focused, quite dynamic, and because it was the President's brother, they actually got action. We were able to put items on the agenda occasionally and expect that, if they got on the agenda and got discussed, you'd probably get a decision and somebody would probably do something, which was not standard for the U.S. government.

Q: One of the things as you were talking about that and you were talking about strategies for self defense and all that, what about the countries involved? Were we figuring this out and then going to them, or...?

WOODS: Well, you know, we were already deeply involved in all of these countries. One of the things I figured out over the years is that Ike was a lot smarter than people realized at the time. As I look at the way things have evolved and gone around in a circle, I think he was sort of on top of things. He may have given the appearance deliberately that he didn't know what he was doing at times, especially when he was having a press conference, but actually I think it was all pretty well organized. I think we did know what we were doing. We were spending a tremendous amount of money and getting things done and doing it rather quietly by comparison with what started under the Kennedies and has been the rule ever since - which is to do less and less and talk about it a lot. So it was a matter of going in and looking at what we were already doing, as in Korea or Turkey or Thailand or wherever, and saying, "Are we doing the right thing, and are we doing enough?" then committing the required resources. You will recall, too, that in the last year of the Eisenhower Administration, or maybe '59, Ike decided that they needed a commission to review the whole of U.S. foreign operations and foreign aid programs, and he created or had created the Draper Commission, which did a very exhaustive study and published a huge report, which I think was very good, very good, and which probably we need to do again right now. There was considerable reorganization of the U.S. aid structure then in the several years following the release of that report, the implementation of some of its recommendations. So it wasn't a matter of having a blank slate. How I got personally involved was when AID decided they were going to do new Long-Range Assistance Strategies, LAS's, the decision somewhere was that the teams would include a

State rep and a Defense rep and perhaps an OMB rep - well, Bureau of the Budget, which later became OMB - to keep an eye on the money aspect. They started launching these teams out, and I went out on LAS teams to Korea, the Republic of China, Thailand and Cambodia over a period of about a year, maybe a little longer. I was really impressed with the quality of the teams; there were always AID and State reps, and on a couple of them Bureau of the Budget put their own person. These were really senior, top-notch folks. In China we had Paul Popple from State, a China specialist; Tom Niblock I remember from when we were in Cambodia, later a very senior officer in AID; Bart Harvey from Bureau of the Budget. For Korea outstanding academic scholars were added, who apparently were AID consultants from RAND. The work was taken very seriously. We had unified command representatives join us; and, of course, then the local embassy country team was involved. I participated in four exercises of this kind, meanwhile carrying on with the general work of helping as the planning officer, working with CINCPAC for the annual presentation of the military assistance budget in Washington.

Q: I would think that so often one's experience as a very junior person hangs on for a long time. I would think that, being on the front lines in an armored unit where the optics didn't work, you would want to say, "Okay, we have the greatest planning the world, but what's happening to the guys who are sitting on the 38th parallel or..."

WOODS: Well, I was always interested in getting out to the field and talking to folks, and then, of course, we were obliged to report back, so I in some cases did not have happy local counterparts, because when you reported back to a four-star general saying that he has a bunch of idiots at work out in Country X and then giving the details of why you've arrived at that conclusion, this in a couple of cases made me *persona non grata* with some of the people involved out in the field.

Q: Were you able to look at sort of the ultimate delivery system? In other words, were the people on the front lines getting the right equipment in time and that sort of thing?

WOODS: Well, what I discovered, and it is true today as then, was that you usually can't do that because the cycle is so long that by the time you try to do something, unless you're awfully persistent and stay around for years, you're never going to see it happen. One reason that things never go anywhere is just because of the bloody cycle. You get a project halfway launched, desk officers change, officer directors change, administrations change, and it ends up going nowhere. I dedicated myself. An example: on my first visit to Taiwan I found that they needed a tank turret trainer to train the local people on modern tank weapons, and the armor center was run by Chiang Kai-shek's younger son, Wei-guo. Well, they had ordered this thing two years before and had never heard a thing. So I took, off and on, two years to track the problem to its lair, where somebody had pigeon-holed the request. Before I left the Security Assistance Agency the thing was on the high seas headed for Taiwan, but it took four years. I got into it in year three.

Q: And the fact that you were working on it, somebody was actually making this. Otherwise, it never would have.

WOODS: It would never have happened, like a lot of things from the field just vanish into thin air. You send them up the line and never hear back. I was aware of that problem in the military. It was pretty much of a joke - and the cover-your-butt syndrome. I learned that in the military too. And I'd learned when you're going to have a command inspection all the supply sergeants affected go out to adjacent units and borrow all the missing stuff to fill up their supply rooms and put it on the vehicles until the inspection is over. Then it all goes back for the next round of inspections somewhere else. It's all a charade. I learned that this stuff goes on, and it's pretty annoying. But it did tell me, if you want to know what's going on, you can't sit in Washington and look at the cables. You have to get out and talk to people and get out and look at things.

Q: So often, more on the diplomatic side rather than the military side, people will get together within Washington and sort of get their ducks in a row and all this, but when it comes up against the actual country that you're dealing this, maybe the people in the country say, "Well, that's all fine, but that's not our agency."

WOODS: Well, we found that. Yes, there are two problems. One is the country team, which may or may not salute and carry out the orders, or may just dig in their heels; and then there's the country itself. In the case of Korea, one of the theories was we would have this wonderful, very close, long-range economic development relationship, and we built them a ministry of something-or-other – "development" I think - right beside the big new AID building we built. We built this huge, in effect, double compound, and the Koreans moved in and the first thing they did was build this great unscalable wall between the two buildings and put an armed guard on their front gate.

Q: Much later, in '76 to '79, I worked in the other building.

WOODS: Rather than working together, it became a negotiation on everything, and they had their own priorities. The country team, of course, wasn't too well liked sometimes by Washington for saying, "Well, this will never fly with our friends the Koreans." Washington would say, "God dammit, it's your job out there to make this happen." Of course, if there's anybody more stubborn than Koreans, I don't know who it is.

Q: You've worked so much in the Washington context. Many of the people I worked with worked both in Washington but also out in the field, and this is a real divide, as you put it. You have the Washington component, and then you have the country team, and then you have the country. Each one sort of goes its own way.

WOODS: Yes, well, I found that out early. Of course, you also find out a good bit about bureaucracy if you're an officer in the U.S. military. You run into good officers and bad officers and honest reporting and phony reporting, all of the problems you encounter later with civil agencies. There is somewhat of a different culture in the military, but the problems of bureaucracy are about the same.

Q: How did you find these early days? I assume you were in the Pentagon.

WOODS: Yes, I was in the Pentagon from June '60 to the fall of '64 when I went overseas.

Q: In that time how did you find the civil servants and the military worked together?

WOODS: Well, it was a testy relationship, and if you didn't develop personal relationships to overcome the bureaucracy, you couldn't get much done. In the Pentagon we have the military services themselves, Army, Navy, Air Force and, of course, the Marines, but also the Joint Staff and then the Chairman with his own office. So you've got all kinds of four-stars who, particularly in the early '60s, still had really not gotten very used to unification. They were still fighting the battle of '49 and still hadn't fully accepted the authority of the Secretary of Defense and some had powerful Congressional constituencies, particularly the Navy and particularly Admiral Rickover, and they were willing to go straight to their Congressional constituency and "fix" the problem there irrespective of what the Secretary of Defense or the President might think. So, yes, it was a problem. Of course, for the military they also had their unified command problem because you'd not only got fleet commanders and Army commanders, four-stars, out there, but you had these unified commanders and specified-command commanders who are also four-star, who then and now operate as proconsuls in their own areas. If they got something from the Joint Staff they didn't like or from OSD they didn't like, they were just as likely as an ambassador to say, "Well, thank you very much for your suggestion. I'll certainly give it the attention it deserves." So you had to learn to work with their staffs. I discovered one of the big problems of the U.S. government - and it's a problem to this day - is the turnover. With officers turning over every two or three years in many of the agencies, you rarely get together a team of people who know each other well and have worked together for a couple of years and can get something done. You always have new faces at the table, and you've got a learning curve and overcoming the inhibitions. But you can overcome a lot of it if you're hyperactive and if you do try to create teams. I guess I've always been hyperactive and, I would say, probably a grade B team builder. I'd say Larry Harrison was even more hyperactive when he worked in our office, but he was less of a team builder, more of "ram it down their throat." General Palmer eventually asked Larry if he wouldn't like, since he found AID so interesting, to go and work there - in other words, get out - because Larry was doing papers and they were coming out of the White House and the State Department. General Palmer knew who was writing them, basically drafting the damn things, and he had never seen them. So you've got to strike a balance.

Q: Were you finding with this change-over in the military all the time - this is true of the State Department or the Foreign Service - - that it was sort of the civil service corps that was kind of holding things together and in a way held probably the best hand in these games?

WOODS: Well, I didn't think of it in those years, but looking back on it I think that's the

case, that there was more continuity with the professional civil service executives. The military turnover was basically every three years, sometimes sooner; sometimes they'd get a fourth year. In State the desk officers were turning over every two or three years, and the officer directors, ambassadors. So the country team is basically churning every two and three years. Yes, the civil service provided a lot of continuity, and the spooks, the analysts at least. They tended to stay in their jobs for a long time, partly because the promotion system was not very good. I was an exception because basically I was three years and out, and I felt my last year was much more effective than the first two, and at the point where I was becoming most effective I left.

Q: I saw this in its worst in Saigon, where I chaired a conference when I had just arrived, but after a while I found that within six months I had the historical memory. Everybody else had changed over.

WOODS: That was a huge problem for the military because their tours were even shorter than the civilians', and the VC knew it. I did a number of TDYs into Vietnam, including when we were most involved there, and basically we had decided the VC knew that commanders rotated and so on and they could stage the same ambush at the same bend in the road every other year, just as regular as clockwork because we never learned anything. We wrote all these lessons learned and sent them somewhere, no doubt where they were dutifully filed for years until they were burned. At any rate, in the fall of '64 I was in Thailand, probably working on a Long-range Assistance Strategy, and found an old management intern friend out there, Lee Huff, running a little office for the Advanced Research Projects Agency, and we got together. He said, "I've just been called. They told me I'm going to be posted back to Washington rather abruptly. We're looking for a replacement. Would you be interested?" I said, "What are you doing?" He explained that this was a special project – Project AGILE - under the Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency. They had a special name for it - I forget. It wasn't Foreign Internal Defense; that thing hadn't come up… Well, basically it was helping selected foreign countries develop programs to cope with their own internal defense and, of course, the U.S. involvement with them. ARPA had opened stations in Lebanon, Saigon - where it was CDTC, Combat Development and Test Center, down on the waterfront - and in Thailand, later the Canal Zone, eventually a liaison office in Korea, and then the whole program was scrapped in the early and mid-'70s. So in '64 it had been set up just a couple of years earlier. In Thailand it was still operating out of a hotel downtown and at the SEATO Graduate School of Engineering on the Chulalongkorn University campus, with a very small staff under Marine Colonel Tom Brundage. I mentioned Lee Huff, who later became Deputy Assistant Secretary over in Transportation. Lee was running the social-behavioral science research program and asked if I would be interested. I came back and talked to my wife, and we decided why not. So on basically no notice we packed up and went to Thailand in the fall of '64.

Q: You were there until when?

WOODS: Well, our first tour was three years in Bangkok. I was still toying with the idea

of finishing the dissertation, but I decided that I wasn't going to do overseas basing. I'd given up on that somewhere along the way. I would change to a Thai topic and work on the Thai policy toward its hill tribes, including the involvement of the Thai Border Patrol Police, which the U.S. was funding, and I started working and collecting documents on that. I applied for and got a DOD fellowship, and they sent me back to Cornell grad school in the fall of '67 for a year of Southeast Asia studies under Dr. George Kahin - who just died - who ran a very prestigious Southeast Asia studies program. Actually I toyed with the idea of the Southeast Asia program when I first went to Cornell, but I found that you had to specialize right away, pick your country, start studying Thai or Burmese or something from day one and sort of narrow your options. So I decided not to do that. I took Kahin's courses but I majored in international relations. When I went back in '67, then I worked for George and went through the graduate seminar, which was interesting because I was the DOD swine in a sea of very angry Cornell "stop the war" students and George was organizing the protests on the East Coast himself.

Q: I'd like to stop and go back... In this '64 to '67 period, what were you doing? In the first place, when you hear a name like that, to my ears it says, 'Ah, this is a CIA operation.'

WOODS: Oh, we worked closely with them in the field, because they were operating out of AID/USOM, running the Border Patrol Police program, and also they were very interested in general in the issues of internal security and they had their advisors in many of the same agencies that we had ours. But we were funded and controlled strictly in the Defense channel and our counterpart… Well, the idea was to create a Thai counterpart organization and then we'd be the U.S. component of it, and that was done, the Military Research and Development Center, MRDC, which was a component of Supreme Command Headquarters. We also did some work for something called CSOC, which was a Thai organization, the Communist Suppression Operations Command, run by General Saiyud Kerdphon, and there were a number of CIA advisors over there operating for the most part out of the embassy. We were all part of the country team and the ARPA field unit in Thailand was a U.S. component of that. We also got Australian and British officers in due course - in fact, rather early on - and they stayed with the operation for many years. But we had Thai and Americans mainly. The Thai counterpart to our director was a two-star general, and he reported to a component of Supreme Command - Education and Research, I believe. Most of the MRDC commanders went on to be come three-stars or, in some cases, four-stars. The first commander was an air vice marshal actually, Manob Suriya, who was the first Thai graduate of West Point back, I guess, in the '40s. The U.S. approach was that this was a counterinsurgency-oriented program. Thailand was the laboratory for the soft side and Vietnam was the laboratory for the hard side or things that go boom. So in Vietnam - I would go over there from time to time, and they would come over to Thailand from time to time to escape Vietnam mainly - they were doing a lot of systems work - village information system, hamlet evaluation system, territorial forces evaluation system. They were doing stuff trying to evaluate how was the war going, for MACV. They were also doing ordnance testing; the Armalite rifle which developed into the AR-15, which developed into the M16 - they were involved in that and

God knows what else. On our side we were doing studies and analyses and systems research and a good bit of electronic research including remote sensing, trail sensors, testing different kinds of mobility equipment and communications equipment. Initially I worked for a Navy commander, John Denham, as his deputy. John had just come off an assignment running a spook ship off of Korea. Our office - the Research and Analysis Division - was in charge of social and behavioral and systems research, and we worked for the most part through contractors. We brought in rather sizable teams from RAND, RAC - Research Analysis Corporation, which no longer exists; it was then the Army's prime operations research organization - Stanford Research Institute, Cornell Aerolab, BMI, AIR - you name it, we had it - and a lot of individual scholars on contract.

Q: It strikes me that this sort of thing is a boon to the social scientists and all in the United States at a university or something, but what does it actually produce down in the field?

WOODS: From the beginning there was a disconnect which was never healed. The Thai side thought that this would produce nifty gadgets and improved weapons which hopefully we would give them, otherwise they could buy. They were very much interested in that side of things, the hardware side. ARPA headquarters was very much interested in "the problem" and how to fix the problem. The Thais thought they knew what the problem was and they wanted to go kill it. Eventually we got into counterpart development or counterpart institutional development, and eventually the U.S. gave them a nice new building and a bunch of equipment and a handshake and left. I was the last one out in December '72. On the U.S. side, we were doing a good bit of work on the hill tribes. My assumption was this would be a long-range program. That was another fallacy because ARPA really isn't into and DOD isn't into long-range programs. It's remarkable it lasted as long as it did. This, I decided, is another reason that, by and large, we're so ineffectual in foreign affairs. We don't have any long-range perspectives. We don't learn much from history. We build contacts and lose them. We develop clientele and discard them. I just think a lot of the problems we face right now are because of the way we misconduct ourselves in our overseas activities. We're entirely too much focused on us and our short-term approach and meeting our requirements. So it was always a testy relationship with the Thai because they were feeling they weren't getting a hell of a lot out of it that was useful to them. We were getting shelves full of studies, some of which were of interest to U.S. Army laboratories, or course, or U.S. Navy and Air Force laboratories. The electronics work was of considerable interest. We had - I remember - a thing about three inches thick: *the electromagnetic properties of a tree in Thailand*. I guess it's important to know this stuff if you're trying to build small devices that will penetrate triple-canopy jungle. So we did a lot of that stuff. We built some systems and libraries, which were turned over to the Thai, which hopefully they have found useful – for example, the Thailand Information Center with a gazillion documents. Everything useful that had ever been written about Thailand that we could find in the scholarly community was in there. We turned that over to a Thai university actually. Our hill tribes data base, we turned that over to another Thai institution, the Tribal Research Center, in Chiang Mai. The Village Information System, we turned over to a Thai ministry, although

it was still very much in an embryonic state…

Q: One of the big problems in Vietnam was that the Vietnamese and the Montagnards really didn't get along. The Vietnamese treated the Montagnards as third-class citizens..

WOODS: Did you know Gerry Hickey?

Q: No, I didn't.

WOODS: Gerry, of course, was sent to Vietnam by RAND under ARPA contract to work on the Montagnard problem. He's an outstanding - I don't know if he's still alive - an outstanding anthropologist and ethnographer.

Q: You get to this. You do study after study, but if your officer corps is going to treat the hill tribes as subhuman or something...

WOODS: Then what you end up doing is putting in U.S. special forces who just work with them themselves, and they were pretty effective. Of course, a lot of the Montagnards ended up here and others were abandoned willy-nilly. But the problem in Thailand was somewhat different. The Thai are by design rather accommodating. They have a much softer approach. They solve a lot of problems by avoiding them or sliding off. They're not as confrontational as the Vietnamese. Rather than have platoons of policemen up in the hills, they have Border Patrol Police, which was very much a U.S.-funded program, a lot of it. The CIA provided a lot of the equipment and guidance and so on, but the Thais have kept it up. They put into the remote areas a single policeman with his hut, hopefully his family, and he was the village school teacher and, of course, obviously also the source of intelligence about what's going on up there in the mountains. With respect to the armies and militias that were already up there, Lahu, Karen, KMT Second Generation, all these people, "if you don't cause any problems, you don't bother us, we don't bother you. You can just live up here and trade with the lowlands and do your thing. Don't cause too many problems in Burma, or we might have to do something about it." It was sort of live and let live.

Q: But that's so against sort of the American principle. Were you able to soften this?

WOODS: Well, it worked. We had enough problems without looking for more. That worked okay. What didn't work okay was when the Thai would get excited about something, problems along the Lao border in particular, and decide, probably true, that a lot of these villages, some of them upland Thai and some of them non-Thai - mainly the Chinese tribes - were harboring or providing support to insurgents and drug traffickers along the border. I remember two campaigns. One was aerial. The Thai Air Force started bombing villages up in the north. Our director, Dr. Holbrook, reported on the country team meeting. They were using our bombs, and some of us thought that was really stupid, but Dr. Holbrook came back and reported that the Chief of JUSMAG briefed on how many more tons of this stuff were on the way in, and how many sorties were flying and

how many villages had been flattened. So then Holbrook said, "Does any of this make sense? Aren't we just creating more insurgents?" and Ambassador Unger said, "Well, you know, it's a sovereign country. They're free to make their own mistakes, and we're here to help them." I'm sure that wasn't the exact phrase, but "keep the bombs flowing" was the bottom line. "We're not going to question the Thais' right to drop bombs on their own villages." They eventually had a conflagration on their hands and stopped the bombing, because it was doubling and tripling the goddamn insurgent population every time they had a sortie. Then they went back to their previous policy of leaving them alone or buying them off. The other time they decided to send an army into the Phu Pan Mountains to chase the insurgents and their ethnic affiliates out of the mountains, and the U.S. was duly cast to support this. It was not our responsibility, and you could look at it and say this was going to be a disaster, and it was a horrible disaster and the army got totally trounced trying to get up the slopes and retreated with heavy casualties, licking its wounds and basically gave up the war, or gave up attempting to rout the enemy out of their own terrain. So, in general, I'm not sure that giving the Thais what they wanted would have helped - what the military wanted was more toys to go out and drop bombs and shoot people. What we were working on eventually became a huge doctrinal book that was prepared, *Civil-Police-Military Manual*, and we got in difficulties with our Thai military counterparts because it was basically directed to General Saiyud and the Communist Suppression Operations Command - which got renamed the Internal Security Operations Command - and was predominantly a soft, non-military approach. There was a military component, but there was a heavy police component and a heavy civil administration component. Most of our work, to the extent that it was relevant, fed into CSOC/ISOC rather than to the Supreme Command Headquarters, which didn't know what to do with the studies. As in our own forces, they had Thai special forces and they had, under General Kriangsak Chomanand, decided to send to the border "mobile development units" to work the border villages with movies and loudspeakers. At one point we got into giving the villages radios - AID did a village radio program - and other non-military measures to try to reach out in these contested areas where there was heavy, lethal insurgent activity. But the military, by and large, wasn't enthused about this special stuff any more than our own military is and would much rather go out in force and lay waste to something. The problem is you could very seldom find a target, because the insurgent was out there in the deep jungle. I think I digressed. Where were we?

Q: I think this is probably a good place to stop, and I'll put at the end here where we'll pick it up the next time. Why don't we finish at least the first part of your time in Thailand, what you were doing, and let's pick up the time, too- - I think it would be interesting - in Cornell, just to catch the spirit of the times and all that, where obviously you were persona non grata.

WOODS: Well, with the Americans but, interestingly enough, not with the Southeast Asians.

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Q: All right. Today is December 14, 2001. Jim, you were at Cornell when?

WOODS: Well, I had been there in the mid-'50s as a grad student, '56 to '59. I went back as a U.S. government fellow '67-'68, the fall of '67 to late May or early June of '68.

Q: How did you find the campus at that time, particularly with your experience and all. It was a time of turmoil, wasn't it?

WOODS: Well, the arts campus was in the throes of being wildly indignant about our Vietnam involvement. The professional campuses were going about their normal business. My professor advisor George Kahin was head of the Southeast Asia Studies program at Cornell and he was a leader, perhaps the most important leader on the East Coast, of the antiwar protest within academe, and he was running a lot of antiwar activities. He had his students at the Southeast Asia program office on West Avenue. I was taking the graduate seminar, George's graduate seminar, on Southeast Asian Affairs, which was about, I would say, 80 percent rabid antiwar students, but there was a bunch of rather quiet Southeast Asian graduate students and, of course, I was the only U.S. government rep in that particular cycle. So, yes, it was interesting. I would have to respectfully and not so respectfully disagree with a lot of what was said and going on, then be dumped on, obviously a fool or tool or both of the misguided government, which didn't bother me particularly, considering the source. It was interesting that I would be stopped frequently outside of class by the Asian students, who would say, "You know, we agree with you, but we're not going to risk anything by speaking up during the seminar itself. We're here to get our degree, and we're not going to get bogged down in political controversy."

Q: Did this antiwar protest have any goal in mind for how things should be done other than to get the U.S. out and keep the kids from getting drafted? Were they looking ahead at all?

WOODS: They were looking ahead in the sense that they seemed to feel that, if the imperialists would get out of Vietnam and let the socialist democrats take over the place, everything would work out okay, and, in any case, it was their country, their destiny, and we were just on the wrong side of history in holding back the revolution. So in terms of having a blueprint for how it might work or what we might do to help, no, I would say they didn't have any idea. But their idea was that historical forces were at work, we were obviously an obstacle to the completion of a historical process and, therefore, our intervention was doomed as well as misguided and evil, so, basically, get out and let events take their course.

Q: Was this a matter of looking at the rest of Southeast Asia as this would happen in Thailand and other places, too?

WOODS: Well, they were convinced that there was no such thing as the domino theory but, on the other hand, there was a surge of socialist revolution underway in the world

and this might well overtake some of the other governments, most of which they saw as corrupt military dictatorships. Certainly there was some validity to their criticisms. At Cornell, of course, Kahin and his Indonesia specialists had gotten on the wrong side of the Indonesian Government and were bitterly disappointed and were themselves *personae non gratae* in terms of going back to Indonesia, so they were still feeling bad about that. I think they saw Laos as properly within Vietnam's sphere of influence, if you will, so that didn't bother them. They had no love for the Thai regime. At any rate, I think they professed not to believe in the domino theory, but then if it was true, that was okay too because the regimes deserved whatever happened. So in terms of being concerned about it, I would say not. There was really very little attention to the other countries. The focus was on exactly what you suggested with your first question: let's get the boys out of Vietnam and let the North take over and get rid of that corrupt Southern government, reunify their country, and then things will work out.

Q: I've interviewed many people who served in the embassy at that time in Jakarta. If you were to line up a list of the enemies, the Communists were probably number three down on the list and Cornell was number one. I assume that was reflected the reverse in Cornell, I suppose.

WOODS: Well, they had a well deserved hatred of military dictatorships, whether it was Sukarno or Suharto. But there was also a touch of love for Sukarno because he was a socialist revolutionary military dictator, and a lot of bitterness at the way the counter-revolution had worked out in the massacre of the Chinese and the Communists in general back in '65. They were still smarting over that, which, the view was, had all been a plot: There was no attempted coup; it was all a put-up job. The main point is that they had been frozen out, were no longer welcome to send their grad students there. The regime not only hated the Cornell program, they had reason to fear it because it was a prestigious program and there were U.S. government people passing through and there were a lot of Asian students, usually the political opposition or political liberals and heroes of the left, some of them heroes of the center, getting exposed to all these bad ideas. Of course, Cornell was constantly publicizing its opinion. So they were a formidable opponent and they were a real burr under the saddle of a lot of governments.

Q: In '68 where did you go?

WOODS: As soon as the course was over, I went back to Thailand.

Q: The same job?

WOODS: Basically the same job. I went back to the ARPA field unit, or research center, but I was posted immediately to Chiang Mai University in the north for a year as advisor to the dean, which sounds odd but we knew the dean from his previous position in Bangkok and he was trying to establish an expanded research program on northern Thailand, especially the tribal minorities problem. There was a Tribal Research Center, which the Thai government was attempting to operate, co-located at the university, and so

my job was trying to build a tribal research program in the north working out of the university. So I spent basically the next year doing that, although I was dragged off to Vietnam several times to work on projects there. We launched several projects, one with the university geography department to try to build a description of the transportation network of northern Thailand because the maps basically showed only the main roads and there were networks of what I would call tertiary roads and trails all over the place which were not charted. We also launched a program to create a tribal database of all the villages in the north - location, ethnic makeup, approximate size and so on.

Q: The Thai government didn't have a database of this?

WOODS: They had information but it wasn't in any organized form that we would call a database. Much of their information came from the Thai Border Patrol Police who were posted to the outermost fringes of the kingdom and were basically a CIA project or at least were getting support and training through the CIA part of USOM. They were posted out there basically by themselves. They had a medical kit and they also functioned as the village school teachers, so they were quite effective in figuring out what was going wrong. But we were trying to integrate - not their data actually, because the police weren't sharing that, at least with us - but take the most basic information and get sort of an overview of the ethnic populations of the north and their location, their commerce patterns and all the rest of it. The Communists were at work on the northeastern border trying to infiltrate using the tribes and whatever animosities they had toward the Thai government. There's really a highlander/lowlander split, however, if you had to describe the politics, but then you had the KMT army or remnants thereof over on the western border and the drug smugglers on both borders and the lumber smugglers. So it was a "Terry and the pirates" kind of environment, and we were basically just trying to collect information. We were also sponsoring basic ethnographies by a number of anthropologists, European and American, at the time, again trying to collect in-depth ethnographic understanding of several selected lesser-known tribal groups. So that's how I spent a rather odd year as the advisor to the dean of the faculty of social sciences at Chiang Mai University.

Q: With a map of trails and essentially a jungle environment, how did you find out where the trails were?

WOODS: The dean of the geography department sent his students out all over northern Thailand to drive and walk around and map the things and report back, which is a pretty cheap way of doing it.

Q: Well, I'm sure he also got them out to see the folks.

WOODS: This, of course, eventually came to the attention of the American Anthropological Association and some others and got them greatly excited. It's cited in a book which was published some years later called *Anthropology Goes to War* featuring me as one of the devils they identify as corrupting the practice of anthropology.

Q: Anything we touched in those days the academic world would jump on you for it.

WOODS: Well, the anthropologists were the hottest under the collar because it was not in the tradition of Margaret Mead, you might say. Before the war went bad and became greatly unpopular, we had the leading American anthropologists on Southeast Asia on the consultant payroll and they were hard at work, and some of them stayed at work. Dr. Gerry Hickey – an expert on the Montagnards of Vietnam - worked with us throughout the war. Later he wanted to go back to U. of Chicago to write a book - he'd been out of there for a decade - and the faculty had a panicky emergency meeting and voted not to let him on the campus.

Q: It shows the attitude.

WOODS: So he said, "Fine. To hell with you," and he went elsewhere and wrote his book. But that was the attitude. We had Dr. Ladd Thomas, Northern Illinois University. Now, Ladd, I recall, was a political scientist, and he reported that students invaded his office and threw his furniture and books out the window. He said he couldn't walk across the campus without somebody shoving him and spitting on him, or getting phone calls in the middle of the night threatening to blow up his house. So it was a lot of fun. The same thing was going on all over. We had a couple of very senior professors out in California, David Wilson, political scientist, and Herb Phillips, anthropologist, and they had been cutting-edge scholars on Thailand. Herb capitulated. David basically got up on his feet and told all his student and faculty critics to go to hell; they could think what they wanted but they weren't going to interfere with his right to speak out. But Herb went over; Herb gave up. At any rate, yes, it was an interesting time. It didn't particularly affect me, but it was an interesting year. There were riots at Cornell. The black students took over the student union for their own purposes at the point of guns. President Johnson announced, of course, while I was there, that he was not going to run again, causing great, lusty cheering. It was a most peculiar time to be a DOD person sitting in the very seat of anti-war sentiment. My office on West Avenue was, of course, where they were also cranking out all these leaflets for the protests and other propaganda materials for the East Coast. But I really liked and respected Professor Kahin, who died last year. We had kept in touch. He had his own very distinct point of view, which I didn't entirely share, but I think he was a very honorable man and an excellent scholar but, you know, a scholar with a very open bias, very liberal bias, but a very decent guy. He ran a first-rate seminar, and he would let everybody express themselves freely, but I found there wasn't any point in expressing myself freely very often because it just annoyed the rest of them anyway. They already knew everything and there was nothing to learn. So that was my last return to academe except for an occasional teaching lecture here and there.

Q: In Chiang Mai you said you went down to Vietnam. What were you doing there?

WOODS: I was called over several times to work on what was called a long-range plan for MACV, Military Assistance Command Vietnam. The Army had a special study group

reporting to General Abrams on how was the war going and what recommendations do we have - at a high strategy level, not how to fight the war. It was a large study group. I had worked earlier on something called the Comprehensive Army Study for Thailand, and the Army colonel in charge, who was, by the way, a Ph.D. anthropologist who had worked in the South Pacific, asked me to be a part of the Vietnam study. I was to look at some of the management aspects of the bowl of spaghetti they called MACV headquarters, and that was quite interesting, to be going over in those days. It was an interesting environment of a different kind. Rockets were flying.

Q: I was there from '69 to '70 as consul general at the embassy, and I was running what amounted to civilian court martials for people involved in the black market, civilians. We would bounce them out of their military privileges if they were caught at that. A lot of things were going on.

WOODS: I was there in the fall of '68, late fall, and a couple of times in early '69. The group eventually submitted its report to General Abrams, who was not too pleased because basically it said, you know, we've lost the war, declare Vietnamization and get the hell out of here. Also, he had asked that different units be evaluated. I liked General Abrams. He was a straight shooter. He was also a tanker, which I was. The conclusion was that the conventional forces were not particularly useful and the forces that had really done well were the Special Forces, and he didn't like that, and that the Marines were second best, and he didn't like that. Anyway, we had our hearing.

Q: You were at Chiang Mai through '69. Then where did you go?

WOODS: In the late summer of '69 they moved me back to Bangkok and I stayed on there for four more years. The ARPA program was in the process of phase-out. The headquarters had basically decided that this was not a popular thing to be engaged in. They were catching all kinds of flak especially on their social science projects. They had gotten a great deal of flak over a project they started in Latin America, Project Camelot, and this had the whole academic community after their scalp, so they decided basically to start closing down or at least changing the nature of their overseas activities, getting out of the social-behavioral sciences, the soft research, the counterinsurgency, and go back to high tech and things that go boom, so they had made a decision to close the Center. It took us several years to wind it down because we were in a counterpart development phase and turning things over to the Thai government. I stayed to the end. I was the Acting Director in the final months. We turned the Thailand Information Center over to one of the universities, turned the library over to another. The building and equipment and so on, the Thai Supreme Command Headquarters absorbed it, which was the intent from the beginning, and the Americans gradually went out the back door and disappeared. In December '72 we closed down. I then moved over to the embassy and worked at the embassy for six or seven months in what was called the Development and Security Section, run by William Napoleon Stokes, a counselor. George Tanham had that job for a while earlier. My job was as an advisor to what had been the Communist Suppression Operations Command but was now called the Internal Security Operations Command

under General Saiyud, and I wrapped up my final months in Thailand working there.

Q: Did you have any feel, as you were turning over your facilities of the work you had been doing there, that the Thais seemed to absorb this and use it, or was this just one of these things that we did and after you left it languished?

WOODS: Well, the Thai priorities were very different from the American priorities, and the approach was very different. Our Thai counterparts were essentially all military and very hierarchical. They didn't understand, had no experience or exposure to, the concept of real civil control of the military and a lot of civil guidance and input on things. So most or a great deal of what we were interested in, the kinds of projects the Americans were running, simply vanished once we left. I think some of it rubbed off, and they certainly got some very good files, technical and social-behavioral research of all kinds, a lot of stuff they never knew about their own country, and some of the officers seemed to be very interested. Probably our best program: we sent 18 young Thai officers, carefully selected, to the U.S. Navy Postgraduate School in Monterey, six at a time for three years, and those officers, I am told, when they came back, did rise rapidly in their own ranks. That was career enhancing and, I'm sure, individually helped their institutions as well. One of them ended up as the maverick mayor of Bangkok, a Navy officer.

Also, to the annoyance of our military counterparts, a lot of our work was done through sort of a side door through the embassy to the Communist Suppression Operations Command/Internal Security Operations Command, CSOC/ISOC, General Saiyud Kerdphol, and he was running a program outside the military. We had a good bit of input through our contractors to his program, and he absorbed a great deal of that including finally some comprehensive manuals and training materials which were basically drafted by teams led by our contractors, especially a good friend of mine, a British retired officer named Jerry Waller. Jerry had worked all over Asia for 20 years, and had been in charge of training police field forces in Malaysia during the emergency. Stanford Research Institute picked him up at our request and put him in charge of some of our counterinsurgency research projects. The Thai military were not very interested in any of this, and they regarded counterinsurgency as sort of a weird concept although they were obliged through Supreme Command Headquarters to participate, but they would have preferred a straight military solution or no solution at all. So I would say to the extent there was an impact, it was over on the counterinsurgency side where the CIA was very much involved as well and USOM with the USAID development programs, and that's where the ARPA main interest was actually, so there was always a disconnect. In the beginning the Thais wanted military projects with a lot of hardware, and ARPA was really, at least in Thailand, not into that. The Thai would have been happier had we treated them as we had the Vietnam project, as a laboratory for weapons testing and so on. But we did give them a nice facility and a nice electronics laboratory. Presumably some of it was helpful. But, I think, if I had to answer your question with a yes or no, I would say no, it didn't really rub off enough to, for the most part, continue after the Americans left, although the building is still there and they still do what they consider to be legitimate military research and development.

Q: Then in '73 you left?

WOODS: In '73 I reluctantly came back to Washington, back to the Pentagon.

Q: I take it you really enjoyed Thailand and the Thais.

WOODS: Yes, and the work was interesting and you weren't stuck in your office. You could get out in the field and muck about.

Q: How was the traffic in Bangkok in those days?

WOODS: Well, it was bad but not very bad. We didn't have to go downtown much. It was a great time, the early years. As the place got more developed, it became more congested, more smog, less fun. But it was a very interesting time to be there.

Q: Then you came back to Washington to the Department of Defense?

WOODS: They assigned me for a few months into the ARPA headquarters and told me to start writing up my conclusions about what did it all mean, did it take or not? But they obviously just stuck me off in a corner. I was sort of an embarrassment representing the failed counterinsurgency research programs in Southeast Asia. They had moved on. They had been developing for some time the ARPA-net which became the Internet. They were heavy into that and ballistic missile defense and robotics, back to high tech. They had purged everybody out who was associated with this overseas defense research nonsense. So after a few months I got an offer which I think was really peremptory, an order disguised as an offer, to go back to the Pentagon. ARPA's office was over in Rosslyn just a few buildings from where we are here, the Architect Building, and now I was to go back to the military assistance agency - which was called then the Defense Security Assistance Agency - in the Pentagon. So I went back there in the beginning of '74 and worked there in DSAA in different capacities for several years, working in the management office, then the programs office, back on the Far East again. Went back out to Korea with Secretary Schlesinger's team. Sort of got back into Asian affairs and then got picked to go to the Industrial College, which is on the same campus with the War College. They hadn't yet been merged into the new National Defense University. The year I went was the first year they were experimenting with merged classes and so on, which was '77. I put in a year at the Industrial College, which was very interesting.

Q: This was '77-'78?

WOODS: Yes.

Q: The Army particularly must have been smarting from the collapse of South Vietnam. Were people looking ahead or looking at how are we going to do it better the next time?

WOODS: I think the basic feeling was let's try to block that out of our memory. We shouldn't have got in there. It was just a gigantic misadventure. Now, let's get back to real war and not allow ourselves to be dragged into something like that again, and go back to worrying about Korea and the Russians and Chinese.

Q: The Fulda Gap and that whole thing.

WOODS: Yes, the Fulda Gap, where I had served 20 years earlier, or 25. So they went back to basics. Vietnam was a horrible mistake. I expected but didn't find much in the way of recriminations, "had they given us a free hand, we could have won the war" kind of crap. Most people were just: "been there, done that, miserable experience; I don't want to talk about it."

Q: Then you got out in '79. Where did you go?

WOODS: Before going to the Industrial College, having been picked to go and while waiting my last few months, I actually got an offer to move to become the deputy director of the Office of Foreign Military Rights Affairs in International Security Affairs, so I moved over there. That office has been in existence forever, since around '50, I guess. It's concerned with U.S. overseas basing rights, nuclear exchange agreements and controls, classified overseas systems, jurisdictional legal problems pertaining to the deployment of U.S. individuals and troop units overseas, status of forces agreements, all of this kind of thing. It's actually an office of lawyers. I was a non-lawyer but a good bureaucrat. The director knew me and he needed a deputy, so he brought me in there. That was okay for a while. Then I went to the Industrial College and afterwards came back for about another year and a half at FMRA, Foreign Military Rights Affairs, but there was no long-term future because, as I say, it was an office of and by lawyers.

Q: I've talked to many people who have dealt with base negotiations. I think of Korea, the Azores, Spain, Greece, all these things, and they always feel that the lawyers at the Pentagon were the main stumbling block for getting things done...

WOODS: For reaching an agreement.

Q: ...for reaching an agreement because they were taking an absolutist view.

WOODS: Absolutely.

Q: Was it where you stand is where you sit, or how did you find yourself?

WOODS: Pretty much. State has a bias always in finding a solution on the basis of compromise and will compromise basically anything. Defense has "this is our position; take it or leave it," black and white. So usually State would yield on the small stuff and then there would be a showdown on the big stuff and somebody at the political level would take a meat cleaver and resolve the final issues. But, believe me, if it came down to

annoying Admiral Rickover or perhaps the chairman of the Armed Services Committee, it was State that got whacked, not the Pentagon. But not always. The Panama Canal Treaty I was deeply involved in, and in the final hours State won the day because the White House was more sympathetic to doing the deal than in protecting what the Pentagon thought were, well, not so much essential rights as doing it in an orderly manner and phasing things in an orderly way and sorting out and, you know, tying down some of the obligations of the Panamanians. I would say that politics won out over the lawyers in the final analysis. But on things like jurisdictional issues over U.S. service people abroad, State would be perfectly happy to have U.S. soldiers tried in foreign courts, and the Pentagon's not about to put up with that except in the rarest of circumstances. They would, whenever necessary, go to the Congress and have Congress take a ball bat and give State a whack or two to remind them that they're really not interested in having U.S. armed boys and girls in uniform being tried by those goddamn foreign courts, and that would be the end of that. But you're right: There's inevitable tension between the pragmatic "let's do a deal" approach and the inflexible "we stand on principle" approach, which means to say that it wasn't really so much about legal arguments because the State lawyers said they felt they were as good lawyers as the Pentagon lawyers and they could find wiggle room where the Pentagon could not.

Q: It's built into the two systems. I suppose one can say the outcome was the compromise.

WOODS: I would say Defense had its way about 80 percent of the time, but then Defense felt they had all the real interests at stake, State had no interests at stake, and basically I'd say a lot of them considered State as unpatriotic, basically soulless bureaucrats who wanted nothing but a signed agreement to advance their careers. They took a very jaundiced view of State's approach to these things, especially as time wore on and State had fewer and fewer people who had served in the military, and you would get, "So why do we need bases there anyway?"

Q: Well, it's true. There's developing, I'm sure, within the civilian side of the Pentagon too, fewer and fewer people who've served. You know, people of our generation, we've all had our time in the military, and maybe it wasn't the most beloved period of our lives but you had an understanding about what was going on.

WOODS: The Pentagon also believes in redundancy. Why give something away unless you're forced to? I was engaged also with the Thailand withdrawal scenario and some negotiations in the Caribbean. Phil Barringer, the head of the office, was almost always personally involved as at least a consultant on all major base negotiations, so we were very much in the thick of it. You see, we were an OSD office and so were in the interagency working group on this matter, but we also had our own Pentagon working group and that would include lawyers from the Navy, Air Force and Army usually and a Joint Staff lawyer, who was the legal advisor to the Chairman; and if there were Defense agencies involved, and there usually were, we would have lawyers from the Defense agencies. So we might have seven or eight different points of view to accommodate just

within the Pentagon. I would say that the lowest-common-denominator principle frequently applied to a legal issue. The guy with the hardest line would usually hold out, and so on 14 issues you had 14 different hardest lines. The initial ploy by OSD is to carry all of these hard-line service positions over, let State dump all over them, and then come back and try to find some middle ground closer to the Defense position than State's. But from State's point of view, I think we were always the conveyor of bad news.

Q: What was your role, being a non-lawyer?

WOODS: Well, I had enough legal background and my role was like a lawyer actually. I was drafting. The lawyers in this case, other than the drafting work, are really functioning as bureaucrats.

Q: Yes, I was going to say, in thinking about it: Being a lawyer is not a creature from out of somewhere; it's a background...

WOODS: I had had a good many legal courses in grad school and had also done some legal drafting in international law at Cornell in my international law graduate seminar, because my professor was a draftsman, if you will, and an advisor – including to the Department of State - on these kinds of issues. So we had all had some schooling in that. So I was pretty good at drafting. So I would get involved trying to find compromise, which came in handy later when I was working with Chet Crocker on his negotiations trying to find...

Q: I would think a negotiation on the Azores would be almost completely political, wasn't it? From what I gather, it wasn't so much the issue of how to treat American service people; it's how much money will the United States give us?

WOODS: That's brokering the payoff. In that sense what you are is a broker, bureaucratic broker, between the agencies concerned, who want to put up as little as possible and State which wants to be as generous as necessary to close the deal, in trying to paper over these different U.S. positions when you try to present a united front to the greedy country team that's facing you, which is, of course, very well aware that there are cracks and fissures in the U.S. position if they can just find them. That was an interesting period, but I really wasn't planning to spend the rest of my life there, so a couple years was enough, and I got the offer to move to African Affairs and rather abruptly jumped.

Q: In ISA?

WOODS: Yes.

Q: And you went there when?

WOODS: I think it was the fall of '78, late '78, or maybe it was early '79. I'd have to go back.

Q: Within that period.

WOODS: The Deputy Assistant Secretary for Near East-Africa-South Asia, Bob Murray, who later ran the National Security Studies program at Harvard and is now running the Center for Naval Analyses, Bob came across the hall. We were old friends. He had been a management intern one year after me at OSD. He came over and said, "What would you think of joining the African Affairs office?" and I said, "I wouldn't think anything of it because I have never considered it because I have no interest in Africa and I know nothing about it." He said, "Well, think about this. Since you know nothing about it, you might learn something. It's a little bigger office. You wouldn't get a promotion, but there might be more promotion potential, and you might enjoy it more than what you're doing, which must be pretty boring." I said, "Touché, Bob, but why would you want somebody who knows nothing about Africa." He said, "Ah ha. Well, because we have a splendid State Department officer, Owen Roberts, who knows all about Africa, but he can't find his way in from the parking lot and he can't make a phone call, and he doesn't even speak our acronyms. So you could sort of take care of all that DoD nonsense and let him run Africa." I said, "That's an interesting thought." So I thought about it for a few days and went back and said, "Okay," mainly on the basis that I might be helpful to Owen and, besides, I might learn something. So I went over and in six months Owen bailed. He got an offer to be Chargé in Addis and he disappeared sort of overnight. At this point, you know, I had learned where Ouagadougou was; I was deputy director and also desk officer for North Africa, and had been spending most of my time on the latter. So now management had a problem. It was the mid-cycle, and they looked around and there were no what they considered qualified FSOs still waiting - it was like February - and they said, "Well, you can be acting director for a while until we find somebody." I said, "Fine." So they looked around and looked around. I don't know who they interviewed, but eventually in summer they said, "We haven't found anybody that we really want over here, so why don't you continue to be acting director." So this dragged on for a couple of years, and finally in '81, I guess, they relented and said, "Well, you seem to be doing the job. We'll make you the director." I said, "Thank you." They said, "We'll make the deputy slot an FSO, because we want to have an FSO in here when we can get one." So I became the director. That went on for four or five years, and in '86 they decided to make me Deputy Assistant Secretary. From '82 to '86, for the first time, there had been a Deputy Assistant Secretary for Africa, but it was an "acting" position, as an additional duty for the Principal Deputy of ISA. The Principal Deputy was also running special activities of one kind or another and, because he thought it might be amusing, had also asked to become the first Deputy Assistant Secretary for Africa. He was political, Noel Koch. Noel had been a speech writer for Dole. He came in with Rich Armitage, as Rich's deputy. He had good Republican connections, and basically they said, "You want to be deputy for Africa too? Feel free." Noel kept a file called "Weird." That was his main interest in Africa. It was exotic and different. But he worked very hard at it, in the hours he could make available for it, to try to find resources and build it up and so on, so I never had any problems with him. I'm still in touch with Noel and consider him a friend. When he left, went out of government, he recommended they make the job full time and give it

to me. The new Assistant Secretary, Bing West, eventually did that. I stayed in that job until I retired some eight years later.

Q: You retired when?

WOODS: The first week of June '94, so basically seven and a half years.

Q: What were our interests? Essentially you were there dealing with African affairs in the Reagan Administration, Bush Administration, and for the Clinton Administration.

WOODS: And the last years of Carter.

Q: What were our interests?

WOODS: Of course, it's debatable. What were our interests, if any, is part of it. The view has changed over time, but there are two sets of interests which are worth talking about, national interests and security interests - as viewed by the Pentagon at least - and they're quite different. They're overlapping but very different lists. The national interests list tends to veer all over the landscape because nobody can really pin down what they are. For a while, certain core security interests were a part of the national interest list, and I would reduce a lot of it down to just thwarting the Evil Empire's ambitions in Africa. This would manifest itself in all kinds of ways, things like trying to close down Soviet SIGINT sites, trying to...

Q: SIGINT sites, these are intercept bases for radio...

WOODS: Yes, signals intercept, and they had some sites in Africa. People tend to forget, whether it was a real threat to us or not, it had all the appearance of being an attempt to become a threat to us, and the Soviets and Cubans and Bulgarians and the rest of them were all over Africa, tens of thousands...

Q: And Chinese.

WOODS: ...and the Chinese, tens of thousands of them with bases all over the place and landing rights and SIGINT sites and Soviet nuclear subs in the south Atlantic and the Soviet Indian Ocean fleet prowling the Indian Ocean and on and on and on, and bellicose statements from time to time that basically "Africa will be ours because the revolution is ours" and so on and so forth. The Pentagon's reaction was, "Well, other than its oil and strategic minerals and the strategic choke points and the Soviet naval problem, Africa is a pretty obscure place. Who cares? But since there's an undeclared war underway, the Cold War, and it extends to Africa and they're doing all this bad stuff, our goal is to thwart them one way or another."

Q: The policy of denial.

WOODS: Yes. So we will try to line up allies and then we will have a Cold War confrontation in Africa, and in some places the Pentagon and the CIA were engaged in proxy wars or actions to try to overturn regimes and so on. When you get beyond that you get the argument about oil. Well, is Africa not important because of its oil? Yes, it is, but (a) most of it is pumped offshore and really the problem is to protect the oil platforms, which maybe after the first few days of a war you can do because you have superior naval and air power, and (b) why would any nation want to cut off oil? They want to pump it and they want to sell it. Once they sell it somewhere, it adds to the world oil supply.

Q: It's expugnable.

WOODS: On the other hand, a good bit of Africa's oil is sweet crude which comes to the U.S. East Coast and is very, very important for automobile traffic for our own gas guzzlers, so it could cause a lot of consumer grief and political problems, I suppose, in something short of all-out war. So there was some worry, but when the Pentagon looked at it... The angst came from ideologues of the right, and when it was looked at rather coolly by people in the Pentagon, they would sort of say, "Yes, it's a problem, but it's more of a theoretical problem than a real problem. Nobody's going to lose any sleep over it." Strategic minerals were a little more complex because they are onshore, and between the Soviets and central and southern Africa, you have most of the world's strategic minerals supply. But, again, short of an all-out world war in which the Russians were refusing to sell to anybody, why would we worry about Zaire or somebody not selling their minerals? Our feeling was they would want to sell their minerals and, once again, then it's in the world market and the price may go up but we could probably get them. On the other hand, if the Cold War led to massive disorder in places like central and southern Africa, that could close down the mines and that could cause a serious problem. Now, of course, that has happened in the Congo - old Zaire. The copper mines and cobalt mines are flooded, the equipment has been wrecked and vandalized, and they're basically operating at maybe 10 percent of their capacity.

Q: There were people both in Congress and outside who were having a wonderful time painting the African map red. There's a lot of territory there. But when you get right down to it, the threat wasn't that strong, as you pointed out.

WOODS: Well, again, threat of what? We would have been nervous had the continent been red from top to bottom and Russian bombers were based all over the place, because the threats that the Pentagon thought were serious were (1) the Indian Ocean fleet, which in the event of a war would have to have been sunk, which the Pacific Fleet was prepared to do but expected a major fight; (2) the Soviet ballistic missile submarines in the south Atlantic - what about them? - and (3) Soviet bombers based in Africa. We felt, and the Soviets were rather open, that ultimately their target was political control of South Africa, and that's another reason why the U.S. was unnecessarily friendly with the white South African regime, which, of course, was playing that card. "We are paired together to resist godless Communism here," an argument which even the most conservative U.S. administrations didn't swallow all the way, but it made some inroads with Reagan. We

felt there was a Soviet threat but with reasonably modest programs and careful planning it could be contained, and so what I asked for and progressively got was more money, and we ran little programs to help shore up our friendly states. We weren't sure whether Qadhafi, for instance, was acting on his own or as a Soviet surrogate. He had like 1,000 Soviet main battle tanks, and the question was what the hell is he going to do with them? Is he going to attack Tunisia? What is this? Actually the answer was nothing, other than invade Chad with what he could. So I spent a lot of my energies in the mid and late '80s thwarting Qadhafi in Chad, working with the French.

Q: That was known as the Toyota Wars.

WOODS: Eventually, yes, and we sent them trucks and we sent them TOW and 106s. We sent them Stingers. The French were sending all sorts of stuff. I spent a lot of time in Paris - it was interesting - working very easily with the French military. The Libyans sent a conventional army into northern Chad, and this got the French all annoyed and there was a flurry of military and diplomatic activity, and then the French said, "It's been fixed because Qadhafi has assured us he's pulling out," and then, "He has pulled out, and we can stand down now." It was my job to call their Washington brigadier attaché in to the Pentagon and say, "These are the pictures from yesterday. All they've done is camouflaged their positions, so you can tell Paris they haven't pulled out. They're lying again." He said, "Thank you very much," and after that we had a joint campaign to kick their butt.

Q: How did that work?

WOODS: Well, we each increased our supply and properly armed the Chadian army and their tribal affiliates. They then went out and crashed through the Libyan defenses, and captured or destroyed some two billion dollars worth of Soviet/Libyan hardware – and they were happy to sell us a lot of what was left intact. It was great. The French got some of it, and we got some of it for exploitations. Qadhafi went limping home, and we had a bunch of prisoners, some of whom defected and, I guess, eventually ended up here. That was the end of Qadhafi's military adventures in Chad.

Q: That was very interesting. He had the oil and could make a big noise, but he really didn't have an effective instrument to do anything, did he?

WOODS: Well, he thought he did, I guess. They won some battles. They had used poison gas in a couple of them, but basically that seems to have gone back on their own troops. Then he won a couple of battles in northern Chad until we and the French got the Chadians adequately equipped with their retrofitted Toyotas, as you said, and some other stuff, and they modified their tactics.

Q: These were Toyota pickup trucks, which were great, I guess, for the terrain. They put a machine gun or a TOW system on the back of it, and off they went.

WOODS: Or Milan missiles. Or a 106. They came up with a new tactic, and I have since asked the French, "Did you guys figure this out?" "No, no. They figured it out for themselves and they called it 'the hedgehog.'" The Libyans were in heavily defended and mined positions with interlocking fields of fire, and they had just massacred hundreds of Chadians at a battle a few months earlier, who got in the killing zone and just got cut to ribbons. So the Chadians came up with the tactic of lining everything up at dawn, single file, and then at the command "charge" they went at absolute top speed one or at most two trucks abreast straight into the defensive lines. I talked to some Chadians, and they said for the most part when they hit the mines, which some of them inevitably would because there were several rings of minefield, they were going so fast that the concussion usually didn't kill them. It would just blow the truck over or blow them out of the truck because they had already passed over the damn thing before the main blast came. Their effect was the first half dozen vehicles would get blown up by the defenders or the mines, but within a few minutes, before the Libyans could even get their underwear pulled up, this force had burst through and would proceed to the center of the Libyan position, form a circle, and then explode outwards, which is why they call it the hedgehog, and just attack everything from inside. This caused complete havoc and panic, and the Libyans would surrender within a few minutes. That's how the complete rout came about, with the surrender of most of their equipment intact. It was very daring. I had asked the French a couple of years earlier who they thought the best soldiers in Africa were within their own experience, and after some thought they said the Togolese, which surprised me. Then they said, "Of course, the Chadians are the best fighters but, you see, they're not soldiers. By far, the best fighters are the Chadians, but the best soldiers are the Togolese. You can't really count the Chadians as soldiers."

Q: A little bit like the Afghans.

WOODS: They're like the Somalis, and I remember some Somali warlords telling me, "Oh, yes, the Chadians, they are our cousins, you know. We are ethnically related." I said, "That would figure."

Q: How about the Horn of Africa? Since our interest keeps changing back and forth there, it was one of these choke points for the Red Sea and also an entree into the Indian Ocean. This must have concerned you quite a bit, didn't it?

WOODS: We spent a lot of time on the Horn of Africa. Principally it was a CENTCOM interest at the Pentagon.

Q: Central Command, yes.

WOODS: And they, depending on the commander and the progress in the strategic planning and the development of basing networks in the Gulf, their interest in the place waxed and waned. There was a time, you know, we were desperate to get agreements with Kenya and Somalia in the very early '80s. President Carter launched that initiative. We signed on with the very reprehensible Siad Barre in Somalia, and we offered large aid

packages to both countries, Kenya around $40,000,000 a year, Somalia $25,000,000 a year, I think recognizing what we were getting into. There was some debate about whether we really, really wanted to do this with Somalia. As I remember, we got a memo back from SecDef on that decision paper. In the margin it said, "Hold your nose and go forward." We knew what we were getting into, I guess. As it turned out, after we made the improvements in Kenya to the airfield and also storage facilities down in Mombasa and we made some improvements in oil storage at Berbera, it turned out we really didn't need them, because we got other facilities - initially in Sudan, although those were later closed, and then on the peninsula. If you've got storage sites and access to airfields there and so on, you don't need them in Berbera. CENTCOM finally decided, after years of argument, that Kenya was just too far away to be useful for air support or for naval operating purposes, but it might be useful in the future. In event of a war, it could be a place to pull the ships back for repairs or as a hospital base or something, but it was clearly not an urgency. As for Somalia, they said, "We can do without it in its entirety," because its only use was as a forward operating base or a petroleum storage site, and they had come up with closer, better facilities, so to hell with Somalia. So that was the military strategic argument. Beyond that there was the argument that we wanted to be friends with "the" dominant political power of the Horn, but over the decades we haven't been able to figure out who that is. For a while we thought it was Kenya. The first and, to my knowledge, only SecDef trip to Sub-Saharan Africa was Rumsfeld to Kenya back, I think, in '76. That was before I was in the office, but I found the debris of the trip, and it resulted in two of our very few large military projects in Sub-Saharan Africa. One was the F5 squadron and the other was the air cavalry squadron, which was a mixed bunch of Hughes 500MD helicopters, half with chain guns and half with TOW missiles, and both of these were a result of whatever it was that Rumsfeld had promised the Kenyans on his visit. They're both still flying. Why Kenya or any other African country needs fighter jets I do not know. That was sort of a massive waste of money, but the air cav comes in very handy, and I think that's probably our best single military project on the continent. Beyond that, though, the country's gone bad. It's sliding and sliding. Ethiopia had been lost to the Soviets and then came back and has now sort of gone bad again, although we can't quite decide that. Sudan, you know, went bad, came back, went bad, came back, and in recent years is once again in the clutches of the bad guys. There are three potential candidates to sort of be "our friendly power" in the Horn, but it's never worked out. We were until a few months ago sucking up mainly to the Ethiopians, but now I see we're all over the Kenyans because of what is called their cooperation in the war on terrorism and possibly for use as a launching pad against Somalia again. Yes, East Africa took a lot of our time but not as much as southern Africa.

Q: So what were our concerns in southern Africa?

WOODS: In southern Africa, mainly getting the Cubans out and hoping to achieve a soft landing and peaceful transition in South Africa, both of which happened. I guess people would still generally profess themselves reasonably well satisfied with the way things have worked out in southern Africa with the exception of Zimbabwe, which has gone bad on us.

Q: What was the Pentagon role in southern Africa?

WOODS: Well, not too much other than helping Crocker with his negotiations on southwest Africa, which was, I would say, the most significant thing I did in my years in African Affairs - being senior Defense member of Chet's team to get the Cubans and South Africans out of Angola, facilitate bringing Namibia to independence under UN 435, and setting the stage for a transition in South Africa itself. Chet worked on the southwest Africa accords throughout his eight years, but I was only intermittently involved in that up until about '87 when I started to get more involved and '88, '89, '90 very, very intensively involved.

Q: Doing what?

WOODS: Once things started to move - you'd have to have a look at Chet's book, *High Noon in Southern Africa* - in late '87, I became a regular member of Chet's traveling road show, and we went bouncing around all over the world. There was the troika of the U.S., the USSR and Portugal serving to sort of mediate, facilitate this issue among the parties, the parties being the Angolans, minus UNITA, and the South Africans and the Cubans. Starting in January '88, which I think was the London round, the military chiefs of staff started to come, and so there were half a dozen negotiating rounds including one which I chaired, a technical round, in Cape Verde, which had the chiefs of staff of all three armies, General Ulysses Rosales del Toro for the Cubans, General Antonio dos Santos Franca "Ndalu" for the Angolans, and General Jannie Geldenhuys for the South Africans. It was my job to get these guys to sit down together and work out plans for a cease-fire and disengagement and withdrawal. The first hurdle was getting them to sit down with one another at all. I forget where we were; I think we were in London. At breakfast I went over and got General Geldenhuys by the arm, sort of half picked him out of his chair and said, "Jannie, let's go meet General del Toro." He sort of turned white, "Oh, my God." I could see del Toro sort of crouching down behind his menu. I took Geldenhuys over and said, "We're all going to be working together, so let me introduce…" You know, within five or ten minutes they were just telling war stories and getting it on. It turned out they could work very easily together. With the Angolans it was more difficult because they kind of felt they were being screwed by the Cubans who were communicating directly with the South Africans, but usually General Ndalu was very reasonable. But it was an extremely complicated military negotiation, and there were a lot of problems with drafting, so I sat in the middle of issues like how long is it going to take to get the troops behind this line and what activities are permissible during this phase of the withdrawal, and what would confidence-building measures be in order to get a cease-fire, and how do you announce a cease-fire so that it might work, and blah, blah, blah, a lot of tedious detail. Chet just basically told me, "You work it out." The political side, which chaired all the teams, could not deliver much of importance unless they had their military chiefs of staff on board. In the case of the Cubans and South Africans it was harder because the Cubans had Fidel looking over their shoulder all the time calling the shots in detail, and the South Africans had the minister of defense, who wasn't usually at the meetings but

sometimes, and then President Botha himself also looking over their shoulder and frequently backing off of things they were trying to agree to. So it was, especially in the military field, which was very sensitive. When it came to Namibia, I was again part of the team that Crocker had to put together and go out, because the Cuban withdrawal having succeeded and the South African withdrawal from Angola having succeeded, the South Africans were now hunkered down in camps in Namibia, and UN 435 was supposed to unfold. On the day - April 1 - that it started, the rather unintelligent head of SWAPO, and future president of Namibia, Sam Nujoma, sent his army across the border with their weapons. He would later explain that nobody had told them that they couldn't return with their weapons. They were just going home and, had he been told, they could have put their weapons somewhere else. But anyway the reports started coming in, SWAPO/PLAN, two dozen here, six dozen there, 200 here, coming across the border. So the South Africans said, "We've had it. It's five minutes into the new era, and look what they're doing." So they just came boiling out of their camps in their armored vehicles and proceeded to massacre these poor bastards who were basically clueless infantry on foot with light arms, and they were just being mowed down. You know, the pictures then, the Caspirs were coming back with these dead bodies draped all over them. It became a big turkey shoot. Well, Chet put the team together and we all flew off to Namibia and, you know, we were to put the cork back in this bottle. As it worked out, about two days into the process I'm sitting in this bush camp, the South Africans are holed up in their rooms drinking, the Cubans are off sulking in their hut. General Prem Chand, the Indian general who was supposed to be leading the UN force under 435, he's sound asleep in a hammock by the pool. Martti Ahtisaari is sitting there tearing his hair out saying, "I've had it. I'm leaving on the four o'clock plane," and nothing was happening. In the meanwhile, you know, the turkey shoot is continuing. We've got this South African in charge of Namibia with us, the Administrator General, sitting there frowning. I finally said, "This is ridiculous," and went over and got Prem Chand, shook him out of his hammock and said, "Let's go talk to Martti," went over to Marti and said, "Get the Administrator General over here." "What are we going to do?" "We're going to work out a cease-fire announcement. Get him over here, and get the chiefs of staff over here." He said, "All right." So I basically said, "Look, guys. The situation is, we're not doing a fucking thing here. We're sitting around drinking, and Martti's ready to go home. Let's get going. These SWAPO people are running amuck and getting themselves killed. Let's have a cease-fire announcement. We'll have an immediate stand-down, and SWAPO people who are in the country can report to some collection points and turn in their weapons without getting killed, and so on. Now, somebody start writing it. I'm just saying, come on, guys, go to work." You know, within five minutes they were and in a few hours they had it. And then, how do we broadcast it? When do we broadcast it, which stations, and all the rest of it. And things fell into place. I'm sure this is not in any history books. In the absence of somebody who will take the initiative sometimes... I had no charter but I just felt, you know, give it a push and see what happens. And then there were innumerable follow-on meetings. We had a lot of visits to Havana and meetings with Fidel keeping the Angolan withdrawals on track. Rich Armitage kept me covered for that, including the special phone on my desk with hot lines to Havana and Luanda and Pretoria that year. The Cubans took about two and a half years to get out. The South Africans had

cleared out long before that. And then there was the subsequent negotiation, which was peace in Angola, because Chet had never been willing to bring UNITA into the negotiations. I asked him about this at one point and said, "Isn't this a big mistake because you're just leaving this huge issue on the table unresolved?" and he said, "Look, the whole negotiation is so fragile, if I add that issue, it will just collapse. I'll deal with it later." "Okay." So that then led to additional years of negotiations and what was finally called the Bicesse Accord. At that time we had an aid program to UNITA which was still underway and which I was coordinating at the Pentagon, and part of the process was to turn off aid to UNITA, which was a little tricky because the Angolans knew. I made no secret of it. So the Angolan government was saying, "Here you are telling us how to phase this withdrawal and stuff, and you're still running this supply operation to UNITA." I said, "Yes." "And telling us not to do this and that." I said, "Well, as long as you understand all that, that's the way it is. At least you understand it. Nobody's trying to hide it. Sign the bloody agreement and the program will stop." We had had similar discussions even earlier: "General Ndalu, we know you're planning another offensive. Please don't do it." "Oh, no, we're not." I said, "I know you have to say that, but I'm telling you we know all about it. You're doing this and that, and obviously you're going to launch it. You're going to do it again, and we're going to help UNITA and the South Africans kick your butt again, and this is going to set us back another six months. Please don't do it." They did it anyway. I said, "Well, I told you not to do it, and now you see what happened." Eventually, over the years actually, we became good friends, and he was then sent to Washington as first Angolan ambassador here, and we are still on very good terms. So that's the kind of stuff I was engaged in working for Chet and then later on for Hank Cohen for a couple of years.

Q: Was there much of a difference between the approach of Chet Crocker and Hank Cohen?

WOODS: Well, they had very different styles. And when Hank got to it, it was a very different thing. The military negotiation was basically over. It was a matter of keeping the withdrawal process on track. It was really into the negotiation of what became the Bicesse Accords, and there was less travel, less drama. It was hard but it was more, I would say, a classic negotiation. But the groundwork had been pretty well laid out by Crocker. The issues were laid out, there was a strong team. It changed over time, but a lot of the people stayed with the team, so there was a lot of continuity. There was no discontinuity in policy. So for Hank it was more a matter of completing a process that was already well in place.

Q: I would assume that the accession of Nelson Mandela in South Africa ended an awful lot of the pressures, didn't it, there?

WOODS: Well, the fact that it was a peaceful transition, because there was - and I think Ambassador Lyman never really accepted this - a very high anxiety level in the Defense community about possible violence during or in the aftermath of this transition. We felt there was a very real possibility of a very bloody transition. There have been some things

published by South African white leaders since then which say indeed there were plans to go to war. But Mandela was very, very deft in defusing this situation. Also, I think he had really to give credit to de Klerk. They were able to keep things relatively tranquil. It was still tumultuous, but it wasn't bloody. And then, yes, the fact that that was achieved and ushered in what appeared to be a new era in which there would not be a civil war and that they had turned loose of their nuclear arsenal, which we found lying all over the place when we went out to collect it... And they sort of agreed eventually to stand down on their lethal missile program and so on. Yes, this all took away a lot of the concern, but by this time the Cold War was over so there was no longer a Soviet menace. Everything was resolving itself. But, of course, this then translated in some quarters into "Good. Now we can forget about Africa again..."

Q: Oh, yes.

WOODS: '"...and let Africans solve African problems. We don't have to spend any more money. We can just start closing our CIA posts and DIA posts and then maybe a couple of embassies and come home, and cut the aid program, etc." So in terms of resources and interest and involvement on the ground, with the exception of South Africa, where, yes, we were getting more deeply engaged because we were so enthusiastic, for the rest of Africa we began really to retreat, which I thought was a very foolish set of decisions.

Q: At least when you left the Pentagon you left at a time when, despite our sort of retreat from influence there, the major security and national interest problems had worked out in our favor by that time.

WOODS: Yes, a lot of the specific issues, but then you're back to again the definition of national interest, which gets into what's the threat, and I would say what had not been addressed were the basic problems of Africa and the fact that, notwithstanding isolated successes such as a political transition in South Africa or getting the Cubans out, it didn't reverse the basically negative trends of the continent. On this I'm a noted pessimist and frequently derided for my negative views of Africa, but I think even by '94 it was clear that the place was falling apart, and I think it's been falling apart before, during, and ever since. The security decay had started under the Bush Administration, and we had played our role in not doing anything about it. It started in Liberia when we refused to use our influence or troops to put a stop to the civil war and let the whole place be destroyed when we could easily have stopped it. This was a very deliberate policy decision at the White House. Cohen and I sat in on the meetings where this was discussed. Bob Gates, saying he was speaking for Scowcroft and that Scowcroft was speaking for the President, said, "What happens in Liberia is not our problem. There is no 'special relationship' responsibility. It's Africans solving African problems. If they want to kill themselves, that's up to them." And we would not lift a finger. This was a time when we had the Marines sitting off shore in the MARG, later the MEU. Colin Powell made it clear he wasn't interested in doing anything. He punched me in the chest at one diplomatic cocktail party where we bumped into each other and said, "All I want is my MARG back."

Q: That's Marine Expeditionary...

WOODS: Yes, MEU. ARG was Amphibious Readiness Group, and MEU Marine Expeditionary Unit. At any rate, we could have easily, in my opinion, stopped everything early on, but we let the whole country be trashed and hundreds of thousands of people were killed, everybody made homeless, rather than do anything. The same thing happened I '94 when the Rwanda genocide came, under Clinton. And, of course, in Somalia in '93, when we were finally challenged militarily by a neighborhood thug, a very dangerous man, as soon as we got eighteen troopers killed, we put our tail between our legs and ran for it. I'm convinced the troops were ready to fight, but the Clinton White House said: "Bunker and hunker, we're out of here." So we had become basically the laughing stock of African thugs by the mid-'90s.

Q: Sierra Leone, or that was a little later.

WOODS: It was later, but, you know...

Q: It was the same thing.

WOODS: And, of course, development aid had been cut and we had closed many posts, at least the intelligence posts, and basically had dumbed down. And it was not just Africa apparently, other parts of the world as well, which I wasn't paying attention to. But this has now come home to roost, and I hope that some of the people who made those decisions who are still around will do better this time.

Q: On that I won't say optimistic note but discouraging note, I guess you retired then in '94.

WOODS: I was feeling that things were not getting better and there was no point. I didn't think I was going to get promoted again, because above the deputy assistant secretary level almost everybody's political. I had my time. I thought I was still young enough to start another career. I had talked to Hank, who had just retired. He said, "You ought to give it a try," so, yes, I thought why not get out. We had basically lost our military aid budget for Africa, and after the fiasco in Liberia and the fiasco in Somalia and the ongoing fiasco in Rwanda, which when I got out was already upon us, it was clear that the United States was basically nowhere to be seen because we didn't give a damn, at least if it meant involving our military muscle or spending serious money.

Q: Well, in '94 you retired.

WOODS: Right.

Q: Just briefly, what have you been up to since then?

WOODS: Well, within a couple of months Ambassador Cohen and I had started *Cohen and Woods International,* which works in four activities. We represent, lobby for, advise African governments in Washington. I guess over the past seven years we've had 12 African countries as clients, usually two or three and sometimes four at a time. We advise American businesses or assist them in Africa, usually after they've gotten themselves in some sort of difficulty which could have been avoided had they gotten proper advice in the first place, but that's all right. Sometimes we try to help take them into some business opportunity or put them onto one. A third area, we do occasional work for the U.S. government. We've written a few little think pieces on this and that when asked, and we've consulted from time to time, usually *pro bono*. And, more importantly, we've helped put together and conducted half a dozen training exercises, several for another agency, two for State at the National Foreign Affairs Training Center, and one for the U.S. Army War College. We've run four of these at the War College.

Q: These would be roughly war game type of...?

WOODS: Well, they're political, military, or humanitarian intervention scenarios, and we help write the scenario, find the experts and then participate in the Control Group to actually run the exercise. At the National Foreign Affairs Training Center, they're one-day games. At the War College they've been two- or three-day games. So we do that, and then we also are dabbling in commercial projects, little commercial projects, of our own ranging from a couple of fishing boats in Mauritania to trying to find a market for African hardwoods, cocoa out of Sierra Leone, some diamonds out of Guinea, wine from South Africa, a telecommunications project in Thailand of all places, and so on. We've invested in a couple of companies. So we're trying to develop small independent commercial projects which we control, stumbling and bumbling as we go along.

Q: Sounds like you're both putting your background, knowledge and expertise to use.

WOODS: Well, we've made a profit every year, which we continue to plow into these ridiculous commercial ventures in the hopes that someday it will all pay off.

Q: Great.

End of interview