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

JACK MENDELSOHN

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INTERVIEW

[Note: This interview has not been edited by Mr. Mendelsohn]

Q: To begin with this, when and where were you born and could you tell me something about your parents and your family?

MENDELSOHN: Sure. I was born in California, August 18, 1934.

Q: Where in California?

MENDELSOHN: Los Angeles. But my parents moved back to Chicago, where they had originally come from when I was about five years old. I did all of my schooling, grammar through high school, in Chicago. So I'm a Californian by birth, but I consider myself to be an Easterner, a Chicagoan, specifically by upbringing although there are cousins and aunts and uncles that stayed in California.

Q: I was born in Chicago and around age three or four we moved to Pasadena. That's interesting. Maybe you had better weather growing up than I did, I'm sure you did.

MENDELSOHN: I must say I really am a very big fan of Chicago. I thought it was a great place to grow up. It was not a very international city, or not a very cosmopolitan city. What's interesting is that after World War II, in the late '40s and early '50s my mother got involved in the antique business which centered in Europe a lot, and she got very interested in Europe. When I was in high school she took me kicking and screaming on a European trip. It kind of got me interested in the rest of the world.

Q: This was, let's see, you were…

MENDELSOHN: I was a junior in high school.

Q: What was your father involved with?

MENDELSOHN: He was an insurance broker. He had his own little agency and he worked in an office downtown and of course he wanted me to go and take the business

over. I never had any interest in that. I hadn't exactly decided I was going to be a Foreign Service Officer. The only part of the story that would be relevant to it was this sort of European bug that bit me. I really kind of sort it was a fascinating place. People sitting around drinking coffee and sort of old buildings. Chicago was a great place but you don't get a sense of medieval times.

Q: But you know Chicago has its ethnic centers. My family came from there and they were German. I remember going there and the whole family spoke German, which I didn't. Were you put in touch with any of the ethnic centers?

MENDELSOHN: No, we grew up in a rather scrub part of town where we lived in a high-rise apartment on the lake and everything ethnic had been scrubbed out of the neighborhood. They lived behind us, the ethnic center. We never took advantage of it, and I wasn't exposed to it. I realized it later on, actually, when I went back to graduate school in Chicago. I then realized that there were very interesting neighborhoods there.

Q: In high school did you get any sort of international courses or anything of this nature?

MENDELSOHN: That's very interesting. For the most part, no. For part of high school, the beginning of high school, I was pretty much of a dead beat. And I was in trouble. I went to a public high school and I was very, what's the word, sort of disinterested. I was more interested in sports, big time athlete, more interested in girls, more interested in social life, and I was in big trouble. My family and I reasonably decided that I'd better go someplace else for my last two years. So they sent me off and it was very much in my interest because I knew I wasn't doing well in public school. They sent me for the last two years to a very nice day school, a private day school in Chicago that really gave me a boost. I really enjoyed it. I got a terrific education, and it kind of changed me, it turned me around.

Q: Motivation is always interesting and somebody who was so laid back, sports and girls, not interested in study. You know, I mean, this doesn't sound like somebody who is going to say "Gee, I've gotta get my act together."

MENDELSOHN: Well, you want to know the truth?

Q: Sure.

MENDELSOHN: I had a girlfriend in the school.

Q: Oh, okay, in the day school?

MENDELSOHN: Right.

Q: Alright. I'll buy that immediately.

MENDELSOHN: And also I was beginning to get…I was socially then not terribly

happy at the public school. I remember a teacher, a history teacher. You would think that

somebody interested in the world, although this was before I had gone to Europe, that history might be an interesting topic. I remember her telling me that I might be better off having lunch her period, than coming to class. You'd have to say she was pretty desperate at that point. In any case, I got my act together in the last two years of high school, and that junior year I was taken off to Europe by my mother.

I was very, very reluctant to go, and I insisted that we go with another young person, and another young person's parent. So four people went off. It was a revelation.

Q: This would have been about when?

MENDELSOHN: Oh, boy, this would have been the summer of 1951.

Q: So we're talking about a pretty devastated Europe.

MENDELSOHN: Yes.

Q: Great for antique buyers.

MENDELSOHN: Yes. Both. Devastated Europe, but what was interesting is that I sensed on the trip while I was very interested in what was going on, I also sensed we were not seeing Europe. Because clearly these two women, it was two women and a daughter and myself. The daughter was my age, and I knew her because they were friends of my parents. We stayed in very pleasant hotels and had very easy arrangements; everything was taken care of. And I knew then while I was very interested in what was going on I also knew that that was not what Europe was really about. I also vowed, as I had earlier in high school, I was going to go back and find out about it on my own. That will come up in a second. And I did a lot on my own after that.

Well I came back, graduated high school, had no idea what I wanted to do, absolutely none whatsoever, and then I went off to college. Should I go back and fill in anything?

Q: Yes. I would because, you know, as we do these things I think the opportunity is too great. I mean, I am talking in general about the people we interview. These are people who were involved in America's role abroad and I think social historians might want to grab something of yours, too, and understand the times.

MENDELSOHN: Well I was always interested even though I was into sports. I made all-league in football in my private school league, and I was a big time softball player. But I was really always interested in [reading]. I liked reading and I liked writing a lot. Creative. I wouldn't have said expositive, which is what I wound up doing. I was fascinated by that world. I thought actually that I would like to be a writer or poet or a playwright or something like that, even in high school where I did a lot of writing for reviews. Sort of the high school review that you put on at various dances or something like that. Or I wrote for a literary magazine, and I wrote creatively in English class and stuff like that. I was always interested in that.

I think that carried on a long way through my life. I'm doing a lot of writing now; there is a pile of stuff over there if you are really interested, and a thing that I just published last week. Well that's one thing. There is the European interest; there is the writing interest. I think that's really probably…well, there was also a kind of…related to the European interest…a kind of wanderlust. I mean, I was not prepared just to stay in Chicago all my life and go into my father's business and take it over and all that. I thought I would like to do different things. I didn't mind moving around. I liked traveling. I used to go every summer out to California to visit all the relatives and loved it. But I realized it was a much different life than I knew, I mean I was an urban person. LA at the time, this would be in the '40s and early '50s, was and still is an enormous sprawl without a pulsing center, although I think it has probably gotten a little better. I always felt it was a great place to take a vacation but as I now term it, and I realize you are a Californian...

Q: No, I'm not really. I left there in the 40s and never went back to visit. Short visits.

MENDELSOHN: My take or my rap on California is "no metaphysics." They are not worried, understandably, about the big picture out there. Soren Kierkegaard could not have grown up in LA, that sort of thing. Whereas, if you grow up in the cold and chilly North or East you begin to think about other things. That was my take on it. I loved it for vacations; there are great places for a young person.

When I graduated from high school...

Q: Wait. Languages. Did you get any?

MENDELSOHN: Nothing on languages. That would come, but I had nothing on languages. I don't want to back out of this early period. There isn't anything else that I think is really contributory besides Europe, writing, and a willingness not to sit still.

Q: Was your mother sort of interested in you doing something abroad?

MENDELSOHN: No. I think she didn't try to push me in any way. My father wanted me to go into the business. I think they both thought it would be great if I would become a lawyer, they'd have liked that. But they had no particular international…besides the fact that she went to Europe once or twice a year, my father was not very interested in traveling; he went a couple of times but she usually went with her sister, with the exception of the time she took me.

It was for her a real, not so much thrill, but it really gave a kind of dash to her life. You know she'd come back from a month in Europe, and she would be sort of energized for half a year. It would be a big thing among her friends and she'd take off again with another friend or something. It was a big thing. It was a big social event as well as a visit. A nice combination.

Well, the only other thing I can remember, which I think also affected my life but in a

slightly different way, is that when I was graduating high school I wanted to go to Stanford. I wanted to go back out to California, and I thought that would be a nice place to go. And what's interesting, the only real intervention I can remember in that part of my life is that my mother, who was really the dominant person in the family (my father couldn't have cared one way or the other) said, "You know California, you know Chicago, you must go somewhere East to school." It was a geographic location. She wanted me to know another part of the country. I didn't know anything about the East; I had been in New York once in my life - New York once and Europe once, and California. I knew nothing about the East.

I applied to a few colleges and I wound up going to Dartmouth.

Q: You went into Dartmouth when?

MENDELSOHN: I entered in 1952, graduated in 1956.

Q: So you were in Dartmouth from…

MENDELSOHN: '52 to '56.

Q: '52 to '56.

MENDELSOHN: Now a number of things happened there that are relevant.

One, I really grew to like the East. I really grew to love New England and that's where, after I was married I spent a little time living on a farm and where we go, we don't own anything, but where we try to go in the summertime on vacation. That was one. I did get an appreciation for New England, and for history and American history, and recognized that there was something in the United States that was not as old [as Europe], but was certainly older than Chicago. That was good, it kind of brought America into a slightly different perspective. I mean, Chicago is 1833, LA is basically a twentieth century city, and I suddenly went back a hundred or two hundred years in time. I like that. I don't want to overemphasize it, but it appealed to my interest in older things.

Secondly, when I had gone to Europe with my mother and that other couple, that other family, I knew that that wasn't quite the way that Europe was. And I decided I wanted to go on a slightly more rugged life trip. My freshman summer, between freshman and sophomore years, I went on the Experiment in International Living, and I think that was one of the really key experiences.

The Experiment is an organization that was founded in the inter-war period, between World War I and World War II, whose, at the time, primary job was sending groups of students to live with families in Europe. Now its gotten its own school and has incoming programs as well as outgoing programs and brings in Europeans. It is really quite a large organization. It's in Vermont, in Brattleboro now; at the time it was in Putnam. Well, they sent me off to live with a French family. And it was a mind-blowing experience to

go live in a small French town.

I had started French in college. It was a good way, and the French Department always thought it was a good way to lock in a language. It's now a very ordinary kind of sequence of events. In 1953, I guess it was, the summer of '53, it was not so usual.

Q: I have never heard of it. I graduated from Williams in 1950. Never heard of it.

MENDELSOHN: It wasn't that far from you, actually. But it was a terrific experience. I just loved France, I loved my family, and I loved the guy who led the group. He had really plunged into the U.S.-European post war. He had been at the Salzburg Seminar, he'd been on some UNRAD things, delivering horses to Belgium after the war. He was a very good French speaker. He was a law student at Harvard and was going to go into law. He became a kind of mentor. We'll come back and maybe talk about him later. In any case it just blew my mind, and I knew that was where I wanted to wind up doing something, somehow.

My junior year I took a junior year abroad in France. Whereas the summer was kind of a social and emotional experience, the junior year abroad was a big intellectual experience for me because I got introduced…this was at the high point of Existentialism, it was the highpoint maybe even of anti-Americanism. France had not been rebuilt. You'd get a Michelin map and go touring and there would still be signs there 'Bridge Out' you know, not all of the bridges had been rebuilt, you'd have to take detours. The life was not glamorous, but it was sure exciting, and it was certainly rich.

Q: Dien Bien Phu was happening then.

MENDELSOHN: '54, sure. Yes.

Q: Vietnam.

MENDELSOHN: Right. They were struggling with their political future. I guess Mendes France was Premier part of the time I was there. I was not really politically alert necessarily, but I was very interested, again, in art and literature and film and theater. I just read everything I could possibly read. I did a lot of work in French, got reasonably good in French. I had a very rich intellectual experience which was basically, I think, formative in my own thinking about my own philosophy or views of life.

Q: Could we pick on that for just a minute, because it has always struck me that the French, I love French movies and all, that they approach things with a plan, there is an organization, whereas I think Americans generally go by the chaos. Did you find, by picking up French, getting involved in the French intellectual thing, that you were bringing something back that was different than your colleagues or not?

MENDELSOHN: Certainly in what the Germans would call the 'world view,' I mean, I was reading Camus and Sartre and Malraux. Those people I found -- their view of the

world, of the metaphysics if you will - what's man place in the world, how does the world operate, what's absurdity and what's life, what does it mean and all that - those issues were of interest to me. Not, how do you attack a problem logically and resolve it. That actually, I mean, my sense is that the French way is not my way. You get intellectual rigor a lot of ways.

I didn't necessarily take the French intellectual rigor, but I did take very much the view that you are on your own, you make your own life. The outside is quite a tragic place and you have to recognize that it's tragic and do your best in the fact of that recognition. Those are the kinds of things that were of interest to me at that time and still are. They served, I think, as a kind of foundation for my own philosophy. My own philosophic view to the extent I've got one, of what the world might be like and how it is, what it is, that man can do against the universe, or in the universe, notice I said against because I feel is that it is not a good fit. But this is all very philosophic and that is what I was quite interested in and it made a very interesting difference when I came back my senior year.

I was majoring in English even though I had gone to France; I was majoring in English. When I went back and took a look at some American literature, like Melville particularly, and Hawthorne, and saw that they were struggling, Melville particularly, struggling with the same kinds of problems. To make a very long story maybe simpler Ahab, in *Moby Dick* was asking the question, "Why did this happen to me?" And Melville's answer is, "…because the world is a very, very dangerous place." That was what is was all about.

Q: Speaking about France and this period, which of course when you look at it this was a very interesting period for France because they were pulling out of Vietnam, and badly pulled out. I mean, their army had been defeated in Vietnam and Dien Bien Phu. The United States had not come to their assistance as they had kind of hoped it would. Did you, personally, pick up any kind of anti-Americanism?

MENDELSOHN: Yes, there was a certain amount of anti-Americanism. I didn't think it was politically based. My sense was it was culturally based. You know these were the yahoos from beyond the ocean, you know, who were sort of beneath dignity if you will. It was more that these people are not very sophisticated, they are not very intellectual. That was the kind of stuff. I didn't get the political; at least I didn't sense it. I don't know that others in my group didn't feel that. But, no…one other thing that I did notice, and this sort of just reminded me of it, the one thing that I noticed which is clearly the case and we're seeing it again now, is the ambivalence that existed in France about their behavior during World War II.

I happened to live with a Royalist family, what I thought was a Royalist family, for part of my time there. They were, of course, very critical of Britain and very critical of Britain letting down France. There was the story of not evacuating French troops at Dunkirk. I mean, they had all these horrible, horrible stories about how France had been mistreated in World War II. I suspect these people may even have been sympathetic with Dishiel, though they were living in Paris during the war. I don't know. But I did sense that problem in France and the cultural snobbery vis-a-vis America, but not any political

hostility, although I'm sure it's there. I didn't run into that. And I was at Science Po. I guess that's not an inconsequential aspect.

While I was doing a lot of literature work and theater and art and all that, the stuff I had always been interested in, I also took a year's class, actually I guess two classes, at Science Po [Science Politique, the Institute of Political Science Studies] on political history. That's sort of the classic place that you'd go if you wanted to be a diplomat or a bureaucrat or something, one of them. There are a couple of them, but that's one of them. I took some intellectual history in the sense it was political theory, starting with Machiavelli going through Hitler, and then another one of sort of going through intellectual history, Freud, Marx, things like that.

I took two year-long courses at Science Po. I enjoyed that and learned a great deal. Again, this would be an area more directly related to the Foreign Service although at the time the Foreign Service wasn't in my mind. Although, not having gone to Science Po there must have been something back there, but I don't know, I don't know, but it wasn't openly in my mind. Still, what I was interested in was ideas and literature.

Q: Did you find getting up in the green hills of Hanover sort of a little difficult after you've seen Paris?

MENDELSOHN: Well, that's true. Mark Twain once said, as you probably know, "there is an enormous difference between Peoria and Paris, and you notice it a lot when you are in Paris." Well, what's interesting, and it's a perfectly correct and fair question. What's interesting is when I went back to Hanover, I enjoyed it more than I had before I left because I got in to local history. I got into folk dancing. I went to the New Hampshire State Folk Dance Competition. It wasn't even a college group; it was a Hanover dance group. I got into all this stuff. I got into ethnic things.

This was kind of an extrapolation that I was interested in other cultures. There is a culture in each part of the country whether we recognize it or not, sometimes we don't because we are so much a part of it. But I was interested. I was into visiting old towns, visiting old churchyards and visiting old buildings and museums. I was really interested in that part of America, in the historic part. So I had a very good last year.

But I had no idea when I graduated in the summer of '56 of what the hell I was going to do. I thought what I wanted to do was to be a poet, or a writer, as I said earlier. I suddenly realized I was leaving college and didn't have any plans. So, late in my senior year, really late, I had probably missed the deadlines, I wrote to the University of Chicago and said I'd like to come to graduate school. I chickened out. I mean I sort [of felt that] if I wanted to be a writer what I should do was pack my bags, go to New York, wash dishes and write in a garret. I didn't see myself doing that. I thought what I would do was go to graduate school, and I'll teach and write and it'll be a nice career. So the summer I graduated I started graduate school at the University of Chicago.

Now maybe we should stop a second. Maybe there is something that you think I ought to

go back and fill in.

Q: No, I think we are moving along nicely. Was anybody at Dartmouth pushing the Foreign Service? What about the CIA? You were in an establishment school and the CIA was very much a part of the establishment. I remember in 1949 or so some guys with button-down shirts and dark Brooks Brothers suits came around and they started talking about the CIA at Williams and I'm sure they must have been doing it at your place, too.

MENDELSOHN: I don't remember seeing the people. I'm sure they were there. I do remember knowing a little more about the outreach program of the CIA than I did about the State Department. Maybe there were ads, I have no idea, on bulletin boards or something. But I wasn't focused and I didn't get involved. I didn't interview for anything. You know, most of the people - well, actually a lot of the people were going to go into business or professional schools. I just, until the last minute, didn't have the foggiest idea of what I was going to do.

I sort of liked my senior year and I kind of liked it up there, so I delayed and actually got a job, when I graduated, in Hanover for a month or two working at the bookstore. I do remember one of my professors invited me to come over for dinner in the summertime. I remember him asking what I wanted to do and I said I wanted to be a writer. He said, "Why don't you write?" And I said, "I'm going to go to graduate school." And he said, "If you do that, you are not going to be a writer." And he was right, absolutely right. He was an artist, actually. I had taken a class in graphic arts. I'm not a graphic artist, but sort of an appreciation of prints and we actually did work with a printing press. It was kind of fun.

He had been an artist and guess he really knew that you had to have the guts to do it. In any case, I didn't.

Q: What about the Draft?

MENDELSOHN: I don't know. This would have been 1956. Let's see we were through the Korean War. Was the Draft on before Vietnam, did we ease off of it?

Q: I think the Draft was still going.

MENDELSOHN: What's going to happen is, I went to grad school and I think maybe there was an exemption for grad school, and I got married in one year. Then there was an exemption for marriage. Then I had a child in '63, that's when Vietnam began to heat up. So I was grad school, married and a father and then I joined the Foreign Service in '63 as well. So it's interesting, I didn't get drafted and I kept getting whatever it was, I can't remember anymore, 2A, 2B, 2D deferments: education, marriage, parent, government service.

It was funny because all of that would have happened in what was not the hottest period of the draft, I mean we were sort of between Korea and Vietnam and so they weren't after

your scalp. When they started getting very interested, I was…

Q: And age began to call...

MENDELSOHN: Yes, age would have caught up. In any case, I don't think they were drafting people. Were they drafting people out of the Foreign Service?

Q: I don't think so, not at that time. No.

MENDELSOHN: I don't remember.

Q: In any case, you went to the University of Chicago?

MENDELSOHN: Right, in 1956 I went to the University of Chicago and took my MA in a year. And then I guess I decided…

Q: Incidentally, how did you find the University? You got it in what?

MENDELSOHN: English.

Q: English.

MENDELSOHN: I liked it, I liked it. I'm very fond of the place. You'll see I've spent a lot of time there actually. It was not quite as total an experience as going to college because I lived at home. I drove out. There wasn't any campus life to speak of and still isn't. I didn't make friends or something. You just sat through it and got your nine courses, it was the quarter system, three a quarter. You got your nine courses done and then they gave you your degree. So it wasn't a warm and toasty feeling. But maybe grad schools aren't. I thought it was quite good. The intellectual level was very good. I thought Dartmouth was okay. You know, I mean, you can go a lot of places and get an undergraduate education. It wasn't anything special.

It was a very beautiful place to be, but intellectually I wouldn't…it's okay…I've been a lot of places since that were better and Chicago is one of them.

And then, after taking my MA, unexceptionally, I did it very quickly but with no special feeling one way or the other, I was offered a teaching job. I thought I wanted to be a teacher. While I was there, at the University, I went back to my high school and volunteered, just to get experience as a classroom assistant. I loved it. I liked it. The parent of one of my high school classmates was a public school principal; [he] called me and asked, after I had gotten my MA, whether I'd like a job teaching eighth grade.

I had nothing else to do. I was thinking of going full-time for my Ph.D., and I could go part-time because Chicago had a lot of evening classes and weekend classes and all kinds of things, a big urban operation. So I said I would teach. For the next four years I taught. I taught grammar school for one year, and then I went to the University of Chicago's

Laboratory School, this is their secondary school. It is one of the ways they keep professors on in an otherwise not very pleasant part of town where you can't use the public schools. They run their own public school. I taught there for two years and then went back to my high school, my private day school, and taught there for a year. So I was teaching school for four years, unexceptionally. I was a good teacher; however, I still am a good teacher. I do a lot of lecturing. I just taught at George Washington University as an Adjunct. I've taught at the Naval Academy. But, I always was interested in it.

That is clearly where I was going, because I didn't have the guts to be a freelance poet so what you do, is you teach. Not very interesting, but I loved it. I got married in 1958; the year after I got my MA, my wife has an MA from Chicago. She's also a teacher or was a teacher.

Q: From Chicago?

MENDELSOHN: Yes, she grew up, was born and grew up there. Her father was a musician in the Chicago Symphony; her mother was a musician who then went to work for the University as a tester, in the testing unit. She devised the examinations. My wife grew up on the South side, in Hyde Park near the University. We got married and lived in Hyde Park, in a garret. It was very much the academic, intellectual life.

The other way life might have gone would have been I would be a professor. I was taking a Ph.D. in Comparative Literature. You know, taking a course a semester and then full-time in the summer. It took a long time. What happened at the end of four years of teaching and part-time Ph.D. work is that I said, "I'm not sure this is what I want to do. I find it a little confining. I find it maybe something that would be sedentary…I'd be doing the same thing for a long time. I want to take a year off and think about what I want to do."

We took the year off and we rented a farm in Vermont for $50 a month, moved up there. I tried to write and it was during that year that I decided I didn't want the academic life. I was too timid to risk writing as a lifetime career. I tried to write and sell and I didn't do anything. I thought, look, I'm interested in the world. I speak French really rather well. I like Europe. Maybe I ought to think about the Foreign Service.

Q: How were you hearing about the Foreign Service?

MENDELSOHN: I don't know. I mean, I just knew about it. I knew nobody in it. I'd been to Washington once when I was a kid on a school tour. But that's a business that gets you overseas, gets you in contact with other people, might be interesting, might be fun. I mean a lot of this I generated on my own, if you will. I don't remember hearing…I know that I didn't hear anybody come and give a talk at the university. I don't remember reading anything special about it. But I guess I sort of thought I used to read the *New York Times* and maybe it would be fun to be involved in international affairs. Nothing more than that.

Q: Incidentally, where in Vermont did you have your rental farm?

MENDELSOHN: A town called Guilford Center which is about four miles from Brattleboro, between Brattleboro and Marlboro, where the music festival is. And my wife worked at the Experiment, in Putnam. She got a job. She basically supported us. We had a little money, maybe $2,000-$3,000 saved up. She got a job, paid her maybe $4,000-$5,000 a year. We had a perfectly marvelous year and I was offered a teaching job in Vermont at the end of the year! It was a tough decision. What I decided…I had taken the Foreign Service exam. My recollection is I took it in Manchester, New Hampshire or something, I drove over and took it for the day. All they had at that time was the Written, and I passed the Written.

We had spent one year there and I had three courses to finish to get the Ph.D. residency requirement out of the way, so we came back to Chicago for one year while I finished the Ph.D. residency. I never wrote my thesis. And I waited for the Oral, I guess waited to hear about the results of the exam and [then] for the Oral. I didn't think I was going to have any trouble passing. I wasn't worried about that. I may have already known when I came back. So the academic year of '62-'63 started in about September and ran until June. And my wife had to write a thesis for her MA, so she went back and wrote her MA thesis. I went back and finished my residency and then I was offered an instructorship at Chicago, because I was good. I went back and taught there for two semesters and I took my Oral.

Q: Do you remember your Oral and how it struck you, the questions and that sort of thing?

MENDELSOHN: The Oral was downtown somewhere, I don't remember where it was. I wore tan poplin, you know sort of the standard dress suit. It was probably the only dress suit I had at the time. I went into a room and it must have lasted about an hour. I think there were three or four people there. What they did, they asked me a lot of questions and, you know, my studies had been in comparative literature. But I was an alert guy. They asked me a lot of questions about history and politics. I didn't know a lot of the answers but I sort of talked my way through it.

My conclusion, which I think is right, is that basically what they wanted to know is not did I know... They asked me a question about what was the economy in the 14th century in Europe? Now anybody probably who had studied history knew that it was bad. There were plagues and people would die of starvation and famine. I didn't know, but whatever I said I sort of spun out a little, I think they were more interested in whether I was a person who could hold a conversation, seem reasonable in what I did know, and accessible in one I didn't. Sort of "sympa" as the French would say. And on that basis I assume I passed because I didn't have any brilliant answers. I remember a lot of things I didn't know the answers at all. But when they got to the subjects I knew something about, I was certainly alert and aware. I had had a pretty good education.

I remember them saying thank you, and would I mind going in the other room. And I

walked out of there and I sat for, I don't remember, maybe ten minutes, it wasn't very long and I wasn't very nervous. I didn't even actually know what was going to happen. So I come back in and I sat down and they say, "We would like to offer you an FSO-7 in the Foreign Service at a salary of $7,200 a year." I said, "Thank you very much. I'm interested" or something to that effect and they said, "Fine, you'll hear from us." And it was springtime, I think. I had been a full time teacher and the most I had earned, the year before, was $5,200. Now that was a very good job offer by comparison to what I'd had. Maybe if I'd been a lawyer, I'd be making a lot more. And $7,200 to anybody now…that's not even a half year's salary.

Q: I came in at just under $4,000 in 1955.

MENDELSOHN: This is 1963. Okay, things have gone up. FSO-7, $7,200 a year, $2,000 more than I'd ever earned in my life, and a certain security and something that I thought might be fun. I said, "Fine, I'm on." They said I would hear from them. I went back. I don't even remember what we did. Our child was born that summer. I sort of thought that this was going to happen, or in any case I knew I was going to go into a full-time job, maybe teaching at the university. So we started our family, after six years of marriage. Our first child was born in 1963. My wife got her MA in Chicago in the spring of '63. I finished my residency and could have written a Ph.D. had I decided I wanted to. But instead, I said, "I want to do something else. I'm impatient somehow, I feel like this isn't going anywhere and I want my life to be perked up." And this was a great opportunity.

Q: Had by any chance the Kennedy Administration…this was still the Kennedy era…had that touched you?

MENDELSOHN: Yes. Yes. That's interesting because when I was in FSI training, he was assassinated and I remember that day very strongly. We'll talk about that in a minute. But, yes, there was and it's a good thing you mentioned that, there was at least in my mind a thrill in the air about government service. It's undeniable that it suddenly became quite honorable, desirable, attractive, interesting and exciting to be working for the U.S. Government in the Kennedy Administration. He did bring a certain spark, elan; he lent desirability and credibility to joining the Government. You are absolutely right. And that was there. That would not by itself have brought me in, I don't think. It certainly was an opportunity to do what I thought I'd like to do, to go and commune with all these other cultures. To do it in the Government seemed okay, honorable, if not fun, if something to do for your country. I was not driven by internal, patriotic service motives, but I was certainly attracted by a Government service that seemed like something really quite worthwhile. I think the attitude is a lot different today.

Q: Oh, yes, absolutely, that's why I'm trying to capture this at this time.

MENDELSOHN: And I'm not sure that that period had been repeated. I think it's particularly bad now in terms of what people think about Government service. But for most of the time it was sort of neutral, it's neither attractive nor…you know, there are some good parts and some bad parts. But under Kennedy it was heavily positive, a very

strong sense that this was a really good thing to do.

Q: Well, then, you came into the Foreign Service when?

MENDELSOHN: I entered…my entering class began…I can't give you the exact day, but I guess it was like the 23rd of October, it was late October 1963.

Q: Can you describe a bit the composition of your class, or the general feeling of it…male, female?

MENDELSOHN: There were females, definitely females. I don't recall that there were any minorities, what we would call minorities, either Black or Asian. I could be wrong but clearly if I'm wrong, I'm wrong because there was only one at the most anyhow. I don't believe there were any Black or Asian students in the class. There were, however, a handful… maybe of the 80 people, or 70, there may have been a dozen women. They were nice people and many of them had graduate degrees of some kind; they all were bright-eyed and very talented. It was quite an impressive group. I was impressed.

Q: Having come in in October of 1963, I think it's worth mentioning how the Kennedy assassination of November affected you.

MENDELSOHN: Yes that was just, just a shock. They dismissed us. They came in the afternoon of whatever the day was November…

Q: 22nd.

MENDELSOHN: 22nd. We would have been there a month. We were in training at FSI in the most unpleasant circumstances. There was the converted parking garage of what's now called River Park.

Q: Arlington Towers at that time.

MENDELSOHN: Arlington Towers at that time, River Park in its rebirth or renaissance, but it looks the same.

Q: A rabbit warren underneath…a parking garage.

MENDELSOHN: It was a parking garage.

Q: There were partitions put up and classes in there.

MENDELSOHN: Right, because you could see the round column that was supporting the ceiling. It was a very unattractive environment, but I mean we didn't mind that at all. But then you got this news on the 22nd of November that the President had been assassinated. Everybody was just…you know, it was as if the wind had been taken out of you. And the young people, including myself, I think were very, very depressed. Very saddened. It

didn't eliminate, I think, still the sense that the Kennedy era had built up about the worthiness of enterprise and government service, but it sure took a lot of the what you thought was going to be the fun out of it, in a way. Nobody left, nobody retired or resigned that I can recall. Plenty of people left within a year or two but nobody at that particular moment because you still didn't know, you didn't know yet. But I do remember how deflated, and that is a very mild word, and saddening that event was. There was certainly a kind of uncertainty about what was going to be happening. But nobody was saying okay, well that's it; I'm bailing out. I didn't get that sense at all.

And then of course people would begin to get involved in their own lives and their own careers. But it was certainly, as they say. The wind gets let out of your sails on that.

Q: While you were there were you picking up any idea of where you wanted to go?

MENDELSOHN: Nope. I had no idea. I mean I had this sort of dream that I was going to go off to France and go to Paris and specialize in French affairs. I passed the language exam, so I knew I wasn't going to have to study language, and I knew I would go somewhere French-speaking, or English-speaking because they weren't going to train me in language. So, that was all I knew.

I don't remember the sequence of events. I may have gotten my assignment. But in any case this was a very unfortunate development for most people, most people would consider it as one although it didn't have any effect on my career, or anybody's career. But my entire class was delayed six months or nine months, I can't remember now, from taking an overseas assignment or any assignment because there was a shortage of help in the passport office.

Q: Oh, my God.

MENDELSOHN: So everyone of these eager-to-go, high powered, graduate-decreed new FSOs were sent off to a passport office in the United States. You did get to indicate where you'd like to serve for six to nine months before taking up your assignment. And at the time, I don't know anything about it now, maybe they've cut them back, at the time there must have been about six or eight cities that you could go to. You got per diem, you got a little extra money, but you were going to go and basically take passport applications for six months through a window. That was a little setback. Here you were, ready to go and write these great political reports and all that kind of stuff. So everybody took off for all around the world. And I do not know whether I had my assignment or not, but I'll get there in a minute.

In any case, my wife and I chose New York. That was a great place to go, New York, and have the government pay for you. I didn't want to stay in Washington, although you could. You could go to Seattle, you could go to Chicago, I think you could go to San Francisco, you might get someplace in Texas and things like that, there were lots of choices. My wife and I had a great time in New York, although the job was absolutely dreadful. But it was so much fun in the city that it wasn't bad. And we went up with a

few of my other classmates and it was interesting; I shouldn't totally discount it, it was an interesting jump or peek into the true bureaucracy, because these were GS people who were not doing analytic, intellectual reporting work of any kind. They were basically taking applications and ironing; at that time you ironed pictures onto passports.

Q: With a regular household iron?

MENDELSON: That's right. You took your turn doing that. Actually that was in many ways more fun because you could sit around and you chatted a lot with people in the backroom there.

Q: Did you get any feel, I think that was at the time when Frances Knight was holding full sway, did you have any feel about her regime or were you just too far down the line?

MENDELSOHN: No, I was too far down the line. I knew, you could tell immediately there was a lot of office politics in New York. We were in Rockefeller Center, which is actually a great place to be, and my wife and I got a great apartment in Greenwich Village and I used to walk home at night. A nice long but not impossible walk in an interesting city. There was office politics between the Director and the Deputy Director and all that kind of thing, but we stayed out of that. For the most part, the younger people did. They were nice to us but they were not by any means in awe of these people that were sent down from Washington to help them out.

Actually one very funny thing, and I've still got it, I met, I took an application from an author, a woman, who no one knew at the time, no one had heard of, no one remembered. But because of my French and literary connections I recognized who it was - Anais Nin. I said, "Are you the famous writer from…" and she said, "Yes." At that time she was totally forgotten; this is the '60s; she came back in the '80s. I said, "Oh, I am so honored to meet you." She was so taken aback she brought me an autographed book, which I still have, which she brought to me when she came to pick up her passport.

Q: I'll have to look in her diaries and find out if you are mentioned.

MENDELSOHN: I didn't make the diaries. It was too bad. It was too bad. That was the only thing. The only event of any significance, besides learning what the directory and daily work of ironing pictures on might be that came out of that. Now I do not remember whether I had my assignment or whether I got it at the end, but in any case I got an assignment which was broken almost immediately, to Martinique, which, looking back on it, I think I might have enjoyed. I don't know. But in any case it was changed to Haiti. So before we left New York I knew, my family and I, we were on our way to two years in Haiti.

Q: This would be from when to when?

MENDELSOHN: '64 to '66. September 1964 to, roughly, August of '66, we would be in Haiti. I cannot think of anything else in the passport experience, except that it was

something that marked our class.

Q: Just one question on the passport time. Did you get sort of the residue of McCarthyism spill over there? Because, you know, Frances Knight and her group were very much a part of J. Edgar Hoover of the FBI's apparatus.

MENDELSOHN: If it did, I do not recall it. I was too oblivious, or ignorant, or it was too hidden, I don't know, but I don't remember any of that.

Q: Anything from training?

MENDELSOHN: No, I think in the training period, everyone, I think, was very upbeat and very optimistic. They were young and eager. That struck you. It was really a very good moment. Nice people. I made friends I've kept throughout the years and some I've lost track of. But some I see, still, from time to time.

Q: You were in Haiti from when to when now? This is...

MENDELSOHN: '64 to '66.

Q: What was the political situation in Haiti when you were there, when you arrived?

MENDELSOHN: The United States had just sailed some heavy warships into the Haitian harbor. I think in '63, before we got there, because there had been rioting in the country. Papa Doc had recently declared himself President "*a vie*", President for life.

Q: This was Duvalier?

MENDELSOHN: Papa Duvalier…the good old days...

Q: This is the father?

MENDELSOHN: This is Papa Doc, not Baby Doc. This was the real…you know…when men were men! Relations with Haiti were very bad at that time and Papa Doc was a very unpopular leader. To put it in very simple and probably incorrect terms, basically we were so seized with the Cuban issue that we refused to deal firmly with Papa Doc. He constantly said he was the only person who stood between a Communist takeover or between where we were then and a Communist takeover in Haiti. So we basically continued our relations although they were very, if you put them on the Human Rights scale, they were very bad.

Q: What was the issue why we considered things very bad?

MENDELSOHN: Well basically because he: (A) disrupted the democratic process, (B) was quite repressive to any political opponents. So it was a dictatorship with lots of imprisonment, disappearances, and executions about which I will speak in a moment.

American tourists who had built the country up in the late ‘50s and early ‘60s just stopped going. The place was going downhill dreadfully. We had poured a lot of AID money into it. It was corrupt. It was a sinkhole for AID money. Apart from that it was an interesting place, a really interesting place.

It was a combination of it being a third world country, tropical, a totally different culture, and a first tour. All of which made it a great, great two years. We had a family problem we can talk about briefly. But my wife and I were passionately taken by local culture, voodoo, by local art -- Haitian art’s a big deal -- by the people who were just as charming as could be, the ones we dealt with of course were the educated ones who spoke perfect French and very good English. Whites were not in danger. I don’t know what it’s like now. They were never in danger when we were there. And always there was this persistent, and I’m sure it’s still there, this persistent ambivalence about the United States. Some people saying that the occupation was the best thing that had ever happened to Haiti and the other ones resentful that the Americans had sort of taken it over.

Q: We’re talking...

MENDELSOHN: We occupied it in, I believe, 1919, and stayed until 1934 or something like that. That would have been 17 years, 15 or 16 years, but that was a moment that was looked at both positively and negatively by different people or by the same person. The occupation did do a lot, but it was degrading. It did a lot in the classic sense of what occupations do, the roads got built, things worked, there was a certain amount of, let’s say, reduced venality in the bureaucracy. I won’t say it was eliminated but on the other hand the tradition of the occupation was that the Marines dealt only with the mulattos and that the Black population was considered as it was in the United States sort of beneath caring. So there was a lot of ambivalence.

In any case when we were there Whites were really quite safe from the political violence and there was no domestic or street violence. It was safer than New York or Chicago and certainly Washington. But it was not a happy place. It was beggary poor. We lived exceedingly well and you always felt this incredible gulf between the way you as a member of what would be the elite in the country. You felt this gulf between [the way] you lived and the way everybody in the country lived. I was a $7,200 a year FSO-7 first assignment and I had the nicest house I’d ever lived in because all of the foreigners had cleared out after Papa Doc took over. We were living in the house of the Mercedes Benz dealer and it had a swimming pool, three servants you paid $13 a month and the house was $160 a month. You know it was just incredible. We lived very well, but you also felt how enormous the gulf was.

I did what was at the time a junior officer trainee rotation. It started out with a year in the Consular Section, which was bloody hard work because you had an interminable number of applicants. I did half a year in the Administrative Section as a GSO, General Services Officer, which I thoroughly disliked. I disliked the whole idea of it and this is probably heretical to put down in the Foreign Service Oral History, but I disliked the whole idea of the kind of service that we were expected to provide as a GSO. I felt it was both

degrading to provide it and degrading to ask for the kinds of things that people might ask for.

Is this too controversial to put down in an oral history?

Q: No, no, absolutely not.

MENDELSOHN: I thought people behaved and asked for things they would never…behaved in ways and asked for things that they would never ask for back in the United States. I did it but I thought it was wrong. I knew when I was not a GSO we were always very, very sparing of our demands on the Embassy because I always felt that was wrong.

My last tour was in the Political Section, which was clearly what I wanted to do.

Q: Who was the Ambassador and how did he run the place? This was your first post.

MENDELSOHN: It was my first post and perhaps I wasn't qualified to make a judgement.

The Ambassador was Lane Timmons, Benson E., I don't know what the E stands for, Benson E. Lane Timmons, so his initials were BELT…B-E-L-T. The guy was a little, petty tyrant. When my boss in the Consular Section went on leave, it was either R and R or home leave, the Ambassador came down and went through his in-box to see what hadn't been done, and went through his safe to see if there were things he had been sitting on. I had very good relations with him, but all the layering of the Embassy sheltered me. All of the senior people who had to work with him just found him impossible to deal with. He was very bright and very energetic, he was, what's the word, he was kind of dismissive of most of the people who worked for him as not being up to his standards. I think he was universally disliked.

The morale was very bad and I remember hearing stories that the Department was going to send out a DCM who was very mild mannered and very good with people who would try to cushion the impact of the Ambassador. The Ambassador just broke the DCM eventually. There is a lot I don't know of the story. I wouldn't have been made privy to it because I was a lowly Consular Officer. But there was a lot of backroom politics about how to deal with this guy who, you know, in a funny way kind of represented our Papa Doc.

Although, as I say, he and his wife were terribly nice to both me and my wife and in a sense I feel badly having to be critical of him but his reigning in the Embassy…he never got another Embassy, incidentally, after that. While he was a very bright guy he just didn't do well with people, he was too egotistical and too dismissive of others and it wasn't good.

Q: While you were in the Consular job you say you were terribly busy. What were the

demands?

MENDELSOHN: They were just physical. You had people lined up every day. You worked all day.

Q: These were for visas?

MENDELSOHN: These were for visas. There were two kinds, immigrant or tourist or visitor. It was an impossible workload. It was so busy that they actually managed to send us down some part-time people to help out. It was just a terribly busy place.

I remember one very funny now, looking back, a very funny incident. When we arrived, my wife and I, we took a boat, which you could do, maybe you can still do it now but it's getting tougher, we took a boat from New York to Haiti. We were put up in a hotel while we went house hunting. The hotel was a totally empty, big tourist hotel, vice nice, probably still there. I remember the first week we were there I was in the swimming pool or around the swimming pool, and I leaned over the outer side of the area the pool was in. It had a little railing you could lean over and look into town. Actually it was a big retaining wall that went down 50, 100 feet, I don't know, a big wall. I remember seeing a crowd of people marching ups the hill. I didn't have any idea what it was. I just kept watching. We had been there four days, five days; God knows what was going on. I see the crowd come up to his retaining wall that I'm standing at the top of looking over and I suddenly notice there are a couple of people in uniform and they are putting a couple of people up against the wall. All of the sudden I recognized that this was an execution taking place as my feet. I thought oh, my God, if this is happening in the first week what is this two years going to be like!

I never saw anything like that again, but it was quite an introduction to my Haitian tour although it turned out, as I said, it turned out to be fascinating. From the point of view of what it was I had started out being interested in as a younger person, sort of ethnographically, sociologically, artistically and politically, and I'll get to that in a second. It filled our lives with really very interesting and new sounds and sights and smells and experiences.

Politically it was very interesting because you found out something about raw politics in an underdeveloped country representative of the Third World. So it was a great learning experience that I actually had. Clearly there were other experiences in the Foreign Service, but this was my Third World learning experience and I knew nothing about it and nothing like it. I thought it was very valuable and very, very interesting at the same time.

The other experiences, skipping ahead just for a second, I also got to find out about the Second World, because I served in a Communist country in the good old days, when Communism meant something. And I also served in Western Europe, so I got all of it. But the more interesting, in all honesty, the more interesting of my assignments were Haiti and then the Second World assignment in Warsaw because these were political

cultures, not just social cultures, about which I knew absolutely nothing.

Q: Probably the best thing to do is to talk about the political life and your observation and what we were doing. It was also an interesting time because President Johnson was coming in and doing something about civil rights in the United States. I was wondering whether there was any spillover to that?

MENDELSOHN: No. The two things that there were spillover from…I can remember beginning to argue about Vietnam in 1964, about the wisdom of bombing or whatever it is we were doing I can't remember...

Q: We were just inserting our troops in '64.

MENDELSOHN: Okay. Okay. Maybe this was '65 then. When did we start bombing?

Q: Oh, it was probably during around that time.

MENDELSOHN: Maybe it was '65. Probably it was, because I got there in September of '64. I can remember '65 and '66 certainly, arguing not so much with the Haitians because Vietnam was not an issue with them, but arguing with others in the international community about the wisdom of the U.S. intervention. I can remember at the time, and I later changed when I was in Belgium, being a pretty strong advocate of "we have to do something about this," being pretty supportive of policy. I write that off to loyalty and naivete or ignorance at the time. But I can remember arguing about it and defending the U.S. bombings.

The second thing that happened, and I can't remember exactly when this was, '65 I guess, was the Dominican Republic intervention. That was another factor I guess that fed back into why we were prepared to stay on good terms with Duvalier at the other half of that island, because the Dominican part we were afraid was moving too far to the left. Of course Papa Doc was the bulwark against the whole island going the way Cuba was going. We were absolutely possessed by this Cuban-Dominican-Haitian set of islands off our shore at the time.

I can remember that the Dominican intervention was a big moment where we had to sort of pay attention and do reporting. Nothing happened.

Q: We put the 82nd Airborne in at that time and whether that was needed or not is still in dispute.

MENDELSOHN: We were pretty trigger happy on these issues at that time. And we were very; very concerned about left-leaning administrations anywhere so we tended to overreact.

Q: Did we identify any left-leaning opposition to Papa Doc or was anybody left-leaning?

MENDELSOHN: My recollection is that this was a sort of gossip-mill with a constitution, is what this country was basically. What you were reporting is what people were saying. There was so much gossip going on and that was what you were collecting and reporting. Nobody knew anything really. It was very difficult. You knew that people were disappearing and you knew that Papa Doc was executing people and leaving them at crossroads as sort of warnings to the population not to oppose him. There were landings. I remember a dozen people landing in the North and then being tracked down by Papa Doc.

There was all of this very small scale opposition that was going to be basically crushed by Papa Doc who had not only his army, but he also had these plainclothes mobsters called the Tun Tun Makoots. Plus he had the Volunteers of National Security who were sort of like the Boy Scouts. They marched. And I remember seeing a parade of this ragtag gang. They were all given the same shirts and kerchiefs and to keep the kerchiefs together they were using matchbook covers and carrying wooden guns. They didn't even have guns.

I may be disremembering that but it was sort of like reading *Nostromo,* you know, like reading Joseph Conrad. The level, I mean they could certainly kill you, but the level of sophistication was something out of the 1890s, a ragtag small country somewhere in the colonies. And this great feeling of loving to talk about the politics by the Haitians and also the fear of somehow getting caught up in it. Most of the people who were having anything to do with the Embassy were keeping their nose clean politically, were paying off the Tun Tun Makoots and were allowed to stay in business and not be harassed as long as they responded to the shakedown. I think you might find something similar to that in Russia now. You know if you are prepared to payoff the Mafia, you can stay in business. This was on a universal, countrywide scale.

There was still money in the mulatto classes and the international community was there but there was a great deal of distaste and dislike for the methods that Duvalier had employed in the country. I think we were reporting all of the gossip we could possibly collect, but I don't think we had any impact at all that I'm aware of on Duvalier's policies.

Q: Well there is no real political life, I mean it was all a Court, wasn't it, rather than saying the Chamber of Deputies did this or that...

MENDELSOHN: Yes. That's right. It was a rubber stamp. To the degree that it acted it was a rubber stamp. And you are a right, it was a Court, basically, everybody was in his pocket and all the Cabinet owed their job to him and it seemed that the point of becoming a Minister was to make your money and then hoped that you survived after you were kicked out. You look at the budget and 95 percent of the government budget was salaries. There was no program money. What could you get done? All you could do was keep the bureaucracy employed. Nothing would get done. Everything would either be siphoned off or go into salary. There were no programs to speak of.

We had a malaria eradication program being run by AID that was reasonably successful. I don't know whatever happened to it. Malaria was not in the city but if you went out into the country you probably had to be careful. Certain parts of it were still malaria infested. I remember going down there, as you probably should do, reading instruction and starting to take these malaria pills. I think after the third week I was told that everybody starts out but they don't keep it up. By the third week I stopped taking the malaria pills. But we also didn't have occasion to go very many places in the country; it was very difficult getting around. Cape Haitian up in the North you might go to, and we did a couple of times.

Q: Was the Embassy staff pretty well absorbed into what, I suppose what you call the mulatto community?

MENDELSOHN: Yes. The person who was the Consul, Bill Mall, who we liked very much and became quite friendly with, was very adventurous. He was the kind of Foreign Service type that I would have liked to be and I think I became. He was very interested in the local culture and he got to know some of the local Voodoo priests. He took us along to some ceremonies where they were not hotel ceremonies, but we would be out in the country. We would be the only white people and would be surrounded by hundreds, literally hundreds, of Black worshipers. You never had any sense of fear or concern at all. I want to repeat the fact. You were like an anthropologist, observing, and actually you were honored guests. I mean they were delighted to have you. He and his wife were interested in art, local art, and my wife, who is an artist, got very interested in local art. She is also a musician. She was the only white voice in the church choir. And we also met many of the artists and got beautiful paintings that we still have and carvings and all kinds of things. We had a terrific introduction into the society through the Consul.

The Economic and Political Counselors, as I remember them, the Economic one would have dealt almost uniquely with the mulattos because they were the owners. I didn't know him actually that well. The Political Counselors was the nicest guy, a Latin American specialist. Couldn't have been nicer. Again I suspect his clientele or his circle of friends was mixed because Duvalier's argument was that he was inserting the Blacks into the political process.

Q: Because Duvalier actually represented the Blacks.

MENDELSOHN: That's right, which was his argument. Because he was married to a Mulatto, very carefully chosen from the available Africans, his argument was that he was reversing the power order whereas the Mulatto few had been ruling the Black majority, this was going to be the Black majority ruling the Mulatto few and themselves. And to a large degree or to a certain degree that was the case but the economic and social power of the Mulattos at least when I was there, and I know it is right now, was never broken. But there are Black faces in the governmental structure, which was not a real government but a Court as you suggested, there were more Black faces in that than there had ever been before. And the Political Officer, of course, would have dealt more broadly with a broader set of society.

Let's see, I'm trying to think whether anyone else would be…I don't remember anything about the USIS operation.

Q: Before we end this segment, I thought we would do this and then cut this interview off at this point. Were there any events that happened there that particularly come to mind or was it all one of a piece?

MENDELSOHN: Well, actually, we had a personal tragedy there and so did the Consul that I should mention. I mention it because it actually shows the Government was really quite good. The event that stands out in my mind is the execution that I mentioned.

It happens we had a child who was born with severe handicap problems, birth defects. The Government was really quite good. They evacuated my wife and the baby and took care of…the baby died, unfortunately for us emotionally, fortunately for everybody else. The baby died about half a year after he was born in the United States. I must say I always get choked up on this.

I must say the Government really behaved very well. They took care of everything. We took the baby to Chicago, where my wife could live with her parents while the baby was being taken care of. In any event, we lost him. That was a tough moment.

And what happened to the Consul is his baby, he had several children, but his baby drowned in his swimming pool. It was really ironic that two people in the same section, within the same year, had these tragedies. In that case the Government obviously had nothing to do. But I do want to make the point, since this is an oral history about the Foreign Service, how there was a certain amount of bureaucracy but basically everything worked out very well. Everything was taken care of by the Government.

So my wife and I were separated for about a half a year and so that was a tough moment, but then we came back together and we had another child, we had had one, this was our second child. Things eventually turned out okay. But in terms of events, there was nothing more that I can think of.

What's interesting is that while we were reporting on palace politics in Port au Prince we had also a sort of roiling set of palace politics within the Embassy involving the Ambassador and the DCM. But I was a little bit removed from it and don't have any longer, if I ever had, a real grasp of how this was worked out. I remember being told that Washington was sending down…Barney Taylor was the man who the DCM had turned to, a very nice guy, to help smooth things over. While he was an absolutely marvelous guy, the Ambassador just chewed him up and spit him out eventually, too. But there were so many bad reports, as I say, he never got another ambassadorial job. He left, finished his career, but he left and I think he ran, I'll look this up, but he became administrator of a hospital, I think, on Long Island. I think he is totally retired now of course. I feel a little chagrined about criticizing him because he was always quite nice to me, but I know it was not a good situation there.

Q: Why don't we stop at this point and we'll pick it up the next time when you went to...

MENDELSOHN: Sure. I went to language training. While I was there I volunteered for hard language training. I had language training. Went there for a year and then went off to Warsaw for three years and have a lot of very interesting stuff.

Q: You are off to Polish training. What grabbed you about Polish or was this just luck or somebody just said, "Here, here's Polish."

MENDELSOHN: Well when I was in Haiti as a junior officer we got a kind of a, I guess, a request list of "what would you like to do next." I volunteered for hard language training and listed, I can only remember listing Russian and Polish. I'm sure I listed a third language. Polish was my second choice and that's what I got.

So I left Haiti in the summer of 1966 and, I guess it would have been July or August. Then in either August or September of '66, that's right, I had a year's, or what would be, I guess, 40 some weeks of Polish language training at FSI in Arlington.

Q: Let's talk a bit about Polish language training.

MENDELSOHN: Sure.

Q: Some years earlier, in '61 or '62, I had taken Serbian, Serbo-Croatian, and one of the things I learned out of the language training was sort of the Serbian mentality. We had two hard-line Serbs and I mean I've drawn on that for what's happened today in the former Yugoslavia, my understanding of that. How much did you feel you got out of not just the language, but also dealing with the language teachers and others about the Poles?

MENDELSOHN: Well we had delightful language teachers. They were all older women, obviously immigrants to the United States. And they were all violently anti-Communist, which is not surprising as that's why they left. But I just don't know how representative they were of what was going on in Poland. Although we, my wife and I when I say "we", we both took it, we enjoyed the instructors very much, I don't think we got a spectacular feel for what we ran into in Poland from them because they all had such... Well, there is one thing that came across and that was the tragic lives that Poles led in the 20th century. You did get that sense.

And you got a sense, I guess, of a part of the society but, no, it wasn't a very all-around picture. The training on the other hand, strictly the language training, was pretty good. I was a little bit at a disadvantage in my class of three, there were three of us, because the other two people in the class knew Russian. That was a big help for learning another Slavic language. So I had to work, I think, a little harder than they to get basically the Slavic grammar and syntax, and vocabulary at the same time.

The language teachers through no fault of their own at all didn't really prepare me, and maybe they weren't supposed to, for Poland. I mean it was a very different experience to go to what I like to call a Second World nation, Haiti had obviously been a Third World nation. It was a different experience and extraordinarily interesting.

Anything else on my language training?

Q: No.

MENDELSOHN: The interesting thing is I of course came back to language training. My last assignment was as Dean of the Language School.

Retrospectively what I sensed, although I probably had little sense of it while I was there, is that while the Poles are charming the class was totally disorganized. It wasn't any better when I got back. They never ever were able to write a textbook in Polish so there was a little bit of "ad hoc-ery" to the training. But that may be a little bit of the way the Poles are. Delightful…not supremely.

Q: You were in Poland now from when to when?

MENDELSOHN: I came into Poland in the summer of '67 and stayed three years and it was really quite a good experience for me. I got a wide range of jobs and it was a fascinating Second World society and culture, and certainly the Communist structure, to learn about. My wife's mother is a Polish-American who basically, like a lot of second generation people, while she had gone to Polish language school in the United States she had sort of turned her back on the community when she got married and grew up. So my wife knew absolutely nothing about her Polish background except that her mother was Polish. It was just a kick and a half for her to suddenly go back to where her grandmother had come from, after having sort of skipped a generation of attention to it. So there was that, and my interest of course was cracking into a Communist structure.

I was very interested in Eastern Europe and Russia.

Q: Could we talk a bit first...'67 you arrive in Poland, what was the situation at that time. Then we will talk about the developments over this period and particularly as you saw it, what you were getting from the Embassy and not only Poland, internally and externally but also then American-Polish relations.

MENDELSOHN: The life was pretty grim in Poland in the '60s. They were coming to the end, it turned out, of a long run, about 15 years of control by Gomulka, who had come to power as a, if you will, a Liberal, but it turned out to be roughly the same kind of autocrat everybody else had been. A Liberal in the sense that he had been imprisoned. A Liberal, this was very relative, he had been imprisoned I believe by the earlier Communist leaders and when there was an uprising in Poznan in, I can't remember now, '56 I guess it was, he was brought back to power. He was considered, because he had been in disgrace previously. The assumption was that he must be in disgrace because he

was more Liberal than the people who had been running were, or then the Russians wanted to have. After he took power he basically instituted or continued the same kind of hard line Communist regime that had been there before.

He was running toward the end of his time. Politically it was quite repressive, economically struggling. Despite all this the polls at the non-governmental level were very friendly to Americans, and they always have been and they always will be. There is an enormous American-Polish population. There had been a lot of American help to Poland in the late '50s. We sold grain for local currency, we had a lot of currency blocked in Poland. I think five hundred million dollars worth of local currency, zlotys, which was used to finance a lot of projects domestically, paid for the Embassy. It gave us a very favorable exchange rate. We also put money into a hospital in the South, the American Children's Hospital. There were a lot of visits from American Poles, Polonia it's called, this sort of thing, local Polecia in America.

So at the non-governmental level, very close ties. At the official level we were getting less and less cooperation and getting more and more dissatisfied with the Gomulka Government and that Government was coming under increasing pressure.

Is that what you wanted?

Q: Yes.

MENDELSOHN: We had, when I arrived, the first Polish-American Ambassador, John Gronouski, who had been Postmaster General in the Kennedy cabinet and then had been appointed by Johnson. It was funny, I think he was sort of, I think, one-quarter Polish but it was his paternal Grandfather who brought the name down. He was actually Irish and didn't speak much Polish at all. But he was a smashing success with the Poles. He learned enough but the joke was he was always running for sheriff and the Poles loved him and he was fine. We didn't have any high dealings with Poland. Clearly they were unable to have an independent policy, so there wasn't a lot asked of us and not a lot asked of him.

He was replaced after the first year I was there. He had already been there a couple of years. He was replaced by Walter Stoessel, who was a very, fine professional. He went on to be Ambassador to Moscow and Assistant Secretary for EUR. He was terrific and actually things began to change in US-Polish relations for a number of reasons I'll talk about in a minute.

My first job when I got there was in the Consular Section. Everybody started out there. The point being that you would get familiar with the system and the language and the Embassy would get familiar with you and then give you a substantive assignment of some kind, or you could stay in the Consular Section after your first year. I had a very fortunate run. I enjoyed the Consular work because it put me more in contact with the Poles, with the locals, and was better for my language than anything I did after that. Of course it wasn't substantive in the sense, you know, that I had sort of an idea that I might

like to do political reporting or economic reporting. But I had a very fortunate run of jobs.

Q: In the Consular job, before we move on to the others, what was your impression of Polish migration to the United States?

MENDELSOHN: I should mention one other thing in connection with that, but let me answer your question first. There was a great deal of to-ing and fro-ing. There were lots of Poles, of course, who had relatives in the United States and who had legitimate reason to visit. But there was also a great deal of people who went on tourist visas and never came back. So you did the best you could in the circumstances and if they, on the face of it, conformed to the law you couldn't stop them from going even though you knew that a high percentage of those people who went there would convert. You know, you can't blame them and also they could always claim political oppression and in those good old days at the height of the Cold War that was a reasonable basis on which to convert to asylum status or whatever it was, I can't remember what it was called.

Q: Was there a lot of Polish-American males sort of getting young ladies to come on over to marry?

MENDELSOHN: I don't recollect that so much.

Q: I was dealing at almost the same time with Serbians and Macedonians and there was a great deal of that.

MENDELSOHN: I don't doubt it. I don't remember that. It was more farmers or peasants from the countryside coming up and claiming they had 55 acres and a farmhouse, that they made good money and just wanted to go visit their brother. You knew full well that these guys were unemployed or extra farm hands who didn't own anything, although they had a certificate that said they did, and that they were not coming back. They were going to go and be a laborer in the United States.

Occasionally, I remember one episode, of someone who turned out to actually be what I would have considered a war criminal trying to go to the United States. We stopped him. We found a record of him having been a concentration camp guard. I was quite pleased that we were able not to let him come to the United States. There were a few of those. You sort of wondered, with some of the people of a certain age, I can't remember now exactly you'd have to figure out what the age would be, this was in the '60s maybe they would be in their '50s, you'd wonder what they were doing during the war. And a few of them turned out to be bad-apples and we caught a few, I'm sure we didn't catch them all.

I wanted to mention one thing. I had one of the great experiences of my career. When I first got there, I was in the Consular Section maybe two weeks and I was called in by the Consul who said we had been asked by the Social Security Administration to do a survey, a verification, of social security recipients in Poland. Poles who had come to the United States before the war, obviously, spent their working life in the United States, then took their social security pensions and retired to Poland where dollars could go very far and

where the Polish Government, in order to encourage this, had special rules. They kept their citizenship, very often, the Poles and there were special rules to make life easier to bring that capital in.

But it was my job for, I think it was either three or four weeks, to go out into the countryside with an official from the counterpart "Social Security Agency" in Poland. Almost certainly he was from their security police. And with a driver and a car we'd try to find if these people who were listed as recipients of checks were actually there and also to check the data that they had provided, birth dates that they were eligible in terms of age and all that.

It was a fascinating experience because almost all of these people obviously weren't in Warsaw, or it would have been easy. Or maybe there was a check in Warsaw, I don't remember. These people were in the deep countryside and I got in my first month, or by the second month, I got indoctrination into Poland that very few Americans had ever gotten. We got to go to places… at that time there were off-limits spots, but we insisted, the U.S. government insisted, that for purposes of verification if they wanted the money to continue, we had to have permission to go visit them. I got to go all kinds of places. Most of these places were off-limits reciprocally; there was no particular reason to do it. So I got to all kinds of cities that Americans didn't normally get to go to, not that it was a great tourist experience but for learning about the country it was really very interesting.

Q: And also the language.

MENDELSOHN: I was living with Poles, we were living in local hotels, flying on the local airline. You always had your heart in your stomach on that. We went to local churches. The churches usually kept the vital statistics registry in town. So you'd want to check and see if someone was entered, you know, actually had been born and all. One interesting thing, a side of the war obviously, is that many of these records had been reconstructed on the basis of affidavits. So you didn't know for sure. We discovered and my hunch is, we checked a couple of hundred names. We found a few fraudulent or if not fraudulent I would say more likely deceased people who had never been reported as deceased so that the checks would keep coming. But in terms of the vital statistics of most of the people, there were usually reconstructed records and whatever faith you put into reconstructed records, most of the time it wasn't that significant. But what was interesting was the chance to get out into the country and to see what it was like and to live with the Poles and it was unforgettable and very, very educational and good for me.

Q: I used to do that work, again in Yugoslavia, and it is a fascinating thing and we had the same type of survey. Did you have any relationship with your "social security" Polish man?

MENDELSOHN: Well by the end of the time I think that he realized that it was a real task that I was assigned. Of course they were fundamentally suspicious, but I think by the end he recognized that we were doing something real. And we, you know, we joked by the end and I learned a lot in the way of the language and all that, but friendly or chummy

I would not say that's what happened. But they loosened up by the third week; it was a little easier. I never saw him after that. It wasn't as though we had a long time series of contacts. That was actually quite difficult in Poland. It was tough on the Poles very often, although it wouldn't have been if he were a security guy, obviously.

I guess that's about all. You know, as corny as it may seem to someone who doesn't know the business, it was a great experience and a great way to learn something about it. I mean, I was out there eating the local food, sleeping in the local hotels…you know none of that is what you would choose to do but you sure learn a lot about what the real life is.

Q: I think this is often overlooked and one of the advantages to getting something like this. In the Eastern European capitals, where everything was sort of prohibited, you ended up in a little diplomatic colony. The life was not really that difficult, but you couldn't reach out and it didn't reflect the real world out there. To get out and see a peasant in his or her native habitat, which was the real world of most of these Eastern European countries, is something you'll never forget.

MENDELSOHN: Oh, yes, there is no question. When you mention it, I can remember trying to track down one name or one person and there was no road that a car could go on to where this person was living. I remember riding on the back of a motorcycle driven by a priest who was taking us to this house. I am not a big motorcycle fan, but I figured the priest was going to be as good and careful a driver as anybody and the road was so bad you couldn't go more than five miles an hour anyhow. Certain things like that stick in your mind.

All of the people in the country who were in the civil society, rather than the governmental society, were as pleasant as could be. Again I come back to the point I made earlier; the locals did not view Americans with hostility or suspiciously. We were loved in a sense. You know, we were the 'uncle' from America and it was a very good experience. I actually had three opportunities in Poland to interact in a way that doesn't happen to all Foreign Service people anywhere and certainly was a difficult thing to bring about in Eastern Europe in the good old days when it was totally Communist.

That leads me to what happened after I left the Consular Section. I was asked to fill in for six months for the junior Cultural Attaché in the USIA office, which was often filled by an FSO, not necessarily by a USIA Officer. It was a great job because at the time the one kind of access that we could get in Poland, or maybe even throughout Eastern Europe, was access to the arts community, the film community and the novelist community. They wanted to know, those local Polish artists, what was going on in America and as a Cultural Attaché you had access to American films, American music, American books and it made you a very popular person.

I got to meet a lot of the important artists, many of whom were, I'd guess you'd have to say, had made their peace with the Government. But many had not and wrote, maybe all of this is being lost in peoples' minds, but they wrote these cryptic allegorical novels or made cryptic allegorical movies that everyone would recognize as a very harsh criticism

of the Government. You know, you'd have to really know a lot of what was going on to be able to understand that, but all of the Locals would note they'd have to see it, that they were really putting it to such and such or so and so. It was great. It was absolutely marvelous.

These people were, obviously, intelligent, very intelligent. They were also somewhat freer in their attitudes. They could scoff a little bit and it was another very good access into Polish society. I enjoyed that a great deal but I knew it was only a fill-in and I also knew that that wasn't what I wanted to do for the whole time. Then I got another break. I was told I would go to the Political Section but that in anticipation for that -- now I may be getting the timing wrong, I may have been doing that while I was a Cultural Attaché. But I was then asked to become the Editor of the Daily Translation Service that was probably run in a number of Eastern European countries. But there was a major one run by the U.S. and Britain in Warsaw.

Q: We had the exact same counterpart in Belgrade.

MENDELSOHN: Right. Because there were a lot of people who couldn't read the local language, or couldn't read it well enough or couldn't read it quickly enough to get through the papers in any useful period of time. That was a spectacular experience in the sense that it was great for my language, I managed a group of Locals because they were doing the translating, Poles who knew quite good English. And you also were forced to get into the news. Not only did you pick the articles out for translation, you then read them in English before they went out in the morning to make sure they were reasonable there. So, you know, you were right on top of the news and it was a great sort of obligatory training in the kind of business that State Department Political Officers are supposed to do, which is among other things, want to look at the news.

In Western societies it is so easy to get both access to individuals or to hear all kinds of diverse opinions. In these closed societies, or in these Second World societies, the newspapers were important because it told you what the Party line was and you got a sense of what the issues, although they might be hidden, what the issues were that were boiling up within the Party. Well I ran that for almost a year with a British counterpart. It was done before work. It was a little bit demanding in the sense that, I can't remember, I think we turned up at the office at ten a.m. and you had to get it out by ten in the morning so that it was useful. It might have been even a little earlier…maybe not. In by six and you worked for three hours and then you had a mimeographed, twelve-page pamphlet that was distributed to all the Embassies that subscribed. It was probably self-sustaining in terms of the finances. I didn't know the finances.

Q: Were Polish newspaper articles written in "Commie speak"?

MENDELSOHN: There were two kinds of articles. You got commentators who were writing cryptically. There was lots of covered language or phrases that read one way but meant something else that you had to look at a little bit carefully. Then there was sort of the straight news that was almost always formulaic. You know, "the Secretary of the

Party and major Politburo members met with the Secretary of the Vietnamese Party" that one you could predict and you could read and translate that in about seven seconds. But what you'd call the 'op eds', when they weren't propaganda, which was pretty easy to read and there was pretty much of it in Commie speak, but the 'op eds' and commentaries were very often in this coded language that you might or might not totally understand. You might translate it correctly but not understand what it was referring to.

There were lots of oblique and covered references, particularly when you went to those places that were considered to be not government papers. There was a religious paper run by the liberal Catholic Party. But Poland was a little different in that there were other Parties. They were all clearly subordinate to and dependent on the Communist Party, but there was the Workers' Party and there was the Catholic Party. They were allowed a little margin of, I won't say freedom, but a little leeway from the centerline. You wanted to read them and know what they were saying. Occasionally we got into trouble and occasionally nobody understood what they were saying. It was a very interesting experience, I must say.

Q: Did the Polish translators come to you and say, "Mr. Mendelsohn, here is what is translated, but this is what they really mean?"

MENDELSOHN: Yes. We got help from them. Most of them of course spoke excellent English, which meant in some way they had been out of the country. A lot of them…I shouldn't say a lot…but a few of them were of the Poles that in World War II had wound up in Britain and fought for Poland and they learned very good English and they came back and got caught up in the Communist takeover. Working for the Americans already was a big problem, of course, so most of them were disaffected in terms of the Government so they were delighted to come up and say, "This is important, this is what it means." So it was very helpful and very helpful for my political understanding and political background. I could go back to the Embassy and call up the Political Section and tell them they might like to look at this particular article or that and that it was apparently a reference to such and such.

The answer is yes. The translators were very helpful when there was this coded stuff to work on. They were delightful but they were also so clearly an "out group" in their own country. It was a little sad in that sense.

Q: I never did that job but a friend of mine, Harry Dunlap, had it for a while in Yugoslavia and said that one of the problems was that maybe ten people were doing this and at least five weren't talking to the other five.

MENDELSOHN: Oh, yes, oh, absolutely. I don't know whether that is part of the culture or what but yes, a lot of them didn't like one another. But you know that happens everywhere. That happens in the Embassy, on your own side. I got along with them all because I liked the Poles and I liked my assignment very much and that was clear.

My language was pretty good. Don't ask me to say anything now, I haven't used it for

thirty years, but between the Consular Section, the Cultural Section and running the Bulletin, by the time I hit the Political Section my passive language was very good and my spoken language was pretty good, not great. I never became a great speaker but I became good enough that I basically served Stoessel for two years as his Protocol Assistant. I would do all the arranging for him, I'd do the translating for him, I would go with him on all his formal calls and I would translate. Sometimes I would translate into Polish, not just out of Polish into English. So my language got pretty good. And I think he had confidence in me.

Actually what happened, when I left…I guess I was still in the translating section… Gronouski who never, I don't think, cared much about that kind of stuff… Stoessel had me come in every morning, when he got to the office, and go over the newspapers with him. He was really very good about this. He was a Russian speaker but he had had some Polish, I guess, before he got there. But we went over the newspapers in Polish and I helped him read the articles. Not some of the more complicated ones, but simple ones so he could get his language up to speed. So in that sense I was used and felt very good about it.

That wasn't my only job and it was a delightful one, it was not in any sense a burden. You felt kind of like here's my second assignment, I've been in the Service four years, and I'm going in every morning before the senior officers to talk with the Ambassador. And the Ambassador would say, "Okay, I want to be sure that you guys report on this, this and this…" and I'd go out and tell my boss that we had to do the following things. You felt kind of good about that in a sense.

Q: Could you tell me your impression observing Walter Stoessel as one of the major figures in our Eastern European policy and even beyond…how did he operate and your impressions of how he dealt with the Poles?

MENDELSOHN: He was terrific. This was a guy that central casting would have chosen for an Ambassador. He was very, I hate to use the word dapper, but he was exceedingly well put together, very professional, very savvy and very measured. This was a guy who was thoughtful. He knew how to do things, he knew how to do them right, the Poles liked him very much because he was so obviously a professional at what he had to do. No false steps.

It is important not only to understand the country you are in but also it is important to understand the way Washington works. I don't know a lot of the interplay that he had, but he clearly also understood the way Washington works. I guess there were two important things he understood. He understood what was important in what was going on there and what it is the Embassy ought to be paying attention to. And he also understood how to run a place. Clearly he ran it, but he didn't just run it because he was the Ambassador, he ran it because he was 'up' on what was happening and he had a sense of what it was that should be done. So it was easy to listen to what he told you and what it was you had to do. It wasn't just "I want you to do X, Y and Z" and be thoughtless or be blustery about it. He was a very decent guy. Not a ranter, not a raver, not a foot-stomper or table-

pounder. He was very calm and you just had great respect for him.

He wasn't exceedingly warm by any means, but he was so good at what he did that you respected him and it was a pleasure to work for him. And I think everyone felt that, I mean it's not just me.

Q: While you were there were there any particular issues that you can think of between Poland and the United States that absorbed much of our time?

MENDELSOHN: There are two things. After my first year, year and a half, I guess a year, I went up to the Political Section. I was already doing the magazine in '68 so this would have been '68 to '70, but I was already doing the morning Bulletin, I guess, by this time. In the spring of '68 there was a major purge of intellectuals and Jews in Poland, which was a very sore point both in Poland and in U.S.-Polish relations. I was one of the principal followers of that for the Embassy.

And it was interesting I did one thing, which was really… I want to put it on the record it was great. I had learned a lot about the newspapers in Poland running this Bulletin, and when these purges began I took myself to the public library and asked to look at the regional newspapers that they got. I found in the regional newspapers a whole series of items, news items, naming people who were being purged in the Provinces which were not being reported in Warsaw because the Poles began to get sensitive about international criticism, and U.S. criticism also, of what was going on in Warsaw. They stopped reporting in Warsaw, the purges, but the Provinces didn't. I discovered a whole slew of reports. I went back in some of the regional papers and then also caught up to the current ones and we then translated them in the Bulletin and it was a big embarrassment to the Polish Government when these local purges also got reported.

Q: Of course what you were putting out by this joint translation service the Poles got a copy of?

MENDELSOHN: Oh, yes.

Q: I mean, it was a commercial publication?

MENDELSOHN: Sure. And on what basis would they criticize us? We were translating stuff they had published. But they were very unhappy about that, obviously, that someone had thought to do that and I was always very pleased that I was able to contribute to their embarrassment.

Q: What was our analysis behind this purge?

MENDELSOHN: My recollection is that Gomulka was clearly being challenged and felt very insecure. The initiation of what were called the 'March Events' was discontent among the students and the Intellectuals with the Gomulka regime, which was getting more and more heavy handed. And of course the response of the Gomulka regime was

exceedingly heavy handed. Students were arrested, Intellectuals were purged, and then since you always have to find the instigator, you know it was always a conspiracy, it fell of course on the Jews in the Party and the Jews in the Intellectuals. There weren't that many, but it was an easy one to deal with. So this was all a response by a challenged and increasingly removed from what was going on and increasingly sporadic Gomulka regime which eventually, in 1970, December after I'd left actually, was removed. It clearly was a sign of a challenge to a regime that had stayed in office too long and gotten too dictatorial. It was never a pleasant place and it was getting worse.

That was a bad moment in U.S.- Polish relations.

Q: Just to develop that a little more. What was your impression of anti-Semitism in Poland at that time?

MENDELSOHN: Well, you wanted to thing when you got there that maybe to some degree that had been put behind. What the March Events of '68 showed was that the Poles really had not put that behind them and that there was such an historic memory of this that it was easy for the Government to play on it. It was sort of, if you want, it was a little bit like playing on the attitude towards American Indians in the late 1800s or early 1900s. It was just such a residual, historic memory of antagonism that it could easily resonate, if you wanted to use it for some sort of mobilizing purpose, which is what the Government did. That was tragic. That was very sad and in all honesty or in all fairness it was sad to a lot of Poles too. Not the ones in the Government but those who realized what a tragedy had happened to Poland. And you would hear Poles say that ever since the Jews were gone a certain spark was out of Polish life. Clearly while so many of them were integrated a lot of them weren't and they lent a kind of color and charm to Polish life that when they were gone many Poles recognized it really wasn't quite the same.

Q: I think aside from many other things one of the great tragedies of Germany is there was such an affinity between the German Jews and Germany it turned it into a real intellectual dynamo and it is very obviously gone.

MENDELSOHN: That's true.

Q: You know, Germany is sort of a stodgy, not terribly interesting place.

MENDELSOHN: Absolutely true. Now there was some assimilation but perhaps not as successful in Poland. But there was a sub-culture, an unassimilated sub-culture, that was very vibrant and that a lot of Poles liked. I mean they would go to the Jewish quarter, they would buy from Jewish merchants…it was a little bit like going to the Lower East Side of New York. You know it was maybe not what you wanted to be, but it was a lot of fun to go. I think the Poles recognized that something that they had lived with for 300 years and that had been a contribution although not an assimilated one, or integrated one, was gone.

There were a lot of synagogues that were obviously empty, there are graveyards, and

there are just marks all over Poland of a culture that just didn't exist. And when I was there, I have no idea, I can't remember anymore, there were 30,000 Jews left. I mean those who didn't perish in the war, many of them left after the war, but some stayed. The older ones I guess without alternatives or who didn't want to leave at that point. Some of them were in the Party.

Q: Gomulka's wife was Jewish, wasn't she?

MENDELSOHN: Some of this is escaping me now, but I think some of the leaders in the immediate post war period were Jews who had been in the Party. Before the war the Party, among other things, looked like it was going to be egalitarian and a lot of Jews joined. They had gone to Moscow and then they had come back to take over. So they were doubly resented, they were doubly resented as Russian imports and Jews not Poles.

That reinforced whatever feelings there might have been, anti-Semitic feelings, the fact that many of the Party people who came back from Moscow after the war were Jews.

Q: Did we make our feelings known?

MENDELSOHN: I'm pretty sure we did. I can't remember any longer, but I'm pretty sure we were very critical of this but I don't recall the details.

We did not have warm and toasty relations with Gomulka. Whether we actually made a *demarche* or not I can't remember. I couldn't rule it out.

Q: Did you ever accompany Stoessel when he met Gomulka?

MENDELSOHN: I don't know that he ever did, but I didn't accompany him certainly. It was tougher for us to see the Government people… I'm sorry, to see the Party people, as opposed to the Government people. We tried to keep our contacts at the Ministry rather than at the Party. And I think that was probably true throughout Communist countries, I don't know. I don't remember that we had much to do with Gomulka at all.

Well that was '68. The one other thing that was major that happened and I actually didn't have a role in, but it was major. I think this was part of why Stoessel was sent to Warsaw. We re-opened contacts with the Chinese, prior to and in anticipation of our visit there. When was Nixon...

Q: I can't remember. The Johnson…the Nixon administration came in '69.

MENDELSOHN: That's when we re-opened.

Q: We had the talks going back some years...

MENDELSOHN: But they had broken off.

Q: U Alexis Johnson and others…but they had broken off...

MENDELSOHN: I think it was ’69 when they were pumped up again. At some diplomatic function Stoessel was authorized to go to the Chinese Ambassador who was at that function and propose that they start speaking and it was those talks that eventually led to the...

Q: Kissinger...

MENDELSOHN: ...reopening. That was one of the mistakes of my career. It didn’t make any difference, but it would have been fun. I was asked whether I wanted to become the Reporting Officer for the talks with the Chinese. I foolishly, in retrospect, thought, “Well, they were not going anywhere and I didn’t need another job, no thank you.” That was a mistake. I should have done it. It was probably passionately interesting and another Officer took it over. He was an excellent Officer. It’s just that I expressed no interest. I think Stoessel asked me if I wanted to do it.

Q: What about the Prague Spring? You are talking about the ’68 period and March of ’68 and unrest and all and you’ve got Prague...

MENDELSOHN: That was a very interesting moment. That’s true. Things are getting a little clearer. In the Spring of ’68 I guess I was still in the Cultural stuff, but I got a lot of gossip about what was going on in preparation for the Warsaw Pact invasion in the Cultural Section. I remember getting one major bit of information, someone came in from Krakow, a beautiful medieval town, to the Cultural Section and sought me out. I have no idea why, maybe he didn’t know whom they wanted to see. He sat down and said, “I want to tell you that I just came from Krakow and in the woods all around the city are armored tank units, Polish tank units, in camouflage.” He gave me more details about disposition of forces.

I went upstairs to report this and - I’m sure we had photographs - but it was a confirmation of the preparations at the border for the crossing. Krakow is in the South near the Czech border. It was interesting and that is of course another bad moment right after the March events in ’68, it was a bad moment in U.S.-Warsaw Pact - Russian relations. Clearly we had not a freeze but a downturn. There was one other thing, my recollection…the timing is not good for me…but some time in ’68…I’m pretty sure it was ’68 and I’m pretty sure it was in Warsaw and I’m pretty sure we didn’t catch it right…was the enunciation of the Brezhnev Doctrine.

I think it took place in a Brezhnev speech to a Polish Party Congress. I could be mis-remembering. Where he said it was their job to ensure, forcibly if necessary, the continuance of socialism in countries that are Socialist. The Brezhnev Doctrine. The right to intervene to preserve socialism. That took place also in this whole ’68 period in connection with the Prague Spring.

I can’t remember now whether that…was the Brezhnev Doctrine a *post facto* justification

of the invasion or a pre…?

Q: I'm just not sure, but anyway it was in that period.

MENDELSOHN: It was either a *post facto* justification or a 'pre' one…it might have been *post facto*.

Q: Were you picking up within the intellectual community unhappiness or instigation?

MENDELSOHN: What happened to my recollection is that for weeks, if not months, after the invasion of Czechoslovakia flowers were strewn on the sidewalk in front of the Czech Embassy in Warsaw in sort of commemoration or memory or sadness, if you will. Of course that is not what the Government wanted but on the other hand they couldn't stop people from throwing flowers there. So there was that. There was that indication from the population in Warsaw, in Poland in any case, that they were unhappy or against the invasion, as well they might be.

What else happened in Warsaw? Well, my wife and I were very active, and remained very active, in the Polish community to the degree you could be. You couldn't see anybody too often. You couldn't see a Pole too often, because it put them in jeopardy with the Security, the UB, the Office of Security. You always had to be careful about your contacts.

We knew a disc jockey and we knew some artists and we knew the manager of a museum. They took us around. We took as much advantage of that country as you possibly could. So much so that at the end of our stay my wife wrote a 30 or 40 page handbook that we sort of mimeographed and distributed in the western community, *A Poor Man's Guide to Peoples' Poland*. And we had been places, a cultural museum, and to restaurants and cafes that nobody else in the community knew anything about. We listed them, gave addresses, because our Polish friends took us where most of the community wasn't able to go. It wasn't that they weren't able to go, they just didn't know about them. Everybody knew the downtown restaurants but we went places in the country that were just incredible and the food was much more interesting than in the city - and the decor. I remember one place the chairs were made up of seats taken out of old automobiles and airplanes. They had reclining seats. It was just an unimaginably funky place.

That has always been and it was always an interest of mine and it's true, I think, when we talked about Haiti. If you don't get to know what is going on with the Locals, you are missing a major part of what this Foreign Service experience ought to be. It's not just, you know, getting ahead in the bureaucracy in Washington or through Washington. It's also getting to know a little bit about where it is you are and a different culture. I certainly learned a lot through my job about the different governmental culture and I think in our day to day life we did as well or better than anybody in sort of getting into the society to the degree that you could. It wasn't easy. The language is difficult and of course the system militated against real contacts, real friends, real closeness because you

put them in jeopardy actually. They knew that and so they were cautious too.

One other thing…a nice thing that happened is that our second child was born. Well, actually our third child because we had one that died that was born in Haiti that I mentioned earlier. Our third child was born in Warsaw. Actually, more accurately, born while we were in Warsaw. Because of the level of medical care the routine was to go out to the U.S. Military Hospital in Germany for anything…anything, though there was an Embassy nurse and doctor. So my wife went to Wiesbaden to the Air Force Hospital and our third child, second daughter, was born in Wiesbaden and came back and has a Polish nickname to this day. Her real name is Katherine and she is called Kasha, which is a Polish diminutive that sounds like Russian… Sasha… Basha. Well, Kasha is the nickname for Katherine. She was born in '69 and we left in '70, so she spent the first year of her life in Warsaw living in a little room off the kitchen, which we had had as a pantry until she was born.

Incidentally, I should mention that our living conditions were really quite good. The Embassy owned a number of apartments because there was no market as such in these places. So we owned a couple of buildings and we had an apartment in one building that was a pre war building and it really sensed the pre war era. It was a great apartment and you felt like you were living in Europe in the 1930s or '40s. It was a good trait, the design and the whole feeling, very high ceilings, tall French doors or windows. You really felt like you were in Europe. Although our building was American the neighborhood was Polish, so you weren't isolated from the community.

There was something very interesting about living in Poland and that is that you would hear through your window on the streets in the morning horse carts, delivering coal and selling vegetables. I used to say to myself that these sounds and the way I was living must have been the way my parents must have lived in the United States at the turn of the century. It was funny, that's how far behind if you will they were but it was for me as an American, as opposed to a Pole for whom it was the real world, for me it was a nostalgic world. Everything sort of felt like you were fifty years back and it was kind of fun. I mean there is nowhere you are going to hear a horse cart in the United States any longer.

Q: What about the role of the Polish Church while you were there?

MENDELSOHN: Well that was always a very important part of the societal structure in Poland. The Church was in an uneasy standoff with the Government. The Church, to its credit, resisted the worst aspects of Communism and the Government tried, to my recollection it was always trying, to strike some kind of a, what's the word, modus vivendi with the Church and it was always uneasy at best. There was, as I mentioned earlier, a Catholic Party in the Parliament and there was a voice, a Catholic voice, which was considered to be a reasonably liberal newspaper and I remember it came out of Krakow. The guy's name was Jerzy Turavski, or something like that. I remember visiting him several times in Krakow and chatting with him and then writing reports on what it was he was saying. I don't remember any of the details any longer.

The Church had to be careful but everyone knew that it stood for something other than the Government. On the other hand anybody's ability to outright oppose or criticize was strongly circumscribed.

One other thing going on that was important while I was there was the formal recognition by the Germans of the new borders. That document was being negotiated, I guess in early '70, I think it was signed in '70. I tried to stay on top of that also although I recognize, certainly now although I probably knew little about it then, that our Government was being informed from Bonn about what the Germans were doing. I also had very good contacts in Warsaw with the German Embassy. I tried to report from Warsaw about what was going on in terms of what turned out to be the eventual treaty resolving the…well, wherein both sides acknowledged the border was not to be changed, or recognition that that was going to be the border between the two countries. That was always a big issue.

A big part of life in Warsaw was the effort by the Government, which probably would have been an effort by any government, you know, not just a Communist one but maybe even a democratic one, to keep alive the memory of World War II. Now there was a purpose for that. That was to sort of stimulate the nationalist rationale for the Communists. The appeal to nationalism was always one of the mobilizing aspects or mobilizing tools of Communism in Central Europe. It was difficult to get affection for the Communist system. It wasn't hard however to rally the people around the cause of nation-hood. Germany was sort of that rallying cry.

Posters of bombs falling and words to the effect of never again, something like that. Lots of stories circulating of German tourists coming back to look at their property. These were all canards anyhow but they were always around. But to come back to the central point, whereas the horse carts reminded me of 50 years ago the point of the Government was to remind everybody that the war was just yesterday. I don't know what it's like now, this is 30 years ago, but it was the '60s, after all. Almost up until 1970, I left in the summer of '70, for them the war was as vivid and as recent as yesterday.

Q: Again I go back to my Yugoslav times. There were a lot of movies, Yugoslav movies, showing the Germans doing beastly things and the Partisans being very good and all that. Was there much of a Polish movie industry and that sort of thing?

MENDELSOHN: There was a big Polish movie industry because it was allowed the film school, and I think it may have been the Blat, there may have been one other than the Blat, I don't know, but I think it was The Blat Film School outside of Russia. A famous one actually. Trained some good people, they did some good stuff, a lot of it was about the war but I don't remember seeing a lot of those movies. I remember seeing sort of the 'mod' movies that had to do with life under Communism, however that might be.

Q: Knife in the Water...

MENDELSOHN: *Knife in the Water*, I can't remember any of the other stuff…*Canals* was the big one, that was about fighting World War II. There was a lot of that, I'm sure,

in the movie trail, I didn't see many of them myself. But there was a very, very active film industry and film school for all of Central Europe in Lodz. It still exists and had an excellent reputation. While I was there a British Director who had been trained at Lodz produced a movie that was actually rather well known in the West. It sort of became a symbol of how bitter…the movie was called *IF*…it was about a revolt in a secondary school, a public school in Britain.

Q: Oh yes, Malcolm McDowell...

MENDELSOHN: McDowell…I can't remember the name of the Director now. It will probably come to me after you've gone. But he was feted after the movie came out and he was a graduate of the Lodz film school. And I'm sure Polanski…Roman Polanski…had gone to the Lodz film school. And the Czech guy probably went too, the one who made *Amadeus*, what the hell is his name…

Q: While you were there from what were you gathering what was the attitude towards the Soviets? When I say Soviets, I mean Russian.

MENDELSOHN: The official attitude, the Governmental and propaganda attitude, was Russia is our big brother, our savior, our ally and our comrade. But the fact of the matter is that the Poles historically, deep-seatedly, traditionally and vehemently, dislike the Russians. And they dislike the Russians not only because they were subjects of the Czar, but also they considered them peasants…not just peasants but...

Q: I was going to say, "uncultured collective farmers," which is about as low as you can go.

MENDELSOHN: Right, right. Warsaw was considered at the time I was there, as the Las Vegas of Eastern Europe. Poles would come back from visits to Russia and have nothing but disdainful stories about the, you know, the hotel, the bathrooms the restaurants…just total disdain, dislike and real cultural put-downs. They had very little good to say about the Russians.

The funny thing and I guess this maybe contradicts a little bit about what I said earlier, they were very ambivalent about the Germans. They hated them for what went on in the war. On the other hand they recognized that the Germans were an economic, political and cultural entity of some significance and they distinguished between the East and the West Germans.

They totally disliked the East Germans. There was a little more room for maneuver on a day-to-day basis with the West Germans, with the exception of this Governmental propaganda about World War II which was almost all then pinned on the unregenerate West Germans. The real sense of the population was that the East Germans were just unlikable and unpleasant because they were the ones the Poles had to deal with. They could never strike useful economic deals. They were always at a disadvantage economically with them, whereas the West Germans, maybe because they felt a sense of

guilt, were more generous in their dealings with the Poles than the East Germans.

Q: What about the Vietnam War? This was the height of our involvement, although we were beginning to pull out, but how did that play in Poland?

MENDELSOHN: I don't remember. That may be my fault I didn't focus on it. I'm sure we were criticized, but I can't recall having any discussions about it. Remember at the non Governmental level there was such affection for Americans it is not surprising that they wouldn't engage me on a critical issue or an issue critical of the United States. I'm sure at the governmental level we were being bombarded all the time and I'm sure in the press we were, although I don't remember that specifically. But at the person- to-person level America was the great beyond, it was Avalon, you know, the Arthurian goal. Avalon and not Camelot. I think that overrode everything. I don't remember being engaged.

I mean in the Consular Section they were all trying to come to the United States. They are not going to say, "And by the way, although I'm going, I don't like your policy in Vietnam." It was different. There are, I don't know, seven million, eight million Poles in the United States.

Q: Well I remember in '76 talking to the Polish Consul in Chicago and he pointed out, "You know, other than Warsaw we have more Poles in Chicago than there are in any of the Polish cities. This is a big job."

MENDELSOHN: That's right. Sure. It's the second largest Polish city in the world. They were prepared to overlook a lot of things, except at the official level whatever the line was of the Blat certainly they had it. But I think you always felt, believe it or not, you always felt -- at least I did -- that you were quite welcome. At the official level no, but at the day to day level absolutely.

Q: It was a tense period…it was not a warm and friendly period between the East and the West. One of our major concerns always was a sudden strike into Western Europe…was there any question or speculation about whether the Polish Army would perform if push came to shove? I'm talking about within the Embassy talk.

MENDELSOHN: It's a good question because I've always been interested in that. I spent a lot of time after Warsaw dealing with arms control, East-West, and then I was at NATO so this all fits in. I remember at the time that the speculation, and this may be partly my own opinion, I think generally the speculation was that the Poles would be very reluctant and poor allies if we were talking about a strike on Western Europe.

I think actually Russian policy, if you looked at it carefully, reflected the fact that the Russians had very little confidence in their Eastern European allies in terms of offensive support. On the other hand the feeling was that maybe this was just deduced without any actual proof. That if Germany were ever to attack the Poles would of course fight and fight very hard to their limits. I think they had about a quarter million men under arms.

But there was a lot of joking about the state of preparedness of the military. For example I remember stories circulating. They had tank parks, you know, places where they stored their tanks. People said that all of the gas had been stolen out of the tanks and sold on the black market so that if they had to get them gunned up in an emergency there was nothing in them; they'd have to find the gas. There were those kinds of stories.

I think that those were probably true. They would have been, at best, reluctant offensive allies but determined for nationalistic reasons defensive allies. That's the best I can say about that. I remember going to a couple of remarks passed with the Ambassador, laying a wreath at the tomb of the unknown soldier and all that kind of stuff. The Poles history had dealt them such a terrific blow or bad deal, maybe I should say geography dealt them a bad deal. The military tradition was a very sensitive one, you know, where were you when the war popped up? They got badly overrun by both the Germans and the Russians. There was great confusion, as in France actually, about what people did during the war. Did they go and fight the Free French, did they collaborate, did they hide out, and did they join the Partisans? It was a little bit less complicated in Poland because there wasn't a chance to be a collaborator in quite the same way. There wasn't a Vichy. But there was a Free Poland, you know, of which they were very proud by the way. A quarter of the RAF pilots out of Britain were Polish.

Q: In the Italian Campaign Monte Casino was taken by Polish troops.

MENDELSOHN: So there were bright moments in World War II although fundamentally it was probably the country most touched by it; more than six million people killed, half of them Jews. The country devastated. They were treated as [parasites] by the Germans and of course the Russians partitioned it at that time.

There were some Poles who came back with the Russians. There was one other memory in their wartime memory. At the time of the uprising in Warsaw in '44, the uprising...

Q: General Boer, I think...

MENDELSOHN: Was Boer in the uprising?

Q: He was in the uprising, yes.

MENDELSOHN: Well the uprising was the home army. They were not Communists. The uprising took place as the Russians were at the gates, almost literally, of Warsaw and the Russians stopped. The theory of course was what they wanted was the home army to be decimated because they worked for Communism and the Russians were bringing Communist army and political contingents with them. Plus there was the Katin forest background. For all this time both the Russians and the Polish Communists maintained that the Katin forest massacre was the result of the Germans purging intellectuals and army officers when the fact of the matter is that it was the Russians who were purging. I think everybody, except the official people, everybody knew or strongly suspected that

that was a Russian operation. Add that to this uprising in '44 and the halt outside until the uprising was basically crushed. Those were in the memories of the Poles and made their view of the Russians a lot different.

We started talking a little bit about the military tradition and obviously that was greatly mixed. So there was a lot in connection with the nationalism and the German threat and the memory of the Germans. So there was a lot of propaganda and falderal around the military and the importance that they hold for the country, a lot about Socialist fraternity and solidarity in joint operations. You knew this was popular but they were not that sophisticated a military.

But there is a tradition in Poland interestingly enough, there is a little bit of the Iron Man tradition which was... in the pre war period it was Kulzutski, in the post war period it was Jarowzelsi. So there is that little bit of that running through Poland because it has been such a difficult place to run.

I should mention one other thing that relates to Russia and the military tradition. One of the important moments in Polish military history and political history was the battle in 1920 or '21, I can't remember, after the Poles had invaded Russia in an effort to expand their own territory. The Russians counter attacked. The Russians were stopped on the Vistula by Kulzutski's army, and it is known as the Miracle on the Vistula...

That was a great moment. The Poles stopped the Russians. And the funny thing is of course how that was a central fact of Polish history and part of the military tradition and had that anti Russian aspect to it as well. So there was a little bit of that conflict there. They couldn't say much about what they had done with the Germans. They were not a major participant in that fight. They could of course talk about the Battle of Britain where they were a major participant, and Italy, too, where they took heavy losses.

Q: Oh, yes, you go to Casino and you can see the Polish gravesite, which is very impressive.

MENDELSOHN: The Poles certainly love their country and they would have fought very hard and very well. I think they were considered good soldiers, but those in the East were the ones who took power.

Anything else on Warsaw?

Q: I can't really think of it. You know, Jack, I was thinking this might be a good time to stop at this. It's easier, so we are not trying to catch up, but I'd like to put at the end of this…you left in 1970, where did you go?

MENDELSOHN: I did something I wanted to do. I said I liked it in Central Europe, I was interested in the area, and I wanted to specialize. I was sent to Columbia University to the Institute on East Central Europe where I spent a year. I really worked hard because I did enough work to earn a degree, in one year and a summer, which is all the

Department allowed and that was fine. I earned a degree from Columbia on history and politics, or what would be called a regional or areas studies degree from Columbia on East Central Europe.

Q: This was '70 to '71?

MENDELSOHN: '70 to '71.

Q: We can finish on this, let's cover this.

What was your impression of Columbia which is one of the major educators about Eastern Europe and Russia, did you feel it had a Central European point of view or not?

MENDELSOHN: Well there were certainly a lot of Central Europeans teaching in the Institute. I thought it was really a very good program. I learned a great deal and I don't think it had the Central European view. We did history and politics and I think it was pretty straightforward. You know you are basically just getting a grasp of what the background was to where you were today. I knew a lot about what was happening today. What was useful was to sort of fill in the facts in the past in Central Europe. Obviously, I took courses in the Russian Institute, including a course with Marshall Shulman whom I got to know much better later on in life when I was dealing with arms control. I took a course from Stefan Bieower who is a big expert on Russia. We had visiting Eastern Europeans. We had a visiting specialist on East Germany. We had a visiting specialist on Hungary.

These were passionately interesting experiences for me. We were good students and it was one of the few places where you could actually do Central Europe in the United States. The other place was Indiana. Since I grew up in the Midwest and I had a choice, I wanted to go to New York. I wanted to go to Columbia and I felt it would be interesting to be in New York and it would be another part of the United States for me to get to know. I worked hard and I learned a great deal. It was probably my best year.

Q: Brzezinski, was he...

MENDELSOHN: He was there but I didn't take anything from him. I don't remember taking anything from him.

Q: We were coming toward the end of the Vietnam era and so much of the academic world was sort of condemning what the United States did. I was wondering whether this was translated into what you were getting from the teaching at all.

MENDELSOHN: I don't recall that. There might have been a little skepticism among my younger colleagues of me as a Government employee, you know, where did I stand in all this, but over time that disappeared. The younger people were certainly opposed to Vietnam and I think they would be disinclined to look favorably on a Government employee, but I was a serious student and I think that overcame a lot of that stuff.

I remember in one class being asked to perform twice by the professor because he didn't have enough people to do all the work that he wanted to have done and he knew I would do a good job, so he gave me a double assignment. I worked my tail off. This was the Hungarian who was teaching Intellectual History. I did a Major's study of Kafka and then another one, believe it or not as it is not related to the State Department, on art nouveau in Central Europe. I loved it. I learned a great deal. I did a lot of work and had a lot of fun.

Q: All right. So we'll pick this up in 1971, where did you go?

MENDELSOHN: I went back to the Department and worked for a few months in what was called Exchanges and then in 1972, early, I went to the Arms Control Agency and began what would be a long-term involvement in arms control issues.

Q: Okay. So we'll pick up a little of the Exchange Program and then move to Arms Control. Great

Q: Jack, when did you go into the Exchange Program?

MENDELSOHN: Well I was at Columbia University the academic year of '70-'71, and after '71, the summer of '71, I went to the Exchange Program.

Q: You were in that from when to when?

MENDELSOHN: I was in it from the summer of '71, until spring of '72, when I got detailed to ACDA. So it was about a year. Yale Richmond was the Deputy and Charlie…starts with a 'G' but I can't think of what it...was the head of that office in EUR.

Q: Could you tell me a bit about the Exchange Program, what you were doing at that time, this is the height of the Cold War, I guess?

MENDELSOHN: Believe it or not it's a very foggy moment in my professional memory, but we had highly structured student exchanges with all of the Communist "countries" and this office basically administered the Exchange. You would arrange or you would run panels to choose U.S. students that would go to Moscow under the Exchange Program. You could have two dozen a year and they almost all of them, the only ones ever accepted were in the Humanities and Social Sciences, you couldn't go in the Sciences because that was almost considered by the Russians to be a secret, classified area. We'd have 24 Soviet students come here, 22 of who would go in the Sciences and one or two of who would go into the languages and literature areas. So in that sense it was a totally unbalanced operation.

Of course they had certain restrictions on them. We had to work with the universities. We'd work with the students and all that. That office basically looked out for that program. It wasn't just with the Soviets. We had it with all of the Warsaw Pact countries.

Every once in a while there would be a problem. There was a suicide. Whether that was on my watch or whether it was in the lower of the office, I can't remember any longer. There was some other potential defector problem. Those were the kinds of things that came up. But I blush to say that my recollection of this, apart from sort of administering the paper folders in terms of what operations or actions is pretty vague.

Q: Well I know we all have those times.

MENDELSOHN: Well I think part of it was that I had come from Warsaw, where I'd been in the Political Section, wheeling and dealing and going out to lunches and dinners and cocktail parties, you know, the usual thing. Then I came in and went to Columbia and had a great time. Got a Master's out of it in Eastern European History and Politics and had a very good time there. I did translating for the school in Polish and all that. And then I came out and had really what you would have to call a "desk job."

You know, I never saw these people. They were just dossiers. I was anxious. I wasn't even on a country desk. That would have been, I think, somewhat more fun. It wasn't a lot of fun. It was basically a function that Foreign Service would have considered should have been a USIA function. This was culture. This was not politics. So I think all that is background as to why it is a little vague. Period.

The only thing I can remember is there was a flap about a hockey player that wanted to defect. We had sports exchanges. It wasn't just student exchanges, that's true. Everything. Cultural events, anything that came to the United States or went to Russia or the Soviet Union under that, they were all governed by an overarching exchange program that was agreed to every year or two. You know, "Thou shall send two ballet troupes and one hockey team; we shall send one basketball…" you know, it was all definitely structured and the only thing I can remember that was fun was, I think, one Russian hockey player was trying to defect. We actually most of the time didn't want this stuff. We were not encouraging people to defect.

Q: No. It would louse up the program.

MENDELSOHN: Right. Exactly right. We weren't going to force them to go back, and once they had walked out and declared they wanted to defect we recognized you couldn't send them back but we sure as hell didn't want the problems that this represented. I remember there was a leak about this and it got to the press before we had resolved it and we were really concerned about it. It's a little hard to recreate the concern or the atmosphere that would lead to this because it all seems kind of silly right now, but I remember that.

I'm sorry, I wish I could tell you more. In any case the office doesn't exist anymore. It may be recreated now that USIA is being amalgamated with State, but I don't know that we have these formalized exchanges with anybody anymore.

Q: Just one question about that. Our people were the humanities types, going to the

Soviets, which in a way was fit and proper because I don't think we had that much to really pick out of Soviet science probably...

MENDELSOHN: Well the stuff that we wanted, the stuff we might have been interested in, they weren't going to let us have.

Q: We wouldn't get close to it. But they were picking up the science, were there any efforts on our part to point out that this wasn't fair and we had to do something about it? Do you recall that?

MENDELSOHN: Oh, yes, we were constantly, constantly trying to get our people into science programs of some kind. Certainly we would constantly point out the lack of reciprocity in this. It had very little impact. The Russians would say they were sorry, that either they didn't have anyone working in the field or that nobody working in the field wanted to take an American. You know normally the way this would go, certainly in Russia, you would join an Institute where there was an ongoing project. You wouldn't just sort of go in as a graduate student. Certainly when they came here they all knew a great deal. They wanted to go to MIT and work in, I'll make this up because I don't know the details or don't remember the details, but they'd want to go work in the laser lab with Professor so and so. They knew exactly where they wanted to go.

Now that you mention it all of the incoming Russians or Soviets going to projects in sophisticated technology were very carefully vetted by the intelligence community to make sure that if indeed they did get in the project that there were not national security and military implications. Now in some cases you would have to make that judgment on a very abstract basis because, you know, lasers I suppose could have a military application, even though you were going into a lab that was working on only commercial or theoretical or research aspects of it. Clearly they were let into places that while they were not directly involved in national security research, you could conceive in the future that they could be useful for them. They were not kept out of everything.

There were a lot of things where we were just not prepared to let them study.

Q: At that time what was the philosophy, what was in it for us, the United States?

MENDELSOHN: Well that's a good question. I think the idea was to get some of our people as familiar. We were trying to gain some access and train some people in expertise in Russian language, Russian politics. We thought that might be useful for us. It would be interesting to find out what impact, if any, the dozens of Americans who studied in Russia, what impact it had on their lives and what impact their lives have had on the course of whatever field they've been in. I assume that in languages and literature, which is where a lot of the people had to go, we got a very good cadre that was not a national security interest but you could say in the larger sense it was of interest to the nation.

Now what is interesting and believe it or not I got into the exchanges program once again later on in my career, this time in science and technology. This was not so much science

and technology except in that one way. What is interesting is we did not get people who went into Russian politics to come to the United States. Clearly if you went to the United States, except in Science, it was not career enhancing in the Soviet Union.

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Q: Today is the 22nd of May 1997, with Jack Mendelsohn.

MENDELSOHN: I was struck by this when I went to China later on, a decade later in my career, and dealt with a Politburo member who was responsible, Feng Ye, I think his name was. He was responsible for science and technology in China.

I was struck by how many people surrounding him on the American desk in the Foreign Ministry in China had been educated in the United States. You simply would not find the same cadre of American or Western-educated people in the serious levels of the Soviet bureaucracy. And that was a big difference between Russia and China. Now many of the Chinese had of course been educated prior to the war or immediately after the war before things shut down. But there was never a tradition in Russia of sending their people abroad in the pre-war period and certainly not in the post-war period. So there was a big difference and I think our relations and their understanding of what was going on in the United States suffered because of the way they misused, if you will, that program. It was never useful for them in anything but the science area. It was never useful to work for an individual who had been trained in the West.

I guess that answers your question. Anything else?

Q: No. Why don't we then move to '72? From '72 until when...

MENDELSOHN: From about April or March of 1972 until the summer of 1975, I was detailed to ACDA and there got my introduction into arms control, which basically became my career interest, subsequent career especially. I worked during that period on the U.S. SALT II Delegation, the second round of the Strategic Arms Limitation Talks, as the Special Assistant to the Chief of the Delegation, who was as of January '73, U Alexis Johnson. He was the senior Foreign Service Officer at the time and I guess the U.S. Foreign Service Officer who had gotten the highest in the bureaucracy as an Under Secretary. He has subsequently been a Secretary of State and a Deputy and an Under Secretary. But that was the highest that the professionals had gotten. Alex Johnson got as far as any professional had gotten to that time.

Q: How did you get into ACDA?

MENDELSOHN: Well this was the totally uninfluenced and highly efficient operation of the assignment process. I knew somebody who had a job on the Delegation. He was a Foreign Service Officer. We had coffee in the cafeteria one day and he said he was leaving, it was a great job, was I interested in it, and I said yes, to put my name in. He said he would and he'd put a big push for me and two weeks later I got the assignment.

Q: I must say the cafeteria is where deals are made.

MENDELSOHN: That's exactly right.

Q: I became a Yugoslav expert through the cafeteria.

MENDELSOHN: If I had put my name into the assignment process I'm sure I would have been competitive and competed, but who knows? But this was a straight line. The guy who was there recommended me. I had some Central European experience although I was a novice in arms control, but so was everybody at that time because SALT had just ended or was just ending.

Q: Before we get into your work and all. Could you talk a bit about, you know, from the cafeteria and other low joints, where did ACDA sort of rank within interest and prestige or whatever you want to say?

MENDELSOHN: That's a good question. This was the high moment, the high point of ACDA, was probably under the Director who was there when I came in, although he left by the end of '72. That was Jerry Smith. We started negotiating in 1969 under Nixon. The first Strategic Arms Limitation agreement, SALT agreement, started in the fall of '69, November, and was going to end in May of '72, a month or so after I got into that office. Of course that team was very likely to turn over as things go, that's how I happened to get the job.

But ACDA was the lead agency on the SALT negotiations and the Director of ACDA was the head of the SALT Delegation, a very distinguished lawyer who was an in and out of government type, Gerard Smith, who did a very good job. He had a very good team, a first class team. It included Paul Nitze who was the Defense Department representative, a three-star Air Force General, and some very good State Department people. I think the State Department representative was Thompson, but the Executive Secretary of the Delegation was Ray Gartoff. He has gone on to be our leading historian of the Cold War Period. I mean this was a very high powered delegation.

Q: Well also the Nixon/Kissinger group, this was a big deal to them. This was one of the jewels in their crown as they saw it and this gets translated down into the ranks including hitting a Jack Mendelsohn who feels this is a good place to go.

MENDELSOHN: Exactly. It was an exciting thing and it was clearly the beginning of a sort of new process between the U.S. and Russia. Instead of simply building, building, building without any structure or any idea of where it might end and where it might be going, we had decided we were going to try to put some kind of a framework around this competition. It looked like it was destined to continue as long as the confrontation continued but it ought to have some guidelines to it.

Everybody thought it was very interesting, and it was sexy. Here you were dealing with

big time weaponry, you were dealing with big time issues, and you were dealing with a big time country and the key relationship the United States had. And ACDA was given an important role in that, at least in the SALT I context, even though there was a lot of bad blood by the end of it between Kissinger and the Head of the Delegation, Smith, because Kissinger was constantly going behind the backs of the delegation.

There was a lot of back channel stuff, a lot of things the delegation didn't know about. When they got to Moscow, particularly on the end game, where some of the final negotiations were cut by Kissinger not by the delegation. Now that is sometimes the way it has to be done, but Kissinger of course did it in the most unpleasant and backhanded way. Whereas you know you might cut in your delegation chief a little bit more of course they were totally kept in the dark and Kissinger wanted a certain amount of credit for himself and Nixon.

But the delegation did a very good basic job. As a matter of fact, the ABM Treaty, although possibly under attack, is still in force and SALT I proved to be the first in a series of four major agreements on strategic weapons. It looked like it was going to be very interesting and exciting and it turned out to be, even though I think perhaps being in the first round of the first negotiations might have had a precedent setting aspect that the later ones didn't. But I was very excited about it and there were some very good people in ACDA at the time. ACDA was a powerhouse and it was important. Even though it was small it was a powerhouse because the White House wanted it to be. It had good people and it was clearly the lead agency in the bureaucracy so it had a certain amount of power, a certain amount of ascribed power, because the White House counted on it to take a lot of heat off of them.

Let me try to explain that another way. It was useful to the White House to have an agency that would take extreme positions, if you will, on the arms control side to balance the Defense Department, which was going to take extreme positions on the non-arms control side. And then the White House can come out and say, "Well, we've taken into account both sides." And then the White House could then move to the middle and could move the bureaucracy that way. In that sense ACDA was a stalking-horse for ideas that possibly weren't going to be totally accepted, but we could at least move the process along.

Q: When you arrived there what was your role in '72?

MENDELSOHN: I came in as an analyst, with the understanding I was going to take over the Assistant to the Director's or the head of the delegation's job. But I was not on the SALT I unit that was still negotiating. I just sort of got read-in and for the first six months, from about April to October, basically I was sort of finding out what I needed to know. I was writing some papers in the office, reading the background chrons of the reporting, getting up to speed on what the systems were. Basically it was my indoctrination into the systems and into the process. And then, in the Fall of that years we opened up, actually still under Smith, still in '72, and my recollection is just after the re-election of Nixon, we went back for the first round of what was to become SALT II.

I went as what they called Secretary of the Delegation. It was just a cover title. I think I'm right on that. I went back, I think I went twice, as Secretary. It was just… you were going to go as a staffer and you would do whatever you were asked to do when you got there. We were there from November through December.

Q: "There" being?

MENDELSOHN: Geneva. The talks shifted from the venue of SALT I that had been alternating between Vienna and Helsinki to a permanent location for sessions in Geneva. So I went to Geneva in the fall of '72, I think I was Secretary or Assistant Secretary to the Delegation. There I was in effect told to pay attention and see how it operates, how does the Delegation operate. I wrote a couple of press releases, a couple of toasts, and then I went with the Delegation or the senior members of the Delegation to NATO. There was a tradition at the end of each session of going to NATO and reporting to our allies, because they were very interested in what we were bargaining away or not bargaining away. I remember gong to that and I remember that my major responsibility was writing up the NATO session. Basically for Ray Gartoff. He was the Secretary and said it was my responsibility and to write it up and send the cable out. The Delegation went back to Geneva, or they went home, I guess, from there after I wrote it up.

That was about a three or four or five week opening session. Not much happened. Nobody expected much to happen. It was the first round and we'd just ratified and entered into force SALT I. It was a kind of opening on both sides. We got back to the United States and there was at the end of the year, beginning of January, there was basically a purge of ACDA by Kissinger, the new Kissinger-Nixon White House.

Q: By the way, Kissinger was still at the White House at that time?

MENDELSOHN: At that time but I think he came at the beginning, didn't he, of the second term and go to the State Department? I don't remember.

Q: I can't remember exactly either.

MENDELSOHN: Sometime in there. Certainly he was still at the White House through the end of the first term.

Q: When you arrived in ACDA what were the atmospherics? You said that Smith was getting fed up with Kissinger and his secrecy and hogging the credit and that type of thing. Did you sense any of that? Was there muttering within the Delegation that you were getting or not, about, you know, the wish that Kissinger would keep you informed or what have you?

MENDELSOHN: To be perfectly honest, which I suppose is most useful for the record, I learned a lot of this afterwards. I was so junior and I was so new, I had no friends or intimates, I wasn't cut in on this but coming back over the next year, I would say in '73,

then the story came out. There was no reason, nor was it expected that Nitze would take me aside and say, "Listen, Jack, let me tell you what really went on" or that Gerard Smith would do that. I was the junior of the juniors.

Actually something very interesting happened but at that time I was not privy to it, but in the next year I learned all that stuff.

Q: We'll pick it up as we go. But in this initial period were you involved, as you were reading yourself in, of some of these theories that were going around? Some of the big thinkers like Teller and others about, "Well, if we do this they'll lose two million people and we'll accept a loss of a million and a half." This game, was it apparent at that time?

MENDELSOHN: Oh, yes, there was a lot of this in the background. All that escalation theory and deterrence theory had all been elaborated in the '50s and early '60s. All that was available and I became increasingly familiar with what was being said there. That was all part and parcel of the background. But a lot of that didn't come out in the negotiations.

The deterrence theory came out in the negotiations.

Q: Deterrence theory being what?

MENDELSOHN: That in order to maintain a stable relationship between two major nuclear powers, you needed to have secure retaliatory forces or at least each side needed to feel that. So you had to design any kind of agreement so that the security or the sense of security that either side had concerning its retaliatory forces was not undermined. And that was thrown, each side threw that. Whenever one side would make a proposal, let's limit X and Y, that the other side didn't like, they would respond that it was not a good idea because it would undermine their confidence in their retaliatory force. All that stuff got thrown back and forth and the words 'deterrence' and 'stability.' You know one man's stability is another man's instability, of course. That was a big part of the formal exchanges at the table.

We can talk, and I will, talk a little bit about the way negotiations were structured, but I'm not there yet. I'm not in the negotiations yet. I'm on the delegation. There is a difference. Because I didn't go, for example, to the key meetings, except once or twice I was invited as an observer in this first round. Mostly I was just getting, again, getting a feel for the delegation. And that was in the fall and winter of '72.

But what I did know from the beginning almost was that I really liked this. It was very interesting. I should add that it had a certain amount of science and technology involved in it and while I wasn't a scientist or a technologist by training, I had always liked sciences and math and technology as a student. I was very good in high school and I thought I might want to do it in college, but I didn't. I took chemistry and calculus and then decided that I wanted to go for a broader background, but I always was interested.

This is different from some of the Foreign Service types, the more traditional types. The technical aspects didn't put me off. As a matter of fact I was very interested in them and I tried to learn as much as I could about how the systems worked, where they are, how many we had, exchange effects, all this kind of stuff. I liked it. It didn't bother me. I didn't find it was too specialized.

Unfortunately, there is a little bit of concern in the Foreign Service culture that you don't want to get too specialized in too technical sets of issues. Where you are most useful and where it is easiest to make a career is if you remain a generalist who is able to attack any thought problem, but not necessarily a math problem, or even a budget problem. I thought to be a generalist was okay, but I didn't find it intellectually satisfying. I thought I wanted to get a little deeper into stuff. So I became in that sense, perhaps, a little bit different or apart from the standard of what I would say is the standard State Department culture or generalist culture.

Anything else on that early period?

Q: Just at the very beginning, what were you gathering from your new colleagues about where the Soviet delegation was coming from, dealing with them, what were you picking up?

MENDELSOHN: It was interesting. I think the one sort of surprising thing that people came up with was how badly informed most of our Soviet counterparts were about just exactly what it is they were doing and what these systems were. There is a sort of anecdote I heard on close background that in the Salt I negotiations at one point one of the Russians took one of the Americans aside. I don't remember who it was; you can probably look it up. But he said, "We wish you wouldn't talk so much about the details of these systems because many of our members are not allowed to know about them." It was quite interesting. The Americans knew more about their systems than the Russians knew about their systems. And we knew more about the Russian systems than all except the military. None of the civilians knew as much as we knew about Russian systems. So there was a certain amount of nervousness. It was new ground for both sides but it was particularly new ground for the Russians.

The Russians undoubtedly had much narrower aims and a much more controlled set of goals. A much more controlled delegation and less information, also. But once they got orders they knew how to carry them out. What was interesting, and now I am perhaps drawing on later experience, is that there were very few aficionados of nuclear weapons on either side. I think everybody recognized on both sides of the delegations that these were pretty fearsome engines of war and that we would all be better off if we could get them controlled. What was difficult, of course, was arriving at a mutually satisfactory set of provisions or limitations or ceilings that would in effect control them. There was a tendency to believe that no offer could be objective. Any offer from either side would have a subjective value to the side that was offering it. There was certainly a lot of that. But I guess in the long run they got balanced off and that is what you basically get in a negotiation, neither side gets exactly what it wants, but there is enough in the package

that you can say, well, they got this but we got that. Although they are not exactly parallel they do in a way balance themselves. That was what we were basically trying to do.

Plus I think you had the overriding sense that both sides recognized that unfettered the competition didn't make any sense. It was quite costly and it was also dangerous. So there were three good reasons why you wanted to build a structure around it. But it took time. It took three years for the first one, '69 to '72, and then from '73 to '79, late '72 to '79, for the second one. So it took a lot of time. There was a lot of politics involved as well. It was a function of what was going on domestically. Certainly we knew more about what was going on in the United States, what would be sustainable. And in the SALT II negotiations, the second term of Nixon and then Ford, it was clearly not a term in which the United States was prepared to do anything. Neither President was strong enough to push an agreement that would be meaningful, or that would be acceptable to the other side, particularly under Nixon. The first two years of the Nixon second term was all Watergate and the President looked quite weak. There was concern, and this was an argument used by Nitze, there was concern that the President might do something for the sake of getting it done. I'm not talking about launching a nuclear strike, I'm talking about concluding an agreement that would be disadvantageous to the United States but that would be considered advantageous to his own position.

Nitze claimed, and I don't think this is totally true perhaps, he claimed that he left the negotiation in '74 because he believed that the United States might well take a bad deal in order to save Nixon. I think what actually happened on the Nitze thing is that he was turned down for a senior post at Defense which I think he would have taken if it had been offered to him. He was supposed to go back and be Under Secretary or Deputy Secretary or something like that. It didn't work out and I think he got disgusted at that and that was compounded by what was going on back in Washington and, perhaps also, partly the sense that Nixon couldn't negotiate a good deal. I don't think Nitze left purely because the President couldn't do it.

When was the massacre? Was that at Thanksgiving?

Q: Well there was a Thanksgiving Day massacre.

MENDELSOHN: Was that in '73 or '74?

Q: Probably '73...

MENDELSOHN: He was gone by '74. Yes. I think it was after that massacre that Nixon began to...

Q: This was the massacre being when Nixon fired Elliott Richardson and...

MENDELSOHN: …and Richardson's deputy, and Bork took over. I forget whether his deputy was also a fine guy.

Q: This was in the Justice Department?

MENDELSOHN: Right, right. I think that's what triggered everybody's concern. I'm speculating but I believe that...

Q: This second delegation, we already talked about the first one that you were on, but the second one - who was it, Alexis Johnson was the head of that?

MENDELSOHN: Right. In January of '73 there was basically a purge in the arms control community. People thought this was for a number of reasons: (1) that Kissinger did not want to have a rival power center; (2) that they were trying to diffuse whatever criticism there was or had been of SALT I. And there was criticism from Defense Democrats like Henry Jackson and Richard Perle who thought any deal with the Russians had to be a bad deal for the United States.

There were all kinds of agitation on the right against arms control. What Kissinger basically did was to say well, if there are any problems it is the responsibility or the fault of the arms control advocates in the previous round, so we'll just get rid of them and get rid of the problem, so he purged everybody. He gave the job to a senior Foreign Service type who had been Under Secretary, who had had a heart attack and recovered and was looking for a job, a nice job and he would do a good job at it. He was not a radical; he was not an arms controller. He had to learn it all, too, but he was a consummate bureaucrat and he was reliable. He was not likely to stir the boat in any way, although he would do a very good job. He just recently died, as you know. He knew everybody and he had been everywhere.

Q: And he had long negotiations with the Chinese.

MENDELSOHN: Right. And he had been in Vietnam; he had been our Deputy Ambassador to Vietnam. He had good relations with the military. They respected him and they knew that Alex Johnson wasn't going to give anything, that he was cement to the huge criticism from the right. Interestingly enough the head of the SALT I delegation had been the Director of ACDA and had lived in ACDA. When Alex Johnson was nominated or appointed as head of the delegation, he was nominally assigned to ACDA but he insisted on taking an office in the State Department on the seventh floor, and he got the end suite. That is where we moved into in February of '73.

Whoever was paying Johnson's salary, I know mine was being paid by ACDA, but I have a feeling with him, well, we were in a State Directory on the first page, he was listed as Ambassador at Large for SALT Negotiations.

Q: I might point out for the record that the seventh floor is the floor of power. This is where the Secretary of State and his principle deputies are and so by moving up to the seventh floor he was putting himself in the middle of the power apparatus. I mean, if you were on the sixth floor or something you were out of sight.

MENDELSOHN: Or in ACDA. ACDA had a portion of the building, too. We shared a suite, the end suite on the seventh floor, with Hal Sonnenfeldt. So we were right there.

Well, my job progressed beautifully. I made up that title, I don't know if I was Secretary or not the first time. I may have gone as Secretary on the second round of SALT II, the first round of Johnson's term. He had a Special Assistant, which was Jerry Smith's Special Assistant for that round, but I was told and by then I knew, that Special Assistant would be leaving after Johnson's break-in round and I was going to take that job. By the summer of '73, I was Special Assistant to the Director of Delegation, which meant I was no longer writing toasts and reporting on NATO, although actually I continued to do that. I got to go, then, to all the senior delegation meetings. I was the only junior person in the meetings that would be held by the senior people on the delegation.

I should explain a little bit about how the delegation worked. There was a Chief of Delegation, in this case Alex Johnson, previously Jerry Smith from ACDA, Alex Johnson really liked to consider himself from State, but in any case a Chief of Delegation. Then there was a senior representative from each of the five what you would call National Security Agencies. We had a Senior Representative from the Defense Department, OSD, and the Office of the Secretary. We had a Senior Representative from the Defense Department JCS, the uniformed military…

Q: The Joint Chiefs of Staff?

MENDELSOHN: The Joint Chiefs of Staff. We had a Senior Representative from ACDA, we had a Senior Representative from State, and we had a Senior Representative from the CIA. So the five National Security Agencies, or divisions if you will of the Government each had a senior person. That was the way the SALT I Delegation was structured, and that was the way the SALT II one was structured.

As I mentioned earlier, in SALT I we had Paul Nitze, who continued as the OSD Rep. In SALT I they had a three-star Air Force General. In SALT II they had a three-star Army General, who remained active in the field, although he was quite conservative and I think really not quite competent. That was Ed Round. He is still around and still kicking up dust.

The ACDA Rep…I'll have to think back a little bit, it might have been Ralph Earle at that point. It was Ralph Earle, I think. He became Director of ACDA later on and is now Deputy Director of ACDA again. There was a CIA Rep. I'm trying to remember who the State Representative was. At one point…I can't remember…it'll come to me and I'll think of it and fill it in…there is also the State Rep.

Those key members were at ambassadorial level and they met daily to plot speeches, to plot strategy, to send cables back to Washington. I attended those meetings as basically Johnson's right-hand man, and as the reporter. If they wanted a cable I could write it or I would take care of it. It was also my job, at the end of each meeting with the Russians, to do all the reporting. Well, that's not true, it was to manage the reporting cables in the

following sense. After each meeting with the Russians, Johnson, who was really a pro, would come back to his office. He would gather everybody who had been at the meeting in his office, get into his chair, lean back, look at the ceiling and dictate almost without correction and without stopping a five-page reporting cable, maybe seven-page. This was terrific. He would say something and he'd ask if it were right. We would confirm it. He'd ask if he had the right nuance. He would check with people and people would comment and he'd thank them, but 90% of the discussion in the post-delegation meeting would be Johnson leaning back in his chair dictating a cable that was almost perfect when he did it, really the sign of a pro.

I would help him get that out, as the Secretary I would do that. Then each one of the principles on the delegation, the agency reps, had a Russian counterpart and would have had after the Plenary Session where each side read a speech to the other and exchanged copies of them. Those were sent back to Washington. The translators took care of that. I sort of executive-managed to make sure that got back that and made sure the other cable got back. Then each of the principles would dictate their Memoranda of Conversation with their counterpart. Those would all come to me and I would make sure those got translated back. Then I would do a summary cable drawing from the memcons (memorandum of conversation) the most important issues or points that were made and I would send that off.

So at the end of each day of a session with the Russians, my recollection is that we met two, maybe three times a week, probably twice a week in Plenary. So you'd have this Plenary where statements were exchanged, questions and answers that had to be written up. I don't know if I wrote that up or not, the Qs and As, I think that was another reporting officer. So there were the plenary statements, there was discussion at the table, there was a Memorandum of Conversation, there was the Summary cable, and the transmission of text. All of that was done the same day. If we met at four in the evening, everything went out before you went home. That was sort of the discipline of the delegation, if you will.

So that was basically what my job was. Well I had other parts in that job. I basically edited the plenary statements. Staff wrote them on the delegation. We would decide, well, at the next Plenary we want to give a talk about air launched cruise missiles. We'd like the OSD unit to write the basic statement. That statement would be written and circulated. I would basically vet it for Johnson. He knew basically what we should do and he knew basically what was going on, but he relied on me to make sure that the Plenary statement reflected our instructions, you know, U.S. policy, made good sense, wasn't vulnerable, was in English and all that. I think I did a good job of it.

Johnson was really quite a pro at this. Once he had confidence in me and knew I could do it he basically would take my marked up text, we would go into a skull session with the representatives and he'd say, "Alright, let's take a look at this," he would say, " I have a few suggestions..." And they were always everything I had told him. It was great in the sense that you felt that you had some influence on a principal's actions. And that's what an aide is supposed to do. He's supposed to give his best advice and if he's reasonable

that best advice should be taken, and will be taken. And if the pro, on the other hand, and Johnson was a pro, if nothing else, if he had confidence in his aide knew that it was correct. He never even read over what I had to say. He was confident doing it at the table. If he weren't comfortable he'd throw it out. But he was clearly getting comfortable with me and I had a lot of fun.

What happened of course is that all of the other members of the delegation would come and lobby me. They'd bring in things and say they'd really like to keep such and such in because they knew I would have some impact. This was my third assignment. For a junior officer, or mid grade officer, it was a reasonably heady experience, you know, dealing with people who had really big reputations. Nitze had a big reputation; Johnson had a big reputation. There were other people…Harold Brown who would later become Secretary of Defense under Carter was the public member of the delegation. There was one non-governmental person who was always sort of an honorary...

Q: He was what, President of MIT?

MENDELSOHN: Caltech. Was he President of Caltech at that time?

Q: Something like that.

MENDELSOHN: He was really the smartest guy on the delegation. He wasn't on the delegation full-time, but he would come for maybe a week a session, just to keep his hand in.

Q: The battery sort of gave out at this point, so we are going back over this partly again.

We are going to ask you to start at the role of Harold Brown again. Before you were talking about his role and his influence on the delegation.

MENDELSOHN: Brown was a public member. He came for a week a session. I guess at that time he was the President of Caltech. He is possibly the most brilliant guy I've ever met or seen operate. He always brought a refreshing, a clearing air with him. Debates that people would have about capabilities or impact of systems he would just say, you know, the facts don't bear that out, this is how that works. For example, I can remember Nitze making an argument that the Russians could fly on a depressed trajectory, meaning at a lower angle, certain of their long range systems. By flying them on a lower angle they would reach their targets faster. Brown said that if they flew them at a lower angle the front ends would fall off, because the stresses are too great. They were not designed for that. I mean, an argument that had gone on in the delegation for years, perhaps, because nobody knew the physics involved, Brown could blow out of the water in one minute when he was there.

I would get a reading folder together for him. He'd come in and read for half an hour and he would be totally up to speed on what had happened in half an hour. He would have known the ins and outs of the arguments and he would have known the answers,

presumably the right ones, as well. He was always very refreshing and he sort of cut through a lot of crap that people had gotten themselves tied up in over the previous months.

Q: This often happens when you are all cooped up together. You begin to feed off each other and believe things that are not sustainable. But was he listened to?

MENDELSOHN: I think what he did was put to bed some of the arguments like the one about can the Russians convert their long range systems into depressed trajectory systems. I don't know that he swayed policy because he didn't have that role. I think he also talked with the White House as well, and perhaps had more influence there than he would have on the delegation. What he did, his utility on the delegation was I think to clear some of the cobwebs away from our thinking and was certainly greatly respected. But he wasn't there long enough to actually shape policy. If he had been on the delegation, he would have been the strongest mind there. But that would have been true in practically any group. It is not a putdown of the delegation in any sense.

Q: You said you had a favorite story.

MENDELSOHN: My favorite anecdote of my Foreign Service career took place somewhere, I think, in '74 or early '75. We were asked by the White House, in response to the cabling by the Russians of a draft SALT II Treaty, to prepare a counter-draft SALT II Treaty, a U.S. one. The principle would be that we put ours down, they had theirs down. Then you would move to what is called a Joint Draft Text, which put together all the elements of both proposals, bracket where they were in disagreement, and leave clear text those areas that were agreed. You would have an agreed Preamble and an agreed entry into force provision from the beginning, but a lot of stuff in the middle might not be.

Well, the delegation undertook the job of drafting a U.S. SALT II agreement for a counter-proposal. But of course since all points of view are reflected in the delegation, there was an effort to get all points of view into the counter-draft, including what I considered, from my point of view, to be extremely unhelpful and very conservative or very unacceptable provisions. Provisions that would affect, let's say, for example, only the Russians…that they only had this kind of system. Things that were clearly non-negotiable and I thought would not move this arms control negotiating process forward.

We had some instructions, you know, that basically what we were supposed to do was to translate our instructions into a treaty. What I thought, and basically this argument prevailed, I thought that a lot of these other suggestions of what the treaty ought to contain as well went beyond our instructions. It cluttered the treaty up with stuff that we had not been told to deal with, and I thought would not be helpful. Well Johnson, who was nothing if not a consummate bureaucrat, had the problem of keeping happy the entire spectrum, including the conservative spectrum. But he realized, to his credit, that these would not be necessarily helpful elements in this treaty. So he devised a beautiful bureaucratic device. He said we were going to prepare two drafts, which we would

transmit by cable. One of them would be the treaty based on our instructions and the second one would contain all of the additional suggestions that members of the delegation believed should be included in a treaty. So we would put that out but it was not called for by the position that we currently held.

He detailed me to tell Washington what was going on. I was to call my contact, or our contact, on the National Security Council to tell them what was going on. So I got on the secure phone and I called up and talked to my NSC contact. I told him this story and told him we were going to have two cables. I said we were going to have one, which is the treaty based on our instructions, and we were going to have the second one which was going to have all this "ash and trash," as I called it, which the hard-liners wanted to get in. I said my only question to him was where I should send the second cable. There was a pause and then the voice at the other end said, "Calcutta." That came to be known, at least in my lore, as the 'Calcutta cable.'

Needless to say they were both sent back to Washington and most of what was in the 'Calcutta cable' did not survive. But I thought it was a great bureaucratic ploy and it was a great bureaucratic answer. How to get rid of an unwanted set of recommendations! I always have in the back of my mind the look on the face of our Counsel in Calcutta when they got this!

Q: I'd like to ask a couple of questions. In the first place, you are in a high level delegation there. Who is giving you instructions, where are they coming from?

MENDELSOHN: In the run-up to the opening of the Session, there would have been in Washington a work plan that had been commissioned by the NSC. The NSC would chair inter-agency groups and they would basically say, "We need to examine the question of cruise missiles. OSD write us a paper on cruise missiles, where they stand, who has them, possible ways we might deal with them…" blah, blah, blah. Or, "SS-18…" which was the large Russian system "…ACDA write a paper on SS-18s, how many there are, what the Russians need them for, how they have been limited in the past, how we might limit them in the future…" blah, blah, blah. So this process would go on in the run-up to a Session and these things would be argued out. Papers would be presented. Agencies in the inter-agency council would represent views towards this and then all of this would be sort of prepping towards the principal's views.

Senior representatives from the National Security Agencies, including the Chief of the Delegation, but also including senior State Department officers, senior ACDA officers and so forth, would meet at the NSC to discuss what it was they thought they could do, or should do, at the next round of negotiations. Each agency would have a position. Because the work program would have indicated those things that were issues, all of the principals would have positions that they would bring to the NSC meeting.

At the NSC meeting, whoever was the Assistant for National Security, would listen to the positions of the principals. Based on that probably nothing was decided. There probably would be divided points of view on how to approach things. He would most often just

thank them for what had gone on and say they would make their decisions and issue instructions within the next week.

This meeting would take place on the eve of the delegation's departure for Geneva. At some point between that NSC meeting and the opening, although not always by the opening because sometimes we would have to go to the opening without any instructions, you would get a cable from the NSC. Maybe it would come signed by the Secretary, I don't remember. But it would say "The President has decided on the following instructions for the third session of the SALT II negotiations" colon. You would have there a document that laid out the points of the position that you would deploy at the table over the month or two or three that you were scheduled to meet with the Russians.

That position would have been basically hammered out by the NSC, by phone calls to principals after the NSC meeting, saying for instance "ACDA wants ten and you want five, we believe it makes sense to go with seven and we want you to be on board for this. Fine, seven is okay, we can't buy ten, but we understand, we will take seven." They would have done that for whatever contentious issues there may have been.

You would have gotten a document that represented what the NSC felt was as far as they could push the bureaucracy in those areas where they wanted to push them for some kind of a position that we would protect. That instruction paper, which might be five pages long, or three pages long, or seven pages long, would become the basis for a series of plenary statements in which we would lay out, day by day, key aspects of our position.

That is how, basically, you got your instructions and knew what it was you were going to be talking about. That is at the sort of most formal level. Once you got into a drafting mode. Once you had put down you counter-draft that we talked about. Once the two drafts, Russian and U.S., had been amalgamated into what was called and is still called in all the delegations a 'Joint Draft Text', a JDT, you might then have fewer plenary meetings and statements and more working group meetings.

There rather than reading statements, you know, large policy or positions to one another, you might have a working group on Article 7, whatever that might be, say the limits on cruise missiles. There you would have more detailed working of the language of each provision. And there the working groups would report in the evenings. I assume the Russians did the same thing, but I don't know. In any case our working group would report back to Washington saying, "In Article 7 the Russians have agreed we can use the word 'this' rather than 'that' so we think that point is resolved. On the other hand they propose that we use 'whether' rather than 'when' and we think that is an acceptable idea and we seek Washington's approval." Or you might say if you knew it was not a big deal, you might say, "Unless otherwise directed, we intend to accept that proposal." If you really wanted to move the negotiations along you used what are called "UNODIR" which is an acronym for "unless otherwise directed."

Q: "UNODIR."

MENDELSOHN: A "UNODIR" cable basically says, "unless otherwise directed, I intend to…" whatever it is. I intend to kick him in the behind, or I intend to accept his language, or I intend to put down this proposal which we have figured out in our brilliant way as a solution to a problem that's been plaguing us. And those are called "UNODIR," "unless otherwise directed by the time of the meeting."

That was a way, or at least it was believed to be a way, of stimulating a response from Washington. If you just wrote back and said do you think this is okay, you could wait four months before somebody got around to it. That was a way of sort of driving the pace, if you will, of the negotiations.

Q: During this '73 to '75 period how well did you feel, I mean from your perspective, this apparatus in Washington and the delegation were in sync?

MENDELSOHN: I think you could probably point to moments where things went very well and where things did not go good at all. There are two sets of tensions built into the process and that's the way the process is supposed to work. It is, if you will, a reflection of the checks and balances idea of the Constitution.

There are tensions within the delegation itself among the agencies that are, if you will, miniature replicas of the tensions that exist back in Washington. And then there are tensions between the delegation and Washington where Washington thinks the delegation is going much too fast. Washington feels the delegation just wants to get the draft finished, they don't have a sense of perspective of the larger picture, etc. and so forth. And then the delegation that says the people back in Washington just don't understand how hard it is. They don't understand how well the delegation has done, they don't understand how important it is to get their responses to whether "when" or "whether" is the important word, they are just dilatory and don't sense how important it is to keep the process going.

So you have the internal delegation tensions and you have the Washington delegation tension. Those always exist. They are more or less sharp at varying moments, depending on how hard fought the issue might be. But the delegation is, in all respects, a reflection of the larger picture back in Washington. What the delegation claims it has is a sense of the other side, a better sense of what the other side is about and what can be done than Washington. These are, I think, normal. I think they are even desirable. I don't think they are remediable, and I don't think they are necessarily a problem. What you need is a Chief of Delegation who keeps his balance, his own balance. He doesn't let himself be moved too far in either direction and he keeps credibility with the diverse components of his own organization. And who remains, or retains, his access in Washington.

Now these are all tricky things. I think Johnson did a very good job at it. If anything, I think he didn't fight enough with Washington. But I probably would have been a total disaster because I would have been viewed as difficult to deal with. But I thought he always sort of understood that his masters were in the White House, he had to be sure he stayed on good terms with them. But he also knew that he had to keep the Defense

Department happy because he was basically dealing with an issue that they didn't like.

ACDA liked it, so he didn't have to worry about them. State probably liked it, not always, but they were not going to be a problem. The CIA was not a policy player, they were an informational and background resource but they were important and I thought that they were good. I really enjoyed them, working with the CIA people. They knew a lot about what the Russians were up to and they were good about, you know, keeping us informed on this. But OSD and JCS were the ones you had to worry about. We had to keep them on board. Johnson was very, very careful, you know, to play golf with the General every month, to have dinner with the OSD rep, to make sure that he talked through with them what he was going to do. You didn't want them ever to feel that he was cutting them out, because he didn't want to be cut out by them.

Actually everybody had a back channel. Everyone talked with his or her agency. Johnson just wanted to be sure he knew what everybody was telling their agency, so he wasn't going to be blindsided. That is part of this incredible communications thing. We had our own dedicated communication unit; we did not go through the embassy. Within the dedicated unit CIA had their own lines, OSD and JCS had their own lines, we just went on the secure long-distance line.

Q: You were talking about communications, everybody had their own.

MENDELSOHN: I don't think we could send any cables. OSD and JCS had secure cable capability, independent of the delegation cable lines. The delegation cable lines went back to all agencies. They were open channels. But we had secure phones. State and ACDA communication lines would be secure phones. We could send a back channel through the JCS unit. I did this when I was ACDA Representative in the next round, that comes up later, but I'm sure in this it was the same thing for the ACDA Rep. He wanted to send a cable back to the Acting Director. It was not an open cable for distribution throughout Washington. He could use the JCS secure cable but it meant that JCS read it, so it was not really as secure as secure. So I suspect that most of the discussions went on by phone.

But there was a lot of communications and cross communications. But that's the way the Government works, that's the way bureaucracies work, that's the way policy gets made for better or worse. There are a lot of conflicting issues. What were you doing? Well you were asking…you were saying on the delegation there is this terrific debate about whether we should put this point down now or save it and deploy it later in the discussions. "I suspect," someone might say, "that those that are pushing for it to be deployed later really don't want it deployed at all and are really just trying to push it off and kill it. Is this reflecting something that is going on in Washington? Or is there still strong support for deploying it immediately. That would be my inclination. Shall I continue to push for that?" Those were the kinds of things that you might be asking about if you wanted to go back. Or you might be giving a head's up saying, "This issue, which I believe is new to the debate, has been raised at the table here. You should be aware it might be reflected back in Washington in this agency's position." You know, those kinds

of points. Or, "I'd like to have a stink about X, Y and Z, is there any chance we can get this idea through the bureaucracy?" Those were the sorts of things that you might be trying to do.

Johnson, could of course, back channel and he did, rarely, to the NSC, if he wanted. I can remember one incident where we back-channeled. Actually I guess I went on the telephone. We were having some problems thinking about how it is we might verify multiple warhead missiles. The Russians in '74 began testing what are called MWHD missiles, multiple warhead missiles. We already had them. It was pretty clear that SALT II was going to have to deal with MWHD missiles. At SALT I, we had just begun our MWHD program but basically it wasn't addressed.

Since SALT dealt with missile silos, or launchers, as the unit of account, the question was how is it we were going to know whether something inside that silo had one warhead or more? That was an issue. There were those who didn't want to deal with it, who felt it was impossible to limit this and don't even think about it. It turned out it wasn't that hard when we did do it. At one point Nitze said he was going to talk about this verification issue with his counterpart, he was going to have dinner, bring it up and point out how difficult it was to verify a MWHD system and whether the Russians had any ideas. My feeling was that that was going to screw up our chances of working out a verifiable MWHD limitation. I thought it was probably a bad idea to take it up before we had sorted out the issues ourselves.

I don't remember if I told Johnson this or not. I think Johnson didn't mind because he really respected Nitze and he wasn't going to stop Nitze. This is probably a story that I've never told. I was worried that this was going to screw things up. So I call the NSC and I said, "Let me tell you what is happening. Nitze is having dinner with his counterpart, Schukin, tonight or tomorrow night, at which he has proposed to bring up the discussion of verifying MWHDs. I think this is a bad idea." The guy at the other end said, "You bet. Stop it." I said, "I can't stop it. Johnson's not going to stop him. The only way we are going to stop him is if we get a note from the NSC that says something that gets this off the agenda." The guy said, "Okay." And that was it. The next thing I know, Johnson calls me in his office and whispers he just got a back channel from the NSC and they say under no conditions are we to discuss the issue of MWHD verification. I said, "Oh, is that right? Well, you'd better talk to Paul Nitze about that." He says, "You're right. Call Paul in."

That is just an example of how you use these back channels to get something that you want done or not done. Although I've never told this story, I think it was the right thing. We eventually figured out reasonable and easy ways of verifying MWHD missiles. It was quite possible that Nitze's discussion with Schukin wouldn't have screwed anything up, but it's also quite possible that it would have been unhelpful.

What I was only trying to indicate is how this unofficial, back channel system operates to sort of influence the flow of events. I had forgotten about that story until just now, but it's small. It may be big at that moment and it may be big in your memory, it's small in the

larger picture.

Q: What I am hoping from these interviews is that those people who write about the process and all get an idea of how things actually work and the importance of members of the staff, the telephone and all that never appear on the record.

MENDELSOHN: Certainly. This rings like something from your experience, doesn't it?

Q: Oh, yes. Absolutely. This is true in business or anywhere else.

How did Watergate play? Did you have the feeling that you were on a diminishing power base or something like that?

MENDELSOHN: As I mentioned earlier, certainly there were some in the delegation that felt that. I think maybe Rowney felt that, from JCS, and Nitze, from the Defense Department, who were certainly not that favorably inclined to begin with about the whole arms control process. They certainly felt that being politically weakened at home meant that the President might do something politically foolish abroad. I guess one end of the foolishness might be to stir up a war or trouble with the Russians in order to reinforce his position. But in their case the foolishness was if he would agree to a treaty for the sake of having succeeded with a treaty. Of having made concessions or accepted provisions that were not in the national interest for the sake of getting something he could trumpet as a foreign policy success, and you shouldn't trash a President who has a foreign policy success.

Well as I've said earlier there were rumors, or at least Nitze claimed, that he felt this President in his weakened position could not negotiate firmly enough to get a desirable treaty and therefore he wanted to have nothing to do with it. I don't think that was the primary or certainly not the only reason why Nitze left the delegation. But certainly Rowney felt that way and there were others writing in the press that basically the President was so weakened domestically that internationally he had no credibility. There was a problem there.

I remember, in '74 there was a Summit. He resigned in August of '74 and I think there was one in July. What we did negotiate was pitifully weak. There was a Protocol to the ABM Treaty and Dangers of Nuclear War Agreement, or something. The Protocol went from two sites to one site, it wasn't that important, but the Dangers of Nuclear War, and that's not the right name, I'll look it up and try to remember what it is. But it was sort of a meaningless declaration that the sides would not threaten one another or something like that. It was a total sort of declaratory. It was never ratified, as far as I can remember. I may be wrong, maybe it was. But it was not operational. Nothing happened because of it.

Q: No substance to it.

MENDELSOHN: Right. No substance. Nothing happened because of it.

Let me just see. It was the Prevention of Nuclear War Agreement. I'm sorry, it was in June of '73. It was not in '74. But it was when there was already Watergate problems. Clearly we had nothing else to offer at that point and then the ABM Protocol was in '74. The ABM Protocol was useful, but it was totally technical. The Prevention of Nuclear War was totally declaratory and not operational.

Q: One of the things that I've heard from people. I think it has been floating around the diplomatic historian circuit, is that Henry Kissinger, coming out of this, you might say European power balance feeling, felt that essentially the United States, particularly after Vietnam and all, had lost its elan, its drive. That under the Brezhnev Doctrine it was up against a very powerful force and maybe we had better cut a deal with them before it was too late, because he really didn't feel the United States might want to play the dominant role in the world.

I am just throwing this at you. Was there any of this feeling or not?

MENDELSOHN: No. I don't remember that. I don't doubt that was the sentiment in some circles, but I don't think that was it. The issue that I sensed, the conflict in arms control that I sensed, was the conflict between those people who said that they were fundamentally opposed to arms control. They believed that the United States would be better off providing for its own national security in an unfettered and uncontrolled manner. That it behooved a nation of our power and importance to have the freedom to choose to do what it wanted and that we could not enhance our security or our options by entering into agreements with our major adversary. They were just constitutionally opposed to anything that limited our freedom of choice in the area of national security. That we would be much better off if we were free to build every weapon we wanted, as many as we wanted, and that would beat the little buggers into the ground and all of this arms control stuff was unnecessary.

That was the fundamental counter-argument to the outlook that these were two powerful nations and that these are way too destructive weapons for us not to find mutual benefit in a way of structuring a reciprocal set of limitations. That we would be much better off doing that than trying to outspend, out-deploy and outsmart one another because with these weapons you just can't do it. They are too cheap and they are too destructive and they've got too many of them, three very simple reasons. They were just extraordinarily destructive, they were very cheap and there were a lot of them, and we can't provide for our own defense against these. We might do a little better if we had a set of mutually reciprocal restraints.

That was the fundamental debate, at least as I understood it, between those who believed we would always be better off providing for our own defense, without getting involved with anyone else, and those that said that was ridiculous, we could do much better if we had a mutual set.

Q: One last question on this. You talked about how the United States delegation felt, back channels, consultations and all this. What was your impression of the response time of

the Soviet delegation?

MENDELSOHN: It was our sense the Russians, and I hope I'm not disremembering, that the Russians basically got their marching orders at the beginning of the session and there wasn't much change during the process, during the session. Now in the working groups it was probably a little bit better, but not much. I think the Russians, and I'm a little bit shaky on this because I tended not to get involved in the working groups. Johnson didn't want my time tied up elsewhere. But my sense is that the Russians tended to hang on very long to their positions and then, only at the end of a session or a long bargaining period, would they change.

I think we had somewhat more process flexibility, you know, in-process flexibility. I don't think the Russians had quite the same thing as a backstopping committee in Washington that was supposed to review all the incoming stuff and get answers back. The Russians I think were a little less flexible, less turn-around. It was more here are your instructions and if you don't carry them all out you don't get your medal type situation. It didn't mean they couldn't compromise, but it did mean that those compromises or problems would tend to pile up and then there would be a large sort of compromise solution for all the outstanding problems.

Q: Jack, this might be a good time to end this thing. Obviously we are going to be coming back again. I want to put at the end, in '75 you left the delegation. This was before any final conclusion.

MENDELSOHN: That's right. It was concluded in the middle of '79, but I had been traveling for all of '73, all of '74 and after '75. All of this was TDY. My family was beginning to get very, very unhappy. I could have stayed. I would have loved it. I would have had a good job, but I wasn't prepared to sacrifice my family for that. So I asked for a job back in Washington. I actually asked for a job teaching political science at the Naval Academy, and I got it.

Q: All right, well then we'll pick up in 1975, when you went down to Annapolis.

MENDELSOHN: Great.

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Q: Today is the 21st of July 1997.

Jack, we're off to the Naval Academy in 1976. You were there from '76 to when?

MENDELSOHN: Sorry, '75. '75 to '77, two years.

Q: I'd like to ask you a little about that. Let me give you sort of my interest. I lived in Annapolis for about ten years as a teenager so to me Annapolis is my hometown. My brother was the Class of '40, so I've always kept a benevolent but somewhat critical view

of the Naval Academy process. I'd like to catch what you saw during this time. Could you explain what you were teaching and your impressions of the system and your clientele?

MENDELSOHN: I was teaching political science in the Political Science Department and specifically I was teaching a course which they ran for years during the Cold War called *Soviet Political and Military Systems*, and another one called, roughly, *Communism: Theory and Practice*. I also taught a course on U.S. Foreign Policy. But the big course of which I taught three sections a semester, each fall semester, was *Political Soviet and Military Systems*.

I also occupied what was, at that time, sort of the State Department's slot. The State Department assigned an officer, and had been assigning, I guess, for about 10 years when I got there and maybe longer, an officer as kind of a liaison with the military. It was supposed to fill a need on both sides. It got State Department people involved in the military life, it got them to appreciate what it was like and what was going on and it introduced, of course, Navy people, both midshipmen and those who were on the faculty, to the State Department and Foreign Service types.

I was very impressed and very pleased by my two years at the Naval Academy. I commuted. Part of the reason, as I explained earlier, that I wanted this job was that I didn't want to move the family yet again. It wasn't a big deal. You just got up an hour earlier in the morning. Got in the car and when there was no traffic it took less than an hour from my house to get to my office. I always left early because I always had an eight o'clock class. I left six, six fifteen, was there by seven fifteen, had a cup of coffee, got ready, had a great day and could come home before the rush hour. In any case, I was always going in the other direction.

The Naval Academy was different in one important respect from the other military academies at the time in that it had opened up its faculty to civilian instructors to a much greater degree. When I was there I believe almost, if not more, than 50% of the faculty were civilians. Not that the military people weren't good folks, but it meant that in important areas they could get academically trained people. Of course they were most interested in it in mathematics, in engineering, in physics, in places like that. So in the Political Science Department they had genuine Ph.D.s, teaching American politics or whatever the baseline courses might have been. They had, as well, Officers on their way up who had MAs that were interested in the teaching track, or in a chance to go back or who worked at the Academy. So there were also military people in the Political Science Department. But there were a lot of civilian types. So that gave it a slightly more academic coloring than you might have had at the other military academies.

I liked my colleagues very much. I had a really good two years there. The midshipmen were as you can imagine. There were no discipline problems. There was also a reasonably wide range of abilities in the classes from an academic point of view. There is one other thing I should say before backing up. I think the Naval Academy was also, perhaps, a little ahead of its time in comparison to the other military academies in that it allowed people to major in what you would call sort of non-traditional subjects for a

military academy. In other words they all didn't have to come out with a BS in electrical engineering, or a BS in mechanical engineering. A proportion, although it was controlled, of the midshipmen were allowed to major in what you would call soft subjects like political science, or economics, or history. That I think also was distinguishing from the other military academies. So you had people who were actually majoring in political science.

Now in the political science classes, among the midshipmen I had, there was a wide range of abilities. Some really super people, some really rather, you know, slow people who were really only interested in throwing grenades and this was a four year program they had to take in order to get into the trenches. I think you would find that kind of spread anyplace.

Traditionally, when I was there, the profile of the midshipman was described as similar to that of a good Midwestern engineering school like Purdue. This was not MIT, neither was it Northern Virginia Community College. I mean, Purdue is very respectable, you know, but it's not at the cutting edge of engineering. It's a very respectable training school for people who will turn out to be very good at what they have to do, but they perhaps will not discover a new way to pipe steam or something like that.

Having said that, there was one thing I did notice that was different. I had taught at the university level before I came into the Foreign Service. There was a certain amount of passivity in the student body in the sense that they were not out there pushing you, asking questions that would make you as the instructor have to think, or that you might not know an answer to. They were more interested in sort of being told "this is what it is I want you to know at the end of the semester. Learn it. Read pages X to Y, check questions Z to Q." What they'd say was more like "tell us what you want." And they would listen and they would do reasonably well what it is that was expected of them. That was, I think, part and parcel of the military training. I mean they are told what to do their entire day from when they wake up until when they go to sleep. It's basically programmed for them. You saw that kind of programmed passivity in the classroom.

Having said that, it is not really meant as a criticism, it's just the way things are. They did what they were told to do reasonably well, but they were disciplined. They weren't trying to change things around and they weren't trying to be in any sense disruptive or challenging intellectually, although there were some very, very smart people. Rather than challenge they would ask, you know what else they could read on something or where they could go to find out more about something, rather than saying, "How come Marxism isn't such a great idea? When I was a kid my parents..." You know, there was none of that.

What was interesting, and I find later on I feel rather justified about it, is that I had just come off of working with the Russians in the SALT talks. I knew a lot at that time and maybe still do a little bit, about what the Russians were up to. I knew how the system worked, how the military worked, how good or bad the technology was that was involved in nuclear delivery systems. I was not one of those who believed the Russians were ten

feet tall. I thought they were you know three and a half or four feet tall, if we were six feet tall. If anyone was ten feet tall, we were. Now of course the ethos at the Naval Academy, of all the military academies, in the '70s, and probably in the '80s as well, was that we had one fearsome opponent. They are tough and we were preparing to fight these people and we had to pull our socks up because this is a challenging opponent.

I didn't share that. I understood why you wanted that ethos at the military academy, but my own approach as to how the military system worked, and how the political system worked, was that it doesn't work at all and that these people are not ten feet tall. That their systems are not that red hot. And that what we've got is a hell of a lot better than theirs is. I didn't by any means downplay our abilities.

That got me into a certain amount of classroom exchange. You know, people would say "well what about the ZX247?" That didn't do it. I would just say it was just a bunch of bullshit, I'd read the reports on that stuff and it didn't do half of what people say it will do and so on. That was kind of fun. Now, twenty years later, it can be told, and now everybody acknowledges, that the Soviet Union wasn't such a big deal. It was certainly able to destroy the United States through nuclear weapons, but its individual systems, as you looked at them, were not as good as ours.

Q: Well we are talking though about a time. I mean looking at it from the naval perspective, after the 1962 missile crisis the Soviets decided they were going to have a Blue Seas fleet. They were beautiful ships. I don't know how well they worked, but they were beautiful ships. And there were lots of them. From the naval point of view from going from fifteen years before to the time you are talking about, or ten years before, I mean all of the sudden they had a real opponent, or a perceived opponent, at sea.

MENDELSOHN: Except there was a lot that we knew about how well the ships worked. They had no aircraft carriers at all; they had helicopter carriers. They couldn't manage this carrier landing the way we could. Their submarines were noisy and we knew where every submarine was whenever it went out. All these kinds of things. Sure they had a lot of things out there. It was a little bit like the tanks. I mean, they had 60,000 tanks, we had 10,000. But, you know 45,000 of them were from World War II! Maybe they ran but they were not real challenges.

There was that kind of discussion going. But you're right, the big thing was that the Russians now had a Blue Water Navy, Admiral Gurshkov, I guess it was...

Q: Gurshkov, yes.

MENDELSOHN: It was not that good. In the high tech stuff, in the highest tech stuff in the Navy, are submarines and aircraft carriers. We were just head and shoulders above them, head and shoulders above them. But, again, the ethos of the navy, and rightly, I agree with you, the ethos was that this was our only challenge. The only blue water challenge the navy faces is the Soviet fleet. But you never saw the Soviet fleet, really. It's interesting.

This is a parenthesis on my subsequent life. Last year I went down to Cuba with a foundation and the Cubans took us to Cien Fuegos, which was the port that the Russian Navy used when they stopped in Cuba. Most of the submarines pulled in there. These were diesel submarines. They never had any of their ballistic missile nuclear subs there. They showed us the recharging facilities for the batteries. The Russians had left behind warehouses full of Soviet batteries. I've got photos of these batteries and some of these batteries are the size of these bookcases. Well, that's a parenthesis.

In any case, I subsequently found out, and believe I was justified in feeling, that although history shows they were a ferocious adversary at any given point, on any given system, we were head and shoulders above them. That the system itself did not work well. It was basically running down, not getting stronger.

I shouldn't tell this story on myself, but years later one of the midshipmen agreed that my approach was probably realistic, although it certainly wasn't the common ethos. But he told me that my nickname from that Soviet political and military systems course, because I had such a sort of relaxed view about the Russians, I was known as Comrade Jack. Although they were always very polite, never ever gave any indication of that. I think those of them who thought about it, certainly realize now that this monolithic society that we were dedicated to dealing with had a hell of lot of holes.

Q: Of course we are talking about the mid '70s, this was high Brezhnev. You know if you were ever to look at when was the most sense in the latter part of the Soviet Empire, this was a real conflict.

MENDELSOHN: All during the heat and the height of the confrontation the Congress ran an annual series of Hearings in the Joint Economic Committee called Soviet Strategic Analysis…something like that. Hang on one sec, let me just check – Allocation of Resources, that's what they were called, the Allocation of Resource Hearings in the Joint Economic Committee. They would get all of the leading scholars in the area, most of them dealing with the Soviet Union, Eastern Europe, and China. Separate sets of Hearings. They would annually publish a booklet on the economic performance and the military performance of those three areas.

Actually they alternated. One year they would do Russia or the Soviet Union, one year they'd do Eastern Europe, one year they'd do China. Those were the most revealing series of Hearings I have ever seen. I would say maybe the best that the Congress has ever put out. Scholars would be pointing out, people who were paying attention to this, and they were reasonable people, they did not try to get ideologues from either side, they would be pointing out the disastrous state of the economies in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union. They would also point out the shortcomings in the military command structure, military training, military technologies. And if you had patience enough to look through these things, you would learn a great deal about what was really going on in the Soviet Union.

I used a lot of examples from these Hearings in my class. For example, this is not military related, but the Soviet Union would turn out, annually, some billions of square feet of plate glass from the producers for windows. It turns out that something like only 40% of that plate glass ever got installed. 60% of it broke. Because it was measured in square feet, factories tended to make the glass too thin to handle. So 60% of it would be lost between production and installation, because it was so fragile. It was sort of thinner than code, but larger in area and you filled the production quota.

Q: So it was quota-driven, as they often say.

MENDELSOHN: And there were other quota-driven things. I can't remember now, but I had these great examples. You know all of these figures that you read about Russian or Soviet production, just are meaningless because they are driven by quotas and they are driven by long indices, and they do things to achieve the indices but that somehow undercut them in other ways. You know the thing about grain production. A quarter of the grain was lost in handling. A quarter. They have an enormous harvest but a quarter of it was never available. It would fall through the holes in trucks or it would fall out of train cars or it would be destroyed by rot because it wasn't stored well. I mean there were just amazing anecdotes in these books.

You would read about the training procedure pilots got, for example, Russian pilots. I'll make this up because I don't remember any longer. They got one quarter of the flight hours that we got. They had no independent control they were all managed from the ground. Well, enough is enough, in any case there were lots of very interesting things you could point out to the midshipmen about what was really going on in the Soviet culture.

Q: Jack, did you find you were going head to head or disturbing, you might say, the naval establishment or others there? You're shaking your head.

MENDELSOHN: No. I never had anybody sort of come in and say, you know, by the way this is running a little bit contrary to our ethos here. Do you think you could shape up the threat a little? Not at all. As a matter of fact, for at least ten years after I left I was invited back by other professors every year to give a talk to their classes about sort of my view of what was going on, primarily in this case arms control and strategic stuff.

I still have a lot of friends there. I had a marvelous experience and thought I fitted in reasonably well and I've stayed in touch with a lot of people. I haven't stayed in touch with the midshipmen, but that's a different issue, but with the faculty, yes. I enjoyed it. It was a really great interlude.

Q: Something I get from people who have attended, particularly the National War College, Foreign Service Officers, I usually ask them what they think of the other Services they were with. Often it comes out like this: the Air Force is rather technically inclined and that drives it, the Navy is quite parochial and really doesn't agree with you. In many ways higher-ranking Army Officers, Foreign Service Officers often say, are just like them, the ones that come up.

They say it's maybe because the Army guys are on the ground and having to deal with people and serve. By the time they are at the Colonel level or so, they've served there. The ones who have risen through the ranks have a much broader experience. Oddly enough I've heard at least two people say that they found the Marines who ended up in that thing turned out to be the most intellectual. I don't know.

MENDELSOHN: That's interesting.

Q: Did you get any feeling about the Navy view. I think that's important from a foreign affairs point of view because so much of our projection overseas depends on interaction between the Foreign Service and the military.

MENDELSOHN: I may have mentioned this in an earlier tape. But certainly starting with the SALT delegation and following up through the experience in the Naval Academy and then in my next assignment at NATO, I gained an appreciation and I think a liking, if not a very positive feeling, about our military colleagues. I thought that was very important and very useful for Foreign Service types. I think the world of most of the military guys I've had to deal with.

Again, I was not dealing with the fighting forces. I was dealing with those guys who had already begun to be more sophisticated, played the Washington game, involved in politics and planning. I was very impressed and very positive about it and they were all fine fellows. Even if I didn't agree with them, they always were, as far as character and personality, really first rate.

As far as characterizing the Services, I'm a little hesitant to draw too broad a set of conclusions. I think the Air Force has been, perhaps, as the junior Service people argue and this may be true, a little bit more analytically inclined. A little bit more theoretically inclined, particularly in the strategic and nuclear forces. But that doesn't mean that they are not very Conservative people.

Lee Butler is an example of somebody who ran strategic command. He is radical now in his views of nuclear weapons. But there have been people running the strategic forces who have been quite Conservative. On the other hand, I never found in the SALT/START environment, I never found any of the military people to be enthusiasts of nuclear weapons or enthusiasts of nuclear war; most of them were very opposed to them. That is the wrong way to say it. Most of them were exceedingly willing to try to put some kind of a cap on them because they recognized these things could destroy the United States. They also made war no fun. You know you couldn't fight a nuclear war you could only be killed in it. So they were by no means enthusiasts.

My experience has been generally that the Air Force tends to do sort of the most analytic work on this. The Navy does tend -- you used the word 'parochial' -- that's probably true. It tends to be the most conservative, the most closed, sometimes the toughest to deal with. On the other hand, we had an Admiral on SALT, or maybe on START, who was very

radical with his views on nuclear weapons. So radical he eventually got withdrawn by JCS. But it shows that these kinds of generalities always have exceptions and are always dangerous.

I don't know enough about the Army because I dealt only with Navy and Air Force, really, in the strategic forces. The Army didn't have any. What has happened subsequently is that every year for the past eight or ten years, this Arms Control Association where I am now, has been invited to brief a group of officers from the Army War College. They come to Washington every spring for a *tour de resume* of the Government and they include us as one of their stops. With one exception, one year, it didn't work this way. But out of the nine or ten years we've been there, we've given these Army guys who were Colonels who are going somewhere, or they wouldn't have been selected for the War College, sort of a *tour de resume* of arms control and our interests and all that. They have all been amazingly receptive, realistic and thoughtful about the issues. They may not agree but they certainly are prepared to listen, they are prepared to argue.

One year, as I say, we got a very dismissive group. They looked like they had just come out of the trenches of Vietnam and didn't have much use for any other approach. Every other time, and the fact that they keep coming back I guess is a sign, or maybe they are trying to inoculate them against the pest, I have no idea. But every time they come down they agree with some of the things we have to say, they take a certain amount of exception with others, but they are always receptive. I think the Army is thoughtful without being the intellectual leaders. Air Force and Navy has tended to be sort of the intellectual leaders.

Maybe you can see this in the way the JCS selections have gone recently. They have turned increasingly to the Army as kind of solid middlemen, serious without being flamboyant, leadership people for the JCS. I think that is quite interesting, they normally want to rotate it but they can't.

Q: Jack let's move on then. You left in '77 and where did you go?

MENDELSOHN: I went to NATO.

Q: And you were in NATO from when to when?

MENDELSOHN: '77 to '79, two years.

Q: And when you say NATO, what do you mean?

MENDELSOHN: I was assigned as a Political-Military Affairs Officer to the U.S. Mission, NATO, in Brussels, Belgium. I worked in what would be in effect the U.S. Embassy to NATO. There is a U.S. Embassy to Belgium, and there is a U.S. Embassy to the, at that time, Economic Community, now the Economic Union. So we actually have three Embassies in Brussels. One of them is NATO. That was considered the most

important one. Belgium is a small country so it was important, but the big action of course was the Multilateral Headquarters at NATO. I was one of about eight or nine officers in the Political Section. At the time most of us were FSO-3s.

Q: That's about the Colonel level in the old...

MENDELSOHN: There may have been one junior, and then there was one senior, and there was of course a Counselor for Political Affairs. At the time the Counselor was Orme Wilson and the Ambassador was Tap Bennett. I can't remember his real first name.

Q: William Tapley Bennett.

MENDELSOHN: I guess it was William Tapley Bennett. Right, thank you.

Orme Wilson was a friend of Tap's. He sort of asked him to come on. They both have died, I guess, since then so maybe I can speak freely.

Q: ...leadership and our mission at NATO and the approach and all.

MENDELSOHN: Right. Our Deputy was Mike Glickman, Maynard Glickman, who went on to be Ambassador to Belgium.

Tap Bennett was a sweet guy. He was not into the nitty-gritty but there was too much nitty-gritty. I mean there were thousands of different things going on. It was impossible for anybody except a specialist to keep up with each of those individual specialty items. You had a lot of officers there. But Tap was very good at getting briefed and going in and doing what you told him to do.

He was also a people-person. He was an old-fashioned diplomatic type. When he put his arm around you, you felt really good. He could talk you into almost anything. He was very reasonable and perfect from a junior officer's point of view. You know, you'd say he took instructions very well! He did a very good job. He was not a brilliant strategist. He was a good tactician. He ran the Embassy well. He was very likeable. I think his colleagues among the other ambassadors or representatives, as they were called to NATO or the NATO Council, liked him very much and he did a very good job for the U.S.

Mike Glickman was very sharp. He was kind of the brains and the 'sparkly' part of the operation. He was a very good Executive Officer for Tap. If Tap got instructions, you know, to draft a *communiqué* that reflects the following seven points, Tap would give it to Mike Glickman. Mike would do a terrific job, protect everybody's interests and do it very well. I liked Mike very much and I, as an action officer for arms control, worked very closely with Mike. And of course whenever those issues came up it would be my job to brief the Ambassador in the morning meeting before he would go to the Council meeting. He was very good. You had to write up everything for him and he would follow them. You know, he 'took instructions very well.'

The person that I had the most trouble with and who was in a way largely responsible for my leaving early…I got a four-year assignment, which I wanted. I left after two years because it was boring in the following sense. The Political Counselor, who was Tap's man, Orme Wilson, was way too conservative for my tastes. This was a guy who would never make a recommendation that hadn't already been made so he would be sure not to cross a wire. Each of the action officers had various committees that they dealt with. I dealt with what was called the Special Political Committee, which was the one that managed the MBFR negotiations for Jock Dean, who was in Vienna at that time.

Q: Mutual Balanced Force Reductions.

MENDELSOHN: Which turned into the Conventional Forces in Europe Reductions. It eventually turned into a very successful and important agreement. At the time it had been marking time for six years and was going to mark time for another six years before we really turned it into something serious.

But if ever I made a recommendation at the end of a meeting of the Special Political Committee saying, well, nobody around the table seems to care about this approach, why don't we try this approach, Orme would always try to stop it. He would say, "Are you sure this will be well received in Washington?" I would say, "Well, I don't know, let's give it a try." It was always a fight to say anything because he was afraid of being criticized or of getting the Ambassador criticized.

If he wrote a cable back to Washington I'd come into his office and he would have out the chrons from the last two years, making sure he didn't say anything that hadn't been said before. For someone who had just been wheeling and dealing on the SALT delegation as the Special Assistant to the Ambassador, who had been hawking his wares at the Naval Academy where no midshipman is going to stand up and criticize, well to come and find a guy who was so unwilling to think big... Mike Glickman was not, but you had to get your stuff through Orme Wilson. Sometimes, to Orme's credit, sometimes he would just let me deal with Mike directly and there it was a lot better.

But I just found that so inhibiting, you know. I felt I was a big high flyer and I got there and I was one of half a dozen FSO-3s. It was a comedown in a sense in my own mind. Although NATO is a very good assignment and it is a very interesting place and I liked it very much that was the only, and I repeat this, it was the only Foreign Service assignment that I wound up really not liking as much as I could or should have. I basically liked everything else I had to do in the Foreign Service. This one I didn't because I felt there was no premium for initiative and there was an awful lot of structure. It was a little bit confining.

Q: Jack, one of the things on a job like this, you couldn't fly but at the same time you were learning a structure, you working on an alliance. This obviously played up in later times. This was one of those times when one may be spinning one's personal wills but enhancing one's knowledge of the system.

MENDELSOHN: Absolutely.

Q: Could we talk about your impression of NATO as an organization and also of some of the individual countries or players at that time, including France.

MENDELSOHN: I learned a lot and I learned to appreciate NATO and I am a big fan of NATO, even though I happened to be involved in that group of people that are registering their disapproval of NATO expansion. It's not because I don't like NATO, I like to say it's because I like it so much I want it to stay the way it is, an effective tool for U.S. security interests.

I learned to appreciate it. I liked it very much. It was very frustrating at times having to deal in a multilateral environment, but you learn a lot about how to try to get things done in a multilateral environment. You have to deal with some of the major powers. Britain, Germany were obviously the ones we wanted to deal with. There was a lot of fun cooperating with them on what was happening. You wanted to stay on good terms with your other colleagues.

You also had a feeling at the time, and this plays back to what I was talking about at the Naval Academy. This was an important moment. This was '77 to '79, the height of the confrontation. NATO was clearly the most important alliance in the world and the centerpiece of U.S.-European foreign policy. You knew you were in an important place, you knew it was a big deal. You learned a lot about what it was the West was doing in order to respond to the challenge from the Soviet Union and you dealt, again, with military figures.

The people who went to NATO, and this was true I think across the board, good people got sent to represent their countries both in the military and on the civilian side, the diplomatic side. So all in all it was a very impressive place to work and you learned a lot of interesting and important things.

I just was sorry I felt that somehow I wasn't able to fully deploy my wings. And that may have just been me, but in any case it was a very frustrating time for me. As I said I wanted to stay for four years, but I felt I just couldn't. It wasn't worth it; I wasn't getting as much fun out of it as I should. So I left early.

Q: One of the issues I am thinking of at that time, and maybe it wasn't your thing, was the so-called neutron bomb. Another was the SS-20 and those things. From your perspective and you're watching the operation, how did we deal with those and other issues?

MENDELSOHN: I don't remember the neutron bomb thing. I know the story. When did we decide not to deploy it? Was it '76?

Q: It couldn't have been because Carter was elected in '76 and didn't serve until '77 and it was Carter…I suspect it was right in the middle of your time there. He got what's his

name…Schmidt, Helmut Schmidt, out on a limb and then pulled it back.

One of the people I've interviewed is Vlad Lehovic, and Vlad was saying he could hardly wait to get back and vote against Carter after that, he was so mad.

MENDELSOHN: I cannot remember that well enough to make any good comments. I do remember the SS-20 very well.

Q: All right. Could you talk about that, what are we talking about? What were the responses that you saw within our delegation and in dealing with others?

MENDELSOHN: Well, what we are talking about is that during the late '70s the Russians began to deploy a new intermediate range missile targeted on Europe and NATO countries, the SS-20 with three warheads. This was replacing the SS-5s and 6s, I guess it was, the previous, rather clunky intermediate range missiles that the Russians had.

Schmidt had basically ticked off a debate when he argued that as a result of the SALT Treaties, the U.S. and the Soviet Union were at a strategic standoff. That neither side was likely to use those weapons against the other side because it meant the destruction of both of the major countries. So that left, in Schmidt's analytic framework, that left a kind of a lower level confrontation in Europe between the Russian threat or the Soviet threat to Europe and the NATO and U.S. response to that threat.

He thought it was unlikely in the SALT environment that the U.S. would use its strategic forces to defend Europe, therefore it had to have intermediate range nuclear forces, tactical nuclear weapons, to respond to the Russian-Soviet tactical threat or intermediate range nuclear threat. And as that threat was being modernized, then the question arose did the United States or NATO in general, NATO countries, need to upgrade their tactical nuclear weapon response to this Russian-Soviet SS-20 modernization?

Now what's interesting, and I remember this very well. The initial response of the USG, United States Government, was that there was no increase or real substantive qualitative change in the threat. The SS-20 was a modernization; it was replacing the 5s and 6s. We had thousands, at that time somewhere between 7,200 and 7,500 tactical nuclear weapons on NATO's side. These were still available and would remain available to counter whatever the Russians… Soviets… I've actually trained myself very well and I don't say Soviets anymore and now it's hard to remember to say that… to counter whatever the Soviets were up to.

I remember. I believe it was in the fall/winter, '77, '78, when I first got to NATO. I got there in the summer of '77. Les Gelb, who was the head of PM, led a briefing team of U.S. Government officials to brief NATO to show them how we had more than adequate tactical nuclear weapons forces available to respond to whatever the Russians were up to. So the initial U.S. response to this SS-20 threat was, hey, we've got thousands of tactics. We've even got some on submarines, which are nominally strategic but which are

dedicated to NATO. We've got all the French and British forces. We've got all the other artillery shells, bombs, aircraft carrier launch stuff from the Mediterranean and elsewhere. We've got more than enough stuff to handle any nuclear weapons threat, or any conventional attack that would call for a flexible response and that you might think wouldn't involve our strategic forces, we've got options coming out of our ears. I believed that and I still do. That it was the right thing to do and the right way to go.

I was in NATO, not in Washington, but somewhere between the fall/winter of '77 and '78 and, I guess, '78, somewhere between that briefing and the middle of 1978 we changed our minds. The U.S. changed its mind. At the time, my recollection is under the pressure of the Germans who I think miss-analyzed the situation. There was a lot of pressure from the German military that we had to have a response to the SS-20. We decided that we were going to get NATO to agree to accept deployment of an upgraded Pershing missile, Pershing II, and a new cruise missile that we had been touting for some decades. It was certainly since the early 70s that the cruise missile was sort of the weapon of the future, a new cruise missile that would also have a nuclear warhead.

I cannot now remember. It was going to be some…I'll make this up…it was going to be some 400 odd cruise missiles and some 200 odd Pershing II's we are talking. NATO decided that somewhere between 400 and 600 warheads would be required, not to redress the threat but to continue the deterrent capabilities. There was some fancy language to justify this. And that decision was taken…I cannot now remember, but I think it was taken in '78 or actually in '79. It was worked up to after the decision was made somewhere in '78 that we were not going to argue with our Allies, that we had more than enough. We were going to buy their concerns and then get NATO to agree to accept about 600 warheads.

Basically that decision was made in '79, and I left in the middle of '79. The Russians, of course, were absolutely livid about this. They thought this was an upgrading of the threat facing them. We argued that it was a response, or one of the arguments was that it was a response to the upgrading of the threat facing us. Between '79 and '83, we were in a very bad patch with the Russians; I would say probably the worst patch that we have had in the Cold War. Starting with the invasion in December of '79 by the Russians of Afghanistan, and ending in 1983 when we began to deploy these missiles that had been decided, intermediate range cruise and Pershing missiles. We deployed them, I think in November of '83 at which point the Russians broke off negotiations with us on arms control in Geneva across the board and didn't come back until '85, after Gorbachev came in.

We had, meanwhile, some major political changes in the U.S. Reagan was elected and he had a much harder line vis-a-vis the Russians, and of course Brezhnev was on his last legs in '79, succeeded by Chernenko and Andropov, also on their last legs when they were elected. So the '79 to '83 period was really a pretty dreary one. But all of this in sort of, if you will, the mid to late '70s. We were moving, when I was at NATO, towards deployment of these intermediate range systems.

Two other things were going on.

Q: Before we get away from this deployment thing, obviously this was a political move more than a military move. When you get right down to it, there is a reason to keep from making the Germans feel comfortable, because otherwise this was considered a ploy to turn Germany neutralist on the Soviet part. That was one of our perceptions. Were you getting from your colleagues, both internally in the Mission any thoughts? And what were you getting from particularly the British and the Germans and the French?

MENDELSOHN: I don't remember my colleagues. But I think the Europeans were gung-ho, generally. NATO generally was supportive of this, the Brits certainly, the Germans certainly. This was not a problem for NATO that I remember. Our problem, as I was trying to indicate, we tried to talk them out of it in the beginning and basically didn't succeed or decided it wasn't worth going that route and we had to show a little force on this.

My personal feeling was it was the wrong way to go. But history worked out fine. Basically we got a deal with the Russians by '87. You can't argue that deploying wasn't helpful. We got a deal in '87 to get rid of everything. But there was a second important fact. The first one is we deployed and therefore the argument would be you had leverage to go to zero. But the other argument is that in '85 you got Gorbachev and that changed everything. So two things happened. Whether Gorbachev without our deployment would have been enough, or our deployment without Gorbachev would have been enough, who knows. But there were two key things that happened.

Q: From your perspective at the time, this moving to meet the "Soviet challenge" was supported?

MENDELSOHN: We were not pushing uphill. We were not pushing uphill very much. Actually I think the Europeans welcomed that. I think they were afraid that if we didn't respond that the Russians would have notched up somehow the perception of their threat and the perception that they had somehow cowed NATO, that they had somehow won this war of nerves, war of deployments, war of tac-nukes, which were crazy.

Q: It's crazy but we are talking about psychology, or psychosis, and you had a Carter Administration that was perceived as being rather soft.

MENDELSOHN: Absolutely right. That's where the neutron thing probably works in. We had a very bad show on the neutron weapon and I think that certainly was a factor back in Washington in deciding that here we are getting a lot of pressure from the Allies to do something. On the neutron weapon we put pressure on them to accept it, and they were reluctant but finally did and then we pulled the rug out on it. Here they were putting pressure on us to make a new deployment of a system that they found more acceptable. I think there was certainly the recollection or memories of the neutron weapon debacle that was partly behind the decision to show we were still engaged, we were still linked.

We also had to respond to the Schmidt criticism. Remember we were also in the midst of and would conclude in the summer of '79, the SALT II negotiations, which clearly did sort of set equal levels on both sides of strategic forces. There the theoretical argument, although I don't believe it had any practical reality to it, was that we had equalized the strategic threats and by equalizing them had neutralized them and were not likely to employ them. Therefore we had to look to European defenses in another way. That was the German argument. We had to somehow to respond to that. That was the German concern.

While I wasn't an enthusiast, I wasn't key and I had nothing to do on the decisions. Where I was, I was the action officer for SALT II. The Allies were very interested in this, not the least reason being their concern that somehow we were undercutting their security by dealing with the Russians at the strategic level. So the SALT delegation, the SALT II delegation, came a couple of times a session to brief the NATO Council. I was the action officer; I did the reporting on it. I kept the Council, or the Ambassador, up to date on what was happening in SALT II. That was fun because I knew the subject matter. They had somebody who really knew it. It was very easy to keep on that.

I was helpful I think to both the SALT delegation and the U.S. Mission with others. Other Missions, and particularly the French, were very interested in what was happening in SALT II. They would come to me on a regular basis to get sort of updated, because I read the cables, the general reporting cables, and kept up on it. The French were very interested in this because I believe they shared that Schmidt analysis that we were managing with the Soviets to neutralize our strategic forces and to cut Europe a little bit loose from our strategic deterrent by the SALT process.

My major daily job was dealing with these MBFR discussions. Now that was time consuming but it went no where. You were in there trying to get the Allies to agree to throw in another unit of equipment. If we could get the Soviets to agree… you know, it was endless, meaningless detail.

Q: Did you know it was endless, meaningless at that time?

MENDELSOHN: Everybody did. Everybody knew it was going no where, but it was kept up. It was originally started in the early '70s as a response to Congress who threatened to cut funding to unilaterally reduce U.S. forces. Kissinger argued if Congress did that we would have no leverage over getting Russian forces down. Let us get into talks with the Soviets, see if we can't bring the forces down together. In order to do that you had to keep funding up for ours, blah, blah, blah…so we entered into discussions without either side really having a compelling reason to want to do it.

Q: The discussions were taking place where?

MENDELSOHN: The discussions took place in Vienna. The instructions were generated at NATO. It was a NATO-Warsaw Pact negotiation, if you will. It wasn't a USG-Soviet discussion. So there were joint instructions that were sent from NATO. This special

political committee under instructions from capitals, of course, worked out mutually acceptable positions to send to Vienna. It was very awkward. But again, you asked the question earlier, it taught you a little bit about multilateral negotiations. We always talked privately with the Brits and with the Germans to try to make sure that we had a trilateral agreement on where we could go next. Somebody would introduce an idea, the Germans, the Brits or the U.S., in the Council, in the special political committee, that had already been trilaterally approved. Then we would try to get all the other Allies on board.

You asked earlier about my impression of the other countries. There were very bright people involved in this. The Dutch were very sharp, the Belgians were very sharp on this and they cared. You would have to answer some serious questions from them. Most of the others were not that involved one way or the other and they would not pose problems. The Italians never had any instructions and always spoke at length about the issue. It was great, you knew that they would go whatever way the crowd was going, the Italians would go. They'd have to speak their piece and their guy would always say he hadn't hear from Rome but, and then you'd get a forty minute disquisition on some of the abstract, philosophic principles involved. The Greeks never said a word. The Turks were very sharp. The Canadians would do what the U.S. wanted or go where the U.S. was going. Wanted isn't the right word, but they had no reason to take issue with the U.S. or Britain on this. The French were not involved. They came but they were always a non player and you always had to take a footnote saying, whenever you had a figure, that this was not including French forces, because the French would not agree to anything on MBFR.

Q: What was the feeling, from both your point of view but what you were getting from your other colleagues, about the French nuclear armament and the conventional forces?

MENDELSOHN: That's a tough question. The one thing that was surprising that you found out, but now I guess is sort of common knowledge, is that the French military was much more relaxed about NATO and cooperating with the Allies. It was much more positively inclined than the French Government, which had sort of political, philosophic reasons for making an issue out of NATO and making an issue out of the United States. But at the military level we always had very good relations and the French military was always very anxious to cooperate and be cooperative. So at the practical level you had much less friction and many fewer problems than you did at the political level. Where for domestic politics read political reasons the French were difficult, they were difficult to deal with.

I actually turned out to be one of the primary liaisons with the French to the degree they wanted to liaison with the U.S. Mission, mainly because I've always been a Francophile. That's a little strong. I sort of understand the French and was willing to go along with them. Also my French was quite good at the time and it was easy to talk with them. My French may have been the best in the Embassy, I don't know, I shouldn't say that, but it was quite good and the French found it easy to talk to me. The French DCM was the guy who always wanted to talk with me about strategic systems and then they had a political officer who wanted to talk about other stuff that was going on. So I was sort of the

unofficial, at my level, liaison with the French.

They were always friendly to me, but I found their political analysis just always faulty. It's like that article that was in the paper recently about some business practice where the French said that as a practical matter it was fine, but that in theory it won't work. I was saying it just the other way around, in theory it might work but it had nothing to do with reality. They were very interested, as I said earlier, in the strategic discussions with the Russians because they somehow thought that could jeopardize their security or undercut their security in some way.

What was our feeling about their nuclear forces? This harks back to my days at the Naval Academy where we were always concerned that the French in some idiotic way might go to early use of nuclear weapons. My recollection among my military friends from SALT and the Naval Academy was the old saying, you know, the French were so unreliable and they were so likely to mis-analyze a situation. The slogan was that when the balloon goes up, i.e. when we are really on high alert and we're worried about going to war with the Russians, that the first thing we ought to do is sink the French submarines. I remember that, and I've told the French that from time to time, I've said, you know, in the U.S. military we were more worried about the French than we were about the Russians doing something stupid in a crisis. You could never figure out what they were planning and how their analysis might work.

I know that's a little unfair. Certainly De Gaulle was quite reasonable and understood pretty well what was going on. What the French are trying to do all along, always have been trying to do, is to basically carve a role for themselves in the world. It's very difficult when it's dominated by Anglo-Saxons in the case of the U.S. and Britain, or the Soviets in the case of the Soviet Union-Warsaw Pact. How do you have a French identity, a French independence and a French policy? It drives you to some extremes when the obvious ground is seized by the big powers. In order to cut a swathe for yourself you have to take some really strange byways. Their analyses are sometimes so contorted and convoluted that they just don't act in a commonsensical way. But this is at the political and analytical level.

At the military level the relationship has always been good. As I said earlier the French have always wanted to cooperate with the U.S. About a year or so ago I met some French officers, I forget in what connection. I asked them what they were doing here and they said they were testing their new carrier aircraft. They were using the U.S. test beds, because they don't have carrier testing. They were at Patuxent, I guess. It's actually a land strip that's configured like a carrier, I guess, and you practice on that before you go out to sea. That's terrific. It's close cooperation and it's a two-year period to test this airplane. That's about as close a cooperation as you can expect to get among militaries and it has gone on and I think the French military appreciate it.

They are not critical of the U.S. The other thing I think people ought to recognize is this great ambivalence that existed about the U.S. presence in Europe. Certainly in the '70s that was there, but it has always been very ambivalent and actually deceptively so. There

was always criticism of the U. S. presence and the U.S. dominance and all that, but deep down nobody, not the Russians or the Soviets, not the French, and certainly not the British or the Germans, wanted the U.S. to leave. That would have been the worst outcome from everybody's point of view. You see it even more clearly now where in spite of everything that is in the paper the Russians do not want to drive the Americans out of Europe. They do not want to see NATO expand, but they also do not want the Americans to leave. It's difficult to sort of find a pathway between the two because it is the Americans that make sure there isn't going to be any trouble with the Germans or any trouble in Western Europe.

Q: One goes back to the original idea of NATO where somebody said NATO is designed to keep the Americans in, the Germans down and the Soviets out. In a way those things are still going.

MENDELSOHN: That's right.

Q: You know, my Ambassador to Yugoslavia in the mid '60s when I was there, said one time that Tito said he was highly supportive of having the Sixth Fleet in the Mediterranean, the American Sixth Fleet, because he thought it was a positive force.

MENDELSOHN: I think everybody agrees with that. They all want the Americans in. How do you get them in? Americans now believe that the only way they'll stay in is if NATO expands. We've created a problem there. But I think that two of the concerns…keeping the Germans down, I don't think anybody thinks the Germans are going to get out of control. They write it, but I don't think anybody believes it. Keeping the Russians out? I don't think anybody believes the Russians are headed in. They can't be headed in. If they decided today to re-conquer Central Europe, it would take them 15 years to get to a position to be able to do it.

So the only issue that is really left…that's Lord Ismay that made that statement, by the way, the first Secretary General, and he was right, I agree with him. The only big issue now is what does it take now to keep the Americans in! Apparently the Europeans have concluded that NATO expansion is required to keep the Americans in, because we are pushing it very hard. I think, however, we are making a mistake on that.

Q: Were there any other issues you were dealing with at NATO at that particular time?

MENDELSOHN: No. I was basically the arms control guy, the SALT guy, and the MBFR conventional forces guy. I was also the Soviet threat guy. I continued to brief a lot of people for the Mission, a lot of congressmen coming through, or staffers. My files at home have a dozen or so kind of thank-you notes or letters, but some rather unusual thank-you letters. There is one letter I got from the head of what is now FEMA, Federal Emergency Management...

Q: This is the response to earthquakes, floods, etc.

MENDELSOHN: Yes, well this was going to be for nuclear war, also, at that time. He sent it to, I think the Ambassador, and he said thank you very much for your warm reception, I appreciated all the briefings, I particularly appreciated the briefings by Al Haig, who was SAC Europe, and Jack Mendelsohn. I loved that letter that sort of put the two of us, me an FSO-3 and he was the Supreme Allied Commander in Europe, together. I don't know if Haig ever knew we had been linked together.

I did a lot of briefing of reporters, journalists. The journalists were interested in the Soviet threat and they were interested in nuclear weapons. They were interested in the arms control discussions with the Soviets. So that was my area. I did a lot of that public affairs work. I was sent on speaking tours. I liked doing that because, as I started out saying, I didn't like working with my immediate boss so much. This was sort of, if I got sent to Scandawije to brief on arms control negotiations in NATO, I was my own man. I also got re-detailed down to Geneva to the SALT Talks. The State Department was unable to staff SALT for a month at one point. I volunteered to go just to get out of the Mission. I went down there and had fun for a couple of weeks, three or four weeks in Geneva. So I did a lot of sort of public affairs work for the Mission as well, and I did a good job at it and they liked having me do it.

Q: Another aspect was that you were sort of the liaison man with the French, too.

MENDELSOHN: I was liaison with the French, although that was in the building. I went to conferences and stuff. Despite the impression people might get from listening to the tapes, I was a pretty good speaker and I knew my subject very well. I could handle the public affairs part. I remember going to a lot of conferences of, you know, strategic situation in Europe, in England, Holland and places like that. I did a lot of that kind of stuff.

Q: One last thing that I would like to ask you. Could you tell me what you were saying and believing about the Soviet threat at that time? We are talking about the sort of mixed signals we were getting. You had Carter who thought now was a time we could do business with the Soviets, and Carter came with a sort of a Baptist-Christian idea of if you do nice to them they'll do nice to you. Plus the fact that we were getting ready for this group who were going make the most horrendous mistake in the Soviet Union and get involved in Afghanistan. We never really figured out who did it. This is slightly after your time but there was a real threat. We had a sort of a goody-goody approach on one hand, at the same time we were acting tough. What were we saying?

MENDELSOHN: My argument had to be, when I was out there selling SALT, that there was absolutely no reason not to deal with the Russians because we were in a fundamentally strong, if not superior, position to them. We could afford to strike any of these deals on any basis that you wanted to look at it except perhaps numerical. We were head and shoulders above them qualitatively. In nuclear forces it probably didn't make a lot of difference one way or the other since both sides could destroy the other. But on any measure that you wanted to take, except numbers, we were better off than they were. We had nothing to fear.

What you had to do was to overcome concern that striking these deals would somehow put us at a disadvantage. My argument would have been there was no way we were going to be at a disadvantage. I actually wrote a piece about this after I left the Government. Even though there was a quantitative disparity in conventional forces, this is different from nuclear forces, we more than compensated for the quantitative disparity by the superiority of our training, our command and control, our aircraft, our tactics and our allies.

People agglomerated the Warsaw Pact and said there were the Russians and then there are the Armenians and the Poles and so on. Most of those people, I said, you could discount totally, almost totally, in terms of aggressive allies. If attacked, I didn't have any doubt they would fight, but we didn't intend to attack them. If forced to attack I had grave doubts as to how useful they would be as allies. As a matter of fact I argued that the Russians showed by the way they deployed their forces that they, the Soviets, had grave doubts about the reliability of their allies.

The quantitative difference between NATO conventional forces and Russian conventional forces was very interesting. The Russians had deployed roughly the number of forces that NATO had and the balance of the Warsaw Pact difference was the Warsaw Pact allies. This said to me, and I think it's absolutely right, that the Russians figured they had to have as many troops there as they thought they needed to balance NATO and the rest of their Warsaw Pact allies maybe they'd help and maybe they wouldn't. But they sure weren't counting on them to counterbalance NATO. They were going to do it all by themselves and then everything else would be gravy.

But the Russians knew, for example, at Stalingrad the forces that cracked were the Romanian and Hungarian forces. If you were a Russian General and you were told to go into battle with a Bulgarian Division on your left and a Romanian one on your right, you're going to protect your flanks, let me tell you. You can't count on those people to do the kind of job you want to have done. I don't mean to say these aren't fine nations and that they don't have fine military traditions. They simply weren't of the (A) quality, and (B) of the ideological drive that you would count on as allies. They certainly didn't have the same affection for their alliance that the NATO allies had for its alliance.

But when you started bean counting these factors didn't play. If you bean-counted you had a lot of extra tanks that belonged to the Poles and the Hungarians and the Romanians, Bulgarians and East Germans.

Q: You left there in mid 1979 which is an important date because all hell broke loose in December of '79 when the Soviets went into Afghanistan. It looked like a whole new ballgame. Where did you go?

MENDELSOHN: This is a very interesting story. Maybe this will be the sort of lead into a break here so I can get some coffee.

I had to arrange to get out of my four-year assignment and the best deal that I could arrange long distance was an offer from OES, Oceans, Environment and Science.

Q: This is within the Department?

MENDELSOHN: Within the Department. The OES Bureau offered me a three-year contract with a bonus up front. The bonus was that I would get one year's training at a university in science and public policy in exchange for two years' service in the Bureau. I thought about two seconds about it and decided this might be fun, where are you going to send me? Stanford. Sign me up! I'm going to California. I figured it would be great. So I got signed up.

There was a commitment to serve in OES. At the time the Congress had driven the Department to pay more attention to the impact of global warming, energy issues, pollution, all this stuff. The impact it had on foreign policy and foreign affairs. OES had a very dynamic Assistant Secretary, which was part of the attraction, a guy named Tom Pickering.

Q: Oh, yes.

MENDELSOHN: He is now Under Secretary for Political Affairs and who wound up as Ambassador to Moscow before that. At that point it was an interesting and important Bureau, and the guy I was going to go work for had previously been at NATO, Pierre Shostal.

Q: Whom I'm interviewing right now.

MENDELSOHN: Are you really? He's coming to dinner on Sunday night. He is an old friend. I went to work as his Deputy in his office and then when he left I took over that office, which was the Office of Cooperative Science and Technology. But before I got there I got sent to university. But in the inimitable way of the Department it wasn't Stanford. It was MIT, which was fine.

In its inimitable way the Department screwed up the Stanford thing. They promised Stanford to whoever wanted this program, but they had never talked to Stanford about it. When they went to Stanford, Stanford said if the Department gave a little extra money to establish a sort of administrative framework…they were hoping to get endowed! The Department got back to me and said it wasn't going to work out with Stanford, that I could go anywhere I wanted to go. They suggested MIT and others, I said MIT was fine.

My wife and I and kids moved up to Newton into a wonderful old house. We had a marvelous year at MIT. My wife went to the Radcliffe seminars, studied art and art history. My kids went to the local schools and loved it.

Actually, I hadn't mentioned one thing about NATO and Brussels, if I could. That is, the kids got great schooling, fortunately not in the DOD school, which was a scandal. That

was one of the problems about the Foreign Service that ought to be, or maybe it has been, corrected. I have no idea. But the DOD school just was not up to code in any sense. We sent one of our kids to a local Belgian school. It was marvelous. She had a great time. The other we sent to a British school, where she got a great education. But we had to pay for that out of our own pocket, both of them. The Department would not reimburse because there was a DOD school available that everyone knew was unacceptably poor. It was I thought the most critical administrative aspect of living in Belgium and maybe even in the Foreign Service. The biggest criticism I've got about that, about Department support or the lack thereof, was in the schooling situation in Belgium.

I was reminded of this because when we got to Newton, where we lived, we had excellent schools for our kids. They both thrived. They liked it very much.

I had a very good time at MIT, where I was encouraged not to take a degree. I didn't need a degree. I already had three. I was encouraged to take things I was interested in and that were relevant to what was going on in the world of OES. Also to take things I wanted at Harvard and I took a couple of courses there. Audited a lot and went to all of the lectures I could possibly get to. Basically I had freedom of the Institute and freedom of Harvard University for that matter, at the same time.

I didn't take any arms control at all but I did take stuff that was related, a lot of energy and environmental stuff, transnational communications. Trans-border communications were thriving, satellite communications stuff, I learned a lot. I can't say I remember it much anymore, but it was a very intellectually rewarding and rich year and also a very pleasant one. I had a really very good experience.

I'm a big fan of mid-career training. Everybody doesn't like it and I'm not saying you should force anybody to do it. On the other hand I found it personally very enriching and I think it made me marginally better, more useful. I would be very strong for it. I don't know where those programs stand now. My hunch is that as budgets get tighter these are the things that drop out easily but I think they are very, very useful.

Q: This was somewhat of a new field for you. Having been in arms control all of a sudden you are over in the science environment. When you were at MIT, did you find a certain approach, a certain theme was coming out that was different from what you got when you got on the job?

MENDELSOHN: No, no, not at all. It just gave me an appreciation for the kinds of issues that people were addressing in the scientific community.

What happened in the job when I got there in the summer of '80, was that we were basically administering a lot of bilateral programs. It was the Office of Cooperative Science and Technology Programs. At the time with all the "socialist" countries we had formal agreements for science cooperation. It wasn't just with the socialist countries. We had it with Italy, we had it with Spain, we had sort of formal arrangements where governmental agencies, U.S. scientific agencies, would cooperate with counterparts in the

other country or monies were available from surplus currency accounts or appropriated money to run joint scientific programs. That was the case, for example, in Poland, where you had blocked zlotys and Yugoslavia where you had blocked dinars. We had cooperative science programs that were funded by currencies that were available, surplus currencies that were available.

They were run both between academic institutions and between the Bureau of Standards, NIH. There were lots of these cooperative programs. What it did was give me sort of an appreciation of what it was that was of interest to science and useful to science and technology people at that time. It was really an administrative program when I got there.

I didn't tell the Bureau of Standards that it was supposed to get involved in an emissions study with Yugoslavia. The scientists worked it out between themselves or between agencies. It was my job to sort of round up all the U.S. Agencies on the Spain program, and this is actually one of the things I did. I said we were about to renew our Treaty, our cooperative science and technology treaty with Spain, were there particular areas that should be covered or opened for exchanges or cooperation in the new Treaty? They said, for example, they wanted to talk more about chip technology or emissions technology and make sure it got written into the Treaty. But I didn't get into the nuts and bolts about whether this was the program or that was the program on chip technology that they ought to have.

Occasionally you just had to exercise a little judgement and this actually happened in the Yugoslav cooperative program.

Q: We'll pick this up the next time. We've covered MIT. We'll talk about your time in OES. You were there from 1980 until?

MENDELSOHN: Late '81.

Q: '81. You've already mentioned it was sort of an administrative job on various things but if you want to talk about some of the particulars...

MENDELSOHN: One or two good activists.

Q: ... and the role of OES at that time. I don't know whether Tom Pickering was still in charge, but how he operated and its role there. We'll pick that up next time, then.

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Today is the 17th of September 1997. Jack, we're in 1980 to '81 when you are at OES, which is Oceans, Environment and Science.

MENDELSOHN: International Science.

Q: You say you are basically sort of on the administrative side there. First, could you tell

me how Tom Pickering worked during the time you were there?

MENDELSOHN: Pickering was, as I think he's always been, a very, very effective Officer. He had been most recently, I guess, Ambassador to Jordan. There was an effort, to the credit of the Department, but I think partly pushed by congressional pressure and legislation, to give a higher profile to the environmental and scientific issues that were beginning to appear on the international agenda. The most obvious one was Law of the Sea, but there was also the question of resources utilization, the warming effect or the greenhouse effect. Things like this were beginning to get the attention of policy makers in Washington.

So his appointment was an effort to give a little more profile and to give a really powerful internal Foreign Service Officer sort of blesses an otherwise rather orphaned Bureau, at least in the traditional sense of what is it the Foreign Service is involved in. Well, it's involved in political reporting, economic reporting and OES is a fringe issue or the package of issues in OES is sort of a fringe issue. That's always been a problem between the geographic bureaus and the functional bureaus and still exists today, as everyone knows, in the State Department.

This was an effort to give a little higher profile to it. He was really quite good. Very dynamic, very respected and I think gave the Bureau a big boost. I didn't follow the fortunes of the Bureau after that. I've no idea where it stands now. But when he was there I think everybody recognized that that was a sign that we were paying attention to it and he did, I thought, a very, very good job, if nothing else to give a profile to the issues.

Q: From the executive, administrative side often the clout of the Bureau, the respect to the Bureau, is shown in whether or not you get resources.

MENDELSOHN: Yes, obviously, and whether you've got somebody who is able to pull those resources from the central system. Tom was clearly that kind of guy, although it wasn't always that easy.

I remember one project I was involved in and I don't actually know what happened to it. But when he was in Jordan, maybe in the assignment just before he took over OES, there had been some kind of commitment to get a hunk of money. The recollection I have is something like 37 million dollars to run some project. I think it had to do with water but I don't know that for a fact any longer. It was my job for awhile, in any case, to go find the 37 million dollars at USAID, the Agency for International Development.

Pickering had already promised this money to the King of Jordan. Clearly if he had promised it, it had to be authorized somewhere. I couldn't for the life of me get AID to respond to that issue. Now I think it eventually happened, but it sure didn't happen because of anything I did. I would go from office to office. AID would send me to this guy and that guy and absolutely none of them remembered the U.S. Government commitment or agreed to start working on it. They all said there was no way to do that. It was an incredible stonewall.

As I say I don't know how it finally worked out because whatever happened I wasn't there at the end. I don't remember being taken off it for having failed or anything. I think it might have been towards the end of my tour and it just got passed on to someone else. But, boy, I was not having a lot of luck.

Your question was about getting resources. It was not always that easy even after the decisions had been made.

Q: You were there really at the end of the Carter Administration weren't you?

MENDELSOHN: This would have been '80, '81. Yes. I was there during transition. I wound up being an Office Director. I came in as a Deputy Office Director and wound up being an Office Director. My Assistant Secretary changed sort of midway through my tour. That was the end of Carter and beginning of Reagan.

Q: How did the change of Administration impact on your Bureau. I always think of the classic case in the ARA, American Republics, where there was essentially blood in the corridors. Other places there wasn't really much change. Sort of true believers ended up in the Latin American Bureau.

MENDELSOHN: Well that is not so far from what I know happened, at least in my little section. The Deputy Assistant Secretary changed from a sort of professional bureaucrat who was really quite good and had been picked by Tom Pickering. He is retired but remains a friend, a personal friend of mine.

Q: Who is that?

MENDELSOHN: This was Norm Terrell, a very good bureaucrat who really knew how to get things done. He really knew how to get the system to respond. He was replaced midway through my period by Charles Horner, who again, actually, was a family friend. Our kids were in school together. He was outside government, whereas Norm was a professional bureaucrat, a government employee. He wound up being an associate director at NASA so he was a reasonably competent guy.

Charles Horner had, I don't think, ever been in government. He had been writing for the *New Spectator* or some far right magazine, was ideologically correct, he got this appointment and basically had no interest whatsoever in the subject matter. He thought the whole exercise of OES was futile, and couldn't have cared less. What was interesting for me was that all of the responsibility for running the programs, whether or not Horner thought they were worthwhile, was then left with the offices under that Assistant Secretary or Deputy Assistant Secretary, and the White House which has an Office of Science and Technology. So basically I wound up working with the White House on getting things done. White House couldn't have cared that much either. They had, I think, a reasonably weak Science Adviser at the time.

It had been much stronger, and a much more important component. Carter was using OES and monies in this area to help U.S. policies in Africa and the developing world and places like that.

Q: And also he was quite interested in alternate sources of energy, too.

MENDELSOHN: Yes, very much. We were into energy; we were into all kinds of things. The Reaganauts just didn't think this was an important aspect of policy. Thought it was basically a waste of money, and Horner couldn't have cared less.

It was a good experience in many ways. I had total freedom to run my operation. He couldn't have cared less. I haven't explained quite what it was I did. I was the Deputy and then I ran the Office of Cooperative Science and Technology Programs, SCT. And what this meant was with awful lot of underdeveloped countries and certainly with all of the socialist countries, we had structured scientific exchanges. If you were Russian, you couldn't just apply to MIT and turn up in the labs and study. If you were Western European or Latin American, you could apply to any U.S. university, if you were accepted, you'd go there. Vice Versa, you could apply to any of their universities and if you got in you'd just go. Of course with the socialist countries we had a totally structured exchange program.

They would send us 24 students; we would send them 24 students. We would have government to government cooperation, but all of this was managed by contracts or treaties, if you will. You know, for these two years we will have seven exchanges and they will be in the following four areas and will involve the following thirteen people. It was the office's job to manage these bilateral cooperative science programs.

Actually some of them even with Western Europe were fairly extensive without contracts. In the case of Italy, if you want a simple Western European example, every two years there was a kind of an umbrella committee. In both Italy and in the United States all the science-based government agencies would get together and talk about cooperative programs, in other words, the Bureau of Standards, the Weather Service, and the Geologic Survey. All of these had counterpart organizations in Italy. Every two years they would get together and talk about what it was they would like to do. They didn't actually need contracts, you know, government to government treaties to do their science, but they did like to meet every two years and sort of review the programs.

It was my job to sort of organize those. Call the U.S. Agencies together and say okay, you are going to Italy in two months, what is it that you want to talk about. I want a list of the issues that you've got. I don't want there to be any surprises here, blah, blah, blah. That was State's role with Western Europe.

With Eastern Europe it was much more structured. As I explained earlier, every one of the programs had sort of a treaty justification.

Q: Spying was a concern, or technology transfer.

MENDELSOHN: Well we always thought that was what they were up to. For example in the Russian program, all of the Russians, let's say there were 24, that's about the number I remember, 23 of the 24 would be going to MIT, and one of them would be going to Harvard to study English literature. But the 23 at MIT were all trying to get into the high tech labs.

None of the Americans who went to Russia would ever get into a scientific lab. They were all going to study, you know, the transitive form of the old Slavic verb for "up yours, buddy". They were all in the humanities and literature, and all of the Russians except for one token, would be in science. That was true for most of the Eastern Europeans. Well, it was a little more spread out with the Eastern Europeans. There would be more coming to study the issue of politics, but in terms of our going to Eastern Europe, none of the people were let into the science programs.

Actually, if you were a top-flight science student, with rare exceptions, for example mathematics in Russia and things like that, you'd hardly want to be going behind the "Iron Curtain" to get the latest in science, because the latest in science was in the West not in the East. Maybe theoretical physics, maybe mathematics, maybe magnito hydrodynamics, you were always interested in that. These things are coming back to me a little. But these were rare areas and for the most part you couldn't get into them if you were a Westerner trying to do so. It was one-sided in that respect.

I had a couple of interesting experiences. Again, because nobody cared about the program. For example, I had been on the SALT Delegation, the Strategic Arms Limitation Talks in the '70s. I've talked about that earlier. That delegation had a Chief of Delegation, a representative of the CIA, the Office of the Secretary of Defense, the Joint Chiefs of Staff, the State Department and ACDA. It had five senior reps. Each of the five senior reps had staff aides. Each of the staff aides had secretaries. You'd go out with a delegation of 50, 55 people.

It came to negotiate, or re-negotiate, the U.S.-Spanish Cooperative Science Treaty. One person could go. It was me. I got a week in Madrid. First of all I'd call an inter-agency meeting, all the science labs or science agencies of the U.S. Government that had programs in Spain. I'd say okay, we want to renew this. Is there anything you want to do in the next two years that we haven't been doing that we should write into the treaty? I got half a dozen things that they wanted more work on. I don't remember now exactly. I know one was more work on computers. So I had a list of half a dozen things I was supposed to write into the treaty and I had the old treaty. I maybe had to change maybe five sentences in it. To get it cleared by the Legal Department, in L there is a person who looks over treaties and all that.

So I fly off to Madrid for a week to negotiate this mostly boiler point, ten-page treaty by myself. It was great fun. First of all, the nation's future was not riding on this, but it shows the contrast between these enormous delegations negotiating arms control and this sort of one-man thing.

This science program with Spain was a sub-set of the overall base agreement. We paid something like 500 million dollars a year to the Spaniards to rent bases for NATO. This was before Spain was actually in NATO. We had a submarine base; we had an airplane base. This was the U.S., but they were NATO related. Some of that money, of that 500 million dollars, was earmarked for the science program. That's how we lived, basically, but it shows you how about 498 million of it went into the Spanish treasury, two million of it was set aside for the science program. That is always a problem with a fringe issue. Resources are back ends. But we were living off the base agreement.

The hardest part of the base agreement negotiation in the sense I went over or joined the skull sessions, although they couldn't have cared less about what I was up to when I went off on my own. When I was done I came home. And that was kind of fun.

The other anecdote that I prefaced: most of what we were doing was reviewing these biennial agreements which came up intermittently during my tenure in OES. One of them that came up for review is tragic when you think about it now. It was the Yugoslav one. We had our review in Yugoslavia, in Macedonia, one of the republics at that time, in Skopje. It is a place I've been to three times which is probably three times too many.

Q: I was Chief of the Consular Section in Belgrade for five years, so I know Skopje personally, including during the earthquake.

MENDELSOHN: I sympathize with you. The people couldn't have been nicer; they couldn't have tried harder. We met in probably the nicest building in Skopje, which was the Macedonian Academy of Science building, a sort of modern Balkan building. We had a very pleasant time.

Part of what you do is review proposals by the other side for projects that they would like to undertake cooperatively. This delegation that I nominally headed, most of these people can't be controlled anyhow, was made up of I would guess representatives from two dozen U.S. science agencies, each of whom had a counterpart from Yugoslavia. We had this big review session. The Yugoslavs and the Americans put forward project proposals they'd like to have written into the next two-year agreement. We were reviewing the projects that were to be written into the next two-year agreement. Most of them were pretty straightforward. Let's have another two years of hybrid corn growth, you know, and check to see how many different varieties of corn can grow, or let's have a water pollution survey on a very fragile lake. I'm making those up, but they may very well have been part of it.

Harking back to your question about transitioning between Carter and Reagan. This was just after the transition, I would have guessed this was the spring of '81. This was just before, I can't remember what year this would have been taking place, it was just before the Sarajevo winter Olympics. And one of the proposals was from some agency, some city planning agency from Sarajevo, that would have been the Yugoslav Republic of Bosnia. This guy gets up and proposes to visit the sites of the four previous winter

Olympics.

Q: Ooh!

MENDELSOHN: Yes, right, you didn't have to be much beyond sixth grade to figure out well, if I brought this one home to the Administration they would have wondered what, you're paying for this guy to visit all of these fancy ski resorts in the wintertime!

Well, when he made this proposal it was absolutely serious and it had legitimate justification. The thing is I just didn't think the Administration I was working for was going to part with dollars for this guy's around the world voyage. So there was a little buzz when he gave his presentation. I asked for a time out. I got together with one or two, one staffer from the office and one or two of the senior representatives from the other U.S. Government agencies, and we all agreed, laughed, and knew there was 'no way' we could bring this one home on a list of projects. So we had to go in and tell the guy that we appreciated it but thought it was a little bit beyond our ability to sustain the case for that particular project. But I remember he made the offer in really good faith, but it was a stunner! Particularly as government people with a new administration they already knew what the flavor of it was. That was the one sort of light point on that.

I should say in the background I wound up running an office and that's a good management experience. I had a dozen people. I must admit that while many of them were extremely nice, these were not cutting edge, hard driving, flaming-star officers. They were good. A couple of them were, what's the nice way to say it…a couple of them were nine to five'ers. They came on time and, by God, they left on time. There's nothing wrong with that but it's pretty clear that there is another ethos in the Foreign Service that is endorsed by many people, not all of whom go very far. But those who go far tend to have a more work-driven ethic. But as I said, these were all very nice people.

It was good experience and you learned to delegate. You have to delegate. And one other thing you have to be a little relaxed because it's very difficult to run an interagency operation in any case. No agency has power over another. I had nominal power and I could get them to talk to one another but I couldn't tell any of them what it was they had to do. I could tell them things like what they couldn't do.

The one interesting exchange in there, we had reasonably recently concluded a science exchange program with China. As a result of that, I got a chance to go to China with one of our delegations for three weeks. That was really a very interesting experience. I was not the lead agency. The lead agency, I think, I can't remember any longer, it was a management issue. Well, in any case I wasn't the lead agency, but the lead agency invited me to come along. So I had nothing to do except go and sort of see how it operated. At the end of that two week program I had one week in Beijing talking with my Chinese government counterparts about an upcoming visit by Feng Ye, who was the Politburo member for science, and that is why he would have come to the United States on an exchange program. I was presumably paving the way for this upcoming Chinese exchange visit, which did indeed take place. That was quite a bit of work, again,

organizing at my end. But it went very well.

The thing that was unfortunate about it was that there was just no U.S. money, no State money in any case, to carry off this. I mean, we would get engaged in all these programs. We had no money to carry it off. So we had to count on other agencies to pay the bill, for example, I'll make this up, as I don't remember any longer. If we went to the jet propulsion laboratory at Caltech, my hunch is that the laboratory picked up the hotel bill the night we were in Pasadena because the U.S. Government didn't. It was terrible. We really had no money. We'd go out to dinner and of course the Government people would pay their own way. The Bureau of Standards took us out to Chinese dinner in town about four hundred miles from Washington, even though they were in Gaithersburg it seemed like it was an hour and a half away. It was a cheap deal, you know, but it was nice.

But it was terrible. We had to rely on non-governmental groups to get some money to help us put this together. I sort of was involved trying to get this exchange visit to happen. I don't remember all the details any longer, but most of the funding had to come from outside the Government. It went off very well and it was basically me and the White House who did it. The Deputy Assistant Secretary sort of turned up; he couldn't have cared less. He would have cared if it hadn't gone well.

Q: Tom Pickering had left towards the end, hadn't he?

MENDELSOHN: I don't think he had left yet, but I can't remember any longer. Somewhere in there he wrote my last efficiency report when I left to go back to ACDA, although he had left when he was writing it. So somewhere in '81 he left and I don't remember exactly when. And I don't remember who took his place. Maybe you do, I don't.

Q: No, I don't. I think it was a political appointee, as I recall, who was a real problem. I never seem to focus on…did you get involved at all in the Law of the Sea?

MENDELSOHN: No that was the Ocean's part. That had a separate DAS, I think, I don't remember any longer.

Q: In the corridors did you talk to the Law of the Sea people at all?

MENDELSOHN: I didn't get involved in that at all. There was a separate Law of the Sea person. I think the Law of the Sea person was Norm Wolf or someone like that, a lawyer type. There was a separate Population person, Benedict? I don't remember much else about that.

I remember my little bit and I kind of enjoyed it. Because nobody cared, you had a certain amount of freedom but you also had a lot of responsibility. There were a lot of possibilities for screwing up. Fortunately it didn't. The thing about just administration is that if you pay attention to it, you can get it to work out, unlike policy. You can pay attention to that and it still may not work out.

Everything worked out fine. As I mentioned earlier, my assignment to OES was a follow-on to going to MIT. If you went to MIT, you had to commit to go into the Bureau. I wanted to go to MIT. I wanted to get out of NATO, and that was one of the ways to get out. I enjoyed it very much there. This was a price I was going to pay, but it wasn't a high-powered Bureau. But I got to be an Office Director reasonably easily and early.

I don't know if that was early in my career or not. I had joined in '63, and I was an Office Director by '80, I don't know if that's good.

Q: That's good.

MENDELSOHN: It's about right.

Q: Towards the end of '81 you were moving on? What happened?

MENDELSOHN: Towards the end of '81. The DAS that I had worked with earlier, Norm Terrell, knew that he was going to be replaced. He went over to ACDA.

Q: ACDA being?

MENDELSOHN: The Arms Control and Disarmament Agency under, at this time, Rostow.

Q: Gene Rostow?

MENDELSOHN: Right. He raided OES. He brought over three or four people and I was one of them. A lot of people wanted to get out. It was okay. When Pickering was there, when the Carter Administration was there, when you knew somebody cared, it was okay. It wasn't great. But I think it was quite clear that OES was going to revert to its sort of second-level status and wasn't going to be much fun anymore. The Reagan Administration wasn't going to be a lot of fun and that wasn't an area they cared about. At least in the beginning it wasn't going to be a lot of fun.

So I was glad to go back to the Arms Control and Disarmament Agency. I was invited back and asked if I would like to be the ACDA representative which would now be the senior ACDA person on the new Arms Control Strategic Arms Reduction Talks Delegation, which turned into the START Delegation, Strategic Arms Reduction Talks. But it hadn't begun yet and didn't have its title. I said sure, that would be great, I'd love that.

But I said I also wanted to have a bureaucratic title besides just a Delegation one. So they made me a Deputy Assistant Director. ACDA had four bureaus, each bureau had a Director, who nowadays is the same rank as an Assistant Secretary, so a Deputy Assistant Director would have been the equivalent of a DAS but in a much, much smaller agency and not considered probably quite the same. Although in terms of pay it was about the

same. They said they would give me that bureaucratic title based upon my responsibilities within the Delegation.

Q: Just to get the dates. You were doing this in ACDA from when to when?

MENDELSOHN: Well that's interesting. I came in late '81, and I left in the midst of a very bitter bureaucratic flap in the spring of '83. It was basically about a year and a half, starting in late '81.

Q: Before we move to that…when you arrived at ACDA, where did ACDA sort of rank insofar as power, clout, what have you, as compared to other times you'd seen? But at this particular time you've got the new Reagan Administration, they are just getting their feet by the end of '81, they hadn't been in that long, what was your feeling about that?

MENDELSOHN: That's a good question.

Clearly dealing with the Russians on this issue was not the favorite topic of the Reaganauts.

Q: We keep talking about Russians, but we really should be talking about the Soviets.

MENDELSOHN: The Soviets. But you see it has taken me five years to stop saying the Soviets!

Q: I know. I'm at the point, you know, when I asked you to spell out what ACDA means, I'm at the point now that in a couple of years I'm going to be asking people to please explain what a 'Soviet' is! We haven't quite reached that.

MENDELSOHN: Clearly relations with the Soviet Union were not a high priority on the Reagan list. Their feeling, and this of course, remember, is in the aftermath of the December 1979 Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, and U.S.-Russian relations even under Carter are at a real low point. Not only because of the actions of the Soviets, and mainly the invasion which was a real low point, but because Brezhnev is at the end of his career. He dies in '82 or '83, or '81, I can't remember.

Q: He was kind of doddering anyway.

MENDELSOHN: I think he dies in '81, no…it was in '83 and Gorbachev comes up in '85, something like that. In any case he is at the end of his career and they are going to have two more General Secretaries, none of whom survive, until they get Gorbachev in March of '85. So they were also unable, I mean their policies were clearly falling to sort of the lowest common bureaucratic denominator and Reagan, of course, came in very gung-ho, very much the evil empire, very much the "we can race these people into the ground" and protect ourselves from them.

Arms control is not a high priority for the Administration. That's an understatement. On

the other hand there was a great deal of pressure, or sort of inertia if you want, a sort of continuing feeling that on the question of nuclear weapons in any case we ought to be talking with the Russians even if we don't think we can do anything.

They selected to head this delegation a very Conservative retired military General, Ed Rowney, who had been on the SALT Delegation. He had been a big problem, a really big problem, when he was on the SALT Delegation as the JCS Representative. He had been chosen in response to the first SALT Agreement where they had really a very talented Air Force General, Royal Allison. But the Nixon Administration to sort of heed its Conservative critics cleaned out the whole SALT I Delegation, named a much more Conservative SALT II one. Rowney was the JCS chief.

Q: Instead of the Nixon Administration you mean the Reagan Administration.

MENDELSOHN: No, on SALT it was the Nixon Administration who had cleaned out SALT I and picked Rowney to be the JCS rep. He had gone through all of SALT II, which went up until '79. Then when the Reaganauts decided that they were going to pick up, or had to pick up, or had to look like they were going to pick up, arms control talks they picked Rowney to be the head of it.

I had never liked Rowney and I know he had never liked me and that's what led to this flap later on in ACDA. In any case, he could not control although he very much, I think, would have liked to and probably tried to, control the choice of the ACDA rep. He knew I was a, frankly, an advocate of arms control and I like to think reasonably well informed and also more than able to hold my own in an argument with Rowney, who is not very clever. In any case, I was not a favorite choice for him but there wasn't much he could do about it.

Well we started off in the fall of '81. His delegation was formed although there had been no effort to get the nuclear talks started. In the fall of '81 they did begin the talks on the intermediate range nuclear forces which everybody thought was never going to go anywhere. Actually it turned out that they got a treaty before the START delegation did. They got a treaty by '87. Part of the problem with the strategic arms talks was that it got interrupted by (A) the deployment of short range missiles, and (B) the launching of the strategic defense initiative in March of 1983.

Be that as it may, this Delegation for the talks that would turn into the START I talks, and the START I Treaty, eventually got completed under Bush and signed in '91. This Delegation was formed in '81 and met for the first time in the summer of 1982, with a position that was absolutely non-negotiable. We knew it, at least I knew it and a lot of other people knew it, and we had these kinds of desultory talks with the Russians until the end of 1983.

I thought I stood up for the basic arms control principles. Interesting thing is nobody back in Washington cared at all what we were doing. We had our basic position, which was never going to be accepted by the Russians and wasn't. We had to change it. We had a

Chief of Delegation who was detested by the Soviets and I think reasonably disliked by an awful lot of members of the Delegation. The Russians, or the Soviets, basically made fun of Rowney during most of the time I was there.

As a matter of fact we used to meet twice a week with the Soviets. The routine was a very simple one. We would read a speech on some arcane subject related to strategy or on some point about our position, why it's a good idea to do such and such, which the Russians probably didn't think was a good idea or we wouldn't have been reading the speech to them. And then they would read us a speech about why their position was a good one and our position was a bad one. After the exchange of formal talks, we would break up into one-on-one discussion groups with counterparts from the Soviet Delegation.

Rowney as the Chief of the Delegation would meet with Karpov, the head of the Soviet Delegation, and they would have a one on one discussion with translators and maybe an aide or something. In the case of the Chiefs it was only a translator. I would meet with my counterpart on the Russian delegation who was the representative from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. They would have a Defense Ministry representative that would meet with our JCS rep. Somebody would meet with the OSD representative who would probably be a civilian...

Q: OSD?

MENDELSOHN: It's the Office of the Secretary of Defense, the civilian side at the Pentagon who would meet with some civilian defense intellectual from the Russians. The intelligence people -- I don't know if they met or not, but each side knew who the other's intelligence person was, that was okay.

Well, the interesting thing is that I was told by the translators who worked with him that Rowney did not let them file their transcripts as memcons. He insisted that they give him the memcon, their notes, and the writing up of their notes, and he would write the memcon, and he kept their notes and filed them in his own chron. The reason for that was that he was being beaten up very badly in the one-on-ones and nobody ever got a straight report on them. I wasn't the only one to know that this was going on. Rowney's reports back to Washington were heavily doctored to show, of course, you know, the old phrase that nobody looks bad in their own memcons. But this was a little bit worse than usual.

Usually at that level the translator does the first draft and checks it and all that. But in this case Rowney just took the translator out of the loop. The other people wrote their own memcons, and I wrote mine, for what it was worth. But we were not going anywhere and it was pretty clear we were not going anywhere in the talks. They didn't start going anywhere until 1985, and that was way after I had left. And Rowney left, by the way, too.

Q: Did you have the feeling when you got on and while you were doing this that yes, it was a good thing to keep this door kind of open?

MENDELSOHN: Absolutely.

Q: But we know we are marking time and what you were saying about the Soviet leadership, all one had to do was take a look at the pictures of people holding up Brezhnev. It was obvious that this was a place run by compromising bureaucrats. Also we had a President who had to go through a fairly long training period in a way. Those who were professionals knew this had to come. But did you feel that at the time?

MENDELSOHN: Yes. I always believed that arms control was worthwhile, clearly I'm still working on it; I believed it was worthwhile trying to keep this discussion going. Though it was very frustrating to realize that neither side was prepared to do much at this time. We because we were in reaction to both Afghanistan and Reagan and they because they were decision-paralyzed by a lack of leadership. So we weren't going anywhere.

It was still interesting as hell. I always thought, and this was what really motivated me, there was an intellectual aspect of it and it is kind of an interesting problem, but I also thought it was really something quite worthwhile. You are working to try to make sure that something truly catastrophic didn't happen, I liked that. You know, it made you feel good. I thought I was working for something worthwhile.

I knew the subject; I knew it very well from SALT II. I was able to hold my own, substantively, with anybody on the Delegation. But bureaucratically nobody cared about the issue. The Reagan Administration didn't care about the issue. ACDA was a marginal player. You already had your instructions that came from the White House. There were only sort of marginal changes. You could only marginally affect the process.

You could argue that is a really bad way to put that proposition. If you really want the Russians to listen, you know, don't say it like that, say it like this. That's sort of the kind of input we could have. And then once a session I would write back and send back channel to ACDA my sort of view of where we were, how things were going, what we ought to do. Of course they were way out of step with the Senate back in Washington.

That is always the criticism of Washington, that the people in the field don't understand the issues, back here, they don't know how hard it is. That's fine, but its their job, nonetheless, to say from where I sit what we are doing is going nowhere and will go nowhere, in my view, unless you do the following.

Well, I'd send one of those back every session. I was only there for three sessions.

Q: Who was calling the shots in the White House from your perspective?

MENDELSOHN: Well I think who was calling the shots, very much at this time, was Perle, Richard Perle. His views were basically, to put them succinctly, stick it to the Russians, stick it to the Soviets. They can't be trusted and we can do whatever we need to do on our own. Weinberger shared those views. I've forgotten who was the National Security Advisor. It started out to be Richard Allen.

Q: For awhile you had Judge Clarke, who was sort of a null.

MENDELSOHN: Yes. They couldn't have cared less, and they didn't want anything to happen. They weren't trying to have anything happen. They just wanted a basic agreement, or a basic position. The fact that it was non-negotiable, from their point of view, was an asset. That meant they didn't have to worry about making any decisions, they didn't have to worry about anything happening, and it certainly didn't happen on their watch. It didn't begin to happen until '85, in which two things took place.

I actually just did an article on that. Do you collect articles as part of...

Q: Not really.

MENDELSOHN: Okay. The two things that happened were that Reagan went into his second term and began to reconsider a little bit the wisdom of our totally hard-line policy and his military buildup policy. Secondly, which I think was far more important, was that Reagan got a much more resilient responsive and intelligent interlocutor in Gorbachev. Gorbachev clearly understood that Russia was going nowhere, the Soviet Union was going nowhere, and unless it changed, unless it took the pressure off itself by easing the confrontation with the West, it was doomed. In a confrontational situation it would be in real trouble. So he knew he had to do something about that. And that just changed the whole atmosphere.

Q: Going back to the time you were there. In your contacts with the Soviets was there a sort of mutual agreement that, yes, we're marking time but at the same time the idea of letting this get any further out of control is going to end up with our destroying the world?

MENDELSOHN: Yes, I think both sides appreciated the dangers of not trying to control nuclear weapons. I think both sides' delegations had a lot of people on them that really believed in what they were doing. There were always a few who didn't. I mean I don't think Rowney necessarily believed in them. But the overwhelming sentiment was that controlling these weapons is doing the right thing. Working out a mutually acceptable way of doing this is a very difficult thing, but everybody agreed it was the right thing.

I don't think there was any question about that.

There was perhaps back in Washington, and maybe in Moscow, for all I know, much more doubt about the wisdom and wordiness of dealing with the other side. Particularly the Reagan Administration, I think, thought we'd make them a proposal, clearly in our interest and if they accept it, fine. If they don't, we're not going to worry about it. We have the resources to respond in a military way. All of the critics, of course, of the first Reagan Administration said that was a very shortsighted view of the way the world should work and eventually it changed.

But the answer to your question is that a great number of people on both delegations really believed what they were doing was right and important and should and eventually was, done. And I was very happy doing it. The problem with it is very much what the problem was when I was on the SALT Delegation, and that is when you were on TDY you had long separations from your family. This was very tough our family. It began to get me thinking about the Foreign Service experience in general. Although I have to admit I loved what I was doing and I think I did it reasonably well, but not very well. But I ran into a problem, it wasn't only my problem but I ran into it along with a lot of other people.

Incidentally I should say I got on very well with the Soviets. They liked me. I've heard that back from them over the last years and directly from people that worked with me and all that, because I knew my subject, I was not polemical and I would not let them get away with polemics either. They could say what they wanted. You couldn't stop them from talking. But in a long run on justice and quality and Marxism and all of that I would say the issue before us is whether we want 300 or 400 cruise missiles, not Marxism, Leninism, or that sort of stuff. I would bring them back to the subject and drive them. And I think they appreciated it. I didn't try to criticize them necessarily. I would try to stick to the subject, and I knew my subject well.

Having said that, in the spring of 1983, and this fits into your question about ACDA and its role in the Government. In the spring of 1983, Rostow was suddenly removed from office. It's unclear to me to this day why he was removed. There are lots of possible reasons. I don't know what the real answers are. One was that he was too meddlesome, he wanted to get too involved. They didn't want an activist head of ACDA. They wanted somebody who didn't care.

To his credit, Rostow cared, he took his responsibility seriously. I may have disagreed with his philosophy and with his ideas and all that, but he took it seriously. He tried to make something out of the job and I think that was not something people were interested in, and he was relieved. They picked Ken Adelman, who clearly did not have the same stature as Rostow. You know Rostow was the Dean of the Yale Law School, he had been George Ball's assistant, I don't know, I don't remember. He had a very distinguished both legal and to a certain degree bureaucratic…he was a Democrat and he was, actually, a very nice guy. I still see him around town and he always couldn't be nicer. I'm supposed to talk about the old days a little bit, although I think he was hurt by that sort of abrupt removal.

The Reaganauts were not brooking any fooling around, this was an area they didn't want to have anybody make waves in except perhaps the Department of Defense, and they were to make the calls on that. Rostow was removed and replaced by Ken Adelman who was not known as an arms controller and has often said that he thinks arms control is a mistake. Again, in all fairness, Adelman was a very decent person and everybody who worked with him said he was a decent person. It's just that he wasn't devoted to the subject, if you will.

When the new head of ACDA was announced, Ken Adelman, Ed Rowney, the Chief of the START Delegation, wrote a confidential memo to Adelman about the START Delegation and about ACDA and his, Ed Rowney's, views of the personnel on his delegation and in ACDA. And he was uniformly critical of everyone. There was only one person who was named twice for criticism and that was me!

I've forgotten now, and I'm glad I've forgotten, what the specific criticisms were of me. Certainly they were along the lines of, and it really seems hilarious when you think of it, this was a delegation to negotiate a treaty and the criticism would be something along the lines of "we'll do anything to get an agreement" or something like that. There were lots of implications, but clearly I was way too forward for the Delegation. That was not Rowney's problem. Rowney's problem was that he could not win an argument with anybody. He could "boss" an argument, he could order an end, but he couldn't win it because he wasn't intellectually up to it.

In any case, the JCS representative, who was even more severely criticized, resigned.

Q: You say this was a confidential memo but I take it everybody saw it or what happened?

MENDELSOHN: I don't remember the exact sequence any longer but somehow a copy of it was missent and it wound up in Rostow's front office, with Rostow's old crew still at the desks. Adelman hadn't come in yet. They opened it, saw this memo and that was it, it was all over town. Here I am in Geneva. Rowney had sent me back to Geneva. I'm on the phone back to Washington and someone tips me off, I can't remember who it was, or if I did I don't even want to say who it was.

Someone tips me off that there is a memo back here. It was called the blacklist and everybody's on it and you're severely criticized. So I checked around a little bit and confirmed it. In any case I was getting a little fed up with this operation and my wife was getting a little fed up with it, and I thought maybe there could be other options for me. In any case I went in to Ed Rowney and I said, "Is it true that you've written a memo back in Washington that criticizes me?"

"Absolutely not, I deny it. That's wrong, I never sent any such memo."

Well, I went home from the Delegation; it was my time to be rotated back and when I got back I saw the memo. The guy had lied to me. Not only had he sent the piece - I mean its his prerogative to say he doesn't like me - but he lied on top of it. You know, I read it and just felt this was outrageous, and I went to Ken Adelman and I said, "I refuse to serve on a delegation with a guy..." Ken said he understood but that the memo was unimportant. I said I didn't care but I wasn't going to do this anymore. And I told State and I told ACDA I was done, I wasn't going to do this anymore. The interesting thing is I got a hundred percent support from State, there was no flak whatsoever, I got three job offers immediately. As a matter of fact, the funny thing is, being attacked by Rowney did more for my career than anything that had happened positive because it sort of validated your

credentials in the liberal community. You know, anybody that Rowney dislikes that much has got to be okay. And that's how I got this job, actually.

In any case I was offered three jobs immediately. State couldn't have been better. They said they understood. They would get me another job. I got offered a DCM-ship, I got offered a Dean-ship at FSI, which is actually what I wanted, I didn't want to go overseas. We had another year or two for our daughter to get out of high school, two more years. I wanted to stay here until she got out of high school. And there was a third job. I can't remember what the third job was. It might have been in public affairs.

The DCM-ship was in Poland. I would have loved it because I served there. Jack Scanlan offered it to me. But I had already decided I didn't want to go overseas, mainly because of our daughter. It wasn't even a question of bringing her with us. There was no English language high school in Warsaw that she could use so she'd have to go to boarding school. While I would have liked that job, I wasn't going to do that to my daughter. My wife wouldn't have let me. She would have stayed behind. That didn't seem like an ideal thing. The job was ideal.

The deanship looked like a good deal, because it was a big management job, and I was beginning to think that maybe, maybe, I would think of leaving the Foreign Service as soon as I made my 50 at 20.

Q: This was age of 50 and 20 years of service?

MENDELSOHN: At which point you are eligible to retire with a pension. I was then, I guess, 48. So I thought, well, let's see what I can do. In any case, just to sort of finish the ACDA story. I enjoyed my ACDA time, again, the second assignment there. I think the people in ACDA liked me a lot and they have always been very good friends of mine. I don't know that anybody would remember now, that's 15 years ago, 1981.

Clearly that was a very gloomy moment when Rostow was removed, Adelman was brought in. We were about to deploy our short-range missiles. The Russians walked out of the talks at the end of '83. I didn't miss that much. If I had stayed there would only have been another session because in November when we deployed short-range missiles in Europe, the Russians broke off talks. We didn't begin again until March of 1985.

What's interesting is that, and I'm forecasting a little bit, in March of 1985, I left the Foreign Service. So basically I got out at a good moment. I mean I had to get out. No one with any self-respect could stay and serve with a Chief of delegation who treated you like that behind your back. I mean its one thing to do it to your face, that's okay, you can argue. It's another to try to manipulate and sink somebody. But it came back and bit him. He got removed from the Delegation himself after '83. But be that as it may.

In any case all of the people that had brought me over with Rostow were also going. There was no future there and the Agency basically fell on hard times. I don't think it has ever really recovered.

Well, having said that, I decided I would like to go and be the Dean at FSI. Why? Well I thought if I'm going to seriously consider moving out of the Foreign Service, having a major management job, which is what the Dean-ship really is, you don't have a substantive role as the Dean, you have a management role, you have 250 language instructors, you have a daily, weekly, monthly schedule to meet, and you have a budget. I don't remember know what it was, six million, ten million, twelve million, I don't remember what it was. But you have your own budget. I mean there is a budget for FSI, but you have a sub-set for running the language school. You are responsible for coming in under your budget, for projecting your budget, arguing for your budget with the Director to get your share. And what was interesting, although I didn't know it when I got there, is that they had gone over budget the year before and so they were very upset with the language school.

Q: When you are talking about "Dean" you are talking about Dean of the Language School?

MENDELSOHN: Dean of the Language School. There is a Director and at the time there were three Deans. There was a Dean of Languages, a Dean of Area Studies, and then there was one for Professional Training, which is a lot of the staff work and stuff like that. I think there were three Deans. So in effect the largest responsibility was the Language School. It had the most employees and the most complicated schedules. I thought if I am really seriously thinking about leaving, managing a segment that size would be a worthwhile experience that I might be able to parlay into a job in New York.

I didn't have any trouble. This was really an amazing example of State working at its best in taking care of its own. I'm sure you've got lots of stories about how the Department let people down, and certainly it let me down, I'm sure, at various points. But on this one I had no problem whatsoever. Everybody was extraordinarily sympathetic. I got the job.

I got there in the spring of 1983, just at a moment when the School was under a lot of pressure because it had enthusiastically but unwisely expanded training for languages in the sense that it would start classes almost at will. If somebody said they would like to learn Bulgarian, they could start this week and if someone else said a month later they wanted to start, they could start then. They had staggered and almost unscheduled openings. They were trying, not to give full blame because the guy who actually placed this is also a good friend of mine, a very nice guy, was trying to be responsive to earlier criticism that the language school training program was inflexible. Either you came in the beginning of the year or the middle of the year, but there were no other options. He was trying to respond to that by saying well, I think we can do better, I think we can have more starts of language. And he did that and unfortunately managed to run over budget. So I had to go back somewhat. I was considerably less responsive, but not quite as bad as the original program in terms of it.

You had to get the schedule reorganized. You had to get your manpower under control because every one of these classes is manpower, and manpower is money. So I had to

start tracking FTEs, full-time equivalents. How much money am I paying employees? We had to have a schedule and we had to have some money for the development of courses. The Director of FSI at the time, the Foreign Service Institute, Steve Low, was a little skeptical about putting lots of money into development. I, of course, as soon as I got there recognized that you had to have good basic material to teach from and that was what development was.

Q: Could you explain development?

MENDELSOHN: Development meant writing a language course. You had a lot of language teachers who weren't teaching. They were working in a lab putting together tapes and a textbook and trying to elaborate something. Now that looks like down time. What was this Bulgarian Instructor doing, she didn't teach Bulgarian last year? Well, she was writing a Bulgarian textbook. Oh? Where is it? Well, it takes two years to write it.

You had to both explain, justify and stand by your forces because without materials, and I think the thing which is important about FSI is that it developed very good language training materials. But they needed to be renewed or in some cases they had never been created. There never had been a Bulgarian course, for example.

There wasn't a Polish course when I studied Polish. And when I got there they were still writing the Polish course. Now there was plenty of room for criticism, as well. Some of these development programs had dragged on for years and years and years and the argument, I guess, was that they had never had enough time and money to get real concentrated effort on it. I don't know. I think it was somewhere in the middle. But I tended, as you often do when you become manager of a unit, vis-a-vis your management, you are an advocate for what you are doing. But it was easy. I believe in languages and know how important they are and know how useful they make officers when officers can manage them.

In any case I had to manage the FTEs, I had to manage the scheduling, and I had to manage the money. I loved it. It was great. I instituted all kinds of tracking programs to make sure we weren't running over budget, basically. That we were doing what we were supposed to do and that we weren't running over budget. I had a lot of fun and I got us in budget. We were under budget or on budget both of the years I was there, the two cycles I was there. I was very proud of that.

Secondly, the one thing I was most proud of was that for a long time we had been running, or the State Department had been running, FSI a little bit on the migrant worker model. Which meant they had been hiring as contract employees rather than full time employees a lot of their language instructors. The advantage of course was that it gives you flexibility. If you don't need Swahili, you don't have to pay a Swahili Instructor (A), and (B), they don't get benefits.

Q: We're talking about health benefits, pensions, the whole...

MENDELSOHN: …retirement benefits, leave benefits…at this organization, we figure, at the Arms Control Association, which is not the Government, benefits and taxes for retirement, social security, had about a third. I don't know what they do in the Government.

Q: It's within that.

MENDELSOHN: It's probably about the same. So the Government was saving money. But a lot of the contract employees were not Swahili. They had actually been there ten, fifteen years full time in some of the major languages, but the School had never been able to get them permanent appointments as employees. I made that my task. The Union came to me early on. They said they were very unhappy, they had been trying to get more permanent appointments. I then did a survey of utilization of instructors in various languages, going back, I can't remember now, ten years. I showed by research that we had had as full time employees a large number of contract people for at least ten years. This was primarily in the major languages. Let's say in French, there is always a call for French training; Spanish; German. You could find a number of major languages where you know you are going to have a basic, almost fixed minimum, of students.

Well I did all of the research and basically went to management and said I believe there is no question but that the employment and training patterns can justify an increase in the number of permanent employees. There was a doubling, or better, I remember. We had 250 language instructors, I think 80 of them had permanent employment. And I thought I could justify through my research at least another 80, and we got them. The Union of course was ecstatic and the employees were ecstatic. I thought that was maybe one of the best things I ever did in the Foreign Service, was I got these poor peons who had been, I think, used by the U.S. Government and not adequately or fairly compensated…that isn't quite the right word…paid back, if you will. I got them permanent jobs. I thought that was right thing to do, and not only was it the right thing to do, it was the good thing to do. I was very proud of that. It was not a triumph in diplomacy, but it is a triumph in bureaucracy and if you are working in Washington, bureaucracy is nine-tenths of the game. I thought that was probably the most lasting thing I did while I was Dean there.

While I was there I liked the people very much, but I also started looking around for other possible job opportunities because in the summer of '84, I turned fifty. I realized if I found a job any time after the summer of '84, I could leave and get a pension immediately. Small, because I only would have had just basically the minimum amount of service time and the way pensions are figured, the longer you serve, the bigger they are, obviously. But I had twenty years at 50, in the summer of '84.

I started looking seriously for other opportunities. I didn't have a lot of luck in the beginning, but in February of '85, a mutual friend of the Director of this organization I knew, our mutual friend, called me up. He said he knew that the Arms Control Association had just gotten a new Director, Spurgen Keeney. He's looking for a Deputy, would I be interested?

I said sure and so this mutual friend put me in touch with Spurgen, the Director, Spurgen Keeney. In February we had an interview and he said he liked me. He said why don't you think it over and I'll think it over. He wanted to check out my bona fides. I think I had good recommendations. I came back a week later and he said the job was mine if I wanted it. I said, "What's the salary?" He said, "How much are you making?" At the time I was making the limit, I think $65,000. He said, "How much is your pension?" I told him. He said, "I'll give you the difference." I said, "Fine. I'll take it."

So I went back and I gave notice and within three weeks from the time I had had my interview I was out of the Foreign Service. And if you don't think that was a big decision...

Q: Oh, boy.

MENDELSOHN: …with a lot of emotional confusion. It was. It wasn't just that I didn't want to travel anymore, that my wife didn't want to travel anymore. It was also that I wanted a different challenge.

Q: I would like to ask a question about your time at the FSI.

MENDELSOHN: Sure.

Q: You're talking here to a person who in one way or another, I took a year at the Army language school, I've studied seriously eight different languages over my time, including Latin, French and Spanish at the prep school level. I never did very well at it, by the way, I might add. When you were there, this was in the '83 to '85 period, was there much in the way of research, I'm talking about out in the academic world, linguistics and all that, how you learn languages and what you do about adults learning languages? This is a continuing debate. My wife got her degree in linguistics and all that so I got much more into this than I really wanted to. But I'd like to know what the state of the art was at the time.

MENDELSOHN: Well I don't remember perhaps as well or as fully as I should, but I do know two things. (A) There are aptitudes for language and that those can be tested. The Foreign Service does that. There is a language aptitude test. I cannot tell you what the psychological or physiological components are of someone who has got an aptitude, but I do know that you get a score and if you don't score above, I think the cutoff is 70, you are not considered a good candidate for learning. You can't be assigned to a hard language. They just won't, probably won't, take you and you are not a very good candidate if you get below 70, for learning any language.

If you don't score well, then they keep you in the simpler languages, which are, for English speakers, the Romance and Germanic. You can sort of tell how complicated languages are by the length of time the Language School assigns to a basic course. For the standard Western European languages, French, Spanish, Italian, German, Portuguese, my recollection is the sense was you could get a good basic grasp of the language in 16

weeks of full-time training.

Then there was another set of more complicated languages like Polish and Serbo-Croatian, both Slavic languages, and I assume some of the Asian ones, but I don't remember any longer. Those took a full 32 weeks of academic doing.

Q: Indonesian would be one?

MENDELSOHN: Indonesian would be one. That's just to get a basic grasp for English language speakers. I think if you're Chinese and go into Korean or Japanese, it might be easier, but for English language speakers that would be the problem.

Then there were four languages that we knew were extremely complicated. That was Chinese, Japanese, Arabic and Russian. Not because Russian was extremely complicated, but if you wanted to become a useful speaker and we wanted to have people...

Q: You really had to have it.

MENDELSOHN: You had to have a second year. There was a second year program. Basic, of course, was a year like the other Slavic languages. I took Polish for a year and got to 3:3. I don't ever think I spoke that well, but I got a 3:3, which is considered basic fluency. On a five point scale, five being native and one being just sort of basic tourist phrasing.

There is a difficulty of language issue and there is an aptitude for language issue which FSI addressed (A) the aptitude by the test and (B) the difficulty of the language by the length of the training period. The third thing that was important was the general philosophy of how you teach the language. They were trying at FSI to give you a speaking and understanding facility, not a formal writing one. Writing would always be more difficult. Actually, for most people, reading a language is not as difficult as speaking or understanding it. This training program was very much oriented towards speaking and understanding, with the, I think, well-founded understanding that reading would come on its own and was much easier. Passive use of a language is much easier for most people.

Having decided that speaking and understanding was what's key, then you had a course designed around oral practicing. People talking to you or you listening to tapes or you talking back, based on a structure, a dialog sort of idea. You learned dialogs, you learned phrases, and you interchanged and predicated on a native-language speaker. All of our languages were taught by a native-language speaker, which is key, so you can hear the right way to say things, and a lot of tape work. I think this was the contribution of the Foreign Service Institute to language training, and now everybody does it. I mean all universities train that way. We didn't have any of this stuff when we went to school.

All of it was pioneered by FSI, including the five point scale for judging fluency, the heavy use of tape, and the use of sort of what you might call programmed or structured

dialog learning. So I think they know a lot about it.

The fact that they can't turn out great speakers is partly a function of…I mean they get good clientele. But sometimes if you send someone who is not apt, but for the reasons of the Service or another is going to have to go to Ouagadougou…no Ouagadougou is not good, because that's French. But is going to have to go to Sofia, and you toss them into Bulgarian but they are not language apt at all, they are going to have a problem.

Some languages, even if you are language apt, like Hungarian, you really don't want to get into. That's just the way it is. Or Finnish. You know you are going to be all right...

Q: But you are never going to be perfect.

MENDELSOHN: You are not going to be a serious speaker of it, whereas you can become serious with use of French and Spanish and Portuguese and German. You can become quite good in Russian. We got a lot of people who had had Czech, of course, college training. And what has happened in language training, in the younger members of the Foreign Service, university programs have gotten so much better. People are spending so much more time overseas that people come in better prepared.

You probably don't remember this, but in the '50s, the U.S. Government actually had a Defense Language Act.

Q: Oh, yes, I remember.

MENDELSOHN: We were under Eisenhower, and I went to university that way. Where if you were studying anything. It didn't have to be exotic, if you were studying French, but certainly if you were studying Slavic, the Government would pay tuition, because they needed people that know these languages and were professionally trained.

I am a big fan. I think FSI does an excellent job. I enjoyed my time there very much. And having gotten all this experience running 250 people, a six million dollar budget, and schedules and all that, I went to work for a place that when I got here there were four people. Five people on the staff, and a budget of $300,000, which is now twice that. Wow. So it wasn't that useful.

And there we are!

Q: Well, Jack, I want to thank you very much. We appreciated this.

End of interview