

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

ROBERT J. MARTENS

Interviewed by: Charles Stuart Kennedy
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INTERVIEW

Q: Today is September 13th, 1991. This is an interview with Robert J. Martens. I'm Charles Stuart Kennedy, and it's being done on behalf of the Association for Diplomatic Studies.

Bob, to begin with, could you give me a little bit about your background. When you were born, where, and where you grew up, your education?

MARTENS: I grew up in Kansas City, Missouri. I lived in a very poor family and almost starved to death in the depression.

Q: When were you born?

MARTENS: 1925, November. My dad was unemployed through most of the 1930s. At the outset of World War II, however, he was able to get a job; we gradually came out of it. Like many people of my generation, my life was interrupted by the war although it was a godsend in a way. I enlisted in the Army at the age of 17, in July of 1943, went into ASTP until I was 18...

Q: ASTP is?

MARTENS: Army Specialized Training Program. As soon as I turned 18 I was sent to infantry basic training, eventually went to Europe, and was in the latter stages of the war there. I'd received some education through ASTP; I finally graduated from U.S.C. after a previous stint at the University of Kansas City, graduating in 1949. I immediately took the Foreign Service exams--in those days it took a long time to get in so it was a year later before I took the orals, and I finally got called to active duty in January, 1951.

Q: What sort of pushed you towards foreign affairs, and the Foreign Service?

MARTENS: Even as a small child I loved geography and history, and knew where just about every country and city in the world was located. My education was directed toward international relations, history, and to some extent economics. There was a year break in

there for law school, by the way, which I quit. The result was that it was a natural thing to apply for the Foreign Service. In the long period of a year and a half between taking the first step of the exams, and coming in, I became a probation officer for a year and a half for Los Angeles County, and almost stayed with it, I found it fascinating work but when my Foreign Service appointment came through I entered the Foreign Service instead.

Q: You came in in 1951.

MARTENS: January, 1951, and my initial assignment was to Italy as a consular officer, fascinating work, but I don't know what there is especially to say on it.

Q: Did you come in with a class or were you an infantry replacement, thrown immediately into the work?

MARTENS: No, I was in a class that lasted from January until May.

Q: About how many were in the class?

MARTENS: Oh, there were about 24, I believe.

Q: Who were these people? And what was your outlook on the world? This is 1951, and how did you see America's role?

MARTENS: Well, it was an exciting time. I've frequently been reminded of Acheson's book, "Present at the Creation". That was the feeling when you came to Washington, and it was a very lively place. I stayed in a rooming house with a lot of other young people coming into government, not particularly the Foreign Service, but in various branches. Everybody was filled with this excitement at the time. A new world was being born, and I think the same thing applied to the class. Some of the people that were in the class--let's see if I can remember some that might be known--Dave Schneider was there...

Q: Later Ambassador to Korea.

MARTENS: No, I'm thinking of the fellow who was later Ambassador to Bangladesh and a Deputy Assistant Secretary in NEA.

Q: Did you see yourselves as sort of missionaries, America had the answer? I'm not trying to put words in your mouth.

MARTENS: I don't know about America having the answer. I think one certainly felt strongly America's leadership role. One felt there was a tremendously exciting job to be done in the world. I was already interested in Soviet affairs, I'd had a lot of Soviet specialization in University, and I wanted to put in for that as soon it was practical which didn't occur for another several years. My interest in the beginning was to get involved with the Soviet Union, which was the big issue at that time. People were much more

conscious of this at that time than later on. In fact the Soviet field, I guess, because of the fame attached to Kennans, Thompsons, and Bohlen, was looked upon as an elite within an elite. It was partly that, and partly the excitement of getting involved with the number one issue in the world. So I'd applied for Eastern European studies already from my time in Naples, and was initially supposed to go to Romania afterwards. This posting was canceled at the last minute since it was decided not to send a bachelor there due to recent incidents. I went to Austria instead for a basically Soviet-type job.

Q: Because these are sort of career interviews, I would like to touch for a moment on Naples. You served in Naples from '51 to '53. What were you doing?

MARTENS: I started out doing visa work, non-immigrant visas, for about a year. In those days we turned down probably 90% of the applicants. That was under the 1924 Act. The US immigration waiting list was enormous; the waiting list from the Italian government, before they could get an Italian passport as a required first step, was even longer. So people had to wait seven or eight years. The idea of people getting around the system, and cheating the people that stood in line, was not very appealing, but in any case a great many of these non-immigrant applicants were obviously going for immigration purposes. I did that and then I went into immigrant visa work for a very short period with straight Italian immigrants, and then for a much longer period analyzing the security backgrounds of Eastern Europeans applying under the-- before the Refugee Relief Program.

Q: It was the Displaced Persons Act.

MARTENS: Yes. So I spent a lot of time working on Eastern European people. I think I was assigned to that partly because of my Eastern European background. Then I finally ended up the last eight months there in the most interesting job of all, which was handling shipping and seamen, welfare, mental cases, that type of thing.

Q: How did you find the Foreign Service--I'm sure you'd had one vision of the Foreign Service, and you were really thrown into sort of the guts of the Consular operation. How did it strike you?

MARTENS: I found it tremendously interesting. In fact I liked Naples so much, and I liked the work I was doing so much, that I remember thinking to myself at the time, and I thought it many times later, that I could have spent the rest of my life being a Vice Consul in Naples, and would have been eminently satisfied.

Q: Then you went to Vienna from 1953 to '55.

MARTENS: Actually a year in Vienna, and six months in Salzburg. The first year was in the old Allied High Commission building. I was Assistant U.S. Secretary. The job of U.S. Secretary, which was held by Al Puhon, was merged with another position because of a tremendous cut-back in personnel that occurred early in the Eisenhower administration, and Al went over to the embassy building to take on other responsibilities which took up

most of his time. So he let me take over basically what he'd been doing before, and I reported to him once a week, but he gave me a lot of room to do the work.

Q: What was your work?

MARTENS: The Allied High Commissioners met once every two weeks. Tommy Thompson was the Ambassador and U.S. High Commissioner. On the Fridays in between, the Deputy High Commissioners met--that was Charlie Yost, later Ambassador to the United Nations; and all through each intervening week there were various committee meetings on a number of subjects where lower level officials of the Four Powers met. My job was not substantive; my job was to arrange the meetings. I controlled three American--controlled is the wrong word--but I managed the assignments of three trilingual interpreters, various secretaries that took the minutes of the meetings. Then we had to meet with the other allied secretaries and compare our minutes so as to come to an agreed set of minutes. So there would always be two sets of minutes, the U.S. set, and then an agreed Four- Power set. The agreed set was not necessarily the verbatim record as the other was, but was putting down what the Russians and others--particularly the Russians- -would have agreed to because people like to change their minds, just as Congress does with respect to the Congressional Record. So there were a lot of meetings going on of an administrative nature that brought out substance as well. Before the Allied Commission meetings, for example, I used to meet with Ambassador Thompson and tell him things that I knew would come up suddenly in the Allied Council meeting because I had heard it from the other country representatives. There would accordingly be some forewarning as to what might happen in the coming debates that took place. I also was manager of the building for the Four Powers. That responsibility had always been given to the U.S. side, and I had about 40 Austrian personnel that cleaned up the building, and set out the flowers, or whatever had to be done.

Q: From your point of view, how did this commission work, and what were the issues involved? Again, as you saw it.

MARTENS: Well, as you know, up until the period just before the Austrian State Treaty was signed--that was on May 15, 1955, by which time I had already left--until that breakthrough, the relationship between the Soviets and United States was extremely bleak. This was also true for Austria itself since the eastern zone had been occupied by the Soviets. There was a totally hard line Soviet posture on all kinds of issues and we had given more freedom, more rights, to the Austrians in the western zones. We were generally on the side, as were the British and the French, of gradually decreasing the controls over the Austrian population. There were very rigid postures being taken by both sides, by the Soviets particularly. So little was being accomplished. On rare occasions the Soviets would give way. One case was when my--actually Al Puhon's opposite number, but this Soviet Secretary was in the building working with me. In any event, this Soviet Secretary was a rather nice guy named Koptelov who had gone out with me and my British colleague several times to dinner. On a particular occasion, we were surprised to learn that he had been caught trying to subvert a Polish contact. From this, Koptelov

obviously also had KGB duties and was caught in the act, and held by the Four Power jeep patrol, which also operated out of the building that I was managing. It was known that if this incident should become publicized, or was likely to become publicized, it would be embarrassing to the Soviets. After behind the scenes discussion, the Soviets offered to make some concessions on certain substantive issues if Koptelov's escapade were not published. That in fact happened, and Koptelov was then sent back to the Soviet Union, and no one ever heard of him again. I later ran into Soviet officials in Moscow who had been in Vienna and when I mentioned Koptelov's name, he was a non-person and no one had ever heard of him. This was three or four years later.

Q: Thompson, we'll come back to him again...this is Ambassador Llewellyn Thompson, but how did you see him? How did he operate from your vantage point? He's one of the major figures in our post-war diplomacy.

MARTENS: That's right. Thompson had already become well known because of the Trieste Agreement--which he was working on in Vienna, incidentally, during this entire period. He later also got a great deal of credit for the Austrian State Treaty, although the fact that the Austrian Treaty happened was because of certain high level changes in the Soviet Union. Nevertheless, he shepherded it through very well. Thompson was a very quiet, reserved and actually rather shy man. At the same time he was without airs or pretentiousness. These observations are also based on my service under him in Moscow later. He was much less outgoing than Chip Bohlen. Thompson was, in any case, a man that everyone had tremendous respect for, then and later.

Q: What was your second job?

MARTENS: I went to Salzburg in August 1954. Salzburg was the headquarters of the American zone at the time, so it was both a consular post and a POLAD. The man nominally Consul General there, Tully Torbert, was also the Political Adviser to the Commanding General of American forces in western Austria, a Lieutenant General. Torbert's office was in the military headquarters building across from the Consulate and he left the running of the Consulate itself to his deputy, a man named Oscar Holder. I was also in the headquarters building with Tully Torbert, and was the political officer with responsibility for political reporting in western Austria. It was not a terribly inspiring job from the standpoint that most significant events, as in most countries, were going on in the capital. One of two subjects of interest in the Salzburg area was the third party, the VdU, which many thought of as a neo-Nazi party, but which was basically a conglomeration of pan-German nationalists, neo-Nazis, and a certain number of people who were conservative but were opposed to the Catholic Church aspect of the People's Party, which was the leading conservative party. So the VdU was sort of a mishmash, and it was interesting to follow it, in part because I had a very good contact, namely the head of the VdU. He turned out to be a man who had been in a prisoner of war camp that I began guarding at the end of World War II, and we found it interesting to talk about his view from the inside, and my view from the outside. That common experience provided a basis for rapport.

The second subject of interest in Salzburg, although it was not a major feature of Austrian politics, was the Monarchist movement and this was also centered in Salzburg. There was a local brewery owner who was simultaneously the "Stellvertreter" or representative of Otto von Hapsburg in Austria. Otto himself was banned from entering Austria. I also got to know him pretty well, and it was kind of fun to follow the Monarchist movement. So these two right wing movements were centered in Salzburg, and my job was to follow them.

Q: Just to get a feel about it, was there much concern in the early '50s about a resurgence of Nazism or Fascism, in Austria?

MARTENS: I think US concern over that possibility was much reduced by that time. I think US concern over a possible neo-Nazi or neo-Fascist revival had been somewhat greater in my earlier period in Naples, but by 1955 that was not as much of a concern anymore. There was some concern, but I think no one really thought that Austria was going to go that route. These two groups were minor fringe movements. I should add that I was only in Salzburg six months.

Q: After Salzburg you went to Russian training?

MARTENS: That's correct. I got pulled out early from my Austrian assignment, and although I'd had a couple years of Russian language training at the university level, one doesn't really speak Russian very well on the basis of academic courses although my vocabulary and my knowledge of the language theoretically was quite extensive. I decided not to try to avoid going through the full course, so I took, with four other people, the full FSI language course.

Q: This was at Oberammergau?

MARTENS: No, this was at the Foreign Service Institute, which at that time was a frame building in the area that is now the State Department, it was on C Street. Ted Eliot was in that course with me, and some others who didn't remain in the Service for a full career. The other four besides me had not had any Russian language background so I was able to keep well up with them although two of them were such brilliant linguists that they eventually kept up with me. The three of us that did the best eventually went to Moscow in 1956. In the meantime, after six months of full time language training, we went to universities, in my case to Columbia's Russian Institute. The others went to Harvard's Russian Research Center. After an academic year at Columbia, during which I met my wife to be, incidentally, I went off to what was to have been a one year assignment at Oberammergau. I was the only one of the five to get that, but I was pulled out after only three months. The Oberammergau program, "Detachment R," was an advanced language and area course in which the instructors were all recent emigres. They either did not speak or were not allowed to speak English, so we had to take courses in economics, history, politics, and everything else, in the Russian language. That was considered a way to not

only advance your knowledge of the Soviet Union, but to get your language capabilities up to a much higher level. In any case, that program was interrupted after only three months because a bachelor officer in Moscow was being PNGed, and the housing restrictions were so great--there was no housing outside the embassy building except for one bachelor being put in the old billiard room of Spaso House, the Ambassador's house. This position was not that of an aide to the Ambassador at that time, but that of a regular political officer. In essence, I went in as a bachelor to replace another bachelor, and was crammed into that small Spaso House space which was too small for a married couple or family. I remained in Spaso House for the next year and a half of a two year assignment until Ambassador Tommy Thompson, who came in after my first year under Chip Bohlen, decided he needed an aide. When he was successful in getting an aide assigned, the aide was housed in my old space. By then and for the first time in Embassy history, we got housing outside the embassy compound, and I was given an apartment in that new housing complex.

Q: You went there in what, 1956?

MARTENS: To Moscow, yes.

Q: What was the situation as you saw it at that time in the Soviet Union?

MARTENS: This was the height of the Cold War. This was a period when there was almost no contact between East and West. The Iron Curtain atmosphere of that period was something that is unimaginable nowadays, or would have been unimaginable in 1965 or even 1960. There were no tourists going to the Soviet Union. There were no outsiders of any kind. The only people there were the embassy, which was very small, and a few correspondents who were--a great many of whom were married to Russians, and had been stuck there since the beginning of World War II. So you had this sense of going into the total unknown. I remember as we flew from an airport in East Germany into the Soviet Union, thinking, "God, what am I getting into?" We were buzzed by Soviet fighter planes who made sweeps at us as we began to enter Soviet air space somewhere over Poland. So you were sort of awed by this as you came in, but after you were there a while, of course, you realized that all societies are alike in some ways-- human beings still eat, breathe air, sleep, live in houses, etc. So the awesomeness began to recede. I had much the same feeling when I crossed the Rhine in Germany in World War II. That was at the time when Winston Churchill made his famous statement about "Allied troops now entering the dark sink of Iniquity." But later you began to see Germans in the villages we went through as human beings living ordinary lives. And so you concluded that things were perhaps not as different as you thought even though you also understood that all this ghastliness of Naziism had gone on at the same time. That's the way it was in the Soviet Union, a realization that this was a terrible society but one still inhabited by human beings that one could understand and hopefully relate to.

In the two years there that followed however, the atmosphere in Moscow was difficult indeed. One had no contacts of any real depth with the Soviet population. People were

scared to death. You also didn't want to have any second meetings with anybody because they very likely would be in serious trouble as a result. The sense that you got from reading the press--and I had to read an enormous number of Soviet newspapers every day--was one of total conformity. I began to travel, and you had to apply, I should say, two weeks in advance, if I remember correctly, to go anywhere outside the 25 mile, or 40 kilometer limit, around Moscow. You had to ask permission and wait for about two weeks to see whether you got permission or not. Frequently you would be denied, but at other times, perhaps with changes in the schedule, you would get an itinerary approved. I got so I was applying for travel all the time--as soon as I got back from one trip, I would put in for another one. So I ended up with a tremendous amount of travel. I spent four months out of my last year outside of Moscow. And the reason I mention this is that, once you were outside of Moscow, while it was still a closed society, you found you were able to have much more contact with people, and rather often have the most enormously interesting conversations.

One experience that I frequently cite as an example to illustrate the degree to which I thought the Soviet population was opposed to the system even then, was a trip I took out to Siberia on the Trans-Siberian Railroad. Two and a half days elapsed before we reached our first stop off point at a small city named Petropavlovsk in northern Kazakhstan. I got in a kind of debate with a fellow in my compartment; there were three Russians in the compartment with me, four persons to a compartment being common on Russian trains. The conversation started out in a rather non-ideological way, but it became ideological because this fellow had just graduated from Moscow University in "Political Economy", which meant Marxism-Leninism, and if what I was saying were true, he had to feel that his education was basically false and worthless. So he turned defensive and argued the party line. After a while people from all over the train began to stand around in the corridor and listen in on the conversation, and when I got off two and a half days later in Petropavlovsk in Kazakhstan the entire train--most of the train--huge numbers of people, escorted me, all of us crawling across three or four lines of parked boxcars during a half hour stop for them. The message was clear, they were demonstrating that they agreed with me rather than with this fellow's party line. This was not because of my eloquence, but rather because they saw an opportunity to demonstrate what they really thought without committing themselves to speech.

Those kinds of things happened with great frequency. But on every trip, almost, that I went on, every now and then you'd have a fascinating insight into the depth of disbelief, and discontent in Soviet society. So much so that when I left--my last year had been spent on Soviet internal developments, my first year had been spent on Soviet external matters--my swan song was to write about a 25-30 page piece on the degree of popular discontent with the system. I did not get that out because a more senior officer--a very good officer, by the way and a person I had tremendous respect and like for and who was not able to do much travel because of his job--took an opposite approach. He had been reading the Soviet newspapers like I had all the time in Moscow, and just could not believe that there was that much discontent. So he wrote a despatch, as we called them in those days, that took an opposite position from mine, and he put excerpts of my piece which had not gone

out, in an annex as a dissenting viewpoint. I must say that now that things have developed the way they have in the Soviet Union, I think back on what I had said then, and believe that events have proven that the discontent I had described was there all through the years. It's not just a recent phenomenon, but it's something that permeated the society all through those years.

Q: This was really the depth of the Cold War. Again, we try to operate these oral histories as a time machine. Did you see this at that time...in the first place, why was the Soviet government acting in this regard toward the United States, and also was there anything we were doing that maybe we shouldn't have done, or should have done something we didn't do?

MARTENS: No, that type of revisionist thinking is utterly wrong. The Soviet leadership in those days...

Q: This was...Khrushchev the whole time?

MARTENS: Khrushchev was there; his power was not complete. I arrived in September 1956, that was about six months after the 20th Party Congress, which initiated a kind of liberalizing period. That liberalizing period closed down by the time I arrived because of the Hungarian revolution that occurred in October, because of the Suez crisis which had started opening up in September and reached its culmination in October. I did the first report, incidentally, on the "Polish October" that brought Gomulka to power against Soviet opposition by analyzing a revealing article in *Izvestia* the day before. You could tell that something very extreme was happening in Poland. This is what led to the downfall of the hard-nosed previous regime, and the accession of Gomulka. This was followed almost immediately by the Hungarian revolution on which I did the reporting, by the way, from the Soviet side of that, mainly from the newspapers. So it was a very hard nosed regime. The disbelief in Marxism-Leninism, and the failure of the system had not developed to what it was years later. Khrushchev himself felt the system was on the ascendancy even before, he, several years later, made his famous statement when he got to the United States about "we'll bury you," and he meant their system would outlast ours, and that was inherent in everything he was saying. He was also talking about catching up and surpassing the United States in the production of meat, milk, and butter which became a great slogan of that time.

There's a tendency now to think of that period as one of great openness and liberalism. It was not at all. It was a period in which you could not have contact with anybody. We embassy officers were followed outside of Moscow by enormous hordes of KGB tails; I've been followed by as many as 20 tails at one time. Fear was endemic throughout the society. It was a period in which the threat to the United States and its democratic ideals was enormous throughout the world. So I disagree completely with the kind of revisionist view that the Cold War was all our fault somehow. It was not. It was necessary to stand up to the advance of communism in that period. I was very liberal in those days on U.S. domestic issues, incidentally. But my experience in the Soviet Union probably turned me

in a more conservative direction. One saw first hand how rotten that system was, and how it had to be opposed.

Q: You mentioned you arrived in time for the Hungarian October '56 time. How did you and the people in the embassy, feel about this? Did you feel that this might be the beginning of a war? What was the reaction?

MARTENS: What scared me even more was the Suez crisis. I remember being with Chip Bohlen in Spaso House when the Soviets appeared to deliver an ultimatum to the West that if the British and the French didn't back down, the implication was they were going to launch an attack on the West. This was based on Moscow Radio and, in retrospect, I think they probably made this apparent threat after they saw that the U.S. was already telling the British and French to get out. We had no real information at the time, we had to rely on the Soviet press, Soviet broadcasting, and so on. I remember Bohlen came back from some place saying he had just heard this, and we were scared to death, to tell you the truth. Because if there was a nuclear exchange, of course, we were in Moscow.

Q: In the wrong place.

MARTENS: So there were times when the fear was very great, and the whole Hungarian crisis was one of both elation-- in the early stages of it--and then a great letdown when the Soviet divisions went in and took the whole thing down.

Q: Were there crowds demonstrating, or anything like that?

MARTENS: There were some. The biggest demonstration, oddly enough, was in 1958, sometime after this, at the time of the Lebanon crisis when Eisenhower sent U.S. forces into Lebanon. That was a kind of follow-up to the fall of Nuri Said in Iraq.

Q: This was July 14th when the pro-Western Iraqi regime fell...

MARTENS: ...and the demonstrations were in July. This is an interesting thing: again an insight into the nature of real feelings in the Soviet Union. We had 100,000 demonstrators outside the embassy, and I happened to be the officer who was assigned to the gate to receive petitions from people coming from various factories and offices that were protesting. "Hands-off Lebanon" was the main propaganda slogan. And instead of just taking petitions at the gate I brought them through the gate-- I refused to take the petition at the gate--and brought them into a little room just inside the entrance, and I found myself being kissed on both cheeks, with people saying "don't believe this baloney" or words to that effect. There was one woman who was genuinely angry, but no one else was. I stood at the gate bantering with the crowd, joking. Then the authorities caused a hollow square to be formed after several hours had gone by. They brought in the assault forces which consisted of people dressed in workmen's clothing carrying sacks that contained rocks, and I retreated into the large entry hall on the first floor of the chancery. Everybody else had gone to the upper floors of the embassy. As I stood behind a pillar,

rocks came through the windows until they covered the entire floor, and up to my--let's say my ankles. Pellets from BB guns were also being shot through the windows. Slingshots were also being used to deliver pellets, and all sorts of signs designed to show great anger were hung on the building. And even though I'd seen how people had been friendly before, and you knew what was going on, you couldn't help but be impressed by the show of anti-U.S. feeling. Two days later a newsreel was advertised at a local theater, "Hands Off Lebanon," and it was put on with the first American feature movie to be shown in years as an inducement for people to come, I suppose. There was a huge line and it later became clear that people were there to see the American feature movie. This line extended for several blocks, and I got there very early and was nearly at the front of the line--not quite the front, but very close--and I began to joke with people in the line, "I'm going to be in this 'Hands Off Lebanon' newsreel as the main villain." Not that I was the main villain but I knew that there were newsreel cameras that had taken pictures at the Embassy gate, and I'd been there, so I thought it was at least possible that my image would come on the screen. Well, finally, an hour later we got into the theater. Naturally they showed the propaganda film first, so everybody would remain, and there was my image suddenly on the screen and a huge guffaw of laughter erupted from the audience. So clearly nobody was angry with me or the United States and it was another one of those insights you got, as I said, every now and then as to what people really thought. Anyhow, that was the biggest and by far the most awesome demonstration that we had there.

Q: When you took these trips, one, I assume that you were encouraged to do this by the embassy and there was money for this. Were there attempts...you were a bachelor, you must have had pretty young girls thrown at you and all that?

MARTENS: Yes. An example was on that same trip that I mentioned earlier, the trip that began in Petropavlovsk and continued farther in Siberia. The Soviet authorities were very angry at me, I think, because of that conversation I had had on the train and the sort of demonstration that had taken place when I got off in Petropavlovsk. I was going from that town to the next town, which was Barnaul in the Altai Kray not far from the Tibetan border. On the train enroute, I got into a conversation in the next compartment with a bunch of people who were playing a Russian card game which they were teaching me. Among that group was a young lady of 25 or 26 years of age, not a tremendous beauty but also not unattractive, I suppose. However, I had no thought of that, she was simply in the group playing cards. When we got off the train--there were two people with me from our embassy who did not speak Russian, by the way, or spoke very little...there was a tremendous rainstorm, and only one taxi available. I happened by a stroke of luck to get the taxi for the three of us. But then I saw this young lady standing there in the downpour, and knowing there'd probably be only one hotel in town, and there was space in the cab, I told the cab driver to stop and asked her if she would like a lift. She thanked me and said yes, so we dropped her at the same hotel, and there was no sign at that time that there was going to be any continuation of this acquaintanceship. But then she began to appear at our room maybe twice a day, with various excuses--she wanted to borrow an American magazine, or return an American magazine, or whatever. She was very shy, incidentally. She could not have got through to our room without the sanction and even the connivance

of the KGB because there were...there is a kind of guard system on every floor, in Russian hotels, and one could not get past the guard on your floor unless the KGB wanted somebody to get through to you. The only real restaurant in town--there were in addition a few "stolovayas", which are a kind of stand-up eating places--the only real restaurant in town was in the hotel, and it was closed for repairs. So our meal was delivered from the hotel kitchen, which was still operating, up to our room. We had just finished our meal on the last night there, and this lady came to the room. I should say parenthetically, that this was a day when I had been walking all through the city, and this was a place where I'd been...

---end tape 1, side A.

---tape 1, side B.

MARTENS: ...which I'm not going to do, describe how I knew this, but suffice it to say, there were tails all over the place. So when the young lady came in, very haltingly to return the magazine, I said in a very loud voice--knowing the room was bugged--"Come on in and join us for a drink of vodka," which we'd been having at the end of the dinner. And she did, and then I said, also very loudly, "This is the damndest country I've ever been in. I've been followed all day by the KGB, and now they're even sending women to my room trying to entrap me." And this poor lady began crying. She kept pointing to the walls, and then for the radio to be turned up. So we turned up the radio, and she whispered in my ear, "I had nothing at all to do with this." And she told how the KGB had come to her room after she'd arrived, and forced her to go through with this. So we quickly eased her out the door. That kind of thing happened.

In the next town we went to (Kurgan) there was a young quite good-looking woman seemingly always in the act of undressing with the door open in the room across the hall whenever we came in, or out. Nothing was ever said or done but there is little doubt that the KGB was laying a rather transparent trap if one were foolish enough to make an advance.

Finally, in the next town, Ufa, I was poisoned, and got violently ill--more ill, I think, than any time in my life. I had to literally creep across the floor; I couldn't even get up on my elbows because of my weakness. I was then thrown out of town by the KGB the next day under accusations that I'd overstayed my authorized itinerary time for nefarious purposes. I won't go into more detail, to save time but suffice it to say that you could get into very difficult situations.

Q: You're taking these trips. What was the purpose? And how did you operate?

MARTENS: There were a number of things. One did some technical things, for example, we would go to the markets and price food in different parts of the Soviet Union. The fellow that went with me on the trip I just mentioned was the deputy Agriculture Attaché and he looked at the grain, and how the crops were doing, and that sort of thing. One thing I did, I guess I can say after all these years, was when I had nothing better to do--I

didn't do this unless I wasn't able to talk to people-- but I would make notes on streets. There were no maps of the kind that were freely available in the West in the Soviet Union; virtually everything was regarded by the Soviets as top secret in those days. So as I walked along any given route, I would mark down the names of the streets. At a later time, when I got back to the embassy, I could put my notes into some kind of sketch so one could get some idea of how particular cities were laid out. I won't go into all that in any detail. So there were a variety of things one did. Sometimes you could also arrange meetings with people at various Soviet offices or other institutions. These were innocuous, but of some interest. You might go to a factory that was not regarded as of strategic importance--a candy factory, let's say--and talk to people, and conduct a little interview...

Q: These would be set up for you?

MARTENS: The local branch of the Ministry of Culture might set such a meeting up, for example. But the thing that was of most interest was trying, whenever one had a chance, to talk to people. On trains you were always able to talk to people to a greater extent because people tended to open up on Russian trains. Maybe this was because of the great distances. It was very much like travel by ship in the old days in the Foreign Service where everybody got to know each other on a ship when you felt somewhat removed from your ordinary life. Everybody got into pajamas on a Russian train; you wandered up and down the corridors in your pajamas and you'd strike up conversations with people. And a lot of times they were striking up those conversations with you as soon as they saw you were a foreigner. These conversations were not all highly political, but they were all of interest since they gave you some insight into the real Russia, you might say, not just a propaganda view that was all you ever got in Moscow. So a lot was just by chance in who you happened to run into.

Harry Barnes and I went out one time on another trip to Siberia. We were way out in the deepest reaches of eastern Siberia. A couple of insights: traveling from Irkutsk, we went by plane up to Yakutsk, 3,000, maybe only 2,000 miles of primeval forest and nothing in between but a dirt landing strip alongside of a log cabin village named Olekminsk of maybe 100 or so souls, on the banks of the Lena River. We stopped there for a day or two just for the hell of it, and we were living in a bunkhouse at this airport. One had to walk about a mile or two to the village I mentioned where there were no streets, only log cabins. In the bunk next to mine was a Yakut, a fellow who looked very much like an American Indian. As we got to talking, he described where he lived, which was about 1,000 miles north of Olekminsk at the edge of the tundra. He had a cabin up there in which he was trading stuff for the government with the itinerant Eskimo-like tribes that followed the reindeer. Once a year he would get a chance to take leave, and his leave was spent in this place where I now found myself in Olekminsk. He'd come down for one month to this place which I thought, and still think, was the end of the earth. But yet, for him, this was the place he had to go for his annual vacation. And this has become my description of what "relativity" means.

Anyway, we went on to Yakutsk, a fair sized town in the permafrost region of northeastern Siberia, and we were sitting in a kind of large beer hall. A man came up to our table, a Latvian who was rapidly becoming very drunk, and began telling me he had just been released, under Khrushchev's recent edict, from a slave labor camp. He was still unable to go outside his lumbering camp somewhat outside of Yakutsk, except that he could now come into Yakutsk once in a while. He could not go back to Latvia. But he described the life of his family from the time they were picked up by the MVD in 1940, and where they had all died one by one except for him, in camps along the various reaches of the Trans-Siberian until he ended up at sort of the end of the line out here. It was a tremendously interesting conversation and an insight into the Gulag system. After a while he went to the bathroom and disappeared. I imagine the KGB had been watching us all through this and had grabbed him as soon as he was out of our sight. So you had interesting little insights into things if you got out into the boondocks.

Q: Your's was a more intense experience than I had, but I spent five years in Yugoslavia doing these trips, although we weren't under the same...but one of the dynamics of an embassy, which you alluded to before, was that the young officers got out. They could go out, whereas the more senior officers got trapped almost. I mean they couldn't do the same thing. So you would get two very different perspectives. How did that play out at the embassy, at that time--the dynamics?

MARTENS: I think everybody at the top levels understood what a lousy system it was. There was a sort of basic agreement, I think. The only thing where there might have been some disagreement, and that was implicit more than explicit, was in the understanding of the degree of discontent in the society, which I have alluded to. I don't think it manifested itself in other than this one thing that I mentioned, my final report that didn't come back to the Department. I don't feel any bitterness about it. I don't mean to criticize anyone but it did sort of expose to me that the differences in perception were greater than I imagined they were, and I didn't really realize it until I came back and my report never came through month after month. I kept wondering why.

There was also, I suppose--this is more true, I think, of Tommy Thompson, than it was of Chip Bohlen--a great concern that we not do anything that would offend the Soviet authorities. When I came back from the trip I described earlier where I had been poisoned along the way, I wrote a report describing the conversation I had had on the train. Thompson never said anything to me about it, but maybe two or three weeks later he did make some comments in a general staff meeting that I believe were related to my trip report. He did not mention me or allude to my trip but spoke in general terms about the limits that one should put on one's self; that it would be a mistake to push things too far in conversations with Soviet citizens. It was not our job to get too deep in the debates, the relationship with the Soviet Union could be injured. It was a very sensitive situation. He was very right to say this, and in retrospect, I have thought myself that I probably carried this particular conversation further than I should have. So I may well have been wrong in this. There was no reprimand or anything else, and I continued to talk to people but probably keeping in mind a little bit more Thompson's concerns that one needed to be

careful about how far...it was a very fine line that one had to walk, in other words. Obviously our senior management was more conscious of this than the more junior officers.

Q: And also were looking at a different picture. This is often a dynamic within an embassy.

MARTENS: Yes, and particularly true of that kind of a society. I spent a great deal of my career, as we may get into later on, in closed societies and this was one of four assignments in closed societies, and that sort of thing was always there, and I saw it from both sides. I saw it many years later from the other side.

Q: Did you find there were sort of divergent things within our CIA and military attachés, as you saw it from your vantage.

MARTENS: There wasn't much in the way of a CIA establishment. There was one fellow, I think, and he didn't do much of anything. The society was too closed for him to do very much, and later he got PNGed for trying something. And he was not a terribly substantive officer anyway. There was a large military contingent. They were out doing their thing which was not so much...they were generally not interested in talking to people, they were interested in avoiding contact because they were primarily interested in sight observations. I did a little of it in Odessa, but that was not a sensitive thing. The attachés were more interested in looking at military installations, I suppose, equipment and that sort of thing, but I don't want to get into that.

Q: What about...you mentioned Thompson. How about Bohlen? He was there when you first arrived. His style of operation, and how you saw him within the embassy?

MARTENS: I have tremendous admiration for both men. Bohlen was a more outgoing person, easier to talk to. I liked him tremendously. I played poker with both of them, incidentally. I was the only embassy officer to do so on a regular basis and the rest were usually newsmen. It was not just because I was living in Spaso House with him, but because I was a poker player in those days. The Bohlens took me into the family to a much greater extent than Thompson did later. Every Sunday I had dinner with the Bohlens, that was regular. Other times during the week, if they didn't have anything on particularly, they might invite me up for a kind of family evening in their quarters. I remember one thing we did a couple of times was to look for mushrooms in forests--an old Russian avocation, so to speak--and the Bohlens liked doing that and I used to do that with them. Bohlen was a much more intuitive type of man than Thompson. Everyone knows of his knowledge of the Russian language, and his insights into the Soviet Union. Sometimes, I think, he could be very wrong because his judgments were to a great extent intuitive, rather than based on reason. I think he carried on the collective leadership thing longer than it probably merited. He believed that the leadership was going to stick together--this is before the anti-Party group affair where Molotov, Malenkov and Kaganovich were ousted. I don't think he saw the possibility of that. Many of his insights,

of course, were extremely useful. I had dealings with him later on too when I was in the Soviet-U.S. exchange program, where he was the chief negotiator, and I was one of three subordinate negotiators under him some years later. I think he was more casual by that time in the negotiating process than Thompson would have been. Thompson was a much more methodical man.

Thompson was a man who was rather remote. When I came back to Washington from my previous experience with him in Vienna, I ran into him in the elevator one day. Even though I had talked to him numerous times in briefings that I had given just prior to his Allied Council Meetings in Vienna, he looked at me and didn't recognize me when I said hello. Later when Thompson first arrived in Moscow, I was showing him around Spaso House--Bohlen had already left. Of course, he had previously known Spaso House to some degree from the junior officer's assignment he'd had there during World War II but a lot of years had passed, and I was showing him through the building. He asked me where I had served before. He ultimately remembered me after I mentioned Vienna, but he was kind of aloof--not coldly so, but his mind was elsewhere, you might say. He rarely talked to us junior officers in the embassy, unlike Bohlen who had meetings from time to time in which he got all the substantive officers together and we'd kind of brainstorm various things. It was open to all political and economic officers of whatever rank. Tommy Thompson didn't do that so much. It didn't mean that he was...everybody respected him tremendously. In many ways he was as major, or maybe more of a major player, in the post-war world than Bohlen. There was a book written on what was called "The Wise Men," which mentioned four figures: Bohlen was one of them, Kennan was another, McCloy and Harriman.

I remember a conversation I had about a year or so ago with Ted Eliot, who was in the embassy in Moscow with me at the time, and Ted was saying (he and I and Pic Littell were out to dinner talking about those days), and Ted said, "I think it was really a tremendous mistake not to have included Tommy Thompson in that book to make it five, because I think he was really more important than any of the others. He was really a key figure in the development of U.S.-Soviet relations over the years that followed." And I think there is a lot to be said for that.

Q: One other thing. How did you find dealing with Soviet bureaucracy, particularly in Moscow, but elsewhere.

MARTENS: We had practically no relations during my Moscow tour. I was never in the Soviet Foreign Ministry. There were rare occasions where we had meetings with Soviet officials...if there were important visitors from the U.S. I remember a U.S. Joint Atomic Energy Committee delegation was over including Senator Gore and two or three Congressmen, and we had meetings at an Intourist office of all places, to discuss their desire to visit the Dubna nuclear facility. This was a rather unclassified facility, to which a lot of people went later, but up to that time Westerners had not been admitted and I was interpreting for Gore. I knew that the Soviet Intourist man spoke some English, but he wouldn't speak it in this situation. In my interpretation, I tried to tone down some of

Gore's rather vitriolic comments. When Gore finally understood that I was toning him down, he chewed me out rather badly about not interpreting properly. But I knew that if we were ever going to get the access desired, that it couldn't be done on that basis. The group finally did get in and it was because the request was put in a more courteous way. Anyway, there were rare occasions when you had contact with Soviet officials but not very often. The only people that would go to the Foreign Ministry at all would be the Ambassador, the DCM, and what was called the Chief of Chancery--that is the head of the combined political- economic section. At that time we had a combined political-economic section which had six officers, so it was very small. There were three on the external side and three on the internal side including only one economic officer initially.

Q: At this almost frozen state of affairs, you came back in 1958 to head something which sounds like a complete non sequitur--the Soviet-U.S. exchange program. How did this come about, and what were you doing?

MARTENS: Well, before I left Moscow, an agreement for cultural and educational exchanges had been reached. Negotiations had probably started in an earlier period, and then been put off because of the frozen state of relations as the result of Hungary and Suez. In 1958 negotiations were resumed leading to the first exchange agreement. So by the time I got back to Washington an office had already been set up to deal with this program. The exchanges had not started yet. The first agreement had been signed. I was not the overall head of this office. I was one of about eight officers, but I was in charge of the academic exchanges--the graduate student exchange, and others. I was also the only Russian speaker in this group, and as a result I got assigned frequently to escort other Soviet groups coming over. The Kirov Ballet, I remember, came and I escorted it part of the way, and there were several other big delegations.

I also was frequently chosen to go up to New York to brief American groups going to the Soviet Union. In those days there was a tremendous caution, as well there should have been, about how this program should be handled. There were, on the other hand, occasional naive appeals, particularly from Congress and the press, to have thousands of students exchanged; and all kinds of things opened up unilaterally on our side. We knew this was impractical from a number of standpoints. The thing to do was to make the existing program work, to gradually open the Soviet Union over the years but to do it in a way in which one would get some kind of reciprocity out of it. We tried, for example, to ensure that if a Soviet performing arts group came to the United States and went to five or six American cities, that we should get access to more than just Moscow. Eventually we got American artistic groups into Leningrad, and then eventually into Kiev. But it was very hard and took the most bitter negotiations and hard line stance by the head of this program, a fellow named Frank Siscoe. The first head of our office was a man named Freddie Merrill who was replaced later by Frank Siscoe. Frank had a much better understanding of the Soviet Union since he had served there.

Q: I think it's important to talk a little about this. Our negotiating position often is sort of undercut because we're willing rather to say, if you don't do this, we won't do that.

There's some people who say, hell, anything we can get. Did you find this was a problem?

MARTENS: I was not dealing directly with the large performing arts groups. There's a good example in that when a Soviet performing arts group was coming, it was in the interest of the American entrepreneur, Sol Hurok, let's say--and in this specific case that I'm thinking of it was Sol Hurok. Sol Hurok had an interest in getting a Soviet performing arts group into as many cities as possible. He would make more money that way. It was also useful, looking just at the American side of the exchange, for that to happen. We were not against their getting around the United States, but what we wanted to do was to also open up the possibility for an American performing arts group to go somewhere besides Moscow. So Frank Siscoe tried to take a tough stance at the beginning of a negotiation with the idea that we would later allow more cities to be visited on our side if we could get at least one more city for our group on the Soviet side. Sol Hurok would come screaming to the State Department, probably to the Congress, and others, saying, "Why can't they go to San Francisco?" The mayor of San Francisco, or the mayor of Detroit, would be saying, "Why can't we have this group, we're just as good as New York, why should the Bolshoi be limited to New York." So you'd begin getting all these political pressures. Then those pressures would seep down to the upper levels of the State Department, they'd be saying, "Why don't you loosen up and let these people go out there." And you'd try to go back and explain that we're not against that, we're just trying to get us into Kiev, or Odessa, or some place. So that kind of thing worked all the time.

And the student exchange, which I was in charge of...in that first year, incidentally, Alexander Yakovlev, was one of the Soviet students at Columbia, so that maybe something good came out of it over the years.

Q: Could you explain who he is because this interview is taking place at a time literally within a month of when the Soviet Union has just come apart.

MARTENS: Years later, of course, as Gorbachev's "perestroika" developed, Alexander Yakovlev was looked upon as one of the key figures and was often called the father of perestroika. As a key adviser to Gorbachev, he was one of the instigators of the reforms that swept the Soviet Union. And he's now gone well beyond Gorbachev as a close adviser of Yeltsin.

Another figure at Columbia University then...there were two Soviet students at Columbia, the other was Oleg Kalugin, who I think we realized at the time was KGB. He rose to the rank of major general in the KGB, and during perestroika he became an outspoken opponent of the policies of the KGB and was reprimanded by the KGB...

Q: ...stripped of his medals.

MARTENS: ...stripped of his medals, and in fact Gorbachev himself, was involved in that. After the failed coup in August, 1991 Gorbachev restored the medals, and apparently

restored him to some kind of position in the KGB or its successor--I don't know what it is. Anyway, they are examples of things coming out to the good.

In those days we had to be very careful in the graduate student exchange program because 70%, I would say of the Soviet graduate students, were in the sciences, and were generally being sent for subjects that were as close as possible to sensitive areas as could be-- nuclear physics, for example. They would put forward candidates in computer technology which was then in its early phases. You would have to get reactions from the technical intelligence community on what the dangers were, in which case we turned some of these people down. The great majority of them came, but we had to put some kind of restraint so they couldn't just do anything they wanted from the Soviet side. We never turned anybody down on the social sciences and liberal arts side. But we were very aware of the fact that a lot of the people coming were people that were not just simple students. They were people that were probably young KGB officers, and we knew some of them were. There was a fellow, in addition to Kalugin, that first year at the University of California whose subject was Jack London and he was a known KGB officer. I remember seeing his name in subsequent years--I won't give his name--who became a senior KGB officer. So one had to be very careful. They also put in for a lot of travel and the universities they were going to wanted them to travel. The universities would sometimes get on our backs about, "Why aren't you more open, and allow these people to do things." Well, one reason was that we were trying to obtain better circumstances for the American graduate students--none of whom were intelligence types--going to the Soviet Union. The latter were picked not by the U.S. Government; they were picked by the American universities that were cooperating in this program. These were mainly the universities with Soviet studies programs that were trying to get their graduate student scholars to have some experience in the Soviet Union. These people would go over there--they were only allowed in two universities, Moscow and Leningrad. We kept trying to get them more travel opportunities and access to other institutions. Our universities didn't particularly want them in provincial universities because they didn't think many provincial universities were of high enough quality although there were some exceptions. But they did want access to the Academy of Sciences and to have opportunities to travel and to do research. The Soviets would turn down most of their research projects. When our students went around to the Lenin Library, etc., access was subject to the most stringent conditions. They had to have subjects like 18th century Russian history and even if they were trying to do research on the 1920s, everything was closed to them. So we kept trying to open things up by using reciprocity to some degree to provide a little bit better conditions for our scholars there. I used to say it was sort of like using a lever to wedge open a society little by little. The idea was not just to have Russians see America, although that was important, but the more important and the more profound function of the exchange program was to gradually develop a sense of comfort on the Soviet official side to allow greater freedom for exchanges of people and ideas. So little by little over the years we could reduce these constraints, and that's actually what happened. In those early days we had tremendous controls over everything that went on. By the time I left, after five years, they'd been reduced a good deal, and in the years that followed, the apparatus that we had set up for controlling Soviet exchanges gradually loosened. In fact, it finally

went away altogether. Long before Gorbachev came in, the restraints became very meager as we got more and more experience with this program. In those early days we had to really negotiate in a very tough way to get the Soviets to do anything, to open up at all--except for a one-way street in which they could send anybody here they wanted to, to do anything they wanted, yet we would get nothing in return going the other way.

Q: How did this fit in in the Department? Was this felt to be off to one side? How did you feel about being involved in this exchange?

MARTENS: Well, to some degree it was. In the initial phase bureaucratically, our office was part of the Public Affairs Bureau, and then almost instantly part of the Cultural Affairs Bureau when that split off. We weren't like the rest of the Cultural Affairs Bureau even then, and very shortly after that, by 1960 I think, we were brought into the Bureau of European Affairs because it was considered to be generally a political function. So we became the Soviet and East European Exchanges staff, or SES. This was technically not an "office" like the Office of Soviet Affairs, the Office of Eastern European Affairs or Office of Western European Affairs, but it was kind of parallel to it. It was as large as those offices. It had eight officers headed by what was then an FSO 1, which would now be an MC officer.

Q: MC stands for Minister Counselor, next to the highest rank.

MARTENS: Yes. We had to meet also with the Office of Soviet Union Affairs which had a general policy responsibility; and with the Bureau of Eastern European Affairs where we had a much less controlled program with Eastern Europe. We didn't demand reciprocity for student exchanges with Poland, or Romania, or other Eastern European countries. I helped to negotiate the first agreement with Romania, incidentally, mainly on the student exchange side. That was back in 1960. I also handled huge numbers of Polish students which I exerted practically no control over. I was a Washington back-up on the negotiations for the second US-USSR agreement, which was conducted in Moscow in 1959 or 1960, but I was on the Washington end of sending out instructions to our negotiators. And then I was a negotiator for the third agreement in 1962 which is the agreement which was probably the toughest to negotiate because we had the most ambitious agenda in what we were pushing for, and tried to press the Soviets hardest to make concessions for opening up on the Soviet Union side. That went on for five weeks, and it was one of the toughest battles I was ever in in my life. I couldn't sleep at night it was so tough. Eventually I left SES in 1963.

Q: Why wasn't this whole program with USIA?

MARTENS: USIA came into it, and CU in the Department came into it, but in an operational way. We were the negotiators. We were the ones who provided overall management and substantive direction. CU came into it within State, only in providing grants to American artists going to the Soviet Union, for example. Or American writers.

Irving Stone was one of the writers that went to the Soviet Union. Other than the funding, I dealt with him directly.

Q: "Lust for Life" I think was one of his books.

MARTENS: He was a very nice man. Incidentally, I had long talks with him before he left. That was on the CU side. On the USIA side--USIA came into it for one section of the agreement covering distribution of the magazines. Pic Littell was the head of the USIA branch dealing with the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe who basically ran that part of it, the magazines called Amerika and Soviet Life if I remember the last title correctly. And USIA was also involved with the large performing arts exchanges; this was in financing them, and getting them ready. We negotiated the agreement. We dealt with where they could go, and couldn't go. But the funding, that type of thing, would come from these other entities. Movies were another thing that USIA was involved in. A man named Turner Shelton headed this program in USIA during the Eisenhower administration, and actually did rather well in negotiating the movie exchange with the Soviets--that was an exception where he was an actual negotiator too. Although he was a political appointee, when the change of administrations came in 1961, Shelton got an appointment with State as a Foreign Service Reserve officer--that's an aside.

Q: Did you have any problems at the time? While you were doing this there were two crises, I can think of. One was the U-2, and the collapse of the summit in '59 or '60. And then in late '61 the Berlin wall and Kennedy and Khrushchev not hitting it off.

MARTENS: There were periodic ups and downs. Sometimes the exchange program would be put on hold.

Q: Also the Cuban missile crisis.

MARTENS: There are a couple of things here that are not really directly related to my job in which I got involved. One was when Khrushchev came to the United States for his meeting with Eisenhower, that summit meeting, whenever that was, 1959 probably. Khrushchev went up to Camp David that last weekend and the number two man on the delegation was the Soviet Minister of Education--a man named Yelyutin--and because of my Russian language background and having been in the Soviet Union, and working on educational exchanges, I was assigned the job of escorting Yelyutin for that weekend. I took him up to the University of Delaware, rode with him in an official car up there, and escorted him back. On the way back I was trying to show him the openness of American society: we'd stop at a gas station and I asked him to go in with me and had him given all these free road maps that were available in those days to show the difference from the Soviet Union where no maps were available, free or at any price. And we stopped at various other locations; I even tried to take him into some American houses along the way-- doing it in a way to show that this was not a Potemkin village that was picked in advance; but asking him to select any house that he wanted and we'd stop. Unfortunately, that didn't work out too well. At the first house he selected, a man came to the door and

said someone was ill there. We eventually got into a second house, however. But at the end of our visit there, when Yelyutin was expressing thanks to the man of the house, he asked him about his family and the man responded. He then asked him about his job, and the man said, "I can't tell you because of the nature of my work!" It turned out that this was Laurel, Maryland so I suppose this fellow worked for NSA. I had no realization at that time that NSA was located at Laurel so that was an amusing experience.

At the time of the U-2 incident, there was a Soviet official I had met when I had been at Columbia University. He had then been at the UN mission there, and he later came back to Washington assigned to the Soviet embassy. He looked me up several times. This fellow was KGB and he was later PNGed out of the United States for espionage but he was a rather nice guy, actually, in spite of this...At the time of the U-2 incident he called me up, and asked me to go out to lunch and I did. During the lunch, he proceeded to state that the Soviet Union was going to make as big a propaganda deal out of this incident as it could. He said that was just part of the game and we had to understand that, but we should also understand that this was not going to go too far. We should not over interpret Soviet statements to think that this was going to lead to war, or anything else, it would not. He gave the same message to another colleague the next day, and that message was conveyed in other parts of the world in the same way. The U-2 incident was a difficult period where things cooled down on the exchange program for a time, but exchange activity always came back.

Q: How about during the Cuban missile crisis?

MARTENS: It closed down then too, and I'll never forget those days. I was driving to work every day with a colleague on the Soviet Desk who was more involved in the problem, and he worried a great deal about it. And as I say, the exchange program stumbled. I can't remember the details, but I do remember that exchanges would tend to cool off in those times, and exchanges would be postponed for a time, and they would come back a bit later. It never got to the point of sending Soviet students home or sending American students home. There were prospective visits that were entrain that would stop.

Q: Were you running into any concerns over problems of American students who were in the Soviet Union?

MARTENS: Oh, yes. There were some bitter experiences. I remember it was either the first or second year, I think, out of some 25 American students, five were involved in very serious threats from the Soviets. I remember one case where an American student in Leningrad was put in an entrapment situation in which he was given knock-out drops, and woke up in bed with a man. The KGB had taken photographs. They tried to use this against him to induce recruitment. Fortunately this guy was smart enough to come immediately to the embassy--we did not have a Consulate General at Leningrad. The embassy reported all of his story and we and the Inter-University Committee agreed that we had to bring that fellow out right away. I'm convinced that he was innocent. He had either gotten into research in areas they didn't like or had accidentally talked to Soviet

students in some way that aroused KGB suspicions. Leningrad was always more difficult anyway. The KGB was very strong there. The Party administration was also very hardline, and we always had more incidents in Leningrad.

There was another case where a student in Leningrad was accused of stealing materials out of the Leningrad Library. They were innocuous materials, but he was accused of stealing them. He was put under great pressure.

There were some incidents in Moscow too, but I don't remember them very well after all these years because they weren't as serious. I know of so many horrendous incidents from this and other experiences with Soviet affairs over my lifetime that it's kind of hard to separate it all. Anyway, those were difficult times.

Q: Were cases brought to you from the other side; the CIA trying to recruit, or at least accusations that the CIA was trying to recruit their people? Was it sort of a tit for tat thing?

MARTENS: No, on the contrary, the Inter-University Committee on Travel Grants, as it was called then, it's now called IREX, a grouping of American universities with major Soviet studies programs: Harvard, Yale, the University of Washington, the University of Indiana, and some other major universities--the chairman of it was a senior American scholar in Soviet affairs. The Committee made it very clear that they wanted no CIA involvement whatsoever with American students going to the Soviet Union. They emphasized this to the government, they emphasized it to the students in their briefings. I used to go up to the briefings before the students went out. My own relationships with the Inter-University Committee were very good, and very close. They knew that we, the Government, weren't doing these things, but they lectured the students to "let us know immediately if another agency approaches you." On one or two occasions the head of the Committee would then call me about a situation in which they wondered whether there had been some kind of approach or something and we'd look into it, and it was never anything of consequence. But the sensitivity was there very strongly, and I don't think there was any CIA effort to recruit or otherwise misuse the program.

There were one or two American students that later--there's only one that I can think of, that went to work for CIA later on, and who then went to work for State. He still works for State as a research analyst. He was never a spy type, he was always on the research side. He was an authority on Soviet relations with other communist countries.

Q: If we made an accusation that the Soviets were trying to recruit our students, did the Soviets turn around and say that CIA was trying to do something to their students? Did you get this...

MARTENS: No, that we didn't get. It's rather strange that we weren't...

Q: Yes, I'm sort of surprised.

MARTENS: We didn't do anything with the Soviet students, and I think it would have been...well, I can't say absolutely. Things may have been going on that I didn't know about, but to my knowledge that never happened, and I've never heard of one of those Soviet students becoming a defector later. I think the only thing that ever happened, and it had nothing to do with the CIA, was the fact that some of those people obviously, like Yakovlev and Kalugin, saw enough of the West that they wanted to see changes in their society. And that's a good thing. That we certainly were trying to do. It's more a case of promoting a long-term effect, which was an overt effort. The Soviets knew we were trying to do that, to open up the Soviet Union and to show their people the West and Western values.

Q: I was thinking it might be a good place to stop here, don't you, because we're obviously going to be doing more than just this, and I think it might be a good place to stop, and we'll start again and talk about Indonesia.

Q: This is September 23rd, 1991. This is the second interview with Robert J. Martens.

Bob, we finished off with you in the Soviet exchange program, and you ended up going to Indonesia, which was sort of completely out of your previous area. How did that appointment come about? You served there from 1963 to 1966.

MARTENS: First of all, the job itself was oriented towards the communist side of things, and to some extent Soviet and even Chinese affairs. In other words, major communist power reporting. It was what we called peripheral reporting in those days. There were always a large number of junior and middle grade officers in Moscow but not very many senior positions in those days. So you had this huge body of Soviet and communist party expertise building up over the years, but with few places in Moscow for a second tour. And the result was that a great many officers with that kind of background were sent out to these so-called peripheral assignments. We had three or four in Latin America, for example. Anyway, I went to Indonesia and I was very happy to go to a different geographic area. I'd never been to the Far East, and was looking forward to it. In fact, the job I was assigned to was junior to my rank because I got promoted that summer after the assignment had been made, and I decided not to fight that but to go ahead with it because I really wanted to go out there and do that job which involved reporting on what was then the largest communist party in the world after the Soviet and Chinese parties. Anyway, I arrived in Jakarta in September, 1963 on a date that is known fondly among the people that were there at the time as Ash Wednesday. It was the day the British embassy was burned and sacked, and my wife and I--it was her introduction to the Foreign Service--arrived in all that confusion. Even the house next door had been burned--it happened to be a British house--so it was quite an introduction to the city.

Q: Could you describe what the situation was in Indonesia when you got there in September 1963?

MARTENS: Sukarno had given a great deal of trouble to the West already, but had come to a much more complete individual power position only two or three years earlier. In the early days there had been basically a parliamentary democracy, so his power had previously been far from complete. And now he was in the process of entrenching that power, and carrying, in my opinion, Indonesia further and further in a pro-communist direction. This was not recognized in the embassy when I arrived, nor did I recognize it. I didn't go out with this preconceived notion, but I began running onto things that made me convinced in a fairly short time-- several months--that Sukarno was totally in league with the communists and was carrying the country in that direction. I ended up writing a long report in airgram form in May of 1964, which would have been eight or nine months after I arrived, in which I made the then startling statement that Sukarno was a communist. I could not get that report out without writing a covering sheet, which I also wrote--I was given the opportunity to do that--saying, this was only one man's opinion. But eventually the whole embassy came to this view after a time--that's a long story.

Q: Let's talk about this a bit. Was there a problem--I mean you send a communist expert on the Soviet Union out, and I imagine people said, you send one of these guys out there and they're going to see communists. That's what you're trained to do. Was this a problem both internally in yourself, and within the embassy?

MARTENS: I think the embassy was predisposed not to think of Sukarno along those lines, although everybody knew he was, as our DCM at the time said, "bad news".

Q: The DCM was?

MARTENS: ...was Frank Galbraith. Sukarno had the reputation of being an ardent nationalist, which he was, and there was a tendency in those days for people to think that these things were mutually exclusive. I think that was a fault of American intellectual thought in the early 1950s where, if you remember those days, nationalism was called "the great bulwark against communism". This was a misconception as these two concepts of nationalism and communism can be much more intertwined. To me Marxism was a convenient way to express a kind of paranoid type of nationalism, and paradoxically because of that, every place where a communist party came to power on its own, it ultimately went off in a very unorthodox direction from the Soviets because nobody becomes paranoid for the sake of someone else's ego. I've written about this in a book which has not yet been published but is available to anyone interested in the 1965-66 developments in Indonesia. Whether they happen to agree with some of these opinions or not; there's a great deal of factual material in my book which has never been exposed to public view.

In any case, to go back to your original question, Sukarno had latched on to the British granting of independence to Malaya, and doing so in a form in which the old Malaya was to be combined with several other British colonies in the area along the northern coast of Borneo, and with Singapore, and forming this group of British dependencies into a new independent state to be called Malaysia. Sukarno took issue with this, and declared it a

neo-colonialist scheme, and there were some intimations that Indonesia also had designs on the northern Borneo territories for itself. One could regard the development of this tremendous hypernationalism that evolved in the Malaysia campaign which began in the summer of 1963 to pure nationalism and nothing else. It was nationalism to some degree, but it was much more than that because, in my view at least, this campaign provided the excuse to carry the country internally in a much more extremist, and left-wing direction. For this kind of interview I can't get into all that. It's all in my book, however. In any case, there was a strong and visible trend of Sukarno working in tandem with the communist party from then on. The communist party was becoming more and more powerful and had already become by far the largest element in the country. And this was done not from a grassroots approach so much, there was some of that, but it was primarily a revolution taking place from above rather than below in which Sukarno and the communist party leadership at the top--the communist party working with Sukarno's support--tried to project a feeling of inevitability that the Communist Revolution was marching to an imminent total victory. Meanwhile, all opposition to the communists was being suppressed by Sukarno, under his guise of being the "Great Leader of the Revolution" and the "President for Life" and so on. This continued right up to the famous September 30 affair, the failed communist "coup" that led to the overthrow of communism in Indonesia.

Q: That was 1965.

MARTENS: September 30-October 1, 1965 was the so-called communist coup. I said, so-called because the coup was really a failed purge by Sukarno and the communists who already dominated the civilian side of the government. And a period of total anarchy took place over the following six or seven months before the whole thing came to a...

Q: We want to come back to that. I wonder if you could describe, particularly the ambassador, the embassy, the relations, how he operated, how the embassy felt about him? This was very controversial time.

MARTENS: The ambassador's name was Howard Jones. Howard Jones was sent to Indonesia originally as the AID director way back, quite a few years before this, had gone back to the Department and had been the Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for Far Eastern economic matters, and then was sent back as ambassador. He had already been there as ambassador a long time. I think his total period as ambassador, if I remember correctly, was something like seven years. So he was well established. He had the reputation, which he tended to promote himself, of being very friendly with Sukarno, and one of the few people who had influence on Sukarno. Sukarno catered to this, and in my opinion, and that of most other people, tended to lead Ambassador Jones down the garden path making him feel that he had more influence than he did. This became particularly obvious in the last year or so of Jones' tour as ambassador.

Q: He left when?

MARTENS: He left I think around May of '65, about three or four months before the so-called coup. By that time we were being thrown out, our buildings were being sacked, and various other things were happening. By that time Jones had been made to look ridiculous by Sukarno's actions, and by Sukarno even pointing his finger at him and shouting at him to take away his "so-called aid", and a number of other things. There was a distinct put-down by Sukarno.

When I arrived, there was a good deal of antipathy towards Jones in the embassy, particularly after the burning of the British embassy; a feeling that he was out of touch. Some of this was rather personal. I felt then, and I've felt since, a good deal of respect for Jones personally. He always treated me well even though I became the sort of opposite pole in the Embassy's thinking about what was taking place in Indonesia. Jones recognized that and said in his book, in which he refers to me as someone who came up with a different view, and he does it in a very polite way. After stating my dissident view of Sukarno in one chapter, Jones in the following chapter which described the coup -- by this time he was back in Hawaii -- he combined the two chapters in a way that implied that Martens was right. I interpret it that way because of the way the following chapter unfolds. Jones always took me with him on meetings with Soviets, or figures that were openly pro-communist in the Sukarno government. I remember interpreting for him in Russian, between him and the head of the Main Political Administration of the Soviet armed forces; a man who had come with Mikoyan. Mikoyan was there on a visit. I sat between the two of them while Jones was...

Q: Mikoyan, was he Minister of Finance?

MARTENS: No, he was a prominent member of the Politburo, and was more than just a minister. He was a major Soviet figure. He was regarded as having particular expertise, and occasionally was a Minister in this field, on the light industry side. He was very close to Khrushchev. Khrushchev was still in power at that time. He fell from power during my stay in Indonesia.

Anyway, the situation kept getting worse and worse. I think by the summer of the year after I arrived, that is in 1964, things got so bad with the famous "Year of Living Dangerously" speech. Despite the movie of the same name, that was not the speech of the year in which the coup took place but rather of the previous year, 1964. But that speech indicated a very strong leftward lurch by Sukarno, followed by a period in which there was a moderate counterattack led by Adam Malik. Malik was originally a Marxist, by the way--but he had come back from a tour as ambassador to Moscow disillusioned with communism. And the same was true of the Indonesian ambassador to China, a man named Sukarni. They were both members of the Murba political party which was an offshoot of the communist party. They turned the Murba party into a kind of anti-communist force, and while still a member of the government, although getting gradually demoted, Malik tried to stop this lurch toward the left while Sukarno was abroad getting medical treatment, under the guise of a "Movement to support Sukarnoism". In other words Malik was trying to define Sukarnoism in a way that was not pro- communist.

Sukarno came back from that trip and in effect denounced those people that he said were misinterpreting Sukarnoism. Malik was then removed from his position as Minister of Trade and so on, and everyone associated with him was removed from office or demoted.

The following spring of 1965, in a speech to the quasi-parliamentary body, called the MPRS, Sukarno announced that Indonesia was "now leaving the National Democratic stage, and entering the socialist stage". This was a straight PKI communist party jargon for ending the period in which the communists were still allied with certain other groups in the National Front, and would now go for total power for themselves. Sukarno himself announced this, and most people in the embassy didn't understand it, nor were prepared to understand this kind of esoteric jargon. From that point on I felt there was going to be an attempt made by Sukarno to make the country openly and irrevocably communist in the very near future. And in fact that's what happened. Sukarno himself was behind the so-called communist coup. It was not a coup against Sukarno, it was basically a purge, or an attempted purge by Sukarno, to remove the last elements that stood in the way of a total communist takeover of the country. This is extremely important not only in terms of Indonesia, which was important enough, because as you may recall the Indonesia communist party at that time was the third largest in the world after the Soviet and Chinese, therefore the largest communist party not already in power. If Indonesia had gone totally communist at this time...the effect on all of East Asia and the world would have been enormous because Indonesia is far larger than Indochina in either population or area terms. In fact it is as large, more or less, as all of southeast Asia put together including the Philippines, Thailand, all the Indochina states, (Vietnam, Laos, Cambodia), Malaysia, Singapore and Burma--combined. And furthermore, it is at a strategic location where the Indian and Pacific Oceans are joined. So the effect on these fairly weak states in Southeast Asia would have been enormous. In other words, the domino theory had a lot of sense to it.

The domino theory, incidentally, is an American term for what was basically an Asian communist view. This was the heart of the Sino-Soviet dispute. You don't have to agree with it to understand that the Chinese in the Sino-Soviet dispute had, as one of two major points of contention, the idea that the world communist revolution was very close to coming to total victory in the Third World generally, and particularly in Southeast Asia. The Soviets were saying the opposite, that the Chinese and other Asian communists were overestimating their strength at this historical stage. The Chinese were saying, no, no, we have the imperialists on the run and must press the revolution to a conclusion. And the other Asian communists, particularly the Indonesian communists, felt the same way.

The other major point in the dispute was related to this, and that was the Asian communist view that the center of world revolution was now in East Asia, not in Europe. In other words, the Soviets would take a back seat. One reason the Chinese felt this was the revolutionary surge going on within Indochina, particularly Vietnam, where communist advances led to the American intervention in that summer of 1965. But a more important consideration, in my opinion, and one that has been greatly overlooked in the United States, was that the Chinese were perfectly aware of Sukarno's pro-communist

proclivities, and of the fact that Indonesia intended to go communist in that year. And in fact, what you had in the late summer of 1965, was the cresting of the communist wave, particularly in its radical East Asian version. People have forgotten this but in September 1965, only two or three weeks before the so-called communist coup in Indonesia, Lin Piao made his famous speech that "the world village is surrounding the world city"--meaning...

Q: Lin Piao being...

MARTENS: ...one of the Chinese leaders. In other words he was saying that the allegedly peasant-led communist revolution of Asia was about to overwhelm the industrialized world, in which the Chinese and the Indonesians would defeat the "Old Established Forces" which included not only the United States and the western imperialists, but the revisionist Soviets. They were all being thrown into one pot for some purposes at least.

Another factor in this period was that Sukarno left the UN in January 1965, in the midst of this last revolutionary phase. When he did so, he did it in the context of forming a new organization that was to be called CONEFO or Conference of the New Emerging Forces. He had already talked about "New Emerging Forces" versus "Old Established Forces" in a propaganda sense before, but for the first time there was going to be a big international conference of New Emerging Forces, and facilities were to be built in Jakarta for this purpose. The Chinese financed this, and began sending over great quantities of material to build this up. In other words, it was both a Chinese and an Indonesian Sukarnoist view that this kind of rival UN would be formed, based on the East Asian communists and their allies. There were to be other groups in it--a kind of international version of the national front tactic. At a lower plane than the communist core you could have all the Third World nations; sort of an attempt would be made to suck them into this. New emerging forces would also include as fellow travelers, other progressive forces--what the communists would define as progressive forces--in the industrialized West, and so on. The heart of the thing would be the Asian communist grouping, or what they began calling the "Pyongyang, Beijing, Hanoi, Phnom Penn, Jakarta Axis". All these countries were communist, or about to become communist, except possibly for Sihanouk's Cambodia. But the Cambodians were felt to be under the thumb of North Vietnam enough that they could be included in the "axis".

Anyway, this is what was coming into view. Now when the so-called coup, this attempted purge, failed in 1965-- September 30/October 1--it was very clear that the Chinese had advance notice of it, because they made noises, when it was first reported, of great glee, and they did so before full information had been announced in Jakarta. They were saying things that they obviously knew in advance what nobody could have known unless they were in on it. This doesn't mean the Chinese organized the coup, the latter was an Indonesian Sukarno organized affair. But the Chinese were aware of it, and were in sympathy, and saw it as portending a major shift of the balance of power toward Asian communism.

When the communist coup failed, however, in my view, and this is the second theme of my book--the first theme being the real nature of the Indonesian events of 1965, the fact that the country was going communist under Sukarno's leadership. The second theme in the book is that the failure led the Chinese, and the Asian communists generally, to lose this tremendous revolutionary optimism that they had up to this point, and to retreat into themselves. This, in my opinion, led to the Cultural Revolution in China, or, more precisely, led to the Cultural Revolution developing in the way it did. There were some earlier allusions to the Cultural Revolution before this in the summer of 1965, but it was one of those very common campaigns in communist countries, the so-called rectification campaigns, in which people were told to pull up their ideological socks as it were. But this was far different than what happened after the failure of Indonesia for only then was there a massive reign of terror and purges of people at the very top levels of the Chinese Communist Party.

Immediately after the failure of the September 30 affair in Indonesia, in the late fall-early winter of 1965, a series of purges against members of the Chinese leadership took place. I would attribute this to Mao Zedong, who had been pushed into a kind of chairman of the board position by Liu Shao-chi and others earlier, and who saw a chance to recoup his former full power. This doesn't mean that Mao was against the Liu Shao-chi foreign policy, but Mao had been less directly associated with it. So a series of purges took place beginning with Peng Chen, and going on to Liu Shao-chi himself shortly after this. Even Zhou En-lai was under some threat for a while. Most of the people that were purged were people who had been very closely associated with the Indonesian connection. So, as I see it, the Chinese, saw that Indonesia, instead of becoming a bulwark of the Chinese policy abroad, was instead becoming a liability and indeed going over to the opposite side. Indonesia was not going communist after all but becoming basically anti-communist because they were in the process by this time of killing the communists in large numbers. So what I see is that, while the rhetoric of radical Chinese foreign policy verbiage continued, there was actually a Chinese retreat within themselves, and in fact you got--I followed these affairs from the Soviet angle soon after this--you had a shift of the Sino-Soviet dispute from a conflict over how imminent communist success in the world revolution might be, and who should be leading the world ideological movement, into a more direct border conflict between China and the Soviet Union. This was occurring during the period of 1967-68 and I followed this from my position in the State Department dealing with Sino-Soviet affairs. During this period there was a huge buildup of armed forces on both sides, in Mongolia and along the Siberian borders between China and the Soviet Union.

The United States was thus no longer seen as the great enemy that was keeping the Chinese and the Asian communists generally from achieving their ambitions because of the Indonesian debacle. On the contrary, the U.S. could now be regarded as a card to play against the Soviets in this more direct Sino-Soviet border conflict. In other words, the very nature of the Sino-Soviet dispute had changed even though the dispute went on. The dispute went on in some ways at a more exacerbated level. The Chinese were putting out noises behind the scenes to the Thai and others to beware of the Vietnamese and to

beware of Soviet influence generally in East Asia. In other words, they began to look upon their own situation as one of a defensive nature rather than an offensive nature. This change had considerable effect on Vietnam itself because while, in my opinion, the domino theory had basically been valid up through 1965-66 as a shorthand description of Chinese policy, thereafter it became of less importance because the Chinese had withdrawn from its earlier optimistic position. In other words, the rationale for our being in Vietnam, and you can argue that there continued to be other reasons, was no longer for the purpose of stemming an overall communist drive in Asia. This was receding because of the failure in Indonesia and the Chinese reaction to that failure. That's my interpretation of recent East Asian history, and the beginning of the change in the Cold War.

Q: I want to bring us back to a completely different view, rather than this very interesting view. Going back to the embassy. You get an ambassador who has an avowed policy of being nice to Sukarno, and accepting the blows and arrows of Sukarno's outrageous behavior towards the United States. Before you went out did you get a feeling from Asian affairs that, okay, we've got an ambassador out there who is pursuing this policy and we're behind him; or professionally was saying, he's there but we think he's a kook. What impression did you get before you went out about the ambassador?

MARTENS: I had no impression at all before going out. I went out with a completely neutral view. I also didn't get any comment from the desk on this subject. When I got out there it was very apparent immediately that a good part of the embassy was opposed to Howard Jones' interpretation of events. I will go on to say I'm not in total disagreement with Jones on all points. I think that Jones was wrong in his analysis but I agreed with him that we had to stay in the game. There were some embassy officers who felt we ought to leave Indonesia, close the embassy, and break relations. I never felt that. I am a believer in trying to stay in the game to the extent possible. This meant a certain accommodation with Sukarno from the standpoint of keeping channels open, just like we did in Eastern Europe with the Soviet Union. I think that Jones had some reason to be hopeful in earlier days that things would pan out better. The West Irian dispute had come to a conclusion favorable to Indonesia because of U.S. intervention to a great degree, and getting the Dutch to accommodate themselves to ending their last colonial possession in the East Indies.

There was a wing of the Sukarno government under a Prime Minister named Djuanda that wanted to see much more attention paid to economic development. It became clear in this later period I'm talking about that Sukarno was not in favor of Djuanda's policy but he had accommodated himself to it to some degree to appear to be balancing forces since his tactics were to gradually lead the country by stages toward a more pro-communist approach but with occasional back-pedaling. So I think in the very beginning of my tour there was still a certain rationale for Jones to see things as "possibly turning out" in favor of a moderate non-communist course. There was also the fact that we had been told by General Nasution, the Defense Minister-- and nominal head of the armed forces--that the army remained basically opposed to the communists. So there were those hopes. I think

the problem was that as one got into the later period and Nasution had lost real power by being kicked upstairs to Defense Minister, but with control shifted to other generals, with Djuanda's policy having failed, and then with Djuanda having died around the end of 1963, Sukarno identified himself more and more with the pro-communist forces. At that point it should have become clear that one's analysis of events had to change, but this didn't mean that one would get out of the game, but while staying, we would have to keep our eyes open. But I don't think from the way Jones talked that was the case. It was in this later period that there began to be differences in the Department over our policy. There were some elements in Washington that still generally agreed with Jones, particularly on the NSC staff. Within the East Asian Bureau--and I don't speak on this except at second hand--I think it's clear that the Country Director, a fellow named David Cuthell, began to take a view very similar to mine on what was going on in Indonesia. He was not a Soviet or communist expert and I don't know the precise nature of his views or analysis. I never talked to him, never met him during this period. I had known him slightly at an earlier stage of my life when he was working on Turkish affairs, or something, but I didn't know him in this context. He had left the East Asia Bureau by the time I got back. Anyway, I subsequently talked to Marshall Green a great deal about Dave Cuthell's important contribution...

Q: Marshall Green was at that time?

MARTENS: Marshall Green was Deputy Assistant Secretary in the East Asian Bureau, and since Bill Bundy, the Assistant Secretary, was so preoccupied with the Vietnam question, Marshall had pretty much supervision over Indonesia and many other matters. This is all, incidentally, in Marshall's book which came out just a few months ago. So Marshall Green also began to see things pretty much as Cuthell did. Green obviously relied on Cuthell a great deal because Cuthell had much more time to devote to this one subject. Marshall Green had a great many subjects to cover and was predominantly a Japan expert and a China expert. So views were beginning to change in Washington. Perhaps as a result of this, our policy began to visibly alter after Sukarno publicly shouted at Jones, "to hell with your aid". This was in January 1965. Sukarno took the country out of the UN at about this time and Jones sort of dismissed its importance in a cable to the Department. The Political Section succeeded in convincing Jones to soften some of the more ridiculous things he was saying in his original draft of that cable but it was still overly apologetic for Sukarno's behavior.

In the period that followed--early 1965--the Peace Corps had to be withdrawn. Our library in Jogjakarta was sacked by a communist-led mob. Our library in Jakarta, the capital itself, was then sacked as well by a similar mob. AID was withdrawn around April or May of 1965. The embassy was reduced to a much smaller group. USIA was withdrawn except for one or two officers who remained in the embassy proper without appearing to be a USIA officer. They continued there as information officers. This was much like the situation we had in Moscow at the height of the Cold War where we did not have a designated USIA office although we had a USIA officer. All this was going on and Ellsworth Bunker then came out--I forget whether it was March or April-- and he then

apparently came to the conclusion that things in Indonesia were rather hopeless. Bunker talked to me for about an hour, presumably to assess the views of a leading dissident voice about where the country was going.

Jones then left in May, and Frank Galbraith, the DCM, became Chargé for the next two or three months. He came in with a very pessimistic cable right after Jones left. I had gone to Galbraith, incidentally, right after the Sukarno speech that had declared that Indonesia was now entering the socialist stage. I told him my view that this meant...that Indonesia was going to go completely and openly communist within the next two or three months. Anyway, Marshall Green arrived in July as the new ambassador, and obviously with a far different view. I'm not saying that Marshall Green accepted all my views, I don't know whether he did or not. I remember when he arrived that as he came down the aisle at the airport or embassy--I forget which--he said something along the lines of, "I have read your stuff, and I agree with you". I don't know if he remembered that afterward or not. Anyway, he did have a much more skeptical approach towards Sukarno. It didn't mean that he didn't try to maintain contact, he did try to maintain contact with the Foreign Minister, Subandrio, which was necessary too. But within a month or two after he arrived, we had the communist effort to seize total power, the September 30 affair. And I should add that these final months leading up to the coup were ones in which the relative moderates in the other parties were being purged at Sukarno's urging. The other political parties, other than the communists, had already been or were being taken over from within by communists or were totally neutralized. Sukarno was also pounding the army leadership to accept what was intended to be a political commissar system with the communists being the commissars. Sukarno was also pushing the concept of what he called a Fifth Armed Force, which was basically the arming of the PKI. The army was balking at these measures which were intended by Sukarno to be the last steps required to carry the country into the communist camp by peaceful means. When the army balked, Sukarno decided to turn to a violent entry into the socialist stage. This was foreshadowed by a speech he gave on July 25th which I remember very clearly. I sat underneath Sukarno while he gave it. His bodyguard was Colonel Untung who was later the nominal leader of the so-called coup. In that speech, Sukarno praised the earlier communist uprising of 1926-1927, by identifying himself with the PKI of the 1920s, which went underground after the failure of that revolt. In effect, Sukarno was saying that he had been a member of the 1926 PKI. None of this had been known to the outside world. Sukarno then began to browbeat the army to get in line with the revolution, or else. He shook his finger at General Yani, the head of the army in this period and publicly threatened him along these lines. So the so-called coup, starting with the assassination of Yani and his leading generals, which was carried out largely by Sukarno's personal bodyguards--the so-called Tjakrabirawa Regiment--was aimed at getting rid of the top army leadership which was seen as the only remaining impediment to permit "entry into the socialist stage". Unfortunately for them, the coup failed. That's another long story. I don't think we need to get into it, but I understand what happened and how the coup failed. It's in my book if anyone who reads this interview should be interested in what really happened.

Q: At the embassy, was there any role that the CIA played at all at that point? I mean from your connection that you can...this is an unclassified interview, of course. How did you relate to them, because I would have thought in many ways you would have been the prime person to have some liaison with them.

MARTENS: Well, I knew all those people and it was a very close knit group--the entire mission--all elements at that embassy, particularly as the situation got worse and worse. In certain closed societies you tend to have better relationships with people, I think, than you do in some of the more open societies, so we knew all those people. They did a certain amount of reporting. It was the kind of reporting that the agency does. In other words, non-analytical reports from sources, it was reporting on what the people they had on their payroll were saying, some of it was very good, some of it was off-base because a lot of the Indonesians were so terrorized by the flow of events that they came up with rosier views than were warranted, or that they really believed themselves. They kept hoping that Sukarno was going to save them from the communists, that kind of thing. Whether CIA was doing anything operational, I don't know. I don't think they were doing anything substantial, frankly.

The CIA, from all I've read or heard, had been involved in the earlier late 1950s conflict between the Outer Islands and Jakarta. You may recall that an American pilot, whose name I can't remember at the moment, was shot down in Indonesia, and he apparently had a CIA connection. This was followed by the Jones period, when there was a considerable shift of U.S. policy. Jones had been sent out as someone very sympathetic to Indonesia and Sukarno and with a mandate to make sure that nothing like this went on. And the agency, from all I was told by them and by others, was authorized to oppose the communists, narrowly defined, but to do nothing against Sukarno or any elements of the government. If you took the view, as I did, that Sukarno was the real leader of the PKI in essence, this was a totally unworkable kind of thing. So I don't think that they--they certainly were not doing anything against Sukarno--and were not doing anything else in a major way other than reporting. I don't think, in any event, that one could find any basis whatsoever for any belief that the U.S. was involved in trying to change things in Indonesia. We wanted things to change. Obviously our sympathies were not with the communists, were not with Sukarno as he became identified with the communists, but that was all it was. We didn't see any role to be played. And in fact, one could argue whether that was right or wrong, but that was basically our policy. We stayed out of it. Ambassador Green in his book describes how the policy under him was similar to that of a surf boarder riding the waves, keeping out of trouble basically. The changes that took place were changes that took place because of internal factors. The fact was that the Indonesian people by this time were absolutely fed up with the Sukarnoist and PKI system; very much like what happened in more recent times in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe. There are a lot of parallels. I might say that I'd had previous experience in Moscow, and at the height of the Cold War in the '50s I found the terror in Indonesia in 1963 through 1965 greater than that in the Soviet Union. People were actually scared to death. I remember a young man who had been teaching me Indonesian on Sundays. The last time I saw him he went out the front gate and came running back to my porch saying

that he had seen some people laying for him out there who were trying to kill him. I took him out the back way, and walked him up to a bus stop some distance in the opposite direction so I could protect him as far as I could. But there was obviously no way that I could protect him on a longer-term basis. I never saw this young man again even though I had offered to help put him through college the next year. I had done so because the rupiah cost at our exchange rates were such that it wouldn't cost me very much-- perhaps \$100. After the changes that occurred in a non- communist direction, you would have thought that this young man would have showed up again. He did not. I'm convinced that he was killed by the communists shortly after he left my house although I have no direct proof. And I had some very similar experiences with a professor at the University of Indonesia that I used to see during my first year in Jakarta. Later he was intimidated by the communists at an academic symposium and his life was threatened if he continued to advocate non-communist views. He became so fearful thereafter that he wouldn't see me anymore. I ran into him by accident on neutral ground later. This was at a Third World country embassy probably in August 1965 just before the September 30 coup when things were really looking very bleak for the non-communists--and we happened to be standing next to each other on a balcony, and I said--I won't mention the man's name-- "So and so, you can see how things are going as well as I." The man, an ethnic Chinese, started crying and this was a very brave man in the earlier period. He said, "I know how it's going, and if the communists take over, and it looks like its 95% certain they will, I will be destroyed even though I have tried to take on a neutral image. But that's not going to work, both me and my family will be exposed to persecution. And if by some miracle that doesn't happen, and the non- communists come out on top, it might very well be in the context of an anti-Chinese pogrom, and I would get it that way too." But it didn't happen. The man survived. There was some anti-Chinese feeling in places but it was not on the scale that was anticipated, and most of the Chinese came out all right.

Q: Marshall Green, both in his book and the interview we've done, has described the coup, counter coup, of the military reaction to the coup. But what about in the immediate aftermath? When did you leave Indonesia?

MARTENS: I left in August, 1966.

Q: So almost ten months that you were there in this period. One of the things you can describe how it happened, but there's a story that somehow you had been clipping and keeping names, and keeping a list as part of your regular work, who was doing this. Could you explain what happened, and the accusation about our supplying death lists, and all this sort of thing.

MARTENS: That's nonsense. What happened was, as in every closed society, people that have had the kind of experience I've had with Soviet affairs, analysis sometimes called Kremlinology, you try to read the tea leaves and you try to understand the organization of the communist party, not through contacts, which you cannot very much have, but through reading the communist press very carefully. One of the things you do is to try to form a structure of the party by carding the names of positions. Not so much the names,

as to try to get the positions organized and understand how everything fits together. So I'd been doing that for the previous two years when this so-called coup, actually an attempted purge, took place. I had assembled all this unclassified data on the communist party structure based on the communist press itself and to a far lesser extent on other communist publications. Regarding the latter, I used to go to the three communist bookstores that I knew of in Jakarta from time to time and bought some of their pamphlets which I reviewed later. Anyhow, I developed this into a sort of structure of the party. About a month after the coup, a man came to my house--maybe this was two or three weeks afterward--who was a chief aide to Adam Malik, a man I have spoken of earlier. Malik, you will recall, had been one of the few leaders who had stood up to the communists and he now became very close to the army. He was almost a Foreign Minister in waiting, and he later became Foreign Minister under Suharto, and still later Vice President. This fellow said, "I have been told by friends in the diplomatic corps, not from Americans, that you know more about the Indonesian communist party than anybody else. So could you help me?" I said, "Sure." So I talked to him and we hit it off quite well. He became a very good friend as well as a contact; and we talked about what was going on, as you do with lots of other people. You don't go to foreign countries to sit in the embassy doing nothing but twiddling your thumbs. So I talked with this fellow at some length, and over time I discovered that he, at least, didn't have, and perhaps the army didn't have, a very organized collection of data on the communist party. Everybody knew the big names. If they could put it all together they probably all knew things individually far more than I did, but I had a kind of structure. For example, the new Central Committee of the Communist Party that had been announced maybe a year or two earlier, had been in the Communist Party newspaper at that time but whether anybody had that available was problematical because fear and terror had been so great that anybody within the Indonesian system that collected information on the PKI would have been considered an enemy of Sukarno, and the state, etc. So I gave some of this basic newspaper material to him, and he took it to Malik, and Malik apparently gave it to the army. What effect it had, if any, I don't know. It was certainly not a death list. It was a means for the non-communists that were basically fighting for their lives--remember the outcome of a life or death struggle between the communists and non-communists was still in doubt--to know the organization of the other side. To accuse me, or the embassy, of trying to murder masses of people even down to the village level, as was the accusation of that article, is about as sensible as trying to say that anybody that kept data on the Nazi Party in the late 1930s, so that Americans might be able to distinguish between Martin Bormann and Heinrich Himmler and all those people, and to discuss that with non-communist Germans, was guilty of some heinous crime. It doesn't make any sense whatsoever.

A lot of the problem is that a number of different issues were put together in a way that doesn't make any sense in that article. The writer simply did not understand the subject or was bent on developing an extreme left- wing theory hostile to the U.S. Government.

Q: Will you explain where the article appeared?

MARTENS: It appeared in a good part of the American press. A young lady who came to me originally as a student, had been introduced to me by a State Department officer still on active duty. She was said to be interested in what had happened in Indonesia in that period. I talked to her at length a number of times on the entire history of the period, none of it on her eventual thesis. It was on the overall course of events. She seemed to be very willing to learn, very appreciative of all this. Somewhere in that early period while she was still in a student status of some sort that I mentioned in passing the point she used in her article. This was to illustrate the extent of terror in that society under Sukarno. I had mentioned that, in my opinion, this contact of Malik, and perhaps the army, the non-communist Indonesians in general had been so intimidated in the earlier period that they had been afraid to develop a very good data base on the structure of the PKI--who was a member of the Central Committee, which Party officials headed which Sections of the Party structure and so on. I had given them this material which, as I say, was taken straight out of the communist press, it was all open material. So I had mentioned this point to her as an illustration of the degree of tenor leading up to the Communist coup attempt.

She later became a journalist, and then came back some years later and talked to me again. She still appeared to be interested in the broader picture but she did begin to mention from time to time this particular subject which I had forgotten had been a part of our earlier conversation. It had been a one sentence aside but she now kept trying to raise it. She did so in the context of backing off whenever I wanted to return to the main subject of what had happened in Indonesia. She tried to give the appearance that she was pursuing this more general subject, but then she would occasionally slide in with a question on the side, and I'd say, "No, that isn't right Kathleen. You have it wrong." Then she'd go off on some other tangent, but she tended to come back to this. Anyway, she used that as the starting point for this very negative article.

Anyway, I had collected that material in a routine way. The Indonesian in question was one of two or three very good sources throughout this period for me. In fact I was doing a significant part of the embassy reporting because I'd been around longer than most of the Political Section by that time and I understood what was happening. So I had some very good contacts in that period which were very helpful.

Q: Speaking of this, let's go before the coup and after the coup. Could you explain how you as a political officer dealing with this thing operated--contacts, and this type of thing?

MARTENS: Contacts were extremely difficult before the coup, very much like Eastern Europe. Not quite that bad because there were people who were still brave enough to see Americans occasionally. Also, you had a fairly small elite which was usually the case in Third World countries. Everybody seemed to know each other within the elites of a particular country. So you could sometimes know relatives of political figures who were not quite as political as one example. There were various possibilities for some personal contact but it was very difficult. The great part of my reporting on the Indonesian

Communist Party, its various affiliates, and some of the other left-wing movements--99% of that-- was based on reading the tea leaves of the communist press, and analyzing what was happening in the public arena. I did seek contacts and attend events whenever I could. As I said before, I went to the communist bookstores about once a month or so. I took advantage of any luck. I remember one time when the Embassy received by mistake an invitation from the Communist Party Central Committee to a PKI event. This was obviously a circular invitation intended for communist countries only but some little PKI clerk had made a mistake. In fact, a colleague in the embassy and myself were the only two foreigners that showed up. The PKI leadership initially assumed we were Soviets but we didn't say at any time that we were Soviets or Eastern Europeans, or anything else. We just appeared with the invitations. I was sitting directly behind D.N. Aidit, the head of the PKI, in the second row and he was in the front row. A member of the Central Committee, a little bit to the left of us in our row, spoke to my colleague whose Indonesian was very good. My colleague had had about seven or eight years of association with Indonesia at that point. After they had talked for a while, this Central Committee member asked, "Where are you from?", expecting to hear Tomsk or Omsk or something, and my colleague said, "I'm from the American embassy." Once we were asked, we had no intention of concealing our identify. The Indonesian's jaw dropped, he stammered a little, and then he got up and went to the rear of the room. When he reached the rear of the room he spoke to somebody--we turned around and saw him do this--and then the third party wandered around but eventually reached the front row where he whispered into Aidit's ear. Aidit didn't know what to do either, so he spoke to the number two and number three in the PKI leadership, who were Lukman and Nyoto. All three then turned around and looked at us, then they turned around and they still didn't seem to know exactly how to handle this unexpected situation. They finally talked some more, and then they finally went off to another part of the room. They didn't throw us out, and we listened to the speech, which was a very anti-American speech incidentally, and then we left. Anyway, we were fairly aggressive at times in pursuing a better understanding, a better knowledge of the country, but not really underhandedly, we had an excuse to do it on this occasion. Otherwise it was very difficult and the embassy was very isolated by the intense anti-American atmosphere promoted by both the Sukarno Government and the PKI.

Before the September 30 affair, I had developed one very good contact. This was a man who had stood up to the pro-communist course in the Foreign Ministry. He was probably also the only real Soviet and Eastern European expert in the Foreign Ministry. I remember about a month before the coup I said to this man (I'm not going to mention his name), "You know how things are going and so do I. For God's sake try to save yourself, cut off all contact with me, don't talk to any foreigners." And he said, "Bob, as long as I live I'm going to be a free man. I'm going to associate with whom I want to, and talk with whom I want to, and if you don't come to see me, I'll come to see you. So you might as well come to see me." And he did continue that contact. After the September 30 affair, he, I think, was a fairly prominent player behind the scenes. He was the brother-in-law of one of the key generals. I learned from another source that there was going to be an attempt to assassinate him. I remember this particular night. It was absolutely black, no light in the

sky, no starlight, no moonlight. After I heard this information, I tried to go to his house which was about eight or ten blocks away along dirt streets. I knew the way well enough that I could haltingly find my way at say 2:00 or 3:00 in the morning. When I got to his house to warn him, I saw his wife. She was appreciative of the fact that I had come but she said her husband had already received a similar warning earlier in the day and had gone to stay with her brother, the general. So this was indicative of our relationship. This man remained a very good contact who became knowledgeable of developments and thinking, at the very top levels of the emerging anti-communist leadership. He also became a close advisor to Malik as well, so I accordingly had two good contacts, and friends, who were close associates of Malik. And there were other contacts as well, so I began to develop a pretty good group of contacts--frankly, more than anybody else in the embassy had by a substantial degree in that early period of divided power when Sukarno remained after the coup, and Suharto was reluctant to replace him.

Q: You left there in August of '66. At that time how did you see Indonesia? Where did you think it was going?

MARTENS: Well, Suharto had come to full power, at least in reality if not totally in theory, on March 11, 1966. The government had been formed with Suharto as Prime Minister, Adam Malik as Foreign Minister and the Sultan of Jogjakarta as a third key figure. They were considered a triumvirate although Suharto was obviously first among equals. Sukarno was still nominally president, but was not allowed to do anything. It was now clear that this important country was going to go in a non-communist direction. Indonesia had rejected the communists completely. The relationship with the United States was still remote--they weren't unfriendly with the United States, but there was practically no official contact in the transitional period. The embassy under Marshall Green's guidance had rightfully avoided any kind of overt contact in order not to play into the hands of the communists. Suharto and Malik and the others also kept their distance for that reason because they didn't want to support the Sukarno line that his enemies were lackeys of the imperialists. But the Suharto group was obviously going to move in a much more friendly direction. One of their early decisions was to take the initial steps to patch up Indonesia's quarrel with Malaysia. They had begun the process of forming ASEAN, which was to be a non-aligned grouping that basically included the four countries aligned with the West, that is Thailand and the Philippines through SEATO and Malaysia and Singapore through the British Commonwealth, with Indonesia.

Q: ASEAN, stands for?

MARTENS: Association of Southeast Asia Nations. So a number of steps were being taken to move into a kind of Western direction although without losing its non-aligned status. Indonesia has remained that way ever since. I'm not surprised at that either, and I think that retaining its non-aligned status has been a healthy thing.

Q: Then you came back to deal in INR with Soviet Affairs. Is that right? What was our view in this period of the Soviet threat? Or communist threat?

MARTENS: The Soviet threat was still very great. The Sino- Soviet split had changed the nature of the threat to some degree. The Asian communist threat was still perceived as strong although I think it was actually receding to some degree. I was in the Bureau of Intelligence and Research Office of Soviet and Eastern European Research under Hal Sonnenfeldt. I was chief of the division that dealt with Soviet foreign policy. I had six officers under me each of whom handled various aspects of Soviet foreign policy. Simultaneously I was also the Department of State representative to the inter-agency Watch Committee, and that meant that every Wednesday I had to go to the Pentagon for a regular Watch Committee meeting with representatives of CIA, NSA, and the Defense Department to analyze those factors that might signify an imminent security threat to the United States. The Watch Committee had developed as a result of the failure to foresee the invasion of the North Koreans into South Korea, and similar such failures. It's function was to go over all the latest data.

Q: Looking at the indicators.

MARTENS: ...indicators, and in that respect there was very little regarding the Soviet Union at that time, I would say that 90% of our focus was on Vietnam, looking at the most sophisticated intelligence on it.

Q: The Middle East too.

MARTENS: Sometimes the Middle East would come up, sometimes there wouldn't be anything. There would be periods when it would come up. And China, because already the Cultural Revolution was going pretty strong. I said 90%, I probably should have said 80% on Vietnam, 10% on China, 5% or 6% on the Middle East, and a little dab on the Soviet Union. The Soviets were being fairly passive in this period. They were obviously keeping involved to some degree in a support capacity with North Vietnam, but there was no major Soviet-centered crisis in that particular period, such as one of the many Berlin crises, or that sort of thing. But everyone recognized that the Soviet Union was the major overall threat and that's why a Soviet specialist was always assigned to that function.

Q: What was your impression with the Watch Committee, but also in INR, of the value of both military intelligence and CIA intelligence?

MARTENS: I would say 90% of political intelligence is from overt sources, and that means to a great extent from Foreign Service reporting, and from attaché overt reporting. On Vietnam, of course, there was a lot more sophisticated stuff, mainly NSA type material.

Q: That's the National Security Agency.

MARTENS: I want to be careful about getting into some of these things that are sensitive. Basically, trying to find out what's going on by electronic means. The CIA people we

were dealing with were from the analytical side. The CIA analysts look at all sources. The Central Intelligence Agency was set up to bring together intelligence data from all sources, all agencies. A lot of intelligence analysis is based on unclassified material through the Foreign Broadcast Information Service reporting of open media news reports by other countries. In other words, stuff that is almost like CNN material now, that is fast-breaking news.

Q: Yes, completely open transmissions.

MARTENS: When you're dealing with the kind of subjects we were dealing with, which were not so much long-term, but very much current intelligence, that becomes very important. You're looking at a threat that may suddenly appear over the next day or two. That's the kind of material we were looking at. The political side of intelligence must rely fundamentally on analysis of open source material supplemented by reporting from human sources. On the military side there was obviously a greater reliance on technical collection. Both political and military factors had to be put together, and looked at in conjunction. State's role in the Intelligence Community was basically to look at the political indicators.

There would also be times when we would be called in in the middle of the night to evaluate some suddenly blown up crisis. I remember once was on the issue of whether we ought to bomb Hanoi. Another was on the Pueblo case where they were questioning...

Q: The Pueblo case was the seizing by the North Koreans of an American electronics surveillance vessel.

MARTENS: That's correct. My role in this would be to give a judgment on whether--and I don't want to get into what my judgments were--to give judgments on what the Soviets might or might not do about it.

Q: What was your impression of the role INR and its output played in policy development with the bureaus. I mean was it doing its thing? In a way the bureaus were sort of going their own way anyway. How did you feel about this?

MARTENS: First of all, INR is acting in two directions. One is in an interagency context. For example, there would be National Intelligence Estimates in preparation on which CIA would be the chairman; and you'd also have representatives from INR as well as the military agencies participating, and so on. If the subject was primarily one of intentions, or the political aspects of intelligence, INR's role in the estimating process would be very large and we would play a very strong role in arguing our point of view with others, particularly with the Agency. The military would tend to keep out of those subjects, as we would tend to keep out of straight military questions. So we had a very powerful role to play, much more than is recognized by the press, on intelligence estimates. We obviously also provided support for the geographic bureaus in particular, as well as for the top layers of the State Department with our own intelligence analysis and estimates. In many

cases embassy reporting would already be available and, in contrast to CIA whose field reporting is non-analytical, State Department field reporting is both factual and analytical. A geographic bureau would already have analytical reporting from say Embassy Moscow, on a particular development that took place. If there was a big shift in the Politburo, let's say, INR would also produce its own analysis as would virtually every intelligence organization in Washington on such an occasion. Could our work contribute anything beyond what the embassy was reporting? Well, sometimes yes. I'd say frequently it did not add very much where it was strictly an event confined to one country or perhaps a bilateral event. INR's role would become more important when there were interrelationships between a number of countries and you had reporting from several embassies that had to be analyzed in conjunction. This would be even more true where intelligence was coming in from other sources not available to the embassy. For example, you might have reporting from CIA, or NSA, or Defense, or all of the above which, coupled with the reporting coming out of an embassy, would give you a better perspective on the situation. The analytical reporting supplied by INR in these cases was considerably useful on occasion.

This was a period where I think that INR turned under a new director, Tom Hughes, toward much more emphasis on trying to get current intelligence up to the Secretary and the other Principals early in the morning. I don't think INR did much of this before and was more of a pure research organization. That research side continued, but there was also an effort akin to scooping the headlines. Officers were being called in early, at say 6:00 in the morning, so that by the time the Department opened for business, there would be some kind of INR capsule summary of the latest intelligence news that would be ready for the Secretary's staff meeting. Everybody attending would be supplied with this INR product so they would have a very up-to-date overnight news and intelligence summary. So that was a new function that was added in that period. This product would be partly analytical too. There would be an effort by the analysts to put meaning into the bare facts.

Q: You then moved to Burma. You were there for about 18 months, or a year? From '69 to '70.

MARTENS: I had a year at the National War College and then I went to Burma.

Q: You were in Burma from '69 through '70.

MARTENS: That's right. I was supposed to have gone as Political Counselor to Moscow in mid-1969, but that fell through at the last minute. So I was left without an onward assignment. I was then offered by some of the people in EA who knew me from Indonesia, and knew my specialization in Marxism in third countries that came out of that, a position in Embassy Rangoon. They thought I might be useful in this strange nationalist- socialist country, very Marxist in a way, but with a number of other attributes. Burma had a military but Marxist regime which I thought would be interesting. So my family and I went to Burma. I was head of the Political-Economic Section.

Q: What was the situation in Burma at that time?

MARTENS: It was very similar to what is there now in 1991. There had been a coup led by General Ne Win in February, 1962, and out of that had been formed a military revolutionary council which espoused a Burmese road to socialism, not Soviet, not Chinese, but in fact very Marxist-Leninist in its orientation. This was so even though the government was fighting various breakaway communist factions out in the hills, the so-called White Flag, and Red Flag communists.

Q: Red Flag and White Flag Chinese, were they? Both were communists?

MARTENS: The White Flag communists were supported and financed by the Chinese. While the separate Red Flag faction was small but had a longer guerrilla history. Both of these groups as well as the Government party were Marxist but, at the same time, Burmese nationalists. However, I don't want to go into the details that would be required. Anyway, the Burma Socialist Program Party, which Ne Win had developed, came out, for the first time during my period there in '69 to '70, with a new party constitution. I studied that document and found that it was almost word for word a copy of the Soviet Communist Party constitution. This was not because the Ne Win regime was pro-Soviet, but because it did have this kind of Marxist-Leninist orientation. There was a Burmese preamble and a Burmese conclusion but the operational paragraphs, which described how the party was organized, what it was up to, etc., were a carbon copy of Marxist-Leninist dogma. And in actual fact, the regime thought it was a convenient way to run the country.

Q: Why? I mean was it just that "this is a damn good way if you're going to take control of a country, you do it that way."

MARTENS: Well, a number of things went into it. First of all, Ne Win--this has never come out--but Ne Win had been a secret member of the communist party until 1944. He left the Communist Party when it looked like the British were going to gain victory over the Japanese. The head of the Nationalist movement that Ne Win was a part of, the so-called Thakin movement, took power at the end of the war. They had been brought in by the Japanese, incidentally, but many of them were Marxist oriented. The leader of the Thakin movement, Aung San, who had also been a secret communist earlier, went into a democratic-socialist direction at that fork in the road, you might say. You will recall that the British under Attlee, and with Admiral Mountbatten as the CBI commander-in-chief, were offering independence to Burma. That policy resulted in the top man, Aung San, taking this moderate course. Aung San's brother-in-law, the number two, disagreed with a policy of accepting independence as proposed by the British. Although they were members of the same party, they differed ideologically.

The brother-in-law, Than Tun, went out into the hills and founded what became the White Flag Communists. Ne Win, who was a more junior member of this group, was a regimental commander in the new Burmese army. He later became Minister of Defense. But at this point I believe he thought about going out into rebellion too but he didn't, presumably because of the way he evaluated his prospects in the developing situation. I

regard Ne Win as a man who accepted Marxist dogma at an early age, but was not a real ideologue in the sense of being intellectually involved with this. He was much like certain men in the West who get some ideas in their twenties, never give them up, but never really look at them very closely either. Ne Win had come to power briefly in 1958 as head of a brief caretaker government and had shown no Marxist proclivities at that time. He came back to power in 1962 leading this coup primarily for nationalist reasons. The argument was over how much independence, or rather autonomy, should be given, or economy, should be given to the hill tribes. Ne Win led the army in opposition to the more moderate policies of U Nu toward the hill tribes. The Army favored a centralized, and that's a typical military position, a strong disciplined centrally organized state. When Ne Win got into power as a result of the Army coup he had to come up with some kind of structured government organization and I think he didn't know anything else to do but go back to this Marxism that he had learned in his youth. So he kind of willy-nilly installed this totalitarian Marxist system.

Now there were also some people in the Army who were much more ideologically oriented, and also pushed in that direction. There was a Brigadier General named Tin Pe. Aside from Ne Win, there were only two other officers in the Army who even had Brigadier rank, and this fellow one. He, Tin Pe, was pushing the government in a leftward direction too, and there was a gradual purging of those non-Marxist military officers who had followed Ne Win in the coup because he was the top guy in the Army, because they agreed with him on the national question, and because the Army hoped to get the goodies of being in charge.

Anyway, the non-Marxist members of that group were gradually pushed out of power, and the Army turned more and more into this sort of ideologically directed Army although a lot of these people probably were not very ideological either but were going along with it because they saw that that was what the old man wanted, and it had a lot of advantages from the standpoint, as you were indicating, of being a good way to organize the state if you want to keep tight control and you want to get all the positions of power, and you want to keep down all dissident elements.

Q: What were, if any, American interests in Burma at that time?

MARTENS: We didn't think there were many. I would say the main interest was not to see it become part of, or tied to, either the Soviets or the Chinese in that period. But that wasn't really the problem so there was no active policy of pursuing it. Our long-term interest lay in the direction of keeping the options open for an eventual more pro-Western, and democratic society. We couldn't do much about that either, so we just sat and watched it. But if we had any choice, any way of influencing things, I'm sure as we do everywhere, we would want to see democratic values win out over totalitarian ones. So there was some mild interest, but not a great power, narrowly defined, national security interest of any great importance other than keeping Burma out of the Soviet or Chinese camp. But we couldn't do anything about it in either case anyway.

Q: Did you have much contact, you and others in the embassy, with the Burmese?

MARTENS: Again, it was very difficult. I was the normal routine contact point with the Foreign Ministry. However, I was never in the Foreign Ministry building. Foreigners were not allowed in the Foreign Ministry itself. They had a little building across the street, a converted house, in which you had to deliver a diplomatic Note or make a representation. You'd go to that house and the desk officer would come across the street, and talk to you, and it was a very stilted conversation because the place was bugged. I remember that after getting outside after the formal business, the Burmese official would sometimes talk to me more openly. These people were very Western educated, and often did not have much sympathy for the regime. I don't mean they would divulge secrets, but they would talk to you in a friendly manner outside, that they would not be willing to do inside. It was generally illegal for anyone in the Burmese government to have contact with foreigners in other circumstances. They weren't supposed to have such contact, and if they did have it by accident, they were supposed to write up a very lengthy report. This tended to be a great damper on contact. Actually, however, you did have more contact than this would indicate. There were people, again, that were braver. This quasi-Marxist, which was in many ways theoretically more rigid even than the Soviet system, broke down in practice. They just weren't that well organized in carrying it out.

For example, I had a lot of contact with a rather nefarious character who was head of the Burmese equivalent of the KGB--it was called the MIS. The man in question, Tin U, regularly attended national day receptions given by the various embassies. I had an interesting conversation with him on World War II battles in Burma on which I was well informed and as a result I was able to talk to him at the national day receptions. I discovered that he tended to drink too much. Toward the end of the evening you could sometimes have quite interesting conversations when he was a little bit tipsy, but not so inebriated that he couldn't talk. Another example was that I got to know one of the two co-founders of the Burmese Communist Party. He had left the Communist Party many years earlier but remained a convinced Marxist. He was also a close associate of Ne Win. We became pretty good friends and he used to come to my house for lunch rather regularly because he enjoyed talking to me about Marxism in the Soviet Union as well as Marxism in Burma. So I had a good contact there. I also frequently saw the brother of U Thant, who at the time was Secretary General of the UN, and a number of other people. Again in a society in which you have a fairly small elite, you might find somebody that was pretty high in the party, or the government, but who would have relatives who were basically anti-regime. If you could get to know the relatives, who were not in the government, you might get some insight occasionally on what was going on.

Additionally, my wife and I formed some very good friendships that were not job-oriented in any way. In fact, to this day here in Washington, D.C., I am in a circle of Burmese friends and I probably have more contact with them than with any other group of people, including Americans. They are people whom I got to know from that period.

Q: I think it might be a good idea to stop here, don't you? I think we must do another session. Does that make sense to you?

MARTENS: Sure.

Q: I know you have a parking problem, and all that, don't you?

---tape stopped

Q: This is another interview with Bob Martens. Today is the 27th of September. Bob, we sort of finished Burma, so how did you get your next assignment where you served from 1970 to '74 in Romania?

MARTENS: I was pulled out of Rangoon suddenly on just a week or two notice. I had been promoted in the meantime, and I was too senior for the job in Burma. So I came back for Romanian language training for about six months, and then went to Bucharest, arriving there in June 1971, and remaining until June 1974. The ambassador was Leonard Meeker, who had previously been the legal adviser to the State Department. Len remained ambassador until the beginning of the second Nixon administration, but his appointment was not continued. He was a Democrat. And Watergate was just breaking. I was Chargé then for a year, and finally Harry Barnes, who had been DCM before me, came as ambassador. He arrived about February or March of '74, and I remained as DCM until the school year was completed and then came back.

Q: I wonder, Bob, if you could describe the political situation in Romania? What were American interests in Romania? Particularly, in the light of recent events, it is very important to get a picture of how we saw things then.

MARTENS: Well, Romania was often described as the maverick of Eastern Europe. I got to hate that term because it became such an overused and banal expression, but there was something in it. Let me give a little bit of the background, and history, here and what my understanding is of the situation in Romania and the rise of Ceausescu, his personality, the power relationships, and so on, because I think there's a lot of misunderstanding about it.

After Gheorghiu-Dej, the previous communist leader of Romania died about 1965, Ceausescu became primus inter pares in the Politburo but without full power initially. He had some conflicts in this period, mostly with people who were considered more hardline than he. His first great struggle was with the head of the secret police, and they were the two rivals for leadership. The rest of the leadership more or less united around Ceausescu as the lesser evil, I suppose. You had a situation of collective leadership for a while. There were some other top people being thrown out by then, but Ceausescu, although certainly already becoming dominant by the time I arrived, had not achieved the level of personality cult or complete dictatorship that later obtained. Or was even obtained in the latter part of my time there.

To understand what happened in Romania one should begin with the invasion of Czechoslovakia in 1969 in which the Romanians refused to participate. Romania came under tremendous pressure from the Soviets at that time, and in fact was threatened with invasion. I had a long conversation once with Gheorghe Macovescu, the Foreign Minister, who I had already known 10 or 15 years earlier when we negotiated the first U.S.-Romanian exchange agreement when Macovescu was the Romanian Minister to Washington. Anyway, Macovescu described how the Soviets brought long columns of armor up to the frontier and they revved up their motors and acted like they were going to come across. Of course, it scared the hell out of the Romanians. The Romanians, according to him, and other members of the Romanian Politburo told me much the same on other occasions, decided then that you could not do two things at once. You could not, as Dubcek had tried to do in Czechoslovakia, get your independence from the Soviet Union and simultaneously have a democratic regime, because if you tried to democratize as they did, the Soviets would be able to pick even a very remote minority voice in the Party and say that that was the true voice of the proletariat and that the Soviets would have to come in and save the proletariat of this country who were being overwhelmed by agents of the capitalist powers, and revisionists, and all sorts of things like that. So this resulted in a sort of unity of view among the Romanian leadership that you had to have in Romania a figure at the top who would be the one voice who would speak for Romania, because of the foreign threat. So they all agreed on doing that, and agreed that Ceausescu would be this voice.

Now, Ceausescu took this further as time went on. In essence there was not a deviation from this original purpose, but Ceausescu had a more extreme view of it. He believed that Romania over the long term--let's say 20 years, which was by coincidence more or less his period of life expectancy--that in that period Romania would have to build its power internally by forced industrialization, would have to increase its population radically so it would become in essence the France of Eastern Europe, and could play a role vis-a-vis the Soviet Union that France was perceived as playing vis-a-vis the United States, a role of considerable independence.

So, to do this you had to have a very high reinvestment rate, which was in fact the highest in the world--33%-- by far the highest in the world. That, of course, squeezed the population terribly. Everything that was being produced was being either sold in the west, or used to mobilize capital to have this very fast industrial growth rate. There was agreement on the general course, there was not agreement on detail, and several members of the Politburo--the number two, Prime Minister Maurer, was known to us to oppose such a high reinvestment rate, Maurer made a secret speech on the subject at Cluj in which he strongly attacked the rate of growth. The conflict also became visible in the official press and we reported this at the time. Ceausescu had launched a campaign in which he called for fulfillment of the five-year plan in four and a half years. We then began to notice that there were two slogans that seemed at first glance to be the same. One was to fulfill the five-year plan in four and a half years, and the other was to fulfill the five-year plan ahead of time: indinte de termen, was the expression in Romanian.

Now if you think about it, every Communist had to be in favor of fulfilling the five-year plan on time. If you fulfilled the five-year plan one second ahead of time, you would be ahead of time. So there would be no commitment to four and a half years. So, while it appeared at first glance that there was no difference, there was in fact a major difference, and I would say we began to count up the various statements on the subject by the members of the Central Committee who were also heads of the "judets", the various counties in Romania which, as in all Communist countries, form the largest percentage of the Central Committee--the party leaders of these regions. We counted up and we saw that about 80 or 90% of them were using the expression "ahead of time", not "four and a half years." So we came to the conclusion that there was tremendous opposition within the Party to Ceausescu's forced draft policy although it was being carefully concealed in the official propaganda image. And it is my opinion then that, because of this, Ceausescu began to use his personality cult, in which everybody had agreed because of the foreign threat that only he could speak for the country, to intimidate everybody, and to ensure that the country was going to follow the internal course that he thought proper.

So you had two factors going into the first phase in the development of the personality cult that were not based on his own ego necessarily, but on political considerations--one the foreign policy threat that they all agreed on, and secondly, the internal economic policy, which was somewhat related to it, in which Ceausescu was in favor of a course that was more extreme than much of the party wanted. Now a third factor comes in, and became dominant over time, and that was the ego factor that I think was a corollary or a sequel to these other two factors. So Ceausescu began to like power for its own sake. That was probably true all along, but this became a much more predominant factor as time went on, and it was aided and abetted by the similar proclivities of his wife who became much more prominent during the period that I was there--particularly in the latter half of my period. During the first half she was not that well known, but as time went on, by 1973, she was already being named to a lot of senior party positions. By the time I left in '74, she had gotten even more and this continued on until she became practically a reigning queen along with Ceausescu as a reigning king. And a great many of the people that had been senior members of the party in the earlier period were kicked out and many of them that I knew who were, in spite of being Communists, were men of some pragmatism and some moral responsibility, I would say. And many of them even in my time shook their heads in regard to Ceausescu. Even shortly after I first arrived the former Foreign Minister happened to be sitting next to me in a large tent following the annual diplomatic hunt. I was Chargé then--this was about six or seven months after I arrived--and this was Corneliu Manescu, a figure fairly well known in the West. He had once been a candidate to be Secretary General of the UN, not a very strong candidate, but certainly one put forward by the Romanians. Anyway, Corneliu Manescu, a very kind of Frenchified old-school, not an old-school Communist, but an old-school diplomat type, but a member of the Party as you had to be in that country, turned to me and said, "Can't you shut him up?" I was amazed because I was only a Chargé and the room was filled with ambassadors and members of the Politburo, but I guess because I was American he said, "God, we have to get that guy shut up," meaning Ceausescu, who had been going on

and holding forth for about an hour, I guess, monopolizing conversation. The conversation was between Ceausescu and the Israeli ambassador, a former Romanian Jew, over Middle East policy and what should be done regarding the West Bank.

You would see the great fear that already permeated the society and even within the leadership increasing gradually over time. Now our interest in Romania was that we certainly wanted to encourage independent tendencies in Eastern Europe, not just as a narrow realpolitik approach, but really as part of a long-term process of gradually encouraging greater diversity to unfold in the Soviet Union itself, and in Eastern Europe. This had been the a broad basis of our attitudes in formulating the exchange program about which I talked earlier. It was a policy that we did not see coming to fruition until a great deal of time had passed. It was not just a narrow anti-Soviet thing, but it was part of a policy of gradual change throughout the area. So we wanted to encourage those tendencies toward independence. At the same time we recognized fully that this was a pretty horrible regime internally. We certainly did not like their human rights policy, for example. Their policy in regard to immigration was pretty awful and we made frequent representations on behalf of relatives of American citizens or resident aliens, presenting lists, for example, of people whom we encouraged to be released to the West, and so on.

Q: Much success with those lists?

MARTENS: Not much. Only once in a while you'd get someone out but we tried. We particularly tried to use leverage when prominent Americans came to Romania, and there would be a chance to put a list forward again, and sometimes that would have an effect when they were trying to influence a visitor. Romania was...it took place in this period where you had a tremendous interest by the Romanians, and by Ceausescu in particular, toward expanding contacts with the outside world. He could not get out of the Warsaw Pact. He did not allow Soviet forces into Romania, did not cooperate in Warsaw Pact maneuvers, and that sort of thing. But, since he couldn't get out of the Pact, he tried to more or less neutralize it by having as many contacts with other parts of the world as possible including pro-forma contacts even when there wasn't much substantive meaning in it. So you had people coming in from all kinds of petty African states, for example, who would be given very splashy welcomes. Anybody of consequence who had any kind of a name in the United States, or anywhere in the West, would be similarly received. The entire diplomatic corps, the ambassadors and Chargés--I went out a number of times as Chargé, and most of the Central Committee would go out and have to stand around at the airport, and there would be a ceremony in which the visiting dignitary would be received. And there would be a review by Ceausescu, and he and the high level visitor would march down the line of diplomats with bands playing, and so on, and crowds, obviously organized, shouting, "Ceausescu Pe Che Re," which meant, "Ceausescu, PCR, PCR were the initials of the Communist Party of Romania, and there were some other similar slogans being shouted. One result was that you could have a fair amount of contact with Romanian officials on these occasions. I spoke Romanian quite well then, and you could have some mixing in with people in the leadership that you had met previously. So it was a great opportunity.

Interestingly enough, the personality cult praise of Ceausescu by the clagues at the airport were not emulated by the crowds on the way into the city. The regime would release people from the factories and offices on such occasions, and they had to stand along the streets. Of course, Ceausescu and his immediate entourage, and the visiting head of state or other visiting dignitary, would be at the head of the column and everybody else had to scramble to get into a line of cars. I remember times when my wife and I were maybe 50 cars back, and there would be total silence by the Romanian people as this line of cars passed up the main street into the city until the American flag was seen at a distance and slowly a roar would begin to come up from the population cheering the United States. It was rather embarrassing sometimes. It would not have been embarrassing if the visitor was American, but when the visitor was from the Central African Republic, or some place like that, it was somewhat embarrassing. But we did get these tremendous cheers, and there was obviously a total dissatisfaction in the population with the kind of system they had. This was true, of course, in all the countries of Eastern Europe. I think I mentioned in earlier interviews example after example that I've had in my life. Some of this fear, and this show of friendliness towards the United States would go up to the top leadership of the Communist Party. I mentioned Corneliu Manescu earlier.

Another example was--I won't mention his name, I guess--but he was a member of the Romanian Politburo and had been to the United States on one occasion. He had led a delegation of five or six people besides himself. He was not only a Politburo but also a Minister within the government. When the delegation came back, I gave a dinner party for them and it came off very well. All the Americans present spoke Romanian, so the entire evening was in Romanian. We hit it off very nicely. When the dinner concluded we went into the living room and I sat down on a couch with this particular Politburo member, and it was the kind of situation where you don't jump right into politics. So I asked him about his visit to the United States and whether he had had a chance to see an American football game--the visit was taking place in the fall, and this man had a background in athletics, he had been an athlete himself in his youth, and he was involved with Party supervision over Romanian athletes in addition to his main job. He said, "No, something I really wanted to do was to see an American football game, and I'm sorry I wasn't able to." I said, "Well, you know we get movies of American football games occasionally, and if you'd like to see one I could put one on and you could come over to the house. Or if you didn't want to do that (there was this American library that had been approved during Nixon's visit two or three years earlier) we could put it on at the American library. Perhaps you could come to that." He turned absolutely pale and said, "I just couldn't do that. I would like to but why don't you do this. Why don't you send a letter, not mentioning me by name, to the government and suggest that a senior official come to this event, and perhaps, because of my background in athletics, I would be chosen." Here was a member of the Politburo who was not able to make that kind of decision, who was scared to death that he might get nailed as being friendly to the United States, even though he obviously wanted to be, and who backed off from any kind of involvement. Anyway, that was another insight.

Q: Particularly as this went on, did you feel under any constraints as far as reporting on what was going on in Romania? I say this particularly in light of the constraints that were very definitely put on our embassy in Iran by the Nixon-Kissinger team. The Shah was their boy, and we were told not to report on things that were unfavorable to the Shah. Nixon and Kissinger sort of had a world view and they didn't want people mucking it up.

MARTENS: I don't think so, but I must say, I don't think there was any real disagreement between the official view and our view. We both favored the policy of trying to open Romania up gradually, trying to encourage Romanian independence. We also favored increasing our trade, from a commercial standpoint. It did increase by four or five times while I was there. It was still not any great figure, but it all helped. There was no major difference on the policy level. Now there was an interesting difference on a straight analytical level. The CIA analyst who had been involved with Romania for some years had developed some views that were not in accord with those that we developed after I got there, mainly on the degree to which there were differences in the leadership. CIA in Washington ignored our reporting totally in coming out with about a 15 or 20 page document on Romania which had a nice shiny cover, and which was distributed all over Washington. We got a copy, and I sent back a cable that said, "There appears to be two Bucharests in the world. One is on the banks of the Potomac, and one is near the banks of the Danube, and they don't seem to have any relationship whatsoever." It was a very strong statement saying, "You can have your opinions and there's nothing wrong with that, but you should at least acknowledge that other opinions exist, and acknowledge the reporting that has been coming in from the embassy over a considerable period of time," which they had totally ignored. And our Embassy view, incidentally, was endorsed by our station chief--it was a one man operation incidentally--who went in with a similar cable saying, "I agree with Bob Martens." So there was no question in the embassy over some fundamental analytical differences with Washington analysis on that subject. But that was the only major disagreement.

I might say something else: interestingly enough we did not have very close surveillance from the Romanian security police. We obviously were bugged in the buildings. We assumed that. There were two or three cases which I'm obviously not going to get into. There were also attempts by the Securitate to entrap Americans from the embassy, in two cases I can think of. In both cases I sent the Americans home in about 24 or 48 hours. I remember exactly what it was but I'm not going to get into it.

Q: The only thing I'm asking is, when you say "entrap", and maybe you can talk in more general terms. Is it sex entrapment?

MARTENS: Sex entrapment, yes. But on the other hand, we were not followed. There were no travel restrictions on us. There were no areas in the country off limits. You could take off without any notice, and travel anywhere you wanted to. I never noticed any vehicle or foot surveillance, and I'm very good at finding it. I was followed constantly in the Soviet Union. I took a trip into Bulgaria from Romania, I picked up tails immediately

across the border and observed them all the way--different groups of tails--throughout my stay in Bulgaria. As soon as I crossed the border back, I never noticed tails again. On several occasions our station chief ran a little exercise in which he would come in behind to see if he could find tails behind me. He never found them. We knew, on the other hand, that the Soviets were being tailed closely, and they were. The Soviets were given travel restrictions, and not allowed to travel to certain areas of the country. It was rather an interesting sort of environment. This doesn't mean that this wasn't a terribly closed society. You could not have, or it was very difficult, let's say, to have Romanian friends. You had these contacts whenever you could think up excuses--they had sort of an official tinge to them. You got to know some people very well then but you couldn't go to their house and talk to them informally. There had to be an official occasion.

The only two exceptions to that were a leading reporter for one of the two major newspapers who used to come to my house fairly often. I'm sure he had to report on these conversations. He was probably working to some extent for the Securitate on the side, but we hit it off very nicely. In fact, I think we became very good friends and he was a very smart man and he saw through the system. He later visited me in the States, kissed me on both cheeks. He had no reason to see me here, it was all after I had retired. So I know there was a human relationship under this.

There was also a woman who was a language teacher for the embassy whose husband was a doctor that my wife and I became very friendly with. They were scared to death at times, but we did keep up the relationship with them and saw them fairly frequently. We used to take trips out into the countryside with them, but she had the protection of being a sort of quasi-employee in the embassy as a language teaching role. But these were the only real exceptions, and otherwise there was that iron curtain type wall there very similar to what one had experienced in the Soviet Union, in some ways maybe tighter in Romania than in the Soviet Union.

Q: Within the embassy then, if there were these tactics of the Romanian government of oppression of its people, there was no problem in reporting on this?

MARTENS: Oh, no, except the people were so scared they wouldn't talk to you easily, but no, there was no problem there. No problem on reporting on anything. We did extensive reporting. I found it a very rich reporting opportunity, frankly. Frequently I would come into the Embassy on a Saturday and send out maybe three or four cables covering different conversations I had had the night before--Friday night. I did a lot of political reporting. We had two political officers who were both very good. But I probably did more than 50% of the reporting, part of the reason for that being that invitations would tend to go from other embassies, or from the Romanians, to the ambassador, the DCM, and the Defense Attaché, and nobody else. So I went to a lot of functions, and therefore had a lot of chance to build up contacts and talk to people that the other people didn't have. And the second factor was that I was the only one in the embassy that had extensive experience with Communist countries, and knew how to go about analyzing events and reading between the lines in the newspapers. The other people

got very good at it in time, but you didn't come in knowing this. The type of reporting you do in those types of closed societies is very different from what you do in the open societies of the West that most of our officers had previously had contact with. Most of them had a kind of Latin type background because of the similarity of languages which probably led to their selection for Romanian training. Later on we got an officer who had a previous Soviet background, but this was not generally the case. I also spoke Russian and had a number of contacts with the Eastern European embassies, some of which were extremely productive. A lot of those conversations had to be carried on in Russian, and not Romanian.

Q: Did you find you had a role in having American visitors coming to the embassy sort of a bit starry eyed about Romania because Romania had stood up to the Soviets on Czechoslovakia, and you had to sort of dampen them down, and say the reality...

MARTENS: It's an interesting question because I can see that's a logical one, but not really. Most of the people that came were fairly prominent. We had a number of U.S. senators, congressmen and governors. Sometimes we had three or four in a week. They were usually pretty well briefed. They were not deeply knowledgeable about the country but they understood that Romania was playing this dissident role. But they also understood that this was a tightly controlled and difficult country. Some of the conversations that came out of their visits were extremely interesting. Senator Scott, I think it was, who was the Republican minority leader...

Q: Yes, Hugh Scott of Pennsylvania.

MARTENS: ...was one that came. Another was a Democratic senator from Wyoming, who later had a job in the State Department after he failed to be re-elected...

Q: Gale McGee.

MARTENS: Now Gale McGee had a three hour conversation with Emil Bodnarash, who was the number three man in the leadership, and a man who had been considered years before, that if anybody was pro-Soviet in the leadership, it was Bodnarash. He had a Ukrainian name, he'd been the Political Commissar of the Romanian Communist forces that came in with the Red Army, he had been Defense Minister in the brutal Ana Pauker government that was first set up by the Soviets in '45- '46 or so. But Bodnarash turned out to be entirely different from that assumption. It was really strange. We had this three hour conversation, Bodnarash attacked the Communist system all over the place, attacked the Soviet Union, said the Soviet Union should be broken up into pieces. One of his favorite expressions was, "We don't want any more Yalta sell- outs."

Q: Referring to the Yalta agreement of 1945.

MARTENS: The expression was one very similar to what right wing Republicans were saying about the Democrats in the McCarthy era. But Bodnarash's statement seemed even

more extreme than the right wing in the United States had said about Yalta. Later there was a conversation between Bodnarash and Hugh Scott when the same expression came out. I still had some reservations that Bodnarash's strong anti-Soviet statements may have been tailored to an American audience but I ran across a situation later in which I know that Bodnarash used this same statement within the friendly leadership of the Romanian Communist Party when no Americans were around. I happen to know that, I can't say why I know that, but I know it happened. So this was not something that was put on for an American audience. Even at the time I thought Bodnarash was expressing his real thoughts. You sit and listen to somebody for two or three hours and you get a pretty good idea of what their views are, and what they think. In other words, I think there was a tremendous falling off of real belief within the Communist world. The same thing was true of Maurer who is the man I spoke of earlier, the man who was number two in the leadership, was Prime Minister, and who left the government because...it never came out, but it was because of his basic disagreement with Ceausescu and Ceausescu's economic forced march policy. I can't remember who I was escorting, but I was over at the Prime Minister's office with a group of prominent Americans. In the course of the conversation, Maurer said something like, "Well, all these Nineteenth Century economists were all right in their time (the previous conversation had led to this) but as for David Ricardo and John Stewart Mill and Karl Marx, what do they have to do with the modern world?" Now for a supposed true Marxist, a leader of the Communist Party, to say that Karl Marx had nothing to do with the modern world, was rather strange. I almost dropped my teeth at that remark. Maurer didn't push it further, he said it as sort of an aside. I don't think the other Americans even picked it up. But I was astounded by that, and I thought it very revealing as to Maurer's real thinking. Here was a man who had really lost his real commitment to Marxist theory. These people all remained in the leadership. They all remained Communists because it was the only thing to be. He'd been a Communist before the war. This kind of revelation wasn't true of Ceausescu. I never saw a difference between Ceausescu as an individual and Ceausescu in his public statements. He seemed fully committed to the official ideology; he always talked in the same propaganda jargon. I met with him on a number of occasions over the period I was there. I accompanied him to the United States for his invitation to the White House, took him around the country, sat in the airplane compartment with him as he flew around the eastern United States, had a long talk with him down at the Black Sea coast once for about an hour. This latter was sort of a tour d'horizon of the world. That took place not because he was interested in my views, but because I was accompanying a very senior American visitor who Ceausescu wanted to talk to about foreign policy. But this man, although in the foreign policy field allegedly, was unable to converse on any foreign policy subject whatsoever. So it turned out that I sort of had to take over the conversation, not because I was trying to assert myself, but because the American side of the conversation had to be held up. While talking to Ceausescu on all these things, I would turn to the other fellow occasionally and say, "Don't you think so?" and things like that. Of course, this fellow would agree. He was totally incompetent really. One did have these opportunities to see Ceausescu fairly often.

Q: What was your impression of Ceausescu? When really now, I mean he was deposed and executed. So much of the stuff that has come out is extremely uncomplimentary about him.

MARTENS: He was also highly intelligent.

Q: One gets the picture that he wasn't highly intelligent.

MARTENS: For example, he had an extremely good grasp of almost every major issue in the world. He even referred in the Black Sea talk I mentioned to a visit I had made to the Foreign Ministry on a bilateral issue of no great consequence a day or two later, so he obviously had been briefed on it. He was able to carry on the conversation at a level of competence equal to the man who had specialized on the subject. So he was very able, very intelligent. The unfortunate thing that the old adage of Lord Acton applied, "All power corrupts, and absolute power corrupts absolutely." Even by my time Ceausescu was a terrible tyrant. I recall a man that was Ceausescu's interpreter. I had known him previously when he was already interpreting for Ceausescu but in the earlier phase he had a substantive job in the Foreign Ministry and I had dealt with him on one or two occasions on substantive matters. I saw this man on my visit down to the Black Sea coast. He accompanied the American VIP and myself as we walked from our quarters to Ceausescu's villa. Along the way he said, "God, I would do anything to get away from this man. This is the most oppressive environment that you could possibly imagine." He didn't say much more-- this is not an exact quote, but that's the idea. But he certainly left the impression that it was almost unbearable to work for Ceausescu. Ceausescu's ego-mania would come out in other ways. I mentioned the diplomatic hunts that I attended-- two in the three years I was there.

Q: Diplomatic hunt was a...

MARTENS: ...was a hunt presided over by Ceausescu, It was also attended by other leading members of the Party and Government, and all the chiefs of mission were invited. Most of them went whether they actually hunted or not, and you'd spend a day out there. The interesting part was not the actual shooting, although that would go on, but at the end of it there would be a large tent about the size of a Quonset hut in which Ceausescu would hold forth with everybody, and it was a great opportunity to get insights into Ceausescu, and the leadership. There was even some chance to hear some interesting repartee. On my second diplomatic hunt I was given the place of honor even though I was a mere Chargé, and it was not because of me but part of an effort to put down the Soviet ambassador. They put the Soviet ambassador further down the line of huntsmen although he was really one of the more senior ambassadors there, and put me, a lowly Chargé between Ceausescu and a man who had now become Prime Minister, Manea Manescu. Manea Manescu was by then number two in the regime. This is Manea Manescu not Corneliu Manescu that I mentioned earlier. At the previous diplomatic hunt, I had not participated in the shooting but this time I did--it was the first time I had used a firearm since I was a young man in the Army. At the end of the actual hunt, they laid out all the

birds and hares that had been shot and then announced the results. The results were...and this may be slightly but not much off but this is the idea...the leading total game bagged by any hunter was, believe it or not, Ceausescu with 452. The second best was Manea Manescu, the Prime Minister with 105. Everybody else had an even five including all of the chiefs of mission there. So there was this need on Ceausescu's part to portray himself as the greatest of everything. And he was a good shot, of course, he had two people standing behind him with loaded guns and they kept handing one to him, and he would take one shot and hand it back, and take another one. Nevertheless, the whole thing was just an absolute farce.

Q: I read recently an account...I don't know if it's true or not, that he used to make trips to the various provinces, and they would always have to put a hunt on. And this was a terrible strain because the local huntsman would usually try to get...they would tame a bear, and then tranquilize it, and train it to go to people so that...Ceausescu, I mean at the time, they would blow a whistle and that would rumble the bear and Ceausescu then would shoot the bear. Because if he didn't get a bear, or a boar, or whatever one was supposed to get, he'd be very, very angry.

MARTENS: That could be, I don't know. I would take some of this with a grain of salt because there was a great effort afterward by people to put him down. He certainly was a good shot. He was a far better shot than I was, there's no question about that.

He also had a sense of humor. I remember at the first of these two diplomatic hunts that I attended, at the end there was a little ceremony where you sit in a kind of forest glade--I suppose a Romanian tradition--and the chief of the hunt would stand there with a little switch and spank, in a kind of jocular way, the people who were on the hunt for the first time. So anybody who had been there previously would not go through this, but the new ones had to go through it. The Soviet ambassador had been through it before so he didn't have to go through it, but there was a new Czech ambassador, a fairly elderly frail looking fellow, and as he got up to the place where he was to be spanked, Ceausescu with a big laugh turned and handed the switch to the Soviet ambassador, and said, "You're used to spanking the Czechs, why don't you do it?" It was really rather funny, and when I came up I said in Romanian something like--one of the great slogans of the regime then was, "Non-use of force or the threat of force." This phrase seemed to be practically every other sentence in their official pronouncements, so I said something like, "I thought you were in favor of non-use of force or the threat of force." That got a laugh.

Q: How did he react on his trip to the United States? We obviously put our best face forward. Did this seem to impress him? Or was he seeing it through Marxist eyes?

MARTENS: Incidentally with him were Manea Manescu who by now was the Prime Minister, and George Macovescu, the Foreign Minister, who I knew fairly well. There was a big state dinner at the White House.

Q: His wife, I assume, Elena, was with them.

MARTENS: Elena was along. The state dinner was a very formal affair. Earlier, the Nixons received the Romanian party in an upstairs sitting room. While Nixon was downstairs waiting to meet Ceausescu at the door of the White House I was upstairs with Kissinger, the chief of protocol, Manea Manescu, the Foreign Minister, and Mrs. Nixon. I have a high opinion of Mrs. Nixon from that meeting, by the way, not so high of Henry. Later on I went around the country with the Romanian visitors in Air Force one or its like. In the front of the airplane Ceausescu and his wife sat across from each other on one side of the aisle and on our side were Manea Manescu, Gheorghe Macovescu and myself. On the various flights, none of them very long--two or three hours, I suppose, but maybe four or five of these flights--it was obvious that the two senior Romanians were just scared to death of the two Ceausescus. They hardly talked. The two Ceausescus sat and talked to each other but not to the other two or to me. I got into an occasional conversation with Macovescu but it was all rather stilted. I probably should have gone into the back of the plane and let them all alone, but I thought this was a great opportunity to sit with them, and see what I could learn, or get some feel for these people. In fact I did have a couple of interesting conversations, particularly with Macovescu. It was clear that they were just scared to death of their leader and his wife. While the Ceausescus said very little to their subordinates, that little was rather curt and in a manner that kind of put them down. The difference of position and rank was very clear.

Q: Was he or his wife interested and say, "Okay, here's the city of Dallas. How does Dallas work?"

MARTENS: None of that at all. They were totally aloof, and kept to themselves throughout. Their interest when we got to the cities on the itinerary was mainly in seeing the big industrial concerns they were visiting and traipsing through, and, of course, they would ask technical questions of the guides in the various plants. And their other interest was in attending meetings that had been set up with Romanian-American groups. Again, this was all very formal, and there was a great distance between them and these local people, but there was this effort to show interest. Now there may have been things going on on the side that were not apparent. Certainly there were long-term efforts by the Romanian regime to penetrate these ethnic Romanian groups. However, I don't think that this particular visit contributed to any such effort very much, this was something that was done for the record, I think.

Q: What about when you were in Romania...

MARTENS: I was with a number of Soviet visiting groups in the past...I think I mentioned one in a previous interview...Soviet leaders who came to the United States at levels lower than the very top leadership-- ministers of this and that. During those experiences I found a lot of the Soviets very interested, and you could talk to them about the nature of Dallas or Cleveland, or whatever place it was.

Q: In Romania we obviously wanted Romania to be strong, and self-supportive. How did we feel about this reinvestment in Romania? Was this a concern to us because it turned out to be pretty much a...particularly later on...pretty much of a disaster as far as what it did for the Romanians in this very rich country, and like so many of these it sort of brought it to...

MARTENS: Well, I think there was not a thing we could do about it. I mean Communist countries, in those days, they obviously had their own agenda, and there was no way you could influence them on their internal policies so it was out of the question to try and talk to them about it. Their own leaders couldn't talk to Ceausescu about it, at least successfully. It also probably should be said in fairness to Ceausescu's policy, that while all of us thought it was a mistake to go so far in squeezing the people to develop an industrial base, the degree to which that policy collapsed was influenced not only because of its inherent weaknesses but because of changes in the international economic picture. In other words, the failure was partially a result of the same things that happened in the world economy to get the Latin American countries, and Nigeria, and others in...

Q: Particularly the oil change in price.

MARTENS: The oil, but also the changes in interest rates, financial conditions, the terms of trade, the degree to which a country could count on income from the sale of commodities in one period and then find it changed in another period. All that kind of thing. In the early period, in other words, calculations were made on how much a country could sell abroad and what it would get for its exports and then how much it could safely borrow to meet its objectives. A country trying to pursue a high growth rate figured you could get ahead even faster if it borrowed heavily. So the Romanians borrowed heavily like everybody else. The Poles did it, all the Latin American countries, and so on, and they thought nothing was going to change, and they then could pay it back. I'm not an economist, but the situation changed radically and then it became very difficult to pay back. The Romanians encountered the same trouble as in Latin America, and in the same time period. Now one thing you have to say for Romania, is that they did pay it back. This can be said from both a favorable and an unfavorable standpoint. The unfavorable side is that they continued to squeeze the hell out of their population in order to do it, but from the standpoint of the outside world, they did pay off their debts while the other countries didn't. And they finally paid them all off in the latter part of the Ceausescu period.

It's worth saying I was later considered to go back as ambassador but it all fell through. I just wanted to say that, and get it over with.

Q: Okay, then you left in 1974, and you came back to Washington. And again as you moved back and forth, really the overlying thing was the Communist angle. An expert on Communism, rather than on geographic.

MARTENS: Yes, it came out that way. I had retained my Soviet-Eastern European central interest but I had become involved with East Asia on the Communist side and

then it was repeated in Burma after Indonesia. I had a certain cache in the East Asian bureau, so when I came back in '74 I was brought in on a broader basis actually. My Communist expertise was not very important for the next four years when my responsibilities were much more across the board on East Asia as a whole. I might say that I was asked to go back to Moscow in '74, but I didn't do it, partly because my family and I had had four straight hardship posts, some 25%, some less--and this would have been another one. I was being asked to go to a job as political counselor that I had been offered two tours back that had fallen through then because it had turned out that I was too junior for it. But now I felt that I was a little too senior for it, so I didn't take it and it was probably a big mistake, but I didn't do it. This was at the same time that Kissinger came out with his so-called GLOP idea, which was to get people going from one region to another on the grounds that Foreign Service officers were allegedly too narrowly focused. Of course, what happened in the geographic bureaus then was that they had to make some acknowledgment of GLOP but they preferred to get people from other areas that were already known quantities to them. So the East Asia bureau was happy to latch onto me as somebody coming from Europe that had been associated with East Asia in the past, and that fulfilled their GLOP responsibilities. So I ended up in the East Asia bureau.

Q: What were you doing in the East Asia bureau?

MARTENS: I was brought in as the Director of Regional Affairs.

Q: What does that mean?

MARTENS: Well, at the time there was a very large office although it got reduced progressively after that. We had about eight or ten officers, I guess, including two people on the military side, one a full colonel who had been Defense Attaché in Laos or Thailand earlier. We also had a State officer at the then O-3 level also working on military assistance issues. We had a--what was then a class two, it would now be an OC officer--as the labor adviser. He also handled human rights. I had a deputy as well, and then we had somebody for UN affairs, somebody for SEATO, which was still going on. We had a kind of political policy analyst, and speech writer, who is now the ambassador to Thailand. We had someone for UN affairs, and we had another jack-of-all- trades young officer. These are the ones I can think of. It was quite large. A lot of these activities were connected with the Vietnam war and its early aftermath which made the Regional Affairs office much larger in the East Asia bureau than it was in other bureaus.

During the next two or three years under Phil Habib as Assistant Secretary and later under Art Hummel, I had a lot to do. I was given a lot of authority. I was acting pretty much, without the title, as a Deputy Assistant Secretary. I would go out and do things, or testify to Congress, and things like that that a Deputy Assistant Secretary would normally do. The job was given a big demotion when the Carter administration came in, and Dick Holbrooke became the Assistant Secretary, partly because of his tendency to look somewhat askance at anybody who was already there in the previous administration. He had formerly been a young Foreign Service officer and seemed to resent older officers

being around. And he wanted to fill the top jobs with his own people. And, in fact, all the senior officers were soon gotten rid of with one exception. That was me because I stayed on for another year after that, partly due to some family considerations that caused me not to accept a couple of assignments in East Asian posts.

Q: Were there any major issues that you dealt with then that might be of interest?

MARTENS: Well, in the early period, there was first the fall of Vietnam. There was an interesting aspect there when Phil Habib was very emotional over the fall, having been much involved with Vietnam. And I remember this meeting between Phil Habib and Winston Lord as head of the Policy Planning Staff, and I was there along with Bill Gleysteen who was Deputy Assistant Secretary with Habib, and Mike Armacost was there with Winston Lord. The two principals, Winston Lord and Phil Habib, got into almost a crying situation, bemoaning the fall of Vietnam and what the effects would be on Southeast Asia. They were talking along the lines that Thailand was going to fall, and that perhaps all these countries were going to fall. I finally couldn't stand it any longer, and I intervened even though I was one of the two more junior people there, and said, "This isn't going to happen, this is ridiculous. The North Vietnamese are going to be totally occupied with establishing themselves in the south. Besides the force is going out of East Asian communism, they're not the wave of the future and they know it. Furthermore, the non-communist countries have grown a great deal stronger compared with the 1960s. Even if you're right, it's not going to happen right away. I don't think you're right, but at least you can afford to sit back and not jump to such sweeping conclusions." Surprisingly, they both stopped because they'd been sort of reinforcing each other's somber assessments-- they both knew that. So they both said, "You're right." And they assigned Mike Armacost and me the job of coming up with a paper that would lay out an analysis of the probable future of Southeast Asia, and what our policy should be, and so on, which we did. Mike Armacost did most of the writing, although Dave Lambertson of my staff and I helped on it. And the policy we followed was basically what we had been following, of continuing to be committed, but also letting the non-Communist East Asians take the lead. I also contributed a lot on what our policy should be toward ASEAN, and others did too, but I was an early major actor on this. I wrote a long paper on it, for example, stating that we ought to be very careful of not pushing ourselves onto ASEAN, this should not be looked on as another SEATO. This was a grouping in which--oh, there was an underlying political purpose, but none of them were going to admit it for a long time to come. Eventually they did, but they were going to continue to stress the economic and sociological qualities of this grouping. I argued that we should go along with that and to be very careful about not inserting ourselves unnecessarily, to be a kind of benign somewhat distant uncle to the whole thing, but not really getting too closely involved. That policy was continued for some time after the fall of Vietnam, in fact, although our policy became somewhat more activist in the Carter administration. I initially wondered a little bit about moving in a more active direction although it turned out it was not offensive to ASEAN at this later point. In the immediate aftermath of the fall of Vietnam, a lot of these countries were scurrying to...

Q: It fell in the late spring of '75, didn't it?

MARTENS: Exactly. There was another interesting thing that happened in that period that may be of note. The last SEATO meeting was held in New York, and I went up along with Phil Habib, and only the Thai wanted to continue the SEATO structure because they were interested in...this was the only form of alliance between the U.S. and them...through the SEATO connection. We had no bilateral relationship except for the Thant Kooman- Rusk exchange of letters which had extended SEATO in a kind of bilateral direction for Thailand. It didn't have treaty force or anything without the SEATO umbrella. I think the Australians and the Philippines were the two countries that were the most savage in trying to get rid of SEATO. This was somewhat paradoxically because Romulo had been so close to the United States in the earlier period. Romulo was at the New York meeting and was the most vigorous in trying to get rid of the thing--get rid of SEATO entirely. We did get rid of the SEATO organization. Its important that the five letters end with an "O"--SEATO. Now in most of human history alliances have existed without organizational structures. I had come up with the idea which Habib liked of getting rid of the organization, but not necessarily of the treaty. Habib twisted Romulo's arm on the side in New York, and I think fairly vigorously. I wasn't present for that, but Romulo did finally agree that the communique would announce the abolition of SEATO but without saying anything about the underlying treaty. So the treaty itself remained or appeared to remain for the Thai. It never had to be used and it had never been of great consequence anyway. The treaty itself had outlived its real usefulness, but the important point was that our formulation was kind of a bridge, or tiding over for the Thai who were feeling extremely threatened in the immediate aftermath of Vietnam, and it allowed the Thai to come out of the last SEATO meeting with some kind of feeling that they had not been left totally in the lurch. So that was done. It's a minor footnote.

Q: Well, it's interesting. Holbrooke, outside of the fact that he obviously didn't like old duffers around, how was he otherwise? I mean, how did he look at Asia and the Carter administration?

MARTENS: Over time, not too badly. I had grave differences as it turned out with the Carter administration as it proceeded. Human rights was one of the issues. Strangely, in the previous Ford administration, I had taken the leadership in getting instructions to our ambassador in Korea to push human rights harder. So I was not opposed to human rights as such, but when the Carter administration came in there was on the part of some of these people, particularly Patt Derian, and even more her deputy, a man named Schneider who had come over to State from Ted Kennedy's staff. There was a kind of fanaticism and an attitude of taking harsh actions against countries friendly to the United States in East Asia--I'm thinking of Thailand, Indonesia, the Philippines, South Korea--that I thought at the time, and still think, was going too far. The same people were not making these sorts of human rights complaints against the communist countries in the area. They were trying to have the U.S. vote against loans by the IMF, or the Asian Development Bank, or whatever, to these countries on human rights grounds. And even countries like Malaysia and Singapore, which are not perfect--no country is perfect including the United

States--were really not that bad. So I would contest some of these things, and I became a kind of point man on this. The coordination of this question within the East Asian Bureau was within my jurisdiction. I particularly ran into controversy over Indonesia where I tried to explain to Patt Derian on several occasions that we had been working with Indonesia to release most of the communist prisoners that were being held from the 1965 coup period. First of all, one needed to understand that these prisoners were by-and-large the hard core of the communist party that had initiated armed action against the non-communists. It was not the first time, it was the third time in Indonesian history that the communist party had done this, and each of the three times it had resulted in a tremendous amount of violence, and death. So you couldn't really blame the Indonesian Government for being a little bit concerned about letting all of these people out. They didn't have laws in respect to conspiracy which we have. They had no way of proceeding along Western legal lines against the top communists who didn't have an actual gun in their hand. So for those who were running the communist coup, the senior leadership, well, this was the only way to keep them in, and basically without trial. Now the Indonesian Government was in the process of releasing these people gradually, and there was a program to do this, and we were pushing for it to go faster. But at least one should understand the reasons why they were moving fairly slowly. But she wouldn't listen to this sort of thing. She would get angry, and she walked out on me twice, and the result of this was that while the East Asia Bureau leadership supported my position, they wouldn't support me. When Derian raised a fuss, the Bureau leaders would shift any blame on me to senior people in the Department who were keen on human rights and I would be regarded as some kind of hardliner. Later, the Bureau leadership of that period would push me out ahead again but with a willingness to leave me dangling if there was a problem. That, at least, was my strong perception. This was not only on the human rights issue, it was on other issues as well.

Twice proposals came up for the Peace Corps, which was then under ACTION headed by a well-known radical. ACTION was proposing that State should approve the Peace Corps sending Volunteers into Cuba, North Korea, and North Vietnam--this was to be the main centers of Peace Corps activity. This proposal was killed and it never came out. I was obviously on the side of stopping that kind of nonsense but the decision to do so was made by others.

Another issue I got involved with was a scheme to neutralize the Indian Ocean, or rather to demilitarize the Indian Ocean. A U.S. delegation had already met with the Soviets when I first learned about it. The idea was for a US-Soviet treaty to largely exclude U.S. and Soviet forces from the entire Indian Ocean, including the sea lanes around Australia. The affected area would extend all the way to the eastern shore of Australia and largely negate the ANZUS treaty. Now from an overall standpoint, this was to me a bad idea because the Indian Ocean was a place where there was a natural strategic advantage to the U.S. because the Soviet Union would have to organize its strategic defenses to take account of a possible U.S. strategic weapon launch from the south as well as from other directions, whether this would be from long range bombers out of Diego Garcia, aircraft carriers or submarines. The obverse would not be true since the Soviet Union would not

have any reason to put similar weapons in the Indian Ocean to hit the United States which was further away. The point was not that you would necessarily want to make such deployments but the mere possibility of it would cause the Soviet Union to have to look south as well as north in its strategic dispositions. The existing situation was accordingly advantageous to the U.S. from a military standpoint and should not be thrown away lightly. I could say this kind of thing informally behind the scenes to a few people, but actually I had no basis for advocating overall strategic arguments. That was other peoples business, and I could only argue East Asian considerations. But what I could say, and what I did say, was that this idea would be the death knell of the ANZUS Treaty because the Australians were not in the ANZUS Treaty to defend themselves, or to get U.S. help in defending themselves against an attack from Fiji, or other minute places in the Pacific. Australia was obviously interested in defending itself against a threat from the north or from the northwest. So I said, "If you're going to do this, from the standpoint of the East Asian Bureau, the one thing that we can stand on if you're going to apply this is that a line needs to be drawn down the middle of the Pacific Ocean 100 miles west of Australia, and the Indian Ocean covered by any such US-Soviet agreement would have to stop 100 miles west of the western shore of Australia." That's our only and final compromise position. And I must say I had the full support of Holbrooke and the rest of the Bureau, and eventually the Department came around to this viewpoint but only after the Australians finally got wind of it. They were furious and pointed out the effect on the ANZUS Treaty. So the thing finally got stopped, but there were a lot of really foolish ideas floating around for a while and unfortunately--well, I got in the middle of these things, and fought over them. I didn't get any real support from the East Asian Bureau leadership. I mean, they favored my substantive views, but they didn't provide much support to me.

Q: Was your next assignment sort of a result to get you out of the line of fire?

MARTENS: My four years were coming up that summer. I had been offered a couple of DCMships in East Asia which I didn't accept, a major factor being a schooling problem for one of my children. So instead of asking for help on a suitable assignment from Holbrooke, I sought some other job and that's why I ended up going to Sweden as DCM.

Q: You were there for about...

MARTENS: I was there for one year only. I was picked by the ambassador out of 15 people.

Q: Who was the ambassador?

MARTENS: A fellow named Kennedy-Minott, a fellow who had been a professor in some minor college in California, and had been involved in the Carter campaign there. We hit it off fairly well at the beginning, but later on we came to a parting of the ways. I don't want to get into all that, it had nothing to do with policy, it was all personal. The man had been aided by his wife and his secretary. There was an effort by the secretary to run the embassy. All kinds of things came up that were so insane that if I described them,

you wouldn't believe that it could have happened. But anyway, the result was that I decided that the best thing to do was to leave, and I got in touch with the Director General, whom I knew very well, Harry Barnes, and got reassigned.

Q: Just to get a little feel for this type of thing for somebody some time in the future. You see a problem like this, and obviously it's not going to help the morale of the embassy, and because you went into the Inspection Corps thereafter. Is this the sort of thing that would trigger an inspection, to say come on and get the embassy back...

MARTENS: No, it did not although the ambassador was later fired because of an inspection investigation, which I was not associated with, on a completely different matter. Again, I don't want to get into that, but there was no connection with my conflict. At any rate, I wanted to get out of it with the least harm to the U.S. interest. I made sure that it was done in a way in which it was all kept secret--a few people in the embassy knew some of it, the next two ranking officers. I got them aside and told them what I was going to do, and I had to do that in order to ensure that there was continuity, and that they would act in ways that would ensure that our relationship with Sweden would not be harmed, etc.

I won't get into all of the problems but one of the peculiar things is that, after problem emerged the ambassador said that the role of the DCM was to deal only with the FSNs...

Q: FSNs being the Foreign Service Nationals. These are the staff of the embassy who come from the country itself.

MARTENS: That's right, and I was to have no other function. Obviously this was impossible, and I said it couldn't be done. But he kind of hemmed and hawed, he had no courage to stand up on these things but he would kind of keep coming back--in fact, I made a certain effort in this direction without stopping the other responsibilities of being DCM. I didn't want to do it the way he wanted me to but I did take time out whenever I had some time to meet individually for approximately a half an hour with every FSN in the embassy just to talk to them, find out what their interests were, and what their background was. This was a remarkably successful thing, something that I wished I'd done earlier and that I would recommend that other officers do, that they take a little time to talk to people one on one at every level. Of course, I spent more time with those FSNs who had professional level jobs. But I also talked to the drivers and the carpenters and all the rest of them too. When my family and I finally left Sweden, the FSNs put on a party for us that was really something, they thought I was the greatest DCM that had ever been there. I never heard of any DCM ever doing this otherwise. I ran into a fellow about a year or so ago, 10-12 years after I had left Sweden, whom I met in the Middle East while putting on a Crisis Management Exercise and who had just come from being the Admin Counselor in Sweden, and he said, "Boy, the FSNs are still talking about you." Nobody else had ever done anything like this.

Q: Then you came back and you served for three years as an Inspector during which time, by the way, you inspected me in Naples. Just in general, how effective did you find the...you'd seen all sorts of inspections over your career. How effective did you think that the inspection system was at that particular time?

MARTENS: I think much more so than I expected. I might say that before I left Sweden, I received a number of phone calls suggesting that I might be going to Afghanistan, either as ambassador or Chargé, they hadn't made up their mind, although I was only a candidate if they decided to take a Soviet type rather than someone with a Middle East background. This was shortly after the initial communist coup and the assassination of the U.S. Ambassador Spike Dubs. Shortly thereafter I was told that I was going to be Chargé in Iran. This was after the withdrawal of Bill Sullivan as ambassador. That fell through at the last minute. In fact, I had packed to go to Tehran over a weekend and was going to leave on a Wednesday. I had been told on the preceding Friday that I had been selected for the Tehran job but that the Secretary of State had to approve it and he was coming back on Sunday from a trip to Spain. I was called on Monday and told that I had been turned down by the Secretary, which obviously related to the previous problems I had had in the East Asia bureau on human rights issues--not that I think the Secretary knew anything about me but he had undoubtedly been advised by others. Bruce Laingen went out to Tehran instead, and I came back to Washington and took over an cycle which he had begun. I stayed in the Inspection Corps then for the next two and a half years of active duty, followed by another year after retirement when I was called back almost immediately to undertake a particularly difficult inspection. The latter partly involved confronting a political appointee Assistant Secretary, and five Deputy Assistant Secretaries--all political. I had to shake that entire bureau up because of certain things that had transpired but anyway that's another story that I can't get into in detail obviously.

I found that inspection work was very interesting and more useful than I expected. As senior inspector I headed a team of about five or six other inspectors who specialized in different cones. I had to review their work. I also concentrated personally on the ambassador, DCM, principal officers, and the leadership of other agencies, particularly interrelationships between the State side, CIA, AID, that kind of thing. So I personally wrote the reports on those subjects. I found that frequently you would learn an awful lot about what the other agencies were doing, much more than the ambassador or DCM knew on occasion. So there were insights useful to post management for the running of the embassy. Frequently inspections helped the embassy leadership get things they wanted and needed because they were having a hard time getting the attention of Washington agencies including State. I don't mean you always took the side of the embassy, but you looked at the issue in an objective way, and came up with recommendations that might move things in a certain direction where they had been stuck for bureaucratic reasons.

There were also some occasions where there were personnel problems. At the first post I went to as an inspector, there was a serious personnel problem that involved the FSNs almost to the point of their leaving their jobs en masse. The ambassador and senior leadership didn't know this. They thought they were being helpful to the FSNs, but they

were keeping secret what they were doing vis-a-vis Washington over a recent poorly-performed wage survey. Since all the FSNs dumped on me and the other inspectors, we learned about this and when I told the ambassador about it he said, "Oh, my God, we didn't have any idea of this. Why don't you do something about it?" I said, "No, I'm not going to do anything about it. You go do something about it. You're the one that needs to get the credit for it. You go and meet with the FSNs and I'll sit in the back of the room. I'm not going to say anything. You talk to them and try to iron the thing out," which he did. It all got worked out, nothing went into the inspection report on this. The whole situation improved, and a major calamity was averted, all without anything going on paper. Other things went on paper in the normal way, but that's an example of how some things can be done.

I don't think I ever inspected a really bad career ambassador. I did meet a couple of political appointees who were terrible on their staffs. One of them was in a major country that the U.S. was heavily involved with. At the end of that inspection of Rome, I sat down with the ambassador and told him that he was doing a fine substantive job, which he was, but that what he was doing with his staff was terrible, and that he was going to have a very bad reputation. I said that he had the stature to conceivably come back someday as Secretary of State, or Deputy Secretary, or another high position, but, if so, he could come back with the kind of reputation in the organization that a man like Acheson, or Rusk had, or he could come back with the reputation of being a horse's ass. And as I went through this with him, he began to cry. He actually broke down and cried. Of course, this was made a little easier by the fact that the election had just taken place, and with the change of administration coming up, he was going to leave soon anyway. In any case, I thought that was a useful function for me to perform. If he ever did come back--he hasn't--I would hope that maybe something useful came of this advice.

And I had a similar experience with another political ambassador with whom I sat down and talked turkey in the same way at the end of the inspection. She was being terribly harsh on her secretaries and staff personnel. A number of people in this embassy were resigning. There were some others that had volunteered for difficult countries, anything to get out of this embassy. It was a very pleasant place, it was a place in the Caribbean, what normally people would think of as an easy post. But again this particular ambassador was very effective substantively. She was personally doing a good job, but she was working so hard to make a reputation that there was no concern for the staff. So anyway there were things like this that were useful. After I retired I was called back one week later to do an inspection of a bureau and that required some strong confrontations. I had to go to two Under Secretaries of State to say that, "I'm not doing this for political reasons, I'm not unsympathetic with this administration, but these things are wrong. This cannot be done, and this has to be stopped." And both of the two Under Secretaries agreed with this, understood it. I went through the whole thing. I was supported on the inspection. Because of that the decision was made, incidentally, to get rid of at least the top guy, but it wasn't done after all because Secretary of State Haig was fired first by pure coincidence and, of course, for unrelated reasons and the whole thing went back to ground zero. Later those

same changes were made, but it had to work itself back up again. It would have worked then if it hadn't been for this coincidence.

And there were a number of other problems uncovered in that inspection. In most previous inspections, I had never had occasion to recommend position reductions, at least for State functions. But in this case I found that the staffing was too great, and positions ought to be removed. I accordingly recommended 30 positions be abolished in this particular bureau, there were that many people doing nothing or nothing relevant. I don't know the ultimate results although I am sure that many of those recommendations were not accomplished although some were. We were making what I thought were valid, sensible, logical recommendations for the overall good of the institution, I had nothing against the Bureau. The Bureau was doing great things, it was a useful Bureau and all that, but there were areas where, for one reason or another, things had happened to cause particular functions to become redundant. There was no longer anything being done there, and they were holding the positions just to keep the staffing levels high. In fact using some of these positions to bring in political appointees to do other things. Anyway, I think there were a number of useful things.

Q: Well, its been a fascinating set of interviews. I've really enjoyed this, Bob. Thank you very much.

End of interview