

Association for Diplomatic Studies and Training
Foreign Affairs Oral History Program

DESAIX ANDERSON

Interviewed by: David E. Reuther
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INTERVIEW

Q: This is a Foreign Affairs Oral History Program interview with Desaix Anderson, the first American chief of mission stationed in Hanoi, Vietnam. It's March 6, 2005 and we are in his apartment in New York City. This interview is being conducted under the

auspices of the Association for Diplomatic Studies and Training with the support of the Luce Foundation. I'm David Reuther.

ANDERSON: Good morning, David.

Q: Can you give us first a sense of your background and how you became interested in the Foreign Service.

ANDERSON: I guess my first interest in the Foreign Service came indirectly. It was from the Baptist Sunday School class when we would talk about India and China and missionaries going over there. So I became fascinated particularly with Asia. And then my father who had been a lawyer but had taken over the family farm was very interested in politics and international relations.

Q: —that high school opportunity, was there anything out of that? What from that would have led you to Princeton?

ANDERSON: Well, it was a classical Latin style school and very strict in the rules, but we were well taught, and I knew I wanted to go east. My older sister had gone to Vassar, so she had talked to me about the East a lot. That had a lot to do with selecting the school, but I wanted to go to what I considered to be the best school for me in the country. So Princeton stood out.

Q: Now this is 1954. So in the fall of '54 you would've started at Princeton. What were the academic requirements at that time?

ANDERSON: For Princeton?

Q: Yes because they've changed over the years.

ANDERSON: They looked at everything. They didn't have SATs [Scholastic Aptitude Test] or any of that kind of thing.

Q: But a set few courses you had to accomplish, and then you got to choose your major. What was your major?

ANDERSON: Major was history. I took three parts, equal amounts of Asian, European, and American history.

Q: So already at this time Asia is becoming a focus.

ANDERSON: Yes, I took my general examinations in Asia and the U.S. So very interested in Asia always. It was just the most exotic part of the world, and I wanted to go as far as I could and see as much as I could—but after I made more money and I went to John Kennedy's inauguration.

Q: Let's go back to the navy. You said that you knew you were going to go into the navy. Was that because of the draft at the time or family tradition?

ANDERSON: No, everybody had to go do some military service at that time. So I was in the Naval ROTC [Reserve Officers Training Corps] at Princeton. Not the one that pays the money. It's the other one. So there was an obligation to go for two years. Everybody had to do something at that point.

Q: So how did that work out if you were ROTC Princeton? You graduate from Princeton. Now you have your obligation. There's some sort of boot camp and skills training.

ANDERSON: No, we'd had navy cruises in the summers. I'd been on those two years. And you just came in. I was an ensign, the gunnery officer lowest slot that there was. I did that for a year, and then I was promoted to be the first lieutenant in charge of all the deck force, a couple of hundred people.

Q: Same ship?

ANDERSON: Same ship.

Q: This was Quemoy-Matsu business which you probably would've been reading about.

ANDERSON: I had read a great deal about it and actually went down to Washington. I had heard part of the debate and met Mamie Eisenhower.

Q: Oh goodness. How did that happen?

ANDERSON: A guy at Princeton was from Colorado and he was friends of theirs. So we went up to see Mamie. The president wasn't there, but we went up and had tea with her. Then we went to hear the Quemoy-Matsu debate in Congress, which was wonderful. That's the kind of thing that excited me. But also in the background was the concern that we would have another war. It would be China over Russia. So I was keenly interested in what was going on in the world.

Q: Because of course at that time we were describing China as this part of the Sino-Soviet bloc, just as a handmaiden of the Soviets.

ANDERSON: It was until '61 so they were a satellite of the Soviet Union. All that was ominous and all that sitting right out there. So when I went out to sea, there was a reason to be there. So I enjoyed that very much.

Q: Now when did you leave the navy? When was your enlistment up?

ANDERSON: In 1960, and I went to Las Vegas and hitchhiked back. I wrote my thesis on the approaches to nihilism in Dostoevsky.

Q: Yes, well you would get together with Gerard Damon these days. He's writing along those lines.

ANDERSON: Well, I'm painting along those lines. My focus on works of despair. There's a lot that reminded me of the decline of empires these past couple of years.

Q: Well, you're right because the room we're sitting in has hanging some of your very exquisite art. I quite enjoy it. I see some other pieces that you brought from Southeast Asia and probably Japan too. This is a marvelous apartment here in New York City. I appreciate your inviting us.

ANDERSON: My pleasure. My pleasure. But that's just part of my great interest in societies and living in artistic and cultural worlds too.

Q: But you know I'm wondering where in the background some of these other things play because in the early '60s in Mississippi or other places in the South you had these vast social movements come up. James Meredith in '62 integrates Ole Miss. You're talking about cross-cultural understanding and your interest in people.

ANDERSON: Well, my father was a farmer and all summer and sometimes even in the winter I'd go with him out to the farm. We had mainly black workers there. We had some white but most of them were black. They were just fascinating people and I loved to talk with them. They were my best friends when I was a kid and always had very good relations, and that was one thing that disturbed me terribly about living in the South was the attitudes. The Emmett Till murder trial was in my hometown. That was when I was a freshman at Princeton, and I was very much aware of it. Some of the people involved, not the bad guys but the good ones, were good friends of mine. But my family was very open and there was never any racist comment in my family, just very different. So I fortunately did not suffer under that. It was a pleasure for me to know the black people. I knew lots of them. That was a positive from my standpoint in my early life but it is a very important part, terribly.

Q: Getting back to the Foreign Service now you said in Princeton you heard people take the test and describe it and now there's this delay. When did you actually take the Foreign Service exam?

ANDERSON: I think I took it in January right after I got to Berkeley. Wait a minute. I take that back. I took it in Jackson before I went. Yes. I took the oral [exam] out there.

Q: So that would be what, '61?

ANDERSON: Must've been late '61.

Q: Late '61 because Kennedy administration started in January '61. You were in Paris when he came through there.

ANDERSON: I think this was late, so '62. No, '61. Late, must've been late '61.

Q: Late '61. And in the interim you go out to Berkeley. What was the test like?

ANDERSON: No, I wasn't out at Berkeley. I was still in Mississippi.

Q: So you take the test in Mississippi.

ANDERSON: I came back out and worked, helped on the farm again for three months. That's when you pick the cotton, and I took, the night before I went out with my friend John Stennis [son of Senator John Stennis]. We drank a bottle of scotch so it's a wonder I passed. Then the oral I had out at Berkeley.

Q: What was the written test like in those days? They changed it so much.

ANDERSON: You read—*Christian Science Monitor* is what I read then and *Newsweek* or *Time*. It just seemed to be generally aware of what's going on in the world and that was all that was required. I'm sure I got a few extra points for being from Mississippi.

Q: Was there anything particularly remarkable about the oral?

ANDERSON: How easy it was because the people were delightful, and they asked me about books I'd been reading. I didn't always answer very well. I told them I was interested in architecture and so we had a nice discussion about architecture. It was a very pleasant conversation. I enjoyed it.

Q: So where were you when you received the letter of acceptance?

ANDERSON: I was at Berkeley. I got there pretty soon after that because it seems the oral was in the spring, and I got it in July, I think. And they said they wanted me there on the seventh of September.

Q: Nineteen sixty-two.

ANDERSON: And that was right after the—I left to finish my exams, passed all my stuff for the master's degree, and then went straight to Washington over the weekend and went to work.

Q: How did that work out financially? Did they say you get yourself to Washington or did they send money or how did that work out? I hear different stories.

ANDERSON: I don't remember. I sort of think I paid for it. They reimbursed me, but I'm not sure.

Q: How did you come out there—train, plane?

ANDERSON: It must've been on the train. I don't remember riding on a plane. When I got a car in Memphis and drove out to California it was one of those one-way cars.

Q: Yes, yes, I've done that.

ANDERSON: As I said, I hitchhiked back. I don't remember how I got back. I don't remember flying there though.

Q: Well, I tossed that question in because that helps set people's minds as to the technology that was available to us and how one handled some very simple things. Because kids nowadays if you will and young researchers won't and need to have that context in mind because it goes back to the way we began to report out of our first assignments and what not. You remember the old airgram thing—

ANDERSON: Loved it.

Q: —which was a primary tool. But you joined the Foreign Service on September eighth, 1962. What was your A-100 class like?

ANDERSON: It was bizarre.

Q: Here you are a world traveler.

ANDERSON: Well, we had an interesting class, and I made a lot of good friends there that are still friends. But I was used to running my own life and a great deal of independence, and the notion of suddenly having to be under an organization that could tell me what to do was a little bit strange.

Q: Well, you'd been in the navy.

ANDERSON: Well that's right, but I considered that just a part of my education.

Q: Who was in your A-100 class?

ANDERSON: A lot of the names later which some of them are still friends. They talked to us, spent a lot of time on the consular work, which I wasn't very interested in. They talked about, just gave us a six-week course. I didn't have an introduction to the navy like that because they taught me how to navigate, things like that, but they didn't tell me much about what this new life is going to be like. That was interesting.

Q: So there was actually a difference between the two instructions for junior officers if you will.

ANDERSON: No, we didn't get that kind of social introduction in the navy. I was still fresh out of Berkeley. That was when the free speech movement was emerging, just starting. Great deal of freedom. So I didn't feel quite like a bureaucrat. But it was basically a positive experience because I was so excited about going abroad.

Q: How soon after, what happened after the A-100 course? Were you given an assignment right away?

ANDERSON: We got assignments, and I got both the prize for the worst assignment and my first choice, which was Calcutta. I asked for India.

Q: Of course, because that's where you were going in the first place.

ANDERSON: I had to figure out another way to get there. That's where I was headed so I had another way to get there. So I got a choice. No, I got Calcutta, and then I pointed out to them in the letter that they'd sent to me that they were going to teach me a world language. I said, "Where's the world language?" They said, "Oh okay." They sent back a thing that said that I was going to go to either Nepal or Yemen.

Q: Wait a minute. How did the language break up the Calcutta assignment?

ANDERSON: Because they needed somebody in Calcutta immediately, at the end of the A-100 course, but I wanted a language. So that meant I was delayed for four months.

Q: So you selected the language.

ANDERSON: Then so they, so Calcutta thing was broken, and I had the choice of either Kathmandu or Aden.

Q: Because it was their requirement that you had to pass a language test.

ANDERSON: No, I insisted on being taught a language. It said in the letter accepting me that I'd be taught a world language. So I insisted on it.

Q: Using their own promises against them. Tsk, tsk.

ANDERSON: I looked at the poster boards and I looked, my mistake, at the 1954 report of Kathmandu, and it said, "Rats as big as dogs are running the streets and have every disease in the world," and it sounded pretty miserable. I'm sure it was written to get a good 25 percent hardship allowance. But it sounded pretty awful. The other one sounded like hell. Aden sounded awful, even worse. So I immediately chose Kathmandu.

Q: How was it that only those two choices came up?

ANDERSON: I don't know. Those are your choices.

One other thing I'd like to go back to and mention.

Q: Go ahead.

ANDERSON: My father had a law degree from Vanderbilt, but he liked the common folks, and we would frequently stop at the service stations or something like that. He loved to talk to the common people. So I grew up enjoying talking, just talking to ordinary people. That I think was a great contribution in being able to communicate with people wherever I went. So that is a little thing to remember there. But it was important.

Q: When you get to Kathmandu, that's actually a fairly interesting place right at the moment. You've just had the Sino-Indian War of October of '62.

ANDERSON: I was on the Indian desk there for part of that, right during the war.

Q: Oh. So tell us about that.

ANDERSON: That was very exciting.

Q: Let's see. You finished the A-100. That's what, six weeks?

ANDERSON: Uh huh.

Q: Was it? So and then you tell them to wait a minute. You guys promised me a language. Let's perform on that. So they gave you a language which was?

ANDERSON: French.

Q: French.

ANDERSON: Well, they asked me which one I wanted. I didn't say Nepali. It was supposed to be a world language.

Q: Okay. So that French language lasted how long?

ANDERSON: Well, it was supposed to last four months, but of course they had no money, couldn't send us out until June. So we stayed six, which was wonderful.

Q: So you had a full six weeks?

ANDERSON: Six months.

Q: Six months of French.

ANDERSON: I'd already learned to read. We were reading Sartre by that time. When I went to Berkeley I signed up for a course with my advisor on French literature. He said, "You're going to speak French," which I was horrified by because I could read it without any problem, but I spoke terribly. It was terrible, but he insisted on my doing so.

Q: So then out of French language?

ANDERSON: So then all of that plus six months of language put me in pretty good shape because I knew a lot of exotic words in French from my reading.

Q: From the reading.

ANDERSON: Yes.

Q: So once the language is done what next?

ANDERSON: I think maybe I went to the India desk maybe before. There was a gap there and it was just for a week or two. I think that was in the fall. Fall of '62 when the Chinese attacked.

Q: Right, it was October. Because that was the middle of the Cuban crisis too for the Americans. The timing was the same.

ANDERSON: That's when I went to the India desk. They had me doing nothing, but it was very exciting. It was wonderful. I was very much aware of the Cuban crisis too. All contemplated whether we should drive out to West Virginia for the weekend. But the India thing, that was just wonderful. You've got a war on your hands the first time you go to a desk between two great countries in which I was interested. What could be nicer?

Q: After language then where were you, what did you do? Then you went out to—?

ANDERSON: I went to Kathmandu.

Q: How does one get to Kathmandu by July seventh of 1963?

ANDERSON: You go to Athens; then you take the boat to Rhodes; then you take another boat to Cairo and from Cairo you go to Beirut; Beirut to Istanbul; Istanbul to Tehran; Tehran to New Delhi. Then you fly to Kathmandu. I think I was traveling for about six weeks, but it was wonderful.

Q: You may have liked it.

ANDERSON: I loved it.

Q: I have some records here that suggest that Kathmandu itself was in a bit of political instability and that there was a government shake up at that time. I suppose the real question is what was your assignment in the embassy?

ANDERSON: Well, I was a general services officer, so it was like being back in the navy again. I had all the carpenters and plumbers and generator operators and drivers, about 150 of them, working for me. That was marvelous. I knew how to communicate with those kinds of people. I knew I wanted to be a political officer but that was what the last junior guy got. But it was delightful.

Q: Can you describe the embassy at that time? Who was the ambassador? How large is it?

ANDERSON: The aid mission was much bigger. It was huge and it was in a separate place. I think they had over a hundred people and the embassy, oh maybe thirty Americans. Henry Stebbins was the ambassador and Harry Barnes was the DCM [deputy chief of mission].

Q: Harry Barnes.

ANDERSON: A wonderful guy, we were close friends. Having dinner with him next week. But he was wonderful, very interested in what the junior officers were doing.

Q: That was it. Here you are a junior officer. You're fresh off the boat, to coin a phrase. The DCM takes an interest in his junior officers.

ANDERSON: Absolutely. Very interested and brought us into things and had us over frequently for meals. We had the Nepalis there and other things. So he was terrific. I learned a great deal about politics basically because of him. But the work was Madame Stebbins calling me every morning, "Oh the wall is falling down because of the monsoon rain. Come fix it." So we'll fix it. But I liked it. I like operational things too. So it was fun. Didn't bother me a bit.

Q: So you had quite a bit of interaction with Mrs. Ambassador.

ANDERSON: Oh I liked her, but she was old style. She was from England. I think he was English too, originally. They were older style people, traditional people. I respected them, and Harry Barnes and Betsy, his wife, were just wonderful because they were so interested in the rest of us.

Q: And you're there from July, starting July '63, but in November President Kennedy is assassinated.

ANDERSON: Well, the Nepalis came and woke me up and said your president's been killed. And I just was in horrible shock. So I guess one other person, maybe two more other people, two secretaries from the embassy and I and those Nepalis we all went up to a high mountain right around the place because it was peaceful and away from everything. It was just horrible. It really hit me.

All the Nepalis loved President Kennedy. Part of the time I took a trip with one of my workers. We went to Lumbini where Buddha was born and then went up around, up this side of Dhaulagiri, but we could see it all the time, just trekked up and down the mountain. Three days in we had a little tent. We put up the tent. We frequently slept in those tea houses too, but this place you had to put up a little tent, and in that house, they had an altar, and they had one picture of Buddha and one of John Kennedy. It's three days in from the border, walking. So that brought on to me it made a difference who our president was. This one was dearly loved by the whole world.

Q: What were some of the other experiences that came out of this experience?

ANDERSON: Well, on this same trip we ended up in Pokhara and we put our tent in front of the Tibetan hotel there because there were a lot of donkeys there for some reason. The place was full. It turned out to be the son of the Maharaja of Mustang who was on his way with the donkey caravan from Burma going back to Mustang. My friend and I talked with him and my friend had the good sense to give him a Swiss Army knife so that he would get along with us. So we got to be big buddies and he invited us to come and visit him in Mustang. He said, "Our houses and our horses are yours." So I was intrigued by that. That's all the way on the other side—it's on the Tibetan plateau. Completely on the other side of the Himalayas. So absolutely fascinated by that we got back shortly thereafter, and I guess we had to submit our travel plans. So I submitted in October—the monsoon was over—that my friend and I would go for a three week hike up to Mustang and back for three weeks. Harry Barnes approved the trip. It was an incredible trip.

By that time I was switched over to the consular section or I was about to be—so we were going to do that, but after being in the consular section for about a week these two people from Washington showed up and said, What do you want to do on your next assignment? I said, "Well, I like it so well I'd like to stay for a third year." I was there for two; this was only after one. They said, Well, where would you like to go after this? I said, "Anywhere but Vietnam because I don't like war." Two weeks later I had my orders to leave. So I didn't get to go to Mustang, but that trip would've been the trip of my life. But walking around in those mountains was wonderful too because everybody thought I was a Brahmin. They didn't know I was American. They just chat with us, a lot of other people would be carrying things, huge things on their back. That was the means of transportation. So we got to meet and talk to a whole lot of people and my friend was very outgoing so that made it all the more pleasant.

Q: It sounds like you were having a fairly typical first tour. A few months in the admin section, a few months in the consular section. Normally then one would rotate through political or econ.

ANDERSON: Well, I was going to be both, I was going to also be in the economic section as well as the consular section. I only gave out six visas the whole time I was there. Eventually four of those people I met in the United States. They showed me the visa I had given to them. So it wasn't very busy. I was supposed to work in the economic too, but I hadn't been there long enough to even get started. The memorable thing was involving the people and trying to take care of all the little things that happen, like the bench falling down in the monsoon and no water and no electricity and all this stuff. So just trying to get all those things fixed up took all the time. Except on Saturday. I had a big house and on Saturday night the general services people would like to come over and dance. There was an enormous living room I had. So we'd put on Nepali music and we'd all dance. Bells on your ankles.

Q: So local staff and Americans.

ANDERSON: Yes, mainly the local staff but some Americans would come. But mainly just the Nepalis.

Q: But the tradition somebody must've started, an earlier GSO?

ANDERSON: I doubt it. I just liked all those people and didn't have anything else to do. There's not too much to do in Kathmandu. So we got going on that level and had a good time.

Q: These two guys that came through the embassy asking what you wanted for your next tour. They were from Personnel or was that an inspection team do you recall?

ANDERSON: They were said they were going out interviewing anybody that—a junior officer that had studied French.

Q: Oh.

ANDERSON: Came back to.

Q: Came back to haunt you.

ANDERSON: Came back to get me.

Q: Because you arrive in Nepal in July '63, but by August '64—

ANDERSON: Gone.

Q: You're someplace else. How did that happen?

ANDERSON: Well, those guys came and obviously they were looking for people to go to Vietnam. I had told them I didn't want to go. Two weeks after they left, I had the orders to leave immediately. Whether I had one week or what, a very short time to leave and go back and study Vietnamese for six months and then go to Camp Lejeune for military training, jungle warfare.

Q: An interesting Foreign Service skill.

ANDERSON: Well, it was the first group to go down to Fort Bragg to study jungle warfare. It was Fort Bragg.

Q: Now let's go back. Six months of Vietnamese. That's with the State Department.

ANDERSON: It's normally ten months. Yes. It's normally ten months. They gave us just six. And that was Dave Lambertson, Dick Teare, Steve Ledogar, Ray Reemer, and Clay Nettles. Anyway, so we were all studying at the same time. The other group that went immediately was Holbrooke.

Q At this time you were in the second group, with Frank Wisner?

ANDERSON: Think at the same time but they sent them straight to Vietnam.

Q: Ah, so there was a group that went straight to Vietnam. They ended up in the embassy? This was one of the provincial units then. How was it organized and to whom did they report?

ANDERSON: Just the two of us there in Bien Hoa Province and a couple of Filipino contractors. We were supposed to work on about ten programs, building schools and building medical facilities. It was a self-help program. We provide the cement and the tents and other supplies. Vietnamese to do these things—which was to encourage people to come back— Then we handed out pigs all that stuff that I felt very much at home really back in Mississippi; but also talking to the people was just wonderful. They would—you could talk to them for five minutes, and then they'd suddenly say you speak Vietnamese. You'd been conversing with them all this time. They just couldn't believe a foreigner could speak.

Q: I think that's one of the most exciting parts of being in the Foreign Service, you're sitting there talking to the other guy in his language. I had a Thai colleague who was deathly afraid when we first called on him because he was trying to remember his university English, which had been fifteen years earlier and was thrilled to death, I mean just absolutely thrilled to death that this exchange was going to happen in Thai.

ANDERSON: Well, we were just wandering around with the peasants basically. I would go and see the village chief. Whatever the project was that we were doing with the local folks.

Q: I think the vocabulary we use today is nation building.

ANDERSON: Yes.

Q: Perhaps, why wasn't the Vietnamese government providing these services? Why were the Americans?

ANDERSON: Well, because the government was inadequate, not in touch with the people there. This assistance began barely two years earlier and the goal of the U.S. government was to strengthen the ability to attract political support. We knew that much. So we were there to both advise them a little bit but provide them with materials so that they could engage with the government.

Q: You were talking earlier about talking to the villagers, but you also had a liaison relationship with the existing Vietnamese governmental structure.

ANDERSON: Right. My boss would go to see the province chief and deputy and then the next service chiefs, I would go to see them because they were the ones that were actually working on the projects. We were the executing agents so I would go talk to them about their projects and what they wanted to do and where they were going to put the schools and all that stuff.

Q: So you would say I have inputs for a school. Where do you guys think you need it?

ANDERSON: Yes, and I'd go out and look and see the project, the location and go back and check and see how it was coming along. As I say hand out pigs or whatever?

Q: How did you see that as contributing to the nation building effort?

ANDERSON: Well, the theory was that if the province chief was the representative of the central government because they were responding to local needs that this would strengthen the support of the government for the needs of the common folks. So we were assisting to enable them to do this with the materials to build the projects, but they were still struggling. I think it did work to a certain extent.

Q: What were some of the parameters or influences that made a difference as to whether it worked or—

ANDERSON: It was whether or not the province chief felt like he had to, whether he supported what you were doing in the first place, and sometimes they didn't. The one in Bien Hoa did. They wanted us there helping them. When you could see that they were

gaining support and you could tell, you could sense that they were doing their job or not. Obviously, security was very important and Bien Hoa province for example had sections that were Vietcong parts of the province where people didn't dare go. I eventually did go there, but that was in the next incarnation.

Q: How does one get around Vietnam in these days?

ANDERSON: We all had International Harvester Scouts. I had one of those, rode all over the place. They gave me an AK-47, but I didn't use it. Bien Hoa was relatively secure. It was right by Saigon and you had the infantry and the air force right there. The week after we got there, they gave us a place in Saigon as well. So the four of us went out to dinner, no five of us. I can't remember who the fifth one was. So we went out to dinner and to a fine restaurant. Then the next night, Saturday night we went to a floating restaurant, the Mekong Floating Restaurant. One week subsequent to that on the same Saturday night was when they blew up that floating restaurant. So we missed that by a week. But then after I'd been in Bien Hoa about a week, two at the most, when they had the raid on Bien Hoa, it sounded like all hell was breaking loose. Just these firing everywhere, it was mainly the Americans and the Army of the Republic of Vietnam [ARVN] firing out, but we didn't know. I didn't know. I was there by myself with no radio. I didn't know what the hell was going on, and suddenly the whole world was exploding. So that was a pretty exciting introduction to the place. But Bien Hoa was a lot safer than many places.

Q: This reminds me. I wanted to pick up something earlier. After language you went to Fort Bragg.

ANDERSON: Fort Bragg.

Q: For how long?

ANDERSON: Six weeks, I think.

Q: So that's fairly intensive.

ANDERSON: Maybe it was a month.

Q: Fairly intensive exposure to probably weapons firing.

ANDERSON: Weapons firing. They sent you out to the jungle, dropped us off, and we had to take care of ourselves for another day. They gave us a chicken to cook, but we had to figure out how to make a fire and so forth. I rang the chicken's neck because I knew how to do that, put it over the fire, and then we snuck off and got some French wine. The military was very impressed with us—wine with our meal. They had to go without, all kinds of things.

Q: The sense of a certain psychological ambience with regard to this assignment.

ANDERSON: Well, it was good.

Q: That you're going to do this military training.

ANDERSON: Well, the military, they were so much a part of Vietnam then. We were building up all that time. It was something over a hundred thousand at that point, but there was constant build up going on and Bien Hoa would see it all the time. But the whole ambience in the province was basically run by the military, the ARVN unit commander running the province. He was a colonel. So just getting used to the life that they were involved in as much as protecting ourselves was important. So we could appreciate what was happening—

Q: I don't get the impression that subsequent groups that went out went through the Fort Bragg routine.

ANDERSON: I don't know if they did or not.

Q: I have a suspicion that your group may have been the one and only.

ANDERSON: They probably heard about that wine we got. They axed the program. We also of course had a small military contention. We needed to be in touch with them.

Q: The American military.

ANDERSON: —security.

Q: So now wait a minute. The province chief is an ARVN colonel.

ANDERSON: Technically he was a civilian.

Q: So even the Vietnamese administrative apparatus was semi-militarized, and so I mean even your boss you said was a retired colonel.

ANDERSON: Was a retired colonel, lieutenant colonel. I believe the deputy provincial chief I did go and see. We talked; I went to see him too. I didn't go to all the provinces' chiefs unless I went with my boss but he was a civilian. He'd come up through the Civil Service, the deputy. So it was mixed but the top guy in most cases was a military guy.

Q: So in one sense we kind of matched their experiences.

ANDERSON: That's what we were doing. Then the district chiefs very often were military, most of the time were military too. The whole administrative structure was military.

Q: Which puts extra strain on their military. I mean, they're not raised to be administrators or sanitation engineers.

ANDERSON: I think they've probably been doing that for some time. I don't think we had anything to do with putting the military folks in there. By the time I got there it was militarized.

Q: Which suggests it was sort of the solution that was being sought. This nation building solution had a high military component to it.

ANDERSON: That's right. We enforced it.

Q: What would've been a typical day if there ever was such a thing?

ANDERSON: Oh we'd have our little staff meeting with two Filipinos and other substantive people in the office. Talk about what we were going to do, what projects needed to be looked at, what new projects we were contemplating, and then just go out and look at them. Traveling around the province, coming back and telling the boss what I'd found. Go home.

Q: What was your reporting channel? Who were you reporting—you were probably doing reports—

ANDERSON: We didn't do many. They didn't ask us to do much, and I guess, maybe the political section had hinted that if we wanted to write up anything we could send it to them, but they didn't encourage that.

Q: So you were really operators not reporters.

ANDERSON: Yes, we didn't have any formal reporting through the, to the, embassy. It was all through AID [U.S. Agency for International Development]. I don't think they even encouraged this. I guess they thought the roving reporters, Lambertson and company, that they were the ones that had the acumen to find out what was going on. And so they were left in charge and didn't let us neophytes do any such thing. One of the most interesting things about that assignment was that the American press and the French press came to see us because they thought they could get a good story on what was really going on because we did have a much better idea certainly than the ambassador of what was happening out in the countryside. So I had a lot of reporters that came to see me. I think almost all of them subsequently became famous. I enjoyed that. So we were—even though it was not our responsibility—we were picking up the political and the security news and didn't hesitate to pass it right on.

Q: Okay.

ANDERSON: That was a habit that continued the next time we came back.

Q: So what we have is the embassy is reporting on Saigon politics. That's the nationwide stuff. Then you have provincial reporters, Lambertson and that group that are reporting on a wider swatch of things. Then your program is supposed to be an implementing program without any reporting responsibility and yet you were very familiar with the atmospherics of the place.

ANDERSON: Absolutely. We passed it on, most provincial reporters would come to see us. So that was one—we had a voice in that way. But it was mainly more due to the press that was trying to find out what was going on.

Q: When the provincial reporters from the embassy came out, what was your sense of their view? What was their Vietnam as opposed to the Vietnam that you were living in?

ANDERSON: Well, they were asking questions more than saying what they thought. I knew we had some exchange with them, but I don't remember them coming but about once in a year. So it was not very common to see them. Bien Hoa was not considered because it was right by Saigon; it was not a choice place for them to go. They wanted to go places that were more contested. Forty-four provinces—I guess it made sense that they didn't come by very often.

Q: I met colleagues who had this kind of provincial responsibility and they claimed that they visited every district or major province.

ANDERSON: Well, they may have.

Q: Or marketplace or something like that. Did you get out that much and in that same way?

ANDERSON: Oh I did. Oh hell, that's all I did was go around everywhere. Except—that we could go to the capital but didn't want to go outside the capital. Tony Lake showed up once, so I remember him, his visit. He was asking a lot of the right questions. I could tell he understood what was going on.

Q: What was his job at the time?

ANDERSON: He was one of the embassy provincial reporters I think. He was in the political section, so I assume that's what he was doing. That's the only one at the time, the only visit I can remember.

Q: So the change in ambassadors or who the ambassador was didn't particularly filter down to what you were doing.

ANDERSON: We knew, but we were supposed to be handing out the pigs and building health stations. We had to report on all that of course but that was not political channels.

Q: One of the things that confuses me, some of the research I've done is specifically your title and then when you were in this job, because I've got it down as an assistant development officer in Saigon.

ANDERSON: Well, we were officially assigned to Saigon and we had a house there that we shared when we went to town, but we were living in the province of Ben Hoa.

Q: I guess that's why the Foreign Service list is for Saigon.

ANDERSON: We were living in both places. I was actually assigned to Bien Hoa.

Q: Did you guys get some time off and R&R [rest and relaxation]?

ANDERSON: Yes.

Q: How did the assignment process go?

ANDERSON: Occasionally we'd meet in Saigon or I'd just show up there and run into each other. But also occasionally we'd get together, the same guys I'd studied Vietnamese with. Then we'd go and visit other provinces. Went up to—with Clay Nettles. He was the other one studying and then went up to Quang Tri to visit Rich Brown and Ray Reamer was up in the highlands. I don't recall going up there to see him. Ledogar was up in—he and Brown were both up at Quang Tri. We'd been there at least a year and it may have been—oh I got switched after one year, so it was that first year, toward the end of it though. We all went up to see Ledogar and Brown.

We got up in the morning and got in the Scout to go out to get on an airplane and we were going to fly over Khe Sanh, which you've probably heard of. So we got to driving along there, and suddenly there were a bunch of people in black pajamas digging up the road in front, all the way across. So Rich Brown got out and said, "Good Morning Brothers, how are you doing?" He said, "Well, we've got to go up here. We'll go around." So we drove out in the field and went around but they were VC [Vietcong] there digging up the road. We got in that plane and we flew over, and I think we were lost. We could see flying under the mountains, and eventually they said we can't get to Khe Sanh. So we're going to have to go back. We can't land at Quang Tri either. So finally they landed at Da Nang. The local USAID people there gave us a Jeep to drive back, to get up through to Quang Tri. We got to the Hải Vân Pass which is between Đà Nẵng and Thừa Thiên-Huế. There was a catholic demonstration going on so it just took us forever to get there to the mountain. So finally we got to the foot of the mountain, and there was one way and it was coming our way. They said, It would be more dangerous for you to face the oncoming traffic, or less dangerous than waiting until after dark and going across this mountain. Why don't you just go on? So we did and gauged the traffic. Didn't look like there was much traffic. It was dark by the time we got to the top and coming back down we had a bullet shot at us, but that happens often. You didn't pay much attention to it. That was the

same night at Quang Tri that they fired into the CIA [Central Intelligence Agency] house. So pretty exciting day.

Q: Were those Catholic demonstrations or Buddhist demonstrations because—

ANDERSON: They were Catholic. It was Da Nang who had been—but Buddhist.

Q: Were there other Catholics collected around Da Nang?

ANDERSON: Yes, there were a lot of them there. There were also the CIA guys everywhere. And they knew a lot so I talked to them. It was very helpful to have those exchanges with them.

Q: What were they doing?

ANDERSON: I didn't know what they were doing. Shouldn't ask. Didn't want to know. Glad I didn't know in retrospect.

Q: But you were saying you were in the, out in the Bien Hoa province for about a year. What happened then in September '65?

ANDERSON: They wanted me to come to Saigon. There was a District Eight program, which was a bunch of young people that had taken over the management of one district, and they were managing it extremely well. It became very popular. It was a poorer district of Saigon. They were about to extend it to two more districts in Saigon. These people, we thought so much of the program, wanted somebody working with it full-time. So I went in to do the same thing but in the city.

Q: This was a Vietnamese group that was doing very well.

ANDERSON: Yes. Yes. Had done extremely well and had gotten a lot of popular support, and so I was just there to help them and then they also assigned me to work with the youth programs in the northern, in the number one— What do they call those things?

Q: You mean I Corps.

ANDERSON: I Corps. Maybe it was more than I Corps. Maybe it was Quang Ninh. Is that I Corps?

Q: I don't have my provincial map in my head right now.

ANDERSON: So I went there to see what those people were doing.

Q: Let's go back to the Saigon thing. Sort of self-generated, the Vietnamese were doing a good job. Who were these Vietnamese? I mean, they're government people or this is a private group? A Catholic group?

ANDERSON: I don't recall them being religious. They were just leaders of the youth movement. They had asked the government to let them take over the province, I mean the district, and they named this District Eight. It was working so well we wanted to support them more and so they got me to assist them.

Q: Make sure they had inputs.

ANDERSON: I had a wonderful time with them. So they had what they wanted.

Q: So that brought you more back into Saigon now.

ANDERSON: So I was living in Saigon. Interestingly when I was back as chargé, I learned Mr.—had been one of the top guys in that project, was sick, and he had a pretty rough life. I helped, working with the interior minister to get him permission to leave to go to California. The circle turned full cycle there. He remembered me. I haven't seen him. He's out in California. But that was very rewarding to be able to help him out after all that time.

Q: You know that's an interesting point, if you will, Foreign Service cycling through places because I came back to Thailand ten years after I left so of course all the young guys drank with now they were on—

ANDERSON: So I was working with all of them but we can get to that later.

Q: Yes. So that's, because that's not very well understood in this thing.

ANDERSON: Subsequently my biggest concern and obviously was in a funny place to cause me concern was that we were militarizing the situation in Vietnam, and we were by bringing in some—military people and threading the government with these advisors—militarizing the conditions—situation.

Q: Well, there's—get over in many cases.

ANDERSON: That was the outcome.

Q: If you were a Vietnamese nationalist and that is a viable actor in this you might have taken umbrage at having had that observation. So there's a line there. Yes, where does the assistance and support become command and control?

ANDERSON: —and also promotes the militarization of—and we can come back to that—

Q: And you're not the only one. As you young officers are meeting each other and having dinner and what not, I assume you're all passing stories about your own experiences and how's it going—

ANDERSON: At the end of the time when we left. It actually was supposed to have been eighteen months, but we stayed a little longer. Those other guys that I was with mainly, we went to see Gene Rostow to tell him what the concern about the war those working in the field generally felt—

Q: Well, let's get into that. How did that come about? Did you young officers seek him out?

ANDERSON: Yes. Ray Reamer somehow had a connection with probably one of his assistants. I think it was Bob Gray as a matter of fact. He arranged for us to go and call on him. He'd written a paper. I stayed an extra six months so—but that was a growing feeling—

Q: Wonder what happened to that paper.

ANDERSON: I don't know. I think Ray Reamer gave me a copy of it, and it's somewhere in this apartment.

Q: And probably—going into Saigon then—

ANDERSON: Yes, but the last six months I did something else. It was when they were putting together Oko.

Q: Oko was the predecessor to courts.

ANDERSON: Started in '66.

Q: Maybe it was.

ANDERSON: Well, Ambassador Porter was running that and Frank Wisner and Paul Hair were the deputies, his protégés that were in charge of that little operation. So I was one of the—enjoyed that. They were called field reporters. I was working with Paul Hair, and I did that for at least six months. I thought it was longer than that. It may have been just six months, and we were supposed to go out and evaluate the revolutionary development program, which had been started I think about six months before that. So I went all over the country. I went, this is when I went back to Bien Hoa and went to that—wasn't supposed to go. They gave me a powder blue Falcon car guy riding around. I got shot.

Q: —the revolutionary—

ANDERSON: —stayed there, didn't they.

Q: Yes. Yes.

ANDERSON: —our development cadre were supposed to fan out all over the country—Paul there, and I think there were two of us. Wait a minute—go and introduce myself to these cadres and say—embassy and see how things are going, talk to them and that was a lot of fun. Very interesting.

Q: I mean here you are in the diplomatic service sleeping on this hard floor—

ANDERSON: Well, I was used to that.

Q: Did you bend the corner of the card the right way, I mean.

ANDERSON: No, I just—peasant background enjoyed the common folks and this was very exciting. In contrast, when those guys came to Kathmandu, the last thing in the world I wanted to do was go to Vietnam, but I had a wonderful time.

Q: Of course your language capabilities allowed you a great deal more freedom.

ANDERSON: Absolutely, I couldn't have done that without the language. Just don't think of showing up because these cadres didn't speak any English at all.

Q: I have here in my notes that DeGaulle visited Saigon about the time that you were there in '66. Do you recall that?

ANDERSON: I don't even recall it.

Q: I mean as the Americans are building up in '65, '66 you're seeing all this military effort pour in. I mean one of the reasons for Orca [task force] as I understand it was military, our military had vast resources of tin and cement and what not. They were bringing it in and it was kind of overwhelming the aid—

ANDERSON: —effort.

Q: —as we build facilities for ourselves and the object was to try to combine this flow of resources and the ability to monitor the courts.

ANDERSON: And then after that—

Q: You have this broader responsibility. Did you come back to Washington and discuss it with anybody? Did you have any Washington consultations?

ANDERSON: I think I did at one point probably after the eighteen months before I did the revolutionary—

Q: Yes you probably would've had a mandatory R&R sort of thing.

ANDERSON: So I think I came back to Washington, but I don't recall what happened on that trip. Probably talked to somebody on the desk, the Vietnam working group. So I don't remember anything from it because orders of course from Rehnquist and—Ambassador Porter. I was fascinated with that because I thought the whole idea was very interesting. It was a Vietnamese initiative, and they were trying to combine the security with the effort to positively attract the people to the government. So I liked what they were doing.

Q: Did you have any sense where the Vietnamese initiative came from? I mean who on their political side—

ANDERSON: I don't know. But I think it was a Vietnamese idea, but of course you can't even be sure of that. It may have come from John Paul Vann.

Q: I read the book.

ANDERSON: Because I was not in Saigon when that was happening. I was still out in the provinces. I didn't know what was going on politically.

Q: Well, here you are. You're a new Foreign Service officer [FSO]. This is basically your second tour. You've been overseas the whole time. You come to Saigon August '64 and—

ANDERSON: No, August '65.

Q: August '65, okay. Then do the revolutionary development program in '66. Then you leave the Vietnamese, leave Saigon anyway, for your first assignment back to Washington.

ANDERSON: I had to bargain on that one. Well, I wanted to study Chinese at that time. They finally said okay you come to the Vietnam working group for one year, then you can study Chinese. That was Mr. Hopkins.

Q: Yes. He was the—

ANDERSON: —assistant secretary.

Q: How did you end up negotiating with him?

ANDERSON: Well, I wasn't negotiating with him directly, but I told him what I wanted to do, study Chinese and they came back eventually and said, If you'll come. I was supposed to be his special assistant actually in January of '67. I mean one of those office

boys. But then they asked me to stay on. So he was aware of me and then I don't know. I guess it was the Vietnam working group, with Reid Matthews or Bob Miller one said, Okay, you're going to come here and then study Chinese. Somehow they worked it out and I got my orders.

Q: Well, in one sense I hear that people coming out of Saigon can't exactly write their own ticket but they're well thought of.

ANDERSON: Well, since I was supposed to be—

Q: Staff assistant.

ANDERSON: —staff assistant—

Q: That's quite a bit of, that's a considerable compliment right there.

ANDERSON: Must've thought I was doing okay so it came out okay.

Q: Now what was the Vietnam working group? Did you come back in about June of '67? Yes, the Vietnam working group in the department. Now that's not Vietnam desk, is it?

ANDERSON: —Vietnam desk but they called it that.

Q: That's what it was called.

ANDERSON: Yes.

Q: Because there were so many people on it or the issue was so big. I mean—

ANDERSON: I guess it was because they wanted to make it sound jazzy. It was bigger than the normal desk, that's for sure. But I think it was because it was special attention that they wanted to accord it.

Q: Administratively what did it look like? How many people were there? How was it organized?

ANDERSON: It wasn't that big. Ambassador Miller was in charge and then Reid Matthews was the political side. I worked for him. Jim Rosenthal was there, and there was an economic guy whose name I cannot remember at the moment. And so maybe a couple more people. I can't remember who they would've been, but there weren't that many. It wasn't that big. So it was obviously just to make it sound jazzier like we were in a war cabinet in the State Department.

Q: Well, now here's the State Department. About this time I'm under the impression 10 percent of the Foreign Service is assigned to Vietnam one way or the other. You have this

office. It's obviously interacting with the rest of the government in an interagency way. Do you get to go to those meetings or is that—

ANDERSON: No that's Ambassador Miller or Reid Matthews or Chuck—

Q: Kirkman? No, no. Not Chuck.

ANDERSON: No, no, no he's much my junior. No, but I did have a wonderful job there, which was that Mr. Habib decided that I was to read the *Congressional Record* every morning before eight o'clock, and then I would come and brief him on what everybody had said about Vietnam the day before. I could make a recommendation, forget it, call them up and cuss them out, call them and thank them, have the president call them. So every morning I went up to see Habib. I just loved that. That was one—he grew up and was just a great guy.

Q: This is interesting because here's the State Department being very concerned about the legislative branch of the government and watching it—

ANDERSON: Yes—

Q: —and responding to it.

ANDERSON: Can you imagine that now?

Q: I can't imagine that. I mean—I remember doing press guidance for the noon press briefing sort of thing but what you're talking about is much more interesting.

ANDERSON: I started doing that and I think there were about twenty things a day and I made the mistake of saying, "Well, send them a letter," and he'd say, "Well, write it." Then after a month or two, I don't remember exactly when, they set up a whole office. And Steve Ledogar and Ray Reamer and lots of other people down there, they were doing all these things that I would suggest to Habib every day. Eventually they—

Q: Your exposure to Habib exposes you to a perception of the role of the legislative branch.

ANDERSON: And the role of a very active assistant secretary. Well, he and Ambassador Bob Miller, of course were very different, very quiet, but between the two I could, the way they were, their goals were very similar. I admired both of them, the way they operated. That was very helpful to see how he operated. I guess if I had—been doing the same thing. But this was a fun and terrible way to have to learn—but that was all I did for a long time. Then Tet, of course, came while I was there.

Q: Yes, January 31, '68.

ANDERSON: That was a big event. Could've been that that's when I started doing that, but I can't remember what I did before that. There's not much of anything. They took—put into office, and I didn't do that after a while I guess.

Q: Hayward Eisham?

ANDERSON: Eisham, yes. He was the director. But I can't remember much either. He was flowery. Those too—first learned a lot from them. That was really my first exposure to the Foreign Service.

Q: That's right because you're coming in from the field. This is the first home posting.

ANDERSON: So I was very lucky to get that bunch of people to work for, very important.

Q: One of your first duties is this legislative—how important the legislative branch is to the whole process. You're also seeing people thinking about an end game that must've been early 1968. That's when the wise men meet with Johnson and then—

ANDERSON: It's just a really nice time. Then of course we had the— Research is a little confusing there because mine was a year in Washington a year in the field.

Q: So you had the same experience. Who was in Chinese with you then?

ANDERSON: Charles Freeman and Jan Barriss, Joy Zimmerman and Murray— Was it one more, yes, Bill Rope.

Q: That's a rather distinguished group.

ANDERSON: Yep.

Q: Gee, was Chaz any good at it?

ANDERSON: Yes, he was way ahead of us.

Q: There are stories that all of us have followed.

ANDERSON: I had that good competition for two years.

Q: So that works out. A year in Washington at FSI. By this time FSI is well organized and is funded and on the ground.

ANDERSON: —teachers.

Q: And it's there in Roslyn. Wasn't that the—

ANDERSON: Yes, That's— Did you go to Ta-Jung?

Q: No. By then they'd moved it to Taipei.

ANDERSON: I liked it down in Ta-Jung.

Q: Well, what I'd always heard was you had these fabulous Mandarin classes and good teachers, and then you walk outside the door and nobody spoke Mandarin. They all spoke Taiwanese.

ANDERSON: That's not true. I think there were a lot of young ones that did. So—

Q: But that again for those who are trying to understand what the Foreign Service is about there is this intense language training. Two years for Chinese, Russian, Japanese.

ANDERSON: Korean.

Q: And we're not talking an hour a day sort of thing. That is your job.

ANDERSON: It works.

Q: The entire workday.

ANDERSON: That's why it works.

Q: So when did you go out to Taiwan next?

ANDERSON: Summer of '69.

Q: Summer of '69. Things are still going on in Vietnam, but you're not paying that much personal attention anymore.

ANDERSON: Yes, I still paid attention to it because I was fascinated—

Q: Sixty-eight was the invasion of Cambodia.

ANDERSON: I was pretty well, I kept up close track with what was going on. Then we had a—went to the embassy. I had wanted to go to Hong Kong, but they eliminated the spot so I went to Taipei instead—huge disappointment. I wanted to go to Peking, Beijing.

Q: Because when you sign up for language training, there's a guaranteed assignment at the other end. I mean they don't just give you language training. It's in preparation for a known assignment so you're known assignment that you're—

ANDERSON: I never got anything in writing but I knew just informally that I was slated to go to Hong Kong and then they chopped it. I went to Taipei instead. The reason I wanted to go to Hong Kong is I wanted to go to Beijing and I didn't—

Q: What made you think in '68, '69 there'd even be any possibility?

ANDERSON: —some people. But if I went to Hong Kong I knew at some time down the road we'd come to our senses, and I didn't, Kuomintang was not one of my favorite organizations. So I didn't want to go and have to talk to those—

Q: Well, let's get you through language training. You go out to Ta-Jung for training there. What would you say is the difference between Washington and Ta-Jung? I mean, just that they step it up or that there are other things, you're much more in the environment.

ANDERSON: It's you're in the environment. Everybody, I mean you run into lots of people that speak Chinese. All the signs and everything in Chinese. So you learn about three times as fast I think, certainly twice as fast, and you just feel like you're in a living environment rather than a false environment at FSI.

Q: Did you guys have a chance to do any traveling around the island as a function of the language school?

ANDERSON: I don't remember the school doing it, but I certainly did travel all over the place.

Q: Ah, personally on the weekends or did you travel during the week?

ANDERSON: Weekend and it's so small. I went down to Kaohsiung several times in the end. I don't remember the school having any plans. I think they did later, but I don't think they did then.

Q: The ten projects to build, of which one was to build the freeway down to Kaohsiung. That wasn't in place yet?

ANDERSON: No. The highway, even the highway to Taipei, was not very good. Two-lane.

Q: So it's still a fairly underdeveloped infrastructure in those terms.

ANDERSON: They had a train, a Japanese train. But the road was like, it was just a two-lane, narrow road.

Q: When you were in language training, was Chaz there the whole time?

ANDERSON: Um hmm. Running circles around us.

Q: I think Terry Ogden was there at that time.

ANDERSON: Yes. He was in my class. I forgot about him.

Q: Yes.

ANDERSON: I liked him. We all actually got along well. There was underlying tension, but we still got along ostensibly quite well. We knew a lot of Chinese too.

Q: Ultimately each group or each person would find that thing that he was interested in that he could do and poke around in whether it's stamp collecting or whatever. Everybody didn't march off to the same market.

ANDERSON: We were all doing different things. Joy was, I think she was involved in some kind of theater and Murray was becoming a Chinese scholar. Jerry was learning his—and I think that's when he took up with his bride from Hong Kong. So he must've been going over there. Freeman was just studying hard. We were close, we were close enough, but we certainly didn't run around like a herd of ducks.

Q: What were the living arrangements?

ANDERSON: We all found our own places.

Q: On the market.

ANDERSON: Um hmm. Anyway, there wasn't much problem finding a cheap house.

Q: Isn't there also an air force base around there?

ANDERSON: Um hmm.

Q: U.S. military presence.

ANDERSON: Yes, what's the name of that place? It was there and we ran into those people a little bit. I once, I knew an, I knew a young air force guy there. We had one wild night. It was Murray and Joy and me and I knew some Taiwanese so they invited us to dinner at a place. We got there. We noticed that they would come out and look at these women, take them back for entertainment while they had dinner. So Joy was quite upset at this arrangement. She said she wanted to be chosen. So I talked to the management there and they brought out a young man for her. So I think the Taiwan banker, he wanted to dance, but he wanted to dance with the air force guy. Finally he got angry and threw him completely through a shoji wall. So we had a little bit of entertainment while we were there too. I guess I knew a lot of Taiwanese. They were kind of entertaining and wild.

Q: It's interesting because there are changes in the wind as you're in the language program. The Seventh Fleet that patrols Taiwan ends in December '69. So when do you start then at the American embassy to the Republic of China?

ANDERSON: Well, summer of '70.

Q: So actually you were in language training when Chiang Ching-kuo did his trip to the U.S.

ANDERSON: Yes. I am aware of—I think we got posted about that stuff.

Q: That's right because the embassy's in Taipei. The language school is off field so it's not being kept in the loop.

ANDERSON: We weren't that connected but we were, somehow we got newspapers or something. Certainly we knew what was going on.

Q: Now you walked into this embassy. Who is the ambassador and how is it organized?

ANDERSON: Walter McConaughy. You don't remember him? He's an old style man. And Bill Gleysteen, an absolutely wonderful person, DCM Bill Thomas, political counselor Bert Levin, his deputy and I were in the political section. I was supposed to keep track of the Kuomintang that I loved so much and the opposition parties. I was doing both. Then there was another guy in charge of relations with the Taiwanese community. So they studied Taiwanese.

Q: Who was that?

ANDERSON: Somebody who was very good—Goldsmith, what was his name?

Q: Sid.

ANDERSON: Sid. He came in and took that job.

Q: Actually we could probably look it up. I also see that Bill Morell was there in the econ section.

ANDERSON: He was head of econ.

Q: Because he was head of USIA when I was there.

ANDERSON: In Taipei?

Q: Yes.

ANDERSON: That would've been afterwards. I stayed on—

Q: Fifteen—

ANDERSON: Well, he took up with one of my girlfriends.

Q: Ah ha.

ANDERSON: Emily. Beautiful young lady.

Q: They're in Oregon now.

ANDERSON: What's he doing?

Q: Oh he retired. I don't know if he's doing much of anything.

ANDERSON: Well, they were good friends.

Q: I obviously haven't talked to him in a while.

ANDERSON: She spoke beautiful Chinese. They were from the mainland.

Q: She should. Her father was in the navy. But this was the time I believe that things got somewhat politically interesting in Taipei or in Taiwan because I was told, one of the USIA [United States Information Agency] guys told me that the USIS [United States Information Service] facility in T'ainan was hit by a bomb in the '70-'71 period. How does that get reported and analyzed?

ANDERSON: I remember it happening, but I read about it in the newspaper. The embassy was certainly reporting on it but I don't remember much beyond that.

Q: Well, let's get down to your specific responsibilities. You said you were assigned to Kuomintang.

ANDERSON: And the opposition.

Q: And the opposition. How does one get assigned to the Kuomintang?

ANDERSON: I was supposed to go and talk to Kuomintang strategists and ask them what their plans were fifty years from now. No, that's—I think he was the person that I talked with that made the most sense. So I'd just go and ask him what was going on.

Q: What was, you were interviewing him in his party position.

ANDERSON: Party, yes, party. And I was the party guy. I was not the government guy. I guess I talked to him when there wasn't anybody else. He was very good and very helpful.

Q: This was an acknowledgement that the Kuomintang is a Marxist-Leninist political party. I mean the party had a responsibility quite different from political parties as we know it.

ANDERSON: It's like going to see Karl Rove and saying, same thing.

Q: Murray tells at this time that he would interview people who'd been assigned to, that held offices in these provinces that had been overrun at the moment and that it had always been an interesting thing to talk to the governor of Fucheng or the governor of Guangdong.

ANDERSON: I tried not to talk about that. I just didn't want to think about that. But wait a minute. I also talked to the Foreign Ministry all the time too. So I must've been in the government as well. Yes, I spent a lot of time with the government, Foreign Ministry, Fred—and all of his Don Huang and the rest of it. Then in addition I was supposed to get to know those dissidents, and I got to know them and I got to be friends. One of them—around, but there was also another guy who ended up being pretty high in the party, a guy from Chin Ju [?].

Q: Oh—

ANDERSON: You probably know him. He got to be pretty prominent—was it— No. And the one named Jong. I've got them in my phonebook, phone registry. They—was the only one that got up pretty high except that—guy. He got up to be very prominent in the party, maybe even the head of it. They didn't have a party when I was there.

Q: No, they wouldn't until the late 1980s.

ANDERSON: Later.

Q: In fact that was part of the nomenclature. They were the Don Huang outside the party.

ANDERSON: Anyway I knew those people and liked them and enjoyed being with them. They were very friendly, didn't seem to cause any problems.

Q: Well, the Kuomintang dominated the political structure, and they didn't allow the formation of the competing political entities. So how did these opposition politicians operate and how did they gain notoriety? How did they come to your attention? Why do we know that they are the opposition?

ANDERSON: I don't know. But how did I meet them? Somebody must've told me that they were opposition.

Q: Well, there are elections, and they're running for office as separate candidates.

ANDERSON: Don was of course, but I don't think those other guys were.

Q: They might not have been. They might have been from the pundit side of the house.

ANDERSON: They were just above students. They were pretty young then, maybe twenty-five, mid-twenties.

Q: Wasn't this the time, '71, '72 when Punmingmen [?] left.

ANDERSON: Yes.

Q: And then you had, I don't want to say radicalization but you had the Tiaoyutai incident, which actually allowed Chinese nationalism to come forth because this was an appropriate Chinese objective to not let the Japanese have Tiaoyutai so the Kuomintang couldn't exactly stop people from demonstrating. There were student demonstrations and political rumblings all around that incident that then led into some other causes and interests, Pungmunmin [?] comes out of this and gets arrested. Did you ever run into Pung? [Note: A chain of uninhabited islands held by Japan but disputed by both the PRC and ROC as part of China. Administered by the United States from 1945–1972. Reverted to Japan in 1972 as part of the reversion of Okinawa.]

ANDERSON: No. No, I didn't know him. Didn't meet him. I knew who he was. The other guy was the writer that was sent to Longkou. What was his name?

Q: Chun wei?

ANDERSON: Chun something or another.

Q: Yes.

ANDERSON: I never met him either, but he had gotten sent over there. So I don't know how I met those people. I guess somebody must've told me who they were—meeting the others.

Q: The point being at that time, the Kuomintang was running a fairly tight ship.

ANDERSON: Oh yes. Some of them would tell me that they had to be very careful of being accused of having—all the way. They were very acutely aware of the danger. But they still were willing to see me. No, I didn't see them in offices. I would just see them in cafes and places like that.

Q: I just get a kick out of Kong because when we dealt with them ten to fifteen years later, when we'd go out to dinner with them, they'd always take us to a Japanese restaurant. When we went out with the Kuomintang guys, we would always go to a Chinese restaurant. I think they deliberately did that. So what, again you're back in the field. This is now your fourth tour, and you're reporting on the environment in the Republic of China. How do you see that environment?

ANDERSON: Very repressive, distasteful.

Q: How did that come out to you? I mean—

ANDERSON: It was an offense to me that they had to worry about being accused of having, of thinking problems. That strikes you pretty quickly. Then the way they operated was and all that fantasy about retaking the mainland that they talked about all the time was just so absurd, and I was just not fond of those folks at all. So I didn't want to go to work there. The biggest event was Kissinger's trip to China.

Q: Yes.

ANDERSON: Now that was much more interesting than working on domestic politics.

Q: That must've had a little ripple in Taipei.

ANDERSON: Well, the ambassador invited the political section into his office and DCM Gleysteen, no hint what it was going to be about. I don't know to this day whether he knew or not. I thought it was going to be something about Vietnam. I knew the president was going to speak. So we came in there to listen to him, quite shocked. I never heard, we didn't know what would happen other than certainly the Taiwanese would climb over the mountains and set us on fire, the walls. It was pretty tense for a few days, and I figured out they weren't going to do anything too drastic.

Q: Well, now let's get into—because I don't think a lot of researchers understand that there was a concern at the time that the Taiwanese would react to this thing. Everybody assumes oh, CC-Chiang Ching-kuo, Chiang Kai Shek would be displeased and what not but why would there—

ANDERSON: Popular concern so it was not—called them all there. It was just popular—

Q: There was a concern on the embassy's part that this would impact on its security situation.

ANDERSON: Yes, very much so.

Q: The embassy had been sacked four or five years earlier, '57, no maybe earlier than that. The embassy had been attacked once by a popular mob.

ANDERSON: Well, it was the popular mobs because it could've been sent by Chiang Kai Shek, I think he was still alive. Yes, he was still alive. So we were just, we were quite concerned about that and didn't know what would happen. So for two or three days we were just waiting to see what would happen. Then soon the government had told them not to do anything. But we didn't have any demonstrations and nobody, I mean the friends, were not quite surprised, but they were not angry directly at us. Didn't show it.

Q: Now later on would you hear about how Chiang Kai Shek was informed because he was tipped off before the public announcement?

ANDERSON: Yes, he had been tipped off.

Q: Sort of a courtesy that was extended to him.

ANDERSON: Well, it may be the ambassador had known and went and told him. He didn't tell us what the president was going to talk about so I didn't know what he knew. I mean stupidly never did ask Bill Gleysteen. He would've told me. So I don't know whether they did it in Washington. I can't imagine they would not tell—at least a few minutes, could prepare for a possible onslaught. [Note: DCM Gleysteen in his oral history says Chiang Kai Shek did not receive advance notice and that heads up to the embassy was so close to the public announcement as to be pro forma. He adds this outraged Ambassador McConaughy who was completely out of the loop.]

Q: But there are things in the wind. In October of '70 the Canadians shifted recognition to Beijing. You had Ping-Pong diplomacy in the spring of '71. Yes, '71.

ANDERSON: We had the duel representation too. I worked a lot on that, spent a lot of time working on that.

Q: How did that unfold?

ANDERSON: Well, they weren't happy about that at all, but they finally accepted it.

Q: Well, give us a little more background as to what's at stake at the, you're talking about the UN [United Nations].

ANDERSON: Yes, the UN.

Q: Recognition issue.

ANDERSON: Well, the seat, we were trying to preserve the seat and have China come in too. When it didn't work, there were people who thought that Kissinger had been

undermining the process. I heard a lot about that. He knew what was going on so didn't really put as much effort into trying to save the seat as the regular government did. So that suspicion was mainly toward Kissinger rather than, that made a distinction between the rest of the government and us.

Q: Well, there's an interesting issue that comes up in this regard because you have in time the Germans decide to cut a deal. In time the Koreans decide to cut a deal so that they're both in the UN. But there's no such deal coming out of the China circumstance. It was an either; it was always played as an either or.

ANDERSON: Well, by the Chinese in Taiwan they eventually accepted although they didn't like it. So they accepted it.

Q: Yes, but they didn't cut a deal, which would allow the two of them to be in there. I mean, there's the political acceptance. Basically they fought the good fight and lost.

ANDERSON: And they had, they had the security treaty with us. The embassy's still there. We haven't said anything about moving the embassy. Nothing about the security treaty so I think they felt they still had the United States support despite that state.

Q: Now at that time the Presbyterian Church in Taiwan puts out a, Presbyterians don't do encyclicals, but put out a letter to the government—

ANDERSON: Saying what?

Q: Saying you've lost the Americans. We've been kicked out of the UN. You really ought to reconsider your policy. It was very critical.

ANDERSON: Towards mainland?

Q: No, toward Cante [?], very critical of Cante.

ANDERSON: Well, that was the Presbyterian Church of Taiwan. Well, I'm afraid I'm ignorant of that.

Q: That's okay. That was my research topic for my doctorate.

ANDERSON: It's a very interesting one.

Q: Not many people know that. Because actually Nixon announces that he's going to China before the actual trip. The actual trip is February-ish. Is that the way it unfolded?

ANDERSON: Yes, they announced it when, right before the UN, right? Yes. Maybe in October. Then Nixon went in February. So, the announcement made people run on the

dual recognition, and that's why they were accusing Kissinger of having deliberately done that.

Q: Now once the deed is done, Nixon goes to China. Is there a difference in the atmospherics that you're picking up from your contacts with the Taiwanese and the Kuomintang, your reporting.

ANDERSON: They were asking, all asking about what's going to follow and what's going to happen to the relationship and we were able to reassure them at that point. We didn't intend to move since the security treaty was in place. So I think we were trying to be reassuring at least for the time being. I don't remember—

Q: Do you think the Taiwanese found that reassuring?

ANDERSON: Well, slightly. I think they must have known inevitably eventually something would be happening. But—immediate so they could try to live with it. It's just that I don't know what we told them in the first place. It's hard to know what we gave them assurances on. I assume we probably did.

Q: But I would assume that reporting out of the political section picked up with this blip.

ANDERSON: Well, they were certainly quite clear publicly they were worried about it, what it might mean down the road and what would happen to Japan. Of course Japan moved very quickly after that. I was reporting on that, the Japanese guy who was a good friend was telling me all about that. That's sort of worried the Kuomintang, the focus sort of shifted to Japan and its move because that presaged the U.S. doing so at some point. Then they were particularly angry at the Japanese. I'm hearing a lot more anger, especially about the Japanese.

Q: On the part of the Canteen and the formal government.

ANDERSON: Just anybody.

Q: The Taiwanese too.

ANDERSON: Well, I can't really, I guess it was probably the government party I was hearing, felt betrayed. I think it extended more broadly than just the government because they moved so rapidly, shifting the relationship and it was '74.

Q: No, they moved in '72.

ANDERSON: Seventy-three, '72.

Q: Seventy-two. And what was interesting about that is that's the whole Tiaoyutai timeframe also and the reversion of Okinawa, which is what brings the Tiaoyutai issue to

the fore because Tiaoyutai is attached to Japan's claim to Okinawa so the '72 Okinawa reversion. Then you have the Tiaoyutai issue come up. That comes up at the same time the vote in the UN as to which government represents China. So Japan is an actor in all these moves.

ANDERSON: Well, I certainly heard more anti-Japanese criticisms of Japan than I did the U.S., but we didn't go as far. So that could explain it. Although the Japanese being an easier target for them, emotionally have been more involved with the Japanese.

Q: Well, certainly because Japan had a major economic interest in Taiwan. I mean even at the time that we were there. Years later the Japanese had an enormous economic role.

ANDERSON: Yes, at that point far more than we did.

Q: Yes. But this is the reversion of Okinawa in May of '72 and CCK [Chiang Ching Kuo] becomes premier in May of '72, so shortly thereafter. I'm sure the political section is vibrating to that news because—

ANDERSON: Well, we certainly were because the Tiaoyutai thing was reported on a lot and then the CCK as well because a lot of folks had a lot of suspicions about him and I heard from the Taiwanese a lot of suspicion about him too.

Q: In what manner?

ANDERSON: His links to Russia, Russian wife. They didn't know what to expect from him. I think they probably were eventually surprised that he proved to be more willing to let democracy develop than they anticipated. I think the expectation is he would be more authoritarian. But that was big news. Everybody got excited.

Q: Is there anything else that you think in terms of how you see the environment now after two years on Taiwan? You've got the language. You've been doing this reporting. These singular events have occurred. Has Taiwan changed in your mind?

ANDERSON: I don't think so because I really went there expecting that it was going to, that we would finally recognize Peking, somehow get out of the entanglements we had with Taiwan. There was just, it was slowly developing. I guess the thing that interested me most was Chiang Ching Kuo coming and turning out, trying to liberalize the place a little bit. That was the most important event even though it hadn't really started at the time I left.

Q: So you probably shared the perception that he was a bit of an unknown or he had this security background to him that would come forward.

ANDERSON: And the lack of knowledge really of him. I think we didn't have anything to do with it. But on the broader question of U.S. relations with Taiwan, the trip was

certainly astonishing, terrific, but that movement had to come at some point so, didn't, not totally shocked by it.

Q: With your language and whatnot and ability to move through that society, how would you rate the embassy's connections and ability to report on political and economic events? Did the embassy seem pretty plugged in to what was going on?

ANDERSON: I think so. I mean Bill Gleysteen was absolutely first class, and he had contacts at senior levels, and the ambassador didn't have much to do with so I don't know what he—he had some old friends that I'm sure he was talking with. I don't remember him as much as the beautiful thing that Bill Gleysteen wrote, which showed that the—was well plugged in. I think the political section was pretty well plugged in.

Q: What was it like working for Gleysteen?

ANDERSON: It was wonderful. I wasn't working directly for him. He was a DCM and had political counselor and Burt Levin in between. But he's my real role model. He was cerebral and wanted to listen to what other people were saying and understand it and analytically very sound, and he was wonderful with people. Again they loved that he paid a lot of attention to everybody, not just the senior advisors, like Harry Barnes had. So those were my early role models, those two.

Q: They were pretty good role models.

ANDERSON: I loved that Bill's writing was so good.

Q: What was his writing that particularly struck you at the moment?

ANDERSON: Well, his meetings with people. He must've been writing other things too. I certainly was well aware of how well he wrote. So I had a lot to learn.

Q: But you're the lit major. You should already have this skill.

ANDERSON: Not English. Ole Miss, not a year of English.

Q: In 1973 Vietnam pulled you back.

ANDERSON: Yes, I went back there in February.

Q: There's the cease-fire agreement formally signed on January 27, 1973 and this election or what is it that these cease-fire observers such as yourself are supposed to do?

ANDERSON: Everything. I already had my assignment to Tokyo, which is what I wanted. So I had that in my back pocket, and we were supposed to report on the military situation. I was in Can Tho covering three provinces—the military situation, the security

situation, the political situation, the governmental, governing, governance, social unrest, psychological, and the economy. Did I leave anything out? Everything. So free hand. I think you know the reports were supposed to go straight to Washington. That was a condition of that we negotiated with Kissinger that they would go straight to Washington so they wouldn't be censored by the ambassador.

Q: Who set that up?

ANDERSON: Well, somehow it was done in the name of the forty FSOs who were being sent back. So I don't know who they were. I wasn't there. But I imagine people like Wisner and whoever, who else would it have been, Holbrooke around there.

Q: Could be—wasn't that, there were a number of—

ANDERSON: Well, anyway there were some people back in Washington that negotiated that and it made a great deal of sense.

Q: Because this was supposed to be the special reporting effort to—

ANDERSON: And it wanted the truth instead of a filter through the ambassador. Everybody knew that he couldn't get anything out of that ambassador. [Note: Ellsworth Bunker to May 1973. Graham Martin from June 1973.] That's one of the reasons why the press liked us so much because we would tell them things. We would tell them what we were seeing. That was not going back to Washington. Because you remember the dichotomy between what the press was saying until they saw it themselves. We corroborated. So we wanted to make, whoever our representative of the forty made sure that was a condition and that was wise.

Q: How did that work out if you were in the provinces out there?

ANDERSON: It was going to go straight from the consul generals. They had four consul generals, Frank Wisner was my consul general. [Note: Wisner was deputy consul general Can Tho, Terry McNamara was consul general.]

Q: Reporting that you were doing.

ANDERSON: That was some of the best reporting I did because I was talking to lots of people, and I think one of the best things I did was to report on who had the power in the province. It was Madame Thieu's home province. President Thieu was very closely tied in. The province chief was a young lieutenant colonel, I think, very bright, very good. The deputy was good. But the corruption was apparent. The person who seemed to be controlling the province was the police chief. I wrote a major airgram describing how the system was working and foreshadowed what—I got there first, the ARVN was on the offensive, and the provinces were working. I said, "My God. This thing could actually work." But the thing that became clear over just those five or six months I was there was

that the corruption was growing and that the Thieus themselves were very much involved in it. It was that connection—and that the province, the province chief and so forth, were sort of the front for this corrupt situation that was developing in the background. That forecast real problems if they didn't get that under control.

Q: Because of course that was the problem that prevents the sort of nation building effort and the hearts and minds effort to begin with. That's where we were under Diem.

ANDERSON: That totally undermines. You don't have faith in the government because you know the system is corrupted and you don't have recourse.

Q: Sort of the way we thought about promotions.

ANDERSON: Don't have it. Don't have the access to authority, I mean the provincial government is not really running everything. So it's not as stout as it looked like it was when I first got there.

Q: So basically the effort of the provincial reporters, the cease fire observers, was to give an impression of the South Vietnamese government's ability to last.

ANDERSON: And the competition with the North Vietnamese or Viet Cong or whatever you happen to have around. The psychological atmosphere of people. But it was pretty positive when I first got there. Of course they were, they had a peace agreement such as it was. They had, we waved goodbye to the Americans and things didn't change very much and those provinces the ARVN was on the offensive. So it looked like things were much stouter than they really were. But it had this corrupt underbelly that eventually was the reason the military, the South Vietnamese weren't prepared really to fight very hard.

Q: You came to this observation over time as you traveled around, talked to people.

ANDERSON: Just those few months, just talking to a lot of people.

Q: What kind of resources did you have available to you to perform this job?

ANDERSON: I had a scout.

Q: Again, the same scout you had six years earlier.

ANDERSON: The one that blew—talcum out. I didn't have anything.

Q: So it was just you, with your language skill?

ANDERSON: No, two of us, old friends. What's his name? I'll think of it in a minute. Anyway, the two of us, for some reason because Ninh Thuan [?] was important. They sent two of us there. I was more energetic. He had his wife come and I think he was

spending time with his wife, something like that. I was out drinking with— So we were supposed to report on everything. We didn't have any, we had a—we even had a secretary. I don't think we had anybody. Typed up our reports ourselves and sent them to the consul general and—

Q: Were you in radio communication or—

ANDERSON: We had a radio, surely. Yes, we must've had a radio. Uh huh. It was very exciting. It was a very enjoyable time because we had free range to do whatever we wanted to. Nobody told us except for a general sense what they wanted us to report on. Most provinces were, Dinh Thuan itself was divided. So we had a struggle, a political struggle going on. The military was over in—pushing back the North Vietnamese. So we had a little bit of everything.

Q: What do you mean the province was divided?

ANDERSON: I mean there were areas that were contested, weren't supposed to go. Several—but it looked like the government was functioning. It was doing the things that we wanted, we had hoped they would do, and along the lines of the nation-building efforts earlier, it looked like they knew how to run a government. So I was pretty hopeful there at first, started hearing more and more about the corruption and that's what led me to believe it was a very weakness there that in part—the addition of the U.S. Congress made it so vulnerable.

Q: How's, give me that argument again.

ANDERSON: The corruption meant that people were well aware of it, and they knew the leadership was soaking up, taking money, and not leading more idealistically for good reasons. That undermined morale throughout the system. So the military was less vigorous in their support of the government. Then when the U.S. cut them off, then they didn't have much will to fight. The corruption was a big part of it. They didn't fight for a corrupt government. It didn't make much sense. So if you've got any researchers that can tell, can track down my airgram.

Q: Okay. I'm sure in some dusty file somewhere, probably now in the National Archives. Most of that stuff has been turned over.

ANDERSON: Well, I was very surprised in '75 how quickly the place fell down, what I had seen there and in fact predicted as part of the political—of such that it was vulnerable.

Q: You were predicting that in your reports that there was this weakness.

ANDERSON: Yes, I didn't say the place is going to collapse as we leave, but this was a major weakness in the way the system was functioning. —was apparent the effective governing structure and military operations.

Q: Now you were saying earlier you had cut a deal with Personnel to get Tokyo.

ANDERSON: No, I just asked for it. They needed me.

Q: This is a little unusual, isn't it. There's a China club and a Japan club and rarely do they mix.

ANDERSON: China watcher. That's the job I had—China watcher in Tokyo.

Q: Ah, the China watcher job in Tokyo.

ANDERSON: Bill Gleysteen had the job too and David G. Brown had, I replaced him. So that, I mean, there was a lot of continuity.

Q: There was actually an intellectual connection between China watchers.

ANDERSON: Oh yes, it was obvious it made sense.

Q: Between the jobs because there is that theory out there about the Chrysanthemum Club and the China club.

ANDERSON: Well, the Chrysanthemum Club came down very hard on Paul Wolfowitz when he made me the Japan countries director. But at that point there was a China desk. There was nothing funny about that. I was the logical person to go to.

Q: So you go to the embassy in Tokyo in about July of '73. What did the embassy look like at that time? Who is the ambassador and how is it organized? This, I mean moving from Taipei embassy, to Embassy Tokyo must've been quite an interesting shift in size.

ANDERSON: Size and quality of people there because Tokyo was well organized, obviously a first class outfit. Taipei was kind of second class, I guess. Jim Hodgson, and then Robert Ingersoll. Have I got them in the right order as ambassadors?

Q: Ingersoll arrived in April of '72 so he was there when you arrived. [Robert Ingersoll to November 1973, James Hodgson July 1974–February 1977.]

ANDERSON: Okay. He was there and then left.

Q: He left.

ANDERSON: He was replaced by Hodgson, Nixon's friend, labor secretary. Well, we were still in the old building, and they were about to start construction on the other one so I lost that beautiful office that I had. But you could tell the whole operation was just first class and really ran well. That was very apparent. You could tell you were in a first, important place, which you didn't feel like in Taipei. All you had was a backwater. Even if it was China. They had Tom Shoesmith, DCM, another wonderful guy and Dick Petree, another wonderful guy, political counselor. Bob Dimling but he didn't stay very long. Nick Platt then came and replaced him. Nick was my boss.

Q: Uh huh. Rust Deming and Larry Farrar were there too.

ANDERSON: They were in the political section, they were in the internal side, yes.

Q: Okay, so you were on the external side.

ANDERSON: External side. Right.

Q: Explain that a little bit, how the political section might be organized.

ANDERSON: Well, they had an external deputy and an internal deputy. Who was the internal one? Well, Nick was external and then we were assigned to the internal or the external unit, in order. Out of the internal unit there was also the—contingent but they were on that side. That was Chuck Schmitz who was negotiating Okinawa. Also—guy. And Deming—was it. Tom Blaycock, no he was a junior guy too, I think. Tom Blayley and Bill Greer. But he was, none of those were the deputies. So somebody else was the deputy on that side.

Q: Let's see actually—

ANDERSON: But he was very impressed because they all spoke the language and were extremely well plugged in— The external unit did right well too.

Q: Now the external unit would probably interact with the Foreign Ministry.

ANDERSON: Exactly.

Q: And also report on Japan's—

ANDERSON: Japan's foreign relations and policies.

Q: External relations.

ANDERSON: So when—

Q: Here's Japan in '73. (turning book pages)

ANDERSON: Schmitz but he's a lower level. Oh it was— He was internal head. So they were, that was a very strong section. Then we had a wonderful time, I mean that was a great time to be in Tokyo. Nick, poor Nick showed up from China and I was covering China and North Korea and Southeast Asia. I told him I wanted to keep those subjects. He let me. So I had all the good stuff.

Q: You got there first.

ANDERSON: I got there first and I got the good stuff.

Q: I mean the joke is that Nick comes in from Beijing. He got your job in Beijing or he got a job in Beijing and had to leave—

ANDERSON: So I felt sorry for him, but he was mighty good and mighty good to me to let me have that, and he also taught me how to write. Somebody needed to because I was still writing like Faulkner at that point. He actually, he really helped me. But the big thing was the normalization with China. All those agreements even though Bill Clark in the economic section insisted he was in charge of the trade agreement and the shipping agreement and the aviation agreement. I was already active on the first two, and I was in the China section with all my best friends and remained so until this day. I just, we covered those in great detail.

Q: Covered the Japanese negotiation of these agreements.

ANDERSON: With the Chinese.

Q: With the Chinese.

ANDERSON: They told me everything, just play by play. [Note: Anderson appears to be referring to his contacts in the Japanese Foreign Ministry.] So we had that which was a major element of our reporting, and the Kim Dae-jung kidnapping which was in August 1973. I reported all of that and they told me everything there too. They were just wonderful, just telling me everything. And with Nick too. I had pretty good stuff.

Q: Go over Kim Dae-jung a little bit, how he comes into the game.

ANDERSON: Well, we suddenly read in the newspaper, I'm sure there is a telegram too, but he'd been kidnapped from the Tokyo hotel, but the press had it too the next day. He'd been kidnapped and was smuggled over to a boat and a ship it seemed— Well, this came out later, the ship some lights appeared presumably were a CIA airplane and Don Gregg had delivered a strong message to the KCIA [Korean Central Intelligence Agency] the intelligence guy over there that the U.S. wouldn't stand for, we'd reevaluate our relations if he was killed.

Q: This is a fairly serious diplomatic incident, kidnap somebody from somebody else's territory and kill them.

ANDERSON: Of course with the historic relations between China, between South Korea, Korea, and Japan that made all the much more difficult. It was a terrible embarrassment to the Japanese government. They finally sent Shena over there to make his apology. But they were, it was, that's just absolute top news and everybody was completely absorbed in it. It was a country direct—you just told him exactly what was going on throughout the whole thing.

Q: Your—contact—

ANDERSON: Yes, my—

Q: —kept you—

ANDERSON: They were terrific, terrific. The China section, the ambassador to China now is Anami, one of the closest friends Nenay [?] is now at the IEA [International Energy Agency], Makita is ambassador to Singapore. So they were all terrific. Noboru was ambassador to China, to Paris. They were terrific at keeping me informed. Let's see, the other big things Tanaka's trip through Southeast Asia and Indonesia after that, important visits, negotiations with the Russians. I think Nick was in charge of Russia, but he was on leave when the big event took place. I take that back but looking at Russia was a major sort of lurking in the background. NPT [nonproliferation treaty] which I won all bets on by their signing the NPT. People thought they never would.

Q: Nonproliferation.

ANDERSON: Yes, I had a good contact on that to keep well informed.

Q: Why at that time would people be thinking—Japan would not sign on to the nonproliferation treaty?

ANDERSON: Because they wanted to preserve the option even though they had the nuclear allergy. They didn't, they were, they were standing away from international agreements at that point in a general sense because they were entangling and the NPT because it would cut off that possibility, even though they weren't even thinking about it. I guess they were extended beyond in case anything ever happens to the U.S. security assurances that they would still have that out. But certainly nobody was thinking about it. Nuclear allergy could not have been stronger. But they still had the internal people who didn't think they would. They were my people that said they wouldn't, won money on that. There again a very close friend was in charge of it. So he kept me well informed. That was a major, major issue.

Q: From—point of view.

ANDERSON: —again. Major development. So we had lots of good things to work on and Japan and China normalization took the whole time I was there, negotiating one agreement right after another.

Q: How did those negotiations look, and what I mean was, Japan had, was a very sophisticated negotiator, and had been involved for a long period of time. The Chinese not necessarily as much.

ANDERSON: Well, the Chinese were insisting on principle. If they could figure out some way to have practical arrangements like on the airlines then the Chinese, that's the way they could convince the Chinese to accept. Every one of those things like transportation and shipping and all that, they had to name a new airline to fly to Taipei. They had to use a separate airline.

Q: That's right. The Japanese had to create a new airline.

ANDERSON: Do the same thing with shipping. So everyone had those sensitivities and they had to be worked out. So we worked out a pragmatic solution that satisfied Chinese principles. So that was fascinating, and I learned a great deal from that.

Q: But how did the Japanese see their Chinese interlocutors and the Chinese needs? Not that they were surprised about them, but I mean they would've had some views.

ANDERSON: I think they saw them as very tough and very principled and difficult, but if they could find a way, kind of like negotiating with the North Koreans—if you can find a pragmatic way to do something that preserves the principle, then that would be the solution. So the Japanese were thinking of practical ways that might be much less principled, or insistent on principles and they were able to find ways through every one of them.

Q: One negotiator who remains anonymous told me one time if you give the Chinese face, you can have their pants.

ANDERSON: Well, principle is face.

Q: That's the point.

ANDERSON: That's a very valuable lesson to learn. Negotiating with the Chinese. And it holds true for the Vietnamese and the Koreans to a certain extent too— Japanese only worry about face not principle. I'm kidding, but they were, that was a key thing to save their faces. Chinese would call it principle. But following that I learned a great deal about China as well as Japan.

Q: What sense?

ANDERSON: Well, that. How they negotiate, what is their bottom line, usually it's if you can figure out some way to describe it so that it meets their principle demands and you can probably find a solution.

Q: What was—telling you about the relationship with Taiwan now at this time?

ANDERSON: Well, they wanted to preserve as much of it as possible and there again they were willing to create a new airline and two airports and everything else. They very much were concerned about preserving as much of the practical arrangement they had with Taiwan. They didn't talk much about the security relationship. That's only now that they're talking about that. They wanted to maintain as robust of a relationship that would be economically suitable for Japan but also could help Taiwan. So very sympathetic and very conscious of what they were doing in terms of continuity. But they were willing to sacrifice the sea to the Chinese principle if they could preserve the pragmatic arrangements with Taiwan. There were a lot of people pushing for more. Still the Taiwan lobby is very strong and important.

Q: Could you talk about the Taiwan lobby and Japan a little bit? That doesn't get discussed much in the U.S. discussion of these things.

ANDERSON: Well, it's older LDP [Liberal Democratic Party] folks who had close ties, commercial and political ties down there for fifty years. They tended to be more conservative people. I don't think it was economic as much as just that they had long ties with Taiwan and they should be upheld and not subordinated.

Q: Which resonates very well in our current political environment.

ANDERSON: Exactly, well, similar, and I don't think it's particularly economic. May have been some people's point, but also we are just old friends and Taiwan used to belong to us. Why should we sacrifice that relationship for communist China who has been nothing but a pest? But they had some pretty strong people that were anxious to move forward. Tanaka and Ohira—he was the foreign minister. He was terrific. So they prevailed. But there still is a Taiwan lobby. They're the ones in recent years that talk about we should quit apologizing to Chinese when we got to the Yasakuni Shrine and our textbooks don't mention the rape of Nanking and so forth. So they're still there. Ishihara Shintaro, the mayor of Tokyo is one of them.

Q: Yes, quite recently.

ANDERSON: He's got an ongoing, he's always—saying something mischievous. So they're, and they identify them. I used to know who most of them were. I don't remember their names now. But they were very strong and part of the backbones of the old LDP.

Q: In fact the embassy's understanding of the existence of this political group or this idea is a key thing it's going to be reporting because that's this wellspring for Japanese policy is its internal political structures.

ANDERSON: Well, it's the same people in NPT that were opposed to signing the NPT and there were again a big substantial number of—in the LDP that were opposed. They were the same group of people— And we knew, we had people like Bill Greer that had been there six times. I don't know how many times he had been there, played tennis with the emperor when he was in short pants. He just knew everybody and we had several people like that, the real Chrysanthemum Club. They knew all those people and had known them for forty years. So knew what everybody, where they stood on everything. Had pretty good, excellent picks on the domestic political situation. That was a tribute to the teaching Japanese language officers early on and waiting to go back. But that was to the detriment of the Japanese language officer. The Chinese who came in and out feel much better.

Q: Did you hear you can't go home?

ANDERSON: So that was a wonderful experience, and that was really my, I mean, that was my first major diplomatic position. Taiwan, I just felt a little bit like we're on the fringe, and this is a show that's winding down.

Q: Now what's living in Tokyo like at that time, the 1970s?

ANDERSON: Cheap.

Q: Cheap.

ANDERSON: Lots to do.

Q: Living on the economy.

ANDERSON: Those housings we had and knocked down or got new ones. I objected to that, but I found it didn't make any difference. I could still go out and meet plenty of Japanese. One thing I did, I didn't go to the language school, but I studied one hour a day for eight years. By the end of that I got my three. I was very proud of myself. I snuck into the Japanese club.

Q: Goodness. An hour at a time.

ANDERSON: So a long way. That's right. But it was crucial to be able to speak Japanese. That was the one thing in Kathmandu I did not do well was study the language. I did study, but in that year I didn't learn nearly enough. So I was determined not to ever go anywhere else where I didn't learn the language well enough so I could communicate. So in Tokyo I would just leave the television on and not listen to it but let the words seep

into my head as well as going out and meeting people all the time. So I just had a wonderful time meeting Japanese folks.

Q: But again the Foreign Ministry officers?

ANDERSON: They spoke English better than I did. They were just terrific. Wonderful friends, they became.

Q: So they were a very talented and helpful group.

ANDERSON: Oh absolutely. Just couldn't find a better bunch of folks to work with.

Q: While you're there, Ambassador Ingersoll leaves and Jim, Ambassador Hodgson comes in. Did that change the dynamics of the embassy any?

ANDERSON: At my level I couldn't tell. I liked both of them and thought they were both very good ambassadors, both interested in the economic side of things. I liked both of them, enjoyed them and their wives. Always nice to meet, kept up with them subsequently too.

Q: We were talking earlier you were saying Bill Gleysteen was very helpful to the young officers and Habib. Now this is a large embassy. You're not a young officer. You're mid-grade by now. How are your contacts with the front office, the ambassador, the DCM? Is it so large there is now a barrier?

ANDERSON: Well, Dick Petree and Shoesmith were very close. Shoesmith like Gleysteen worried about all the young people. So he did a variety of things to bring us into things. Ambassadors were both very friendly. I didn't have much of a working relationship with either of them, but they were always very friendly and interested. So I feel positively about them and Shoesmith was a great DCM. I was very lucky to have those DCMs. So when I got to be DCM I knew what you were supposed to do. I had three excellent teachers. It's not as if it was overstaffed, it's not, there were only 112 Americans there. And there are three hundred or five hundred in Cairo. That was one of the great things Ambassador Mansfield did that I heartily approved—keep people, don't get new people. We've got enough.

Q: One of the things that probably happens at an embassy of that caliber and size with a relationship as important as the one with Japan is a lot of visitors. I suppose you were control officer for visitors from time to time.

ANDERSON: Yes, we got a lot and then of course, when I went to DCM we got even more. In light of the trade thing everybody came through there. But when I was in the political section I was the drill officer for the Bushes when they went to Peking. So ever after that whenever they went through or we needed some tennis balls, they sent me a note. There would be some tennis balls. I also went to China in '75 in the winter after

they were there. He wasn't there, but she was. We had dinner at a Chinese restaurant. Was always very friendly. Then he wrote me a letter once, I think it was '75, and said, "Desaix, my son George is coming through. Would you take care of him? He'll just be there one night." So I said, "Of course." So Virginia Petree and I were having a Chinese dinner. She and I fixed Chinese food for a few friends. I took him there first. Then I took him to the red light district. In Tokyo everything is the red light district. Anyway, the entertainment district of Tokyo. The thing that struck me most, aside from his being a delightful, good beer drinking companion, was that in the six hours I was with him he did not ever ask a single question about Japan. You may recall that was his first trip to Asia and I think he'd been to Italy, but he'd never been to Japan. Not one question, not one. That struck me very strongly at the time. I remember it ever since. We had a lot of issues we could have discussed, in all we had those bilateral talks with the Japanese talking about everything, foreign policy. So a lot of visitors came in connection with that. I was very much involved in that.

Q: Now has this structure, the FSC or these, the established bilateral regularly talk, had that process started out? That was in place.

ANDERSON: Yes. Well, we had foreign policy talks, the ones I participated in. We also had security talks. I didn't participate in those at that time—

Q: So then when you have a relationship as intense and important as the one with Japan, one of the ways to manage it is to have these regular talks and regularly go over the mutual agendas.

ANDERSON: Absolutely you've got to do it, but it works because you know where you stand and at a sufficiently high level so that it's authoritative and just invaluable with the relationship like that, particularly in those areas coming out of their shell from the war. So it was important to have those kinds of talks.

Q: I was just wondering about something, like that is probably educational, certainly, at the higher levels. When you get—

ANDERSON: For both sides.

Q: For both sides. Right. Because even our own guys don't always get a chance to focus on Japan as a single entity, and now they have to go to this meeting and so they have to be briefed up. Sometimes the value of these meetings is to keep your own people as educated as they could be.

ANDERSON: Well, it is. That's right. And of course you write a report up to higher people. They read it. They may read the sensitive parts so it's just invaluable with a relationship like that that we have those kinds of talks. I think we have quite a few with China now, but not as many as I wish, like on strategic issues. I don't think they have nearly the dialogue there that we ought to have. Well, Japan's across the board, economic,

political, and we did have a strong tie with the [National] Diet and the U.S. Congress, and that has withered, just U.S. people want to go, the members of Congress came over there and wanted to see the prime minister. They don't care anything about seeing anybody else.

We had the regular parliamentary exchanges, and they had just withered. A handful of people on both sides tried to resurrect them in the '80s, led by Bill Bradley. He was a senator. A guy named Shena on the other side, the son of the Shena that went over to try to normalize relations with South Korea after Kim Dae Jung. They had these little groups that would get together, but the U.S. Congress is so busy and so preoccupied with events here at home that they don't have the time or the interest to do it. They're unwilling to sit down and talk with people for very long. They come flying in on a visit. All they want to see is the top people.

Q: I noticed that one time during '75 you were the control officer for codel [congressional delegation] Lester Wolff among others.

ANDERSON: Oh that was wonderful. That was so wonderful. They came into Yokota and Tom Shoesmith was the chargé and Prime Minister Miki was either leaving or coming back from the United States. I don't know. Must've been coming back and I guess the ambassador had been there with him and took them to Washington. Tom was the chargé, and he had to go and meet at the same time that codel Wolff came. So I went to Yokota Air Base to meet them and put them in buses except for the Chairman Wolff of course. Had a sedan for him. It took almost two hours to get back into town. He was fuming by the time we got there. Very unpleasant. So they went to the hotel briefly, and they came over to the embassy. Shoesmith was back. So he greeted them all. It was a big CODEL, must've been twenty congressmen, and Wolff got up and said, "This schedule is worthless. We're not seeing anybody. The treatment has been terrible, and if you don't straighten this out immediately, we're just going to get on a plane and are going to leave." Steve Solarz said, "I want to meet the communists. Why didn't you put them on there?" This is just, just awful. Tom Shoesmith told me afterward that it was the worst day of my whole career. He immediately got on the telephone and called them up, called Miki's office, the protocol office, and a couple of people and arranged a meeting. But we had four different groups going in four different directions the next day. It was just the biggest craziest circus, and they had just come from Manila where Marcos the dictator had gone to meet them and had had police escorts taking them everywhere. Here they come to Tokyo, and they're treated like a bunch of ordinary citizens. So they were just livid.

Q: But I mean they had a prearranged schedule already.

ANDERSON: But they didn't say anything about it until they got there and then they were furious because they weren't seeing the prime minister. That's who they had wanted to see, the prime minister—

Q: How could you guys agree to a codel coming in without having made any arrangements. You weren't—

ANDERSON: We had four full schedules for them, but just didn't happen to include the prime minister because he was out of the country and couldn't arrange it at that point. That was the main thing just because the prime minister wasn't on it, because he hadn't been met by Shoesmith with a police escort. It was as much personal although I still run into Wolff and his wife. That's just the first thing I think of every time I see him. He's very friendly now. Solarz became a good friend.

Q: I'm his personal FSO actually. Well, that's interesting because we were talking earlier that you had this legislative responsibility that—had passed you to find out what the guys were saying on the floor about Vietnam. So that twigged you into the importance of Congress. Now here you are at a post escorting congressmen around and what not. Are you of the school that they should travel or shouldn't travel?

ANDERSON: Oh absolutely should travel. But I don't think they should be treated like kings and emperors. I recognize that they are as long as we are treating them seriously and trying to set up a program that makes sense. They should participate in diplomacy, but they were insisting on things that I thought were just a little too regal for what should be demanded.

Q: "Care and feeding of" has been one of those great Foreign Service challenges.

ANDERSON: Well, I learned about it. Right then and there. I guess I had a couple of other codels but they were always very—some small. This was the first, I think, this big.

Q: So this one was really quite extensive.

ANDERSON: The biggest one that ever traveled going from dictatorship to dictatorship, and so our treatment of them in a more democratic way was not well received. But I certainly learned my lesson. We had a wonderful schedule worked out. Four different groups, so it wasn't as though we hadn't paid a lot of attention just the greeting at the airport and the long bus ride and the prime minister that we couldn't arrange because he was in the United States that got them so incensed. I got Steve Solarz together at my apartment with a bunch of young intellectuals and that made up for not letting him see the communist because they were all leftists.

Q: Yes, he was, let's see, at that time pretty junior.

ANDERSON: He was elected in '68 wasn't he?

Q: Yes. [Note: Steve Solarz was elected to his first term in 1974.]

ANDERSON: He was brand new.

Q: By '80 he had certainly taken an active interest in Asia as chairman of the Asian and Pacific Affairs Subcommittee.

ANDERSON: That had been '75 so he was elected in '68, so this was five years later I guess. But he still didn't see why he shouldn't see the communist.

Q: Japan's other external relations of interest to the embassy at that time would've included what else? What else would you have been reporting on? We talked about the two southern trips to Tanaka and Miki.

ANDERSON: Well, they were paying a lot of attention to Southeast Asia and Indonesia. That's why Tanaka and Foreign Minister Ohira went down there. They were also trying to develop the relationship with the Soviet Union and were having a lot of trouble because of the island issue and were still very strong. After '73 of course they were trying to develop the relationship with the Middle East. Nick was in charge of that side of the external section. They of course were trying to strengthen their relations with all the Arabs and did not want to go out of their way to develop visibly strong ties with Israel. So that was one of the few areas where we had any even slightly different approach and that was quite important at that time. Iran has been another, something of a problem that they wanted to keep the relations with Iran. They tried to, I guess—when I was there they were talking a lot about strengthening their relations with Europe because we had strong relations with Europe and they didn't. So that element of the triangle was not being tended. So trying to strengthen the relations there. For economic reasons Latin America was important to them too. A lot of Japanese ancestors, relatives down there. Brazil, Peru, Ecuador, so they were on a global outreach.

Q: Beginning to cast their net.

ANDERSON: That's when it really began to go global. I guess it's probably the oil crisis that stimulated a lot of that.

Q: This is 7 March. We're talking to Desaix Anderson about his career. Desaix, I think yesterday we got up to 1975, but you were saying you had recalled a couple of things after a good night's sleep.

ANDERSON: No, before a good night's sleep. I think better at night. First, the trip I made to China in December of '75 and January '76 was the first in which a foreign FSO went as a tourist. Don Anderson went from Hong Kong by train to Peking. But then I requested to go there. So it was official from my standpoint. They let me travel by train too. I took the train to Suzhou and Shanghai and then flew down to Wenzhou. It was an amazing trip because nobody expected an American just to be sitting on the train with them. They were all mighty curious about who I was. PRC citizens didn't pursue

conversation at that point. Sometimes they would say, Are you from Albania? Once up on the Great Wall with a guide, and she took me up there, some PLA [People's Liberation Army] soldiers came by and they said, You're a friend from which country? She had the good sense to say— So that was fun. Then in Beijing the blue Mao suits were still very much in vogue.

People would sort of look through me and not pay much attention to me but in Shanghai in the Peace Hotel they engaged me. Every single waiter came over and talked to me for a few minutes. They all wanted to but they took their turns, came over and they all were bemoaning the possibility of being sent down the countryside. All afraid they'd be sent to a farm. But I could also see some colored shirts under their blue Mao jackets. Of course by the time I got to Guandu they were wearing yellow bell bottomed trousers and everybody was extremely friendly. But it was remarkable to have the opportunity to do that.

Q: An interesting illustration of the Chinese government. I mean, the center is up in Beijing and as you get further away from the emperor there is little, little more leeway.

ANDERSON: It was visible.

Q: Because aren't we always told that overseas Chinese are from the three provinces at the mouth of the Pearl River because that's the furthest distance you could be—

ANDERSON: —from the emperor.

Q: —from the emperor.

ANDERSON: That's right. I also had a sixteen-millimeter movie camera and took pictures everywhere I went.

Q: Sixteen-millimeter.

ANDERSON: It just amazed me that they didn't pay any attention, didn't bother me at all. The pictures weren't any good because I didn't have a light meter but still I took them. It surprised me, amazed me that they didn't object. I didn't bother them at all.

Q: One of the interesting things even when we were there in the '80s was if you had that Polaroid Instamatic camera they would come out so you would take pictures of people. They'd all gather around.

ANDERSON: They love that.

Q: You could talk and get things going and it was a very friendly atmosphere. I mean it took the edge off things for people.

ANDERSON: Well, it was a remarkable time to go there. So I got my benchmark for comparing where things are today. The change is obviously enormous. But it was fascinating to be there at that time. The second thing is that ex-President Nixon came through Tokyo on his way to China, and I don't remember exactly when it was [February 1976]. It was when Hodgson was ambassador. So it was later. Hodgson was his labor secretary of course. The embassy was in a quandary as to what to do about this, whether Ambassador Hodgson should go and greet him or I or what. They kept asking Washington what to do, and I was the control officer so they were sending these general messages trying to find out what they wanted to do. They never got an answer. So I went out and met him and escorted him back to the hotel. Then we had one meeting where the USIS guy invited a few influential journalists over to chat and he was impressive the way he talks and his knowledge. It was very interesting but the ambassador who had been in his cabinet did not see him. They couldn't get an answer out of Washington as to which level of engagement was the best.

Q: Now at that time did we have the telegraphic Official Informals? Was that system set up by then or was that much later? You know between the desk and the embassy.

ANDERSON: I don't know exactly, but they were working through messages back and forth and they couldn't get an answer.

You asked how the relationships with the senior office people in the embassy were. One day David E. Brown, chief of the external section, had concocted a message. He went in and gave it to Dick Petree, the political counselor and said, "We are normalizing relations with the DPRK and Desaix Anderson has been chosen to be the admin officer in Pyongyang. He should leave in two weeks for his quick language training. Will be arriving there two months from now." Dick Petree saw that and said, "Oh my God. We haven't even told the Japanese." He ran out of the room and ran in to see Shoesmith just screaming the whole way that this was going to destroy relations, was going to be bad or worse than the Nixon shock. So it was very interesting. I thought the commentary on the—it's an easy relationship that we had there. People felt comfortable playing tricks like that on me.

Q: That's interesting you mentioned the Nixon shock. That was something that guided our awareness of our relationship with Japan because the Nixon shock was what—?

ANDERSON: Well, Nixon, that was '72. The people in the embassy, the Japan hands all knew that. But of course Washington didn't know and didn't care. Prime Minister Sato was called just minutes before the big announcement was made. Then after that we had going off the gold standard and the exchange rate shock, and so those were the two or three right in a row.

Q: That's right because the yen used to be at about what?

ANDERSON: Three hundred and sixty to the dollar. Well, I was 275 when I was there but it went down to, it's at a hundred now. But the China shock was the big one. They still talk about that all the time. Just terrifying that Washington will do something and not tell the embassy to alert the host government. In fact there have been several instances in the past four years. I know they didn't tell them about the Axis of Evil.

Q: Yes, I don't think anybody was told about that. But that's a good point because we had just finished this long intensive negotiation with Japan over Okinawa. I mean, we explained in great detail our needs and found out in great detail their concerns. There was this enormous negotiation that went on for the reversion of Okinawa, and so it probably felt as the treaty ally that they should've been one of the first we touched bases with for something so momentous.

ANDERSON: Well, it should have been, but in addition to that the Japanese-China policy just copied ours. They would've been much more inclined without us to follow the French and Canadian example about Peking. So the China policy was just following in our footsteps, and then we suddenly do that without telling us.

Q: Well, once Nixon went though, then they did recognize.

ANDERSON: But they would've done it earlier if it hadn't been for us.

Q: Ah, okay. So that opened the gate for them for a previous position that they already had.

ANDERSON: Yes, well that would've been our preference. They just copied us. So I thought those should be added.

Q: That's exactly the kind of stuff that we're interested in. We were talking about visitors to Japan, and it's a fair target for people. There was a whole variety of visits. Solomon visited when you were control officer for him. Some people from SS.

ANDERSON: We had—from Policy Planning [Policy Planning Staff] at that point.

Q: Yes.

ANDERSON: I think it was Policy Planning [P].

Q: It was P. Okay.

ANDERSON: I think it was. We had constant visitors. Everybody was going out there. We had bilaterals, got consultations on Europe, on the Middle East. So all the regional assistant secretaries came out there and the Policy Planning people came out to talk. The Policy Planning talks, that's probably when he came out there. I certainly don't remember any individual sessions. My memory is gone on those.

Q: But it's an illustration about how tense the relationship with Japan was. you would have visitors from literally every bureau in the department, every other cabinet office because they would have something to do with Japan.

ANDERSON: Well, there was about that time too that we started those consultations, the cabinet consultations. Wasn't that in Nixon's time? I think we were supposed to have cabinet consultations and we had a hard time getting the consultations off. That was the foreign minister, the economic ministries. We had at that level and then down at the expert level just every conceivable subject in which we had mutual interests, we had consultations. I noted that in your list, but we had so many that I can't remember—

Q: Didn't ring a bell.

ANDERSON: They were all very good. And enormously helpful to our building strong relationships with Japanese policy makers, with Japan now. That also kept them from doing things that we would subsequently be unhappy about.

Q: Isn't that an interesting illustration of the kinds of functions an embassy performs overseas, not only just talking to the Japanese but facilitating these visits because somebody's got to brief them up, handle them. That takes up time, you can't go over to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs if you are meeting a guy at the airport. And that impacts on your staffing levels.

ANDERSON: And also writing up the meetings. That's the one pleasure I had. When I was a control officer, I had to write them up. So we had so many I spent a lot of time on, but it's very important, and then of course for us to hear what Washington's nuanced policy was in various areas so we didn't say something funny that was unhelpful. It was also very important for that reason. So general education for the Japanese and for the staff. The Japanese just loved them. They felt like they were getting the kind of consultation the Europeans were, and that's what they wanted.

Q: You left Tokyo in '76. Let me ask this. How would you characterize your feelings for Japan at departure versus when you first arrived? I mean, what did you learn and what did you see in that kind of relationship?

ANDERSON: Well, I didn't know very much about Japanese culture. I'd studied the history but I didn't know that much about it until I lived there. I learned a tremendous amount about how they act as people and think on a personal level. But also I learned the importance of Japan to the United States by the fact that we spent that much time and attention discussing every issue under the sun. I regularly had to go to the Foreign Ministry and brief those instructions about don't strike a deal with Tehran on this or that. Most of the time I had the pleasure of delivering those. I got a good education on the United States as well, but at the same time as an education on U.S. foreign policy also Japan's positions and problems where we did have problems. So it was extremely

educational, although I was certainly a neophyte when I arrived there and had general impressions mainly in the Asian context. But by the time we left I think we could talk about any of their foreign policies with accuracy.

Q: By the time you left in '76, of course you're on the external side of the political house, but what forces or groups in the U.S. did you perceive as being a source of destabilization for the relationship?

ANDERSON: Well we had the trade problems, but they really just started in '72, '73. I guess in the '60s we had the textile issues, but they were still very much under control. They were specific issues and they weren't pressure groups. They worked through the Congress on some issues at that point. But nothing like it was in the late '80s with this Japanese industry taking over the world and you've got to stop them. So no comparison, but trade issues were important and nonproliferation issues had some, a lot of interests in the specialist circles in the U.S. But I guess really the trade issues that came to the fore.

Q: Now when did you leave Japan?

ANDERSON: When did I leave?

Q: When did this tour end?

ANDERSON: Summer of '76.

Q: Summer of '76. And from that you went where?

ANDERSON: I had orders to go to Paris to be an Asia watcher and Mark Pratt was there. Dick Holbrooke, another visitor came through. I knew him of course. He said, "Desaix, you won't have time to pack your bags, we're going to normalize so fast." So that assignment was broken and there wasn't anything else available. We also had that Glock program.

Q: Yes.

ANDERSON: So they sent me to Washington for an eight month assignment in NATO [North Atlantic Treaty Organization] standardization, and I was watching relations with Iran and Somalia. So I was involved in the AWAC [Airborne Warning and Control System Aircraft] sales to the Shah.

Q: To the Shah.

ANDERSON: And trying to turn Somalia away from the Soviet Union toward us.

Q: Now let me get this straight. You bid on the Asia watcher job in the embassy in Paris.

ANDERSON: And got it.

Q: And got it.

ANDERSON: Yes, I had orders saying I was to go there. Then they were rescinded because Holbrooke came in '77. No, came in—

Q: Holbrooke comes in with the Carter administration.

ANDERSON: With Carter so it would've been—

Q: That was January '77.

ANDERSON: Seventy-seven. How is that possible? Because it was broken because he was going to keep Mark Pratt that one more year, which would've been '77. He was going to get relations normalized in that period. How did they break mine in the summer of '76? Something's wrong there.

Q: Yes, unless there was something attached.

ANDERSON: So I had the orders and they were, I don't know what happened.

Q: Because it wouldn't be language. You have French. That's what got you into trouble in the first place.

ANDERSON: Nothing, I got the orders early, but still why would Holbrooke have come through? Maybe he came through late in '76. I wouldn't have been there.

Q: Maybe it was just the Glock that caught up with you.

ANDERSON: No it was definitely because Holbrooke said they were going to normalize relations real fast. Did we know Carter was going to win so—had any. Well, I don't know what happened. I'm totally mystified as to what I'm talking about. But I know he told me that. The orders were changed in the summer of '76. So I went back to PM and Pratt stayed on for a year. I don't know. I know they sent other people after that. So I'm confused.

Q: Well, we can research that. But yes, those short PM tours. I did one of those.

ANDERSON: It was eight months but it was very interesting because it introduced me to Europe, security issues in Europe, and Jim Goodby was the deputy assistant secretary [DAS]. He was superb. So we became friends. That was a very valuable eight months. I, of course, had nothing to do with PM or NATO or anything like that. So it was a quick introduction, just the right length. Perfect.

Q: The AWACs for Tehran must've given you a very interesting look into Middle East politics and domestic lobbying.

ANDERSON: Not much.

Q: Right?

ANDERSON: No. I remember the switch in Somalia's much more strongly. That was fascinating. That was going to be a strategic switch from being a Soviet ally to United States. That was much more interesting to me than AWACs to the Shah at the time. Didn't realize the relative importance.

Q: What was going to be the trigger for the switch? What was the thinking of the time?

ANDERSON: Well, we were trying to get our hands on the Red Sea outlet. And any switch at that point in '76 would be seen as a great coup on the part of the United States. Undermining, would that have been the first country that switched its allegiance from the Soviets to us? Might have been.

Q: Might have been.

ANDERSON: It had been going the other way fairly regularly. So it's a pretty alluring prospect. I was delighted to work on that. It was obviously very peripheral. We were beginning to provide the Somalis military equipment. That's how I got involved. I was very much on the side, but it's quite exciting.

Q: Providing military equipment to the Somali government was—

ANDERSON: I think that's what happened. Yes. They were talking about switching and that was part of the enticement that we'd give it to them. We didn't know what we were inheriting at the time, did we.

Q: In January of '77 the Carter administration comes in. Cy Vance becomes secretary of state. Where are you?

ANDERSON: I was in PM.

Q: You're still in PM.

ANDERSON: But I had my orders to go to Bangkok. Actually I got those quite early on in 1976. By that fall I knew where I was going.

Q: Yes, you would've had language training again?

ANDERSON: I had a couple of months at the tail end there. I don't think I had but two. Two months. So that helped. Helped a lot that it was the equivalent of a couple of years of one hour a day. So it helped me a lot and I kept studying the whole time I was there too. Thai got to be okay. It's withered since then but it was okay. I'm pretty close to a three, I think.

Q: I have in my notes that you arrived in Bangkok August 17 and that the domestic political situation in Thailand is still as unsettled as when I left in '75.

In fact a note that says there was a curfew on at the time, and this impacted on when you come into town and whether an embassy vehicle could pick you up because of the curfew. But how bad was the domestic situation?

ANDERSON: Well, the curfew was midnight or something like that. It was pretty early. I don't remember the exact time my plane came but it was probably pretty late. But it was very inconvenient to have that silly curfew. You couldn't go out at night unless you were in a car. I didn't have a car. I had to ride the bus or a taxi. But then everybody was screaming to get the taxis that were available at that time. Meant you had to go home early, which was not terribly attractive.

Q: How was the Thai domestic scene at that time?

ANDERSON: Well, it was chaotic. Politically we didn't know what was going to happen. Then Kriangsak Chamanan came in [prime minister 1977–1980 following the military coup he led]. So things settled down after that. You know you're reminding me of something. Dick Holbrooke [assistant secretary for East Asian and Pacific affairs] came over there to see Kriangsak, and somehow I guess he and I were chatting about Paris, and maybe I told him about that and he said, "Well, you wouldn't have had time." Maybe that's when I had that conversation. That's what it was. Because he came early on and had a talk with Kriangsak in which he told him they were going to move to normalization very quickly. Then Washington put out a thing saying no one in a position of authority would say we were going to normalize relations quickly with Vietnam. So really put him down. So that's when that was. It was very, when did Kriangsak come in? Do you know?

Q: Not right off, no [November 11, 1977].

ANDERSON: Must've been the end of the year because Holbrooke came over pretty fast. He made that tour around Asia. That's when his girlfriend got off the plane in Tokyo with no shoes on. It's a famous trip. He came and shocked everybody. I think Bangkok was the last on the list of the places he visited, and the press reported he had said move quickly and then Washington denied it.

Q: Denied it.

ANDERSON: Denied it in such a way saying no person in any position of authority would say such. Really put him down.

Q: Can you describe the embassy for us that you walked into? Who's the ambassador? You're in the political section. So how's the political section organized?

ANDERSON: Yes, I was the deputy political counselor and Indo-China watcher. So my main job was Indo-China. Tim Carney had been there before and he was absolutely first class. Everybody thought the world of him. Steve Solaris described him as the best FSO he'd ever run into.

Charles Whitehouse was the ambassador [May 1975–June 1978]. He was very friendly, very nice. His wife Molly was adorable. Once I found a bunch of low class places. It was a northeastern place where they danced and did all this. She one day said, "Desaix, where's a good place where we can go? We've got some visitors coming." I said, "Take them to that place. It's very lively." She of course sent the chauffeur to go and check it out. Came back and said it's a brothel. There was a man that had a heart attack that night, and if he'd gone to that place, they would've blamed me for the heart attack. But they were very friendly, especially her. Then Morton Abramowitz came after a year [June 1978–July 1981]. We were very close. He was superb. Whitehouse was more aloof I think and not as interested in the functioning of the embassy. He was interested in Indo-China because he had come from Laos, hadn't he.

Q: Yes. Previous in Laos.

ANDERSON: But he certainly didn't take the kind of nitty-gritty interest that Abramowitz did. Jim Wilkinson was the political counselor, but he may have gotten there about the same time I did or right after I did. I don't know. They took care of all—

Q: Had—moved into political I think because—was a separate section when I was there earlier, but then we had the bases there.

ANDERSON: It was there. I think there was only one officer here and the two or three internal political people. The external side was just me. Must've been somebody else. Because I'd go out for days on end to the border and talk to the refugees.

Q: Dan O'Donahue was DCM.

ANDERSON: He was DCM.

Q: In '78.

ANDERSON: He left after about a year or two.

Q: Burke was DCM in '77.

ANDERSON: Burke Levin.

Q: Tom Conlin.

ANDERSON: Oh yes he was there at first. He must've stayed a year. He was very nice and very supportive. So was Jim Wilcox and they were great to work for, both of them. Pretty relaxed embassy after Tokyo. Very relaxed and kind of huge and spread all over the place. Big refugee contingent and consular section.

Q: What were your housing arrangements at that time?

ANDERSON: I had to go find it myself and then I moved into a cute little house in—twenty-three I think. It had a little swimming pool and then after one year the owner came back and I had to move again. The same thing happened in that house. I moved—then I moved back at the—down the other side of—there. So I moved every year. It didn't make any difference. Actually the last one was the best because the bus goes straight to— Didn't have to change.

But I spent a huge amount of time over on the border. I noticed you mentioned Nong-khai as if that was something special. Most of it was on the Cambodian border because of the first battle between Pol Pot and Vietnam. I interviewed people about what was going on inside Cambodia and then the Vietnamese attacked in December of '78. That sort of put some other things in perspective. I'd been told by some people who had come from—that the Vietnamese were organizing a group of rebel Khmer-Rouge commanders that were playing footsie with the Vietnamese. That of course ended up being—I heard it early on. That was an incredible job just trying to figure out what was going on in Cambodia and Vietnam. I loved that job, but it was hard work.

Q: Sounds like a pretty independent job. So most of it's on the border. You're doing a lot of traveling.

ANDERSON: Overwhelmingly on the border and most of the time it was on the Cambodian border, but I went down to places down on the coast to talk to the Vietnamese particularly after they started the socialization policy, socialist transformation in '78.

Q: Which was the anti-Chinese program?

ANDERSON: Was the anti-Chinese thing so I got a lot of reporting on that and lots of reporting on the Chinese and Vietnamese battling over paramount influence in Phnom Penh.

Q: So basically you're the officer who's watching the post-Vietnam war unfolding, what the Vietnamese are going to do in Southeast Asia and that target of their interest is Cambodia one, Laos two.

ANDERSON: Well, but I didn't go to Laos very much because—went up there to talk to the Hmong and find out about bee stings that they were having. There wasn't much going on up there so mainly Cambodia and the Vietnamese and trying to figure out what was going on. But I got a pretty good fix on all that. Also on the struggle among the Russians, Chinese, and Vietnamese in Cambodia, and Russians and Chinese in Hanoi. I was following Thai relations with Vietnam very closely as well. I was quite astonished when they first attacked in '78, just went across the border and then retreated that Dan O'Donahue wouldn't let me comment at all. I was an Indo-China watcher, but I was not allowed to comment. He didn't want me to comment. I don't know whether Washington told him they didn't want me to comment or what. But anyway, I was told to just sit tight. Don't try to comment on that event.

Q: Not operating analysis.

ANDERSON: None whatsoever. But then I started early on getting reports about up in the Northeast the fact that some regional regimental commander was talking with the Vietnamese, picked that up. Then the question about whether they would attack again, I was hearing a lot about that and Vietnamese were yes and no. Then in early '78 the—actually that's when the anti-Chinese movement took place in early '78.

Q: Anti—?

ANDERSON: Anti-Chinese, anti-Pol Pot movement. So I got lots of information all that spring on that subject from the Vietnamese. Then when they attacked the next time that was the most fascinating time of all because the Vietnamese came in and the Cambodian's reaction was— Pretty soon, in February I started picking up from Cambodians that people were so pleased and happy, and they were going back to their homes, but they weren't planting a new crop. They didn't have seed or were too excited or security was still such that they didn't plant a crop. So in early February I started realizing that there was going to be a tremendous food problem. We reported that regularly every time I went over there, I kept probing that subject, and finally late in the spring I guess it was Holbrooke sent a message to query who was writing these reports. Are they credible or not? The embassy came back and said it was I and they were very credible. Of course by June there were several hundred thousand people coming across the border. They had a warning there. It was picked up a little bit late but still was picked up. But that humanitarian crisis was one of the most important things I think I've ever done. Alerting people to that early on.

Q: Now what's your modus operandi? You get an embassy car and head to the border?

ANDERSON: Get a car and go to the border and had to take an interpreter because I didn't speak Khmer although I got to know a bit.

Q: Who went with you? Do you recall?

ANDERSON: What's his name, Sok Kim, Kim Sok.

Q: Oh Kim, yes.

ANDERSON: He did at first and then there was a young Cambodian who worked for—and we got to be close friends, and any time I could spring him loose I took him. He was so much fun. We'd just go over there and sit down and talk—go wandering around and sit down and talk to dozens or hundreds of people. I got books and books of notes.

Q: So at that time are there regular refugee camps that you could touch base with?

ANDERSON: Yes and most of them were across the Aranyaprathet. I'd go there and just go wandering around to find people from all over the country and meet people. We tried to find people from far away, intellectuals and a variety of people. We were getting a good cross section of reports— Pol Pot and how there was so much killing going on.

Q: Now there weren't any refugee camps along the Northeast Thai border.

ANDERSON: There were small ones. But they weren't, for my purposes I could get so much movement around the Aranyaprathet so that's what I did. I'd go and stay about a week and then longer and come back and write up what all these people had said. Real busy, worked hard, but it was very exciting.

Q: Where did you stay right around Aranyaprathet?

ANDERSON: Stayed in those hotels, cheap hotels, two dollars a night, a dollar-fifty. I've stayed at almost all of them at one time or another.

Q: Drink the good Mekong beer?

ANDERSON: Oh I loved it. I loved that and the good food and company. The French Political Counselor Pierre Rochand, I'd run into him quite often over there. We got to be good friends because we would exchange notes on what we'd been hearing. So I guess for one of the few times American and French were reporting back the same, similar things. He didn't go nearly as often as I did, but he was good and very perceptive. I enjoyed talking to them.

Q: Yes because they would have an interest in Cambodia because of their historical ties. I found that depending where you were there was a set of embassies that either had historical connections or long interests that were particularly interested in some subject. You could always go to them or share with them because they would have a little more insight or they would be digging a little more deeply.

ANDERSON: Well, the Australians were and the French. They were the main two I think. But after I started sending those reports in, and they were quite lengthy just talking about Cambodia and Vietnam, Washington liked them so much that they authorized turning them over to all the ASEAN governments and Japanese and who else, maybe the Canadians and Australians. They were going all over the place. There were lots of them and they were long. Both in terms of the situation in Cambodia and the food situation. As I say I was able to follow what was going on in Vietnam and subsequently found out what was really going on, tracked very closely getting some good stuff from those fishermen.

Q: Yes. But that's a little surprising. How do fishermen and peasants tell you what's going on at the capitol?

ANDERSON: Well, they told me, figured it out. Somebody ought to go digging in all those things that they were interested in, what was going on in Vietnam or Cambodia at the time because it was just a wealth of material I got, and it was proved to be very accurate. Another thing—Chando was a good friend of mine. So I was sort of bouncing my theories of the struggle between Moscow and Beijing and Hanoi and then in a way China vis-à-vis Cambodia. That was very interesting. Of course there was one flaw in his arguments as far as I was concerned about what the Vietnamese were up to but still that was a very good sounding board. He came pretty often to get together.

Q: What was the tension between the Soviets and the Chinese?

ANDERSON: Well, they were trying to get primary influence in Hanoi. Moscow and Beijing competed the whole time. The Vietnamese were split, you had two Vietnamese factions, and they shifted a little bit too. The pro-Chinese dominated at first so then they shifted to pro-Soviet. Ho Chi Minh had kept them very balanced. But all that and then the ideological struggle that was going on in terms of influence in Cambodia. That was the Chinese and Vietnamese, just I got a lot of good stuff on that. Occasionally some Vietnamese would come out there that knew something about it. They might tell me about the conditions. So absolutely fascinating time.

Q: As a matter of fact, ultimately didn't you get some sort of reporting award?

ANDERSON: I think I got a couple of them.

Q: As the Southeast Asia guy you had all kinds of opportunities so you got involved in that yacht Brilling. The Vietnamese grabbed it or something like that?

ANDERSON: Yes, they grabbed it and then they let it go. I went down to Singapore when they got out of there and interviewed them. They were probably too close to the shore and probably were legitimately seized but the Vietnamese could have let them go a little quicker. But they didn't want to upset the relationship with us anymore than it already was because from then on, '76 on, they very much wanted to normalize with us

after Ho Chi Minh died. No, that was '86. After Ho Chi Minh had died but right '76 on, they were interested in trying to normalize relations with us, and I guess not '76 but a little bit later, but this would've been in '72 or '73 I guess. At that point they were interested in normalizing relations.

Q: From your perspective where did the anti-Chinese movement come from? I mean, what did that represent?

ANDERSON: Well, in part it was Hanoi wanted to get control of the distribution system and the trading system in the south. That meant the Chinese were running it. So it meant upsetting those arrangements, taking over the trading and the distribution system. So that happened I think in February of '78. They started that in those few months when they were socializing the economy so made the decision very quickly and in '77 to socialize. No, impose socialist principles on the south, and so part of it was to get control of the economic system, the trading and the distribution and that was part of it. Then after that I think the Chinese weren't averse to stirring it up a bit themselves later on. But I think initially it was the Vietnamese who started that in the south and then it kind of spread all over the place, through Hanoi and the north. I think the Chinese were also trying to stir it up to cause the Vietnamese trouble, it made them look bad. Then it got a little bit out of hand because they were getting two hundred thousand at the Vietnamese-Chinese border. A huge number of people wanted to go up there and the Chinese got tired of that as well.

Q: Yes, because the Chinese fleeing from Vietnam both went north into Southern China and Hong Kong—

ANDERSON: The Vietnamese accused the Chinese of being subversive and accused China of stirring up all this trouble just to cause trouble. So it got to be pretty mixed, but I think right at first it was them trying to take control of the economic system in the south that got it started and broadened, and these other elements came into the picture.

Q: I see Lionel Rosenblatt was in Bangkok at that time.

ANDERSON: Wonderful. Wonderful.

Q: He was in Thai language with me.

ANDERSON: Wonderful fellow.

Q: What was he doing there?

ANDERSON: He sat on the humanitarian side feeding refugees. We had five hundred thousand people that came out of Cambodia. I went over there one day when two hundred thousand showed up and just started marching south. It was really fascinating. I've never seen so many people in one place. The international community was trying to feed them.

Q: These were Cambodians.

ANDERSON: Cambodians.

Q: Coming out of Cambodia.

ANDERSON: Just enormous numbers. So they came later. But I mean in '78, '77 there were still plenty of them there.

Q: Well, with large numbers of that, that's why you could find intellectuals and well informed people who could tell you—

ANDERSON: Well, there was just a little bit of everybody coming. Most of them were peasants, but there were some cases where you'd find somebody that had thrown away his glasses so he couldn't be identified as an intellectual.

Q: And therefore by the end of '78 that's when the Vietnamese invaded Cambodia and knocked off Pol Pot.

ANDERSON: The second time, yes. They came in and knocked him off. Then they had the horrible food problem. That summer, that next summer, summer of '78, and then after that I guess by '79 the main interest was how the Vietnamese administration was settling in, whether it was being accepted by the Khmer and how the regime was being organized. Who was their first flunky, how was he doing? So I started concentrating more on those political developments. But food was still a problem even at that point. By the summer of '79 there was a lot going on in Vietnam too during that time. There was no question about the economic policies towards the south and absorption of the south, reunification, impact, and then ideological battles between Hanoi and China and China and Russia. That was more the later period.

Q: Now there's one Southeast watcher in Embassy Bangkok. That's you. Does that suggest that attention was elsewhere?

ANDERSON: No. Actually Tim Carney came out there toward the end. He was supposed to be up in—but he did go to those camps up in the northern edge. He helped, but I was really bearing the brunt of figuring out what was going on in the country. I worked sixteen hours a day. It was hard work. I loved it. I'd get back, stay up all night writing up. Got full support from Morton Abramowitz. So that made it very rewarding.

Q: I have in my notes that codel Wolfe shows up at your doorstep. You'd seen him in Tokyo.

ANDERSON: I took good care of him. Don't worry. We had a lot of visitors down there interested in what was going on. Elizabeth Becker on her way to, she went with the guy

from Saint Louis who was killed. She was up in Kriangsak with Wolfe. But I knew—like he was the king of the earth and they felt like they were.

ANDERSON: Elizabeth Becker, you don't know who she was?

Q: No.

ANDERSON: She's with the *New York Times* now. And she and two others—was it Richard Dudmon and Malcom Caldwell? Three of them came over there and I talked with her quite at length before they went [into Cambodia]. Then they went and they were in our guest house and someone came in with machine guns in the middle of the night and killed Dudmon, and she was lying in the bathtub, just terrified, whether she was going to survive or not. So that was widely reported, but anyway, we had a lot of those kinds of visitors, a lot of journalists. I spent a lot of time talking to journalists because they didn't have the means or desire to go out there and sit and talk to the refugees as I did. [Note: The shooting occurred in a guesthouse in Phnom Penh on December 22, 1978. After the three journalists had interviewed Pol Pot, Caldwell was killed as was the Cambodian gunman who had earlier threatened Becker.]

Q: Who was head of the NSC [National Security Council] at that time?

ANDERSON: A fine guy.

Q: Yes.

ANDERSON: Who became foreign minister.

Q: Oh.

ANDERSON: A general.

Q: Yes.

ANDERSON: What's his name?

Q: I want to say—

ANDERSON: I really liked him. Split, Swit, name of my Cambodian friend. Anyway he was NSC, he was the national security advisor and then he became the foreign minister. He worked, he was on the Kriangsak, and he was terrific and had some terrific people in the foreign ministry too. Certainly helpful. Som Sok, do you know him?

Q: Sounds familiar.

ANDERSON: And Swit, that was the Foreign Ministry guy. He was a foreign minister. We ought to know his name. He was there for a long time.

Q: Now in response to Vietnam's move on Cambodia then, China attacks Vietnam in February of '79. You must've had a reporting opportunity out of that again.

ANDERSON: Well, not directly because that was way up in the north and the people coming out, the refugees didn't know anything about it. I think I did a piece on the geo-strategic situation vis-à-vis China and Russia and the Vietnamese and Cambodia at that time, which was very well received. I think where I ended up was that there was a strategic opportunity for the United States. We chose to exercise it. But that was a major cable that I sent him, a strong endorsement.

Q: What was the strategic opportunity?

ANDERSON: That they wanted to move forward with us. I can't remember what else it said. I guess I've forgotten what I said. I think we had leverage vis-à-vis the relationship with China and also with the Soviet Union. We could've tried to move forward more quickly. That was after of course Holbrooke had already tried without success.

Q: I mean things get very complicated for the Vietnamese—I mean, their invasion of Cambodia. The good news was they got rid of Pol Pot. The bad news was they had to invade Cambodia to do that.

ANDERSON: Well, I did write about that and subsequently—and—addressed that. I asked Tak—this of course was when I was in Hanoi—who told me that he had argued that they should go in quickly and strike, get rid of Pol Pot and withdraw, that you can't impose a political system on another country by military force, which I've used in a different context and—said, “You know I've been very curious about that whole question and I'm thinking about it.” I think he was telling him he agreed. So that was what belied what they were saying that they were getting rid of Pol Pot. They didn't have to go all the way to Aranyaprathet to get rid of Pol Pot. They didn't have to stay ten years.

Q: Why was Pol Pot such a thorn in their—

ANDERSON: He was terrible on the border. They'd go across there and raid. They were claiming that Khmer land used to go all the way up to Saigon and go over there and cut farmer's heads off and put them on posts. It was just, they were pretty terrible. So there was a practical problem. But that doesn't mean again that you've got to go all the way to Aranyaprathet to deal with it. So I wrote about that several times.

Q: Now in April of '79 reporting out of Bangkok starts talking about another tragedy in Cambodia. Is that again famine related?

ANDERSON: They had a famine the second year too. That's the one I was talking about, spring of '79.

Q: Okay.

ANDERSON: That was after the invasion in December, '78, no '79. Oh, wait a minute. The first one was '77 and '78.

Q: Vietnamese invasion of Cambodia was in December '78.

ANDERSON: So it was '79, spring. That's the famine I was talking about a minute ago. It recurred somewhat the next year but nothing like that first year.

Q: I was noticing that reporting out of Bangkok during this time shows that you were covering other things too. You were the reporting officer on Moshe Dayan's visit and other assignments or other reports as assigned.

ANDERSON: I think maybe there was a brand new FS-09 there that worked with me and she did some things. I knew there was somebody like that that helped me a little bit. Not on anything important.

Q: No, I have, in that period I've only got the broad brush.

ANDERSON: Well, I'm pretty sure there was just a junior officer, a real junior officer, that was there helping me, but she couldn't do much. Moshe Dayan was an interesting fellow. Still had his eye patch on, the Israeli ambassador was quite willing to talk. Interesting. That was not at the forefront of my duties.

Q: I was going to say.

ANDERSON: I had other things much more important.

Q: I mean you're either one of the better drafters in the section, got a lot of time or the embassy's still undermanned that everybody has to do everything.

ANDERSON: Well, I think there was a junior officer, but I still had to do a lot. I certainly dealt with the foreign ministry a lot particularly on their normalization with Vietnam and ASEAN [Association of Southeast Asian Nations] matters.

Q: ASEAN is beginning to form with its own internal dynamics.

ANDERSON: Yes.

Q: At that time, in fact one of the first things ASEAN uses to organize itself is the whole Cambodian situation, that discussion of maintaining recognition of Pol Pot as a way to thwart Vietnamese and—

ANDERSON: Yes, they did it very successfully and very impressively. Thais played a big role with that. Thais and Indonesians really plus Singapore. That follows up with one day I came back to Washington with Negroponte for the UN peace conference on Cambodia, but that's in the next section. I was hearing a lot from the Thais about that, very open about it—they wanted the old Vietnamese feet put to the fire and not move on until after they got them out of Cambodia. Tot came over there and lied—what was that foreign minister's name—through his teeth about what they were going to do. Threatened him, threatened to attack.

Q: The Viet in talking to the Thai foreign minister. Not a lot of love lost there.

ANDERSON: No, they couldn't stand each other. But whoever the foreign minister was—back to him. He was a tough guy. We've got to remember that guy's name.

Q: One of the things we can look up. You had mentioned earlier talking to the Hmong about the things, and the house foreign affairs committee began to hold hearings in November of '79 about these allegations of gas warfare.

ANDERSON: That's why they sent me up for that hearing.

Q: And so you're the FSO that has to investigate the latest rumors out of the Congress. You lucky fellow.

ANDERSON: I didn't find anything conclusive one way or the other.

Q: What was the issue for those thirty years from now who won't even believe this?

ANDERSON: They were poisoning, trying to kill, somehow they were spreading this poison to kill them, eradicate them. I had been finding something was spread around, but it could've been bee excretions. So I didn't get anything very convincing.

Q: I mean, anyway, the allegation was the Vietnamese were gassing or poisoning the Hmong who were of course our actors—

ANDERSON: Oh the Vietnamese and the Laos, puppets.

Q: Up there. So somebody had to analyze these allegations, and I believe people were bringing back samples of this waxy substance off the trees.

ANDERSON: I brought back some leaves and we sent them in to be checked. They couldn't find anything either.

Q: Now among interesting allegations POWs [prisoner of war], MIAs [missing in action] that we'd left behind, lots of people. Were you asking questions?

ANDERSON: You know that was more and it was Laos. I mean that was certainly going on, but it didn't hit me very hard. I think who I asked regularly were whether anybody had ever, the Vietnamese particularly if they'd ever seen any American prisoners, and nobody ever had seen one. I recall finally somebody said they'd seen a foreigner, but couldn't tell who he was. But that hadn't gotten quite so hot yet. It came back to haunt me a little later. By then though that was certainly going on in Washington, but it didn't get directed to us so much except that I routinely asked about it.

Q: Now as the Southeast Asia watcher at the embassy in Bangkok that's pretty high profile stuff, and your reporting is well respected and what not. Your next job is going to be country director back in Washington. Is that all connected? How does that job come up?

ANDERSON: Well, absolutely. Holbrooke was out there again and said he wanted me to go there. I said, "Great."

Q: So you were actively recruited.

ANDERSON: Well, yes. Holbrooke offered me the job and I said, "Great." I was an O1 at that point. So he was giving me a little promotion there.

Q: So how—you must've known well in advance because you made a trip to Vien Tien and you were known at that time as the director to be.

ANDERSON: I went up there and talked to the vice foreign minister, the one that took care of western doubles. What was his name? Suits.

Q: I've forgotten now.

ANDERSON: Nice, very smart fellow.

Q: But this is June of 1980.

ANDERSON: That's why I went up there. I went up there and saw, talked to him. Had a good talk with him. Wendy Chamberlain was up there. We walked down the street. The Laos, they come running out of the doors to wave. It was like she was the queen of Laos, just astounding. But I had good talks with them also. Then eventually I went back with Senator Hiyakawa from California. Went back later with him. That was a funny time. On one side of his briefing book we had this is what the Lao think and then on the other side, this is what you should say when you are talking with them. He got there, and he read the page about what Laos thinks, and that poor vice foreign minister looked at me and

thought what in the world is going on. So I had to say something in French. But the damage had been done. But anyway that was nice, sort of fun.

Q: I was asking about the MIA thing because I was noticing that the Wolfe subcommittee held hearings in June of 1980 on MIA and the League of Families was organized and actively involved in that POW-MIA issue.

ANDERSON: But that had become a hot issue by the time I took over the desk. But it hadn't hit Bangkok so much before that.

Q: Well, let's move on to that job as country director of Vietnam, Laos, and Cambodia, Kampuchea. I mean you've been overseas for years and years and years by now.

ANDERSON: Spent twenty-five of my thirty-seven years overseas.

Q: So they drag you back. This remains a very important window onto U.S. policy. Congress is very involved in this.

ANDERSON: They were all excited about that.

Q: You must've had, not exactly daily but certainly more than other desks, recurring lessons about the importance of Congress.

ANDERSON: Yes, but it also escalated up higher. See Bob Kimmitt was in Defense then, and he was, he had that committee that met regularly with the League of Families.

Q: Yes.

ANDERSON: And Ann Mills Griffiths with Chris Christoff.

Q: Ann Mills Griffiths.

ANDERSON: And I became good friends. But Bob Kimmitt was involved and he—very smooth and very solid and convincing. So we got together regularly with them and talked. Then in terms of the Congress we were getting inquiries all the time about things. I would talk to them, the staff people, but I don't think I had any—I don't remember any hearings that I participated in. It was usually above me. Negroponte, Dan O'Donahue and then Negroponte and Bob Kimmitt became a solid player in that too and was very helpful to organize committees to discuss, coordinate and discuss with Congress.

Q: But I think that's interesting that at your level of office director at least you had regular contacts with the staffers on the Hill. I mean a lot of people will think just reading the paper that the point at which the executive branch and legislative branch meets are to do the formal testimonies. When in fact there is a constant interaction, depending on the issue, at the staff levels on both sides and it's much more.

ANDERSON: Well, I knew a lot of the staffers and I got to go to them regularly. Chris Nelson, Richard Kessler, there were a couple of Republicans too. So I talked to those people a lot.

Q: Would you go up there on the Hill to their offices?

ANDERSON: Yep. Yep. We got together put here or we got a group of them and I'd go see them and they would call me too.

Q: What sense did you get from them? What were they trying to respond to? What were they looking for?

ANDERSON: Oh political pressures. Trying to respond to the current congressional mail. They were getting a lot of that I'm sure. Then the congresswoman or man directly decided that's a good issue to play with, and so they got pressure to know what was going on. So it was more generalized I guess frequently when I talked with them. We were comparing notes about what was going on. But it certainly included POW-MIAs. But I think when we had the hearings it was a combination of Kimmitt, and either O'Donahue and Negroponte. So I don't remember hearings that—

Q: That raises a point. You're coming back to Washington. You're an office director. What does your office look like? What is your chain of command? Who is the assistant secretary? Which deputy assistant secretary did you work with?

ANDERSON: It was Dan O'Donahue whom I had already known in Bangkok and then Negroponte.

Q: Negroponte was the—?

ANDERSON: Deputy for Southeast Asia. Two very different styles.

Q: Would you be prepared to compare and contrast?

ANDERSON: No, it's just their personalities are so different. You have to deal with them. I didn't have any problem with either one of them. But they each had their quirks. I had no problem.

Q: But that's exactly the point. I mean, however professional and however an organization it is, personalities make a difference and the atmospherics.

ANDERSON: But I knew them both, so Negroponte from Vietnam days and Dan from when he was a DCM. So I knew him even before that I think when he was on a desk that other time I was there. I got to know him. I already knew him but Dan just liked to rewrite everything. It didn't matter what you wrote, no matter how good or bad it was he

would rewrite it all. That was his major quirk. John Negroponte was very demanding, but also very understanding and very pleasant to deal with.

Q: Holdridge?

ANDERSON: Who?

Q: Holdridge was the assistant secretary in '81.

ANDERSON: Yes. Yes. Yes the Republicans had come in. I didn't deal with him very much. Occasionally not on a day-to-day basis. Those other people were very busy on Indo-China. So I saw them all the time.

Q: Now how was your office organized?

ANDERSON: Well, I had one deputy who was Reid Burkhart.

Q: Reid Burkhart.

ANDERSON: And then Barbara Harvey was on the desk as a political officer and Bob Porter was on there. So I think I had three more officers on that side and a deputy unless you found something differently. Barbara was a political person and Porter was economic I think. Then there was another one that dealt with, may have been the day-to-day person on the POW-MIAs. I'm not sure. If I saw their names, I'd remember what they were doing. But about five of us. Worked very hard.

Q: What were some of the key issues for you at that time?

ANDERSON: Well, POW-MIA and Cambodia. What to do about Cambodia working with ASEAN to develop the UN conference on Cambodia.

So it was developing a strategy for there, developing a strategy to work with ASEAN so that they came together and we also worked with the Chinese and Japanese. We had made a concerted effort to put pressure on the Vietnamese to withdraw so I spent a lot of time on that. So did John Negroponte. That was a huge issue. POW-MIA, another big issue. We were getting all that business about the bee stings, that issue stayed alive although it didn't consume that much time because there was a limited amount we could say about it. Normalization of Vietnam, you know, at first they said we're going to send Negroponte up to New York to talk with the Vietnamese and just lay down. This is what you've got to do if you want to move to normalization. If you do these things, we're prepared to withdraw from Cambodia. Accounting for POW-MIAs was the third thing and one more thing—quit your slandering of the United States. So they ended up, the interagency committee decided that would be too high a profile to send John so they would send me. So I had a long first chat with the Vietnamese that we'd had since Holbrooke's talks had broken off in '78. Maybe he got into '79, I'm not sure. But anyway, from about that time,

first by the Reagan administration, which was taking a harder line, the talks were fruitless. That guy ended up being the vice foreign minister when I went out there and was very friendly.

Q: He remembers your initial contact.

ANDERSON: Uh yes. It was very civil. Just came up here and had lunch with them. We talked first and then had lunch. It was very civil, but they just took a very firm line that they were in Cambodia. They had been acting in the best interests to rid the region of horrible killers. That was their responsibility to do that. POW-MIA, they were actually doing things all along on that. So Cambodia was the really big obstacle.

Q: Now all these issues actually are interagency ones, they're not just State's alone. So you're meeting with your colleagues over at Defense and Treasury.

ANDERSON: Yes, but Cambodia was the big one. It was interagency. It was above my level. It was Negroponte or even Holdridge, but mainly I think Negroponte. Though preparing for that conference, I think he was the one that was driving on that subject.

Q: Actually that raises an interesting issue because you became country director in '80, and then a new administration came in. And that's the time where everybody does the transition papers, trying to explain to the new guys where we are by now. So I assume your office went through that exercise.

ANDERSON: That must've been when O'Donahue left. Negroponte came about the same time. Yes, we did all those. I can't remember, I mean, it wouldn't be different from what we've just been talking about.

And leading up to what the problems with Vietnam were and the value or lack of it to normalize relations with Vietnam, the situation in Cambodia and the situation in Laos and the POW-MIA question pretty much covers it.

Q: Yes, because I was sitting at the China desk at that time with Chaz Freeman and wrote lots of papers. I mean from my perspective as a fourth tour officer I thought it was a worthwhile summary of where we were and where we wanted to go.

ANDERSON: I think so too.

Q: And whatnot. We ought to have elections every four years.

ANDERSON: I think those are very good exercises. You need to take stock. That's a good time to do it.

Q: But it's interesting. I mean, you're moving from being the primary reporter in an embassy on a very important issue to now country director, which is much more of a

policy job, policy management job than a reporting job. In your personal development how did that transition go? You knew the main actors.

ANDERSON: Like every journalist always prefers writing to policy management. But that was a challenge because I was deeply versed in what was going on over there from all those interviews. So I was confident about what I was saying. I was interested in the policy of normalization of Vietnam and getting them out of Cambodia and interested in their interaction with ASEAN, with Thailand particularly, but ASEAN generally. Dealing with the POW-MIA issue some way or another and their relations with China and the Soviet Union. So all of those issues that I was well aware of and enjoyed trying to push the policy forward. So I enjoyed that job very much. I loved analyzing and writing, but that work was very good. I enjoyed it very much. I was working very hard with Kishore Mahbubani. He's been the UN rep for Singapore twice, ambassador to Washington in the middle. His name comes up as a new secretary general, one brilliant, wonderful guy. Close personal friend, and he and I worked on the Cambodian peace conference up here, international conference on Cambodia together because the U.S. administration was trying to be very close to China. ASEAN was worried about that and was afraid we were pushing too hard to support the Democratic Kampuchea government. It was because of the China link other than being neutral or certainly not moving toward recognition of Pol Pot, but at least being not to distance ourselves somewhat more from Democratic Kampuchea. So I worked with him and very much on that point trying to get the end result so that they were comfortable with us, but we kept the Chinese on board trying to keep the pressure up for Vietnam.

Q: Because the Chinese were still attached to Pol Pot.

ANDERSON: Yep. We didn't want to be tainted to John Negroponte's greatest fear that there was going to be a photograph of him shaking hands with Pol Pot. He was scared to death they would go out—see him approaching they'd come jump on him, kick him out. But I was doing all the legwork on that—and that was very rewarding. He was sort of the leader of the ASEAN group. So I was the leader on the other side trying to deal with Washington and Peking, Beijing. So I think it was '81. It wasn't when I first got back there. It was about a year later and Negroponte would've come. So it was after the new administration was in so it was '81. That was a major event. Consolidating the support of the opposition to the Vietnamese occupation and acceptance of that on the one hand and there were people in ASEAN that wanted to do that—we were going to hold a hard line. So finding out how to deal with Democratic Kampuchea.

Q: How was that compromise basically arrived at?

ANDERSON: It was I'll say one thing and you say something else but we all agree in the end. A condition of normalization and peace agreement had to be that they would withdraw from Cambodia. We all agreed on that. So the other question was do you remain, does the UN continue to recognize the Democratic Kampuchea government as the lawful occupant of the seat in the UN. That's where the question was debated. The

conclusion was that we were supporting the Chinese. That didn't mean we recognized them and we did not support them and so forth. But to legitimize that a government, that an installed puppet or foreign power could not legally supplant the power no matter how terrible they might be, that's the way we came out. But that was a major foreign policy issue for us. Of course we got a lot of criticism in this country for supporting the Democratic Kampuchea regime but had we slipped over to the no seat for them, the sort of solution that a lot of people liked, just vacate it, or certainly if we'd gone over and recognized the other, that would've been the end of them. The Vietnamese would've stayed forever, put together their little Indo-China dream that Ho Chi Minh seems to have called for earlier. But that was all fascinating and I liked to work with all the ASEANs too. That was fun. I spent a lot of time with them. They were skeptical of some things we were doing, specifically the China angle. But I had to try to explain to them what we were doing and why that was the right course.

Q: Those would be discussions with those representatives' embassies in Washington.

ANDERSON: Washington.

Q: As you got together from time to time, when you start out that that's when Haig is secretary of state and you're right there is this image, quite fascinated with China and what not because—

ANDERSON: Holdridge as well, very close to China, just had come from there. —and Haig very strongly.

Q: In fact Haig goes, isn't there that story that Haig goes to China and says, "We're going to sell them arms," or something like that and gets himself in big trouble?

ANDERSON: Brzezinski that stood up on the Great Wall and held up the AK-47 and poked it in the eyes of the Russians. He did Haig one better. But Haig was enchanted with China and saw the power play, and I think he was thinking about his future selling Sikorsky helicopters. It's funny, of course, Reagan loved Taiwan. Now we've got a secretary of state that was very much the other way around. So that was a struggle that was going on too. I worried about them even though I didn't have anything to do with it. But a dangerous slippage on the China problem. So I was not there but personally had strong feelings about maintaining the China connection in terms of—and also dealing with ASEAN in those terms, and felt very deeply that one country shouldn't invade another one. I maintained that position ever after (laughs), very strongly about that. Henry—and I used to just go back and forth; Elizabeth Decker too.

Q: The journalist.

ANDERSON: Good friend, yes the journalist, would say you're hopeless.

Q: Those are some of the high level issues that an office director might handle. What would be some weird things that need to be handled?

ANDERSON: Well, we had a lot of correspondence that we had to get, a lot of letters written out to people that weren't necessarily weird—the letters were but we just had to answer them politely. We got a lot of telephone calls and about the POW-MIA just a lot of that all the time. We began to get hate mail about the UN, the international conference that supported Pol Pot. I had to answer those. There was a lot of public interest in what we were doing.

Q: So if there was any letter writing to the signatories it trickled down to the desk.

ANDERSON: Yes, I don't think he answered many of those. Other weird things, I don't know. Once that conference was over we were in a good deal of harmony with the Chinese and with ASEAN and with other players too, the Japanese. So, a lot of the policy concerns that were evident for the first year were more or less taken care of—worked very closely with us. I spent a huge amount of time just working with ASEAN in Washington on the Vietnam-Cambodian question. I enjoyed it.

Q: Were you meeting one on one with the ASEAN ambassadors?

ANDERSON: Oh yes and I'd have lunch with—

Q: Where people would get together—

ANDERSON: Come see me and get together with all of them some time. Just had a lot of interaction with all of them. Got to know them real well.

Q: Who were some of the main interlocutors from the embassies?

ANDERSON: Well, it was Keith Shore when he was down there, but who was it before? They had another guy named—I think. Singapore embassy. Then did Komsok go to the Thai embassy? Well, I knew all the Thai because I had just come from there. Who was the ambassador? Whoever it was, I knew the Thai ambassador, we were good friends. There was a guy who was from the Philippines who was there forever [Eduardo Romualdez]. We got to be good friends. For Indonesia it was the political counselor. I can't remember his name, but he was the counselor. For Malaysia, it was a beautiful young lady who was really a spy. She went back and became a close confidante of—but I dealt with her. But I knew all the ambassadors there so I knew how to work with them. They were all, they called me up all the time.

Q: And of course being on the desk you have three countries, well, actually you never got to go to any national day functions did you.

ANDERSON: Well, I went to the ASEAN national days, Chinese national day.

Q: Not the Vietnamese, Laos or the Cambodians [VLC]. You're probably the only office who never had to go to your countries national days.

ANDERSON: In Laos we did. We had relations with Laos. I went to the Lao National Day.

Q: Okay, I wanted to ask you, you were saying that Holbrooke recruited you for the job of country director of VLC.

ANDERSON: He offered me the job. He and Walter Abramowitz were very close. So when Washington asked who was writing these memos, reports about what was going on in Cambodia and the famine particularly, Walt told them it was I. He knew me from Vietnam. So after that I think he paid more attention to who was reporting, and they told us to send it to all over Asia. So he was well aware of what I was doing and said he wanted me to be the director of Vietnam, Laos, and Cambodia. I told him immediately that I'd be delighted.

Q: Now we are on.

ANDERSON: I was saying, I knew Holbrooke from when we were in Vietnam in the mid '60s, and he becomes very aware of what I was doing in Indochina, and he said he wanted me to be his director for Vietnam, Laos, Cambodia and I accepted immediately, delighted, honored.

Q: Despite the fact you had to come to Washington.

ANDERSON: Well, at that point I had been away a while. So I didn't mind going back.

Q: When you moved back where did you live?

ANDERSON: In 1976 when I moved back from Japan, I bought a house near Logan Circle, and then I bought another one and renovated it over that next year about eight blocks away.

Q: Oh, well, you'd be pleased at the way it turned out.

ANDERSON: I knew it would. I didn't know how long it would take.

Q: Anyway, you come back, country director of VLC, VLK. Haig leaves; Schultz comes in, and in '83 you're asked to be country director for Japan. Where does that offer come from?

ANDERSON: That came from Paul Wolfowitz. He had been in Policy Planning, and he was coming to EAP, East Asia Pacific Bureau to be assistant secretary. He told me

subsequently that he wanted to make sure that credibility on Japan was established under his tenure and that having someone from the Chrysanthemum Club would diminish the chances that that could be true vis-à-vis Congress. So he deliberately looked slightly outside the normal, usual candidates and saw what I'd been doing in VLC and VLK and asked me to be the country director.

Q: Now that is interesting because you're saying he's responding in part to the need to present an image to Congress.

ANDERSON: Absolutely with Congress. That's what he said. Wanted to have credibility and that required having someone that would not be considered to be a Japan advocate.

Q: What is the issue with Congress at this time?

ANDERSON: Well, trade issues were starting to become very serious at that point. He probably knew that President Reagan was going to go to Japan. I didn't. So on a Sunday the day before I took over the Japan desk it was announced that President Reagan was going to Japan, and so for the next six months until he went in November, 1983 I had to learn everything about economics. I didn't know anything about economics before that except Samuels in 201 and 202. So I had to study economics there very rapidly because it was obvious the economic issues that were foremost at that time.

Q: Because you had been working on the embassy side and seen this highly intertwined relationship. In fact we have a series of set meetings with the Japanese that we do annually, the SSC and what not. But are we seeing that it was much more thick on the political-military and political-consultation side as opposed to economic consultation?

ANDERSON: No, it was extremely close across the board. But I think we probably had consultations more on the political side. We did, and we had the SSC as you mentioned. But we didn't really have as many broad discussions like we did on the political side. I mean on the economic side we had plenty of interaction but it was usually contentious and because of some issue that had suddenly come to the fore, trade issues would come to the fore. So we didn't have the same kind of regular attempt to merge our views and to reconcile problem areas like we did on the political side.

Q: What changes in that environment then would bring these economic issues to the fore?

ANDERSON: Well, the trade deficit was growing every year and Congress got very excited about it and the president worried about it.

Q: That was the lightning rod issue, I mean that began to bring it all into focus.

ANDERSON: That's right, and on the other side of course in the mid and early '80s the relationship with the Soviet Union was still extremely important, but the relationship with Japan on the political-military side was still very good. So it didn't have the problem

areas that we did. We had serious things to deal with, but it was on the economic side where the biggest problems were emerging and had to be dealt with. What Paul wanted was someone not so enmeshed with affection for Japan that they could be objective about things. He thought that I could do that, play that role. He told me that he was most concerned about Japan's becoming—and my job was to make sure they didn't go—and that of course was the political-military side. So that was a foremost concern of his. But I think it was related to a deterioration of the relationship that could take place because of the economic issues that would then reverberate on the security relationship. That was the thing he pointed out that I must make sure didn't happen, and I was delighted it didn't despite the trade problems.

Q: Because that's precisely the problem. If these things aren't managed or managed early, some friction begins to pass from one problem to another. Then you have nothing but friction.

ANDERSON: That's absolutely it, and we've been working very hard always to keep the political relationship separate, political security relationship separate from the economic relationship. That was in danger of eroding, and that was something Japanese were quite concerned about as well. So Ambassador Wolfowitz appreciated that and to make sure that I understood that, that was what I was to work against. The confluence of those or the negative problems on the trade issues that we had to deal with would impinge negatively on the security relationship.

Q: What is your impression of the Japanese understanding of these concerns?

ANDERSON: They were just as concerned as we were and said that despite the trade frictions they wanted to make sure this did not adversely affect the political security relationship. It was too important, it ought to be kept separate and they worked to do that.

Q: It's interesting though, it strikes me that the political-military relationship and the security relationship is something that has fewer actors involved in it than an economic relationship. What I mean by that is, it's our relationship with the Japanese military in one sense whereas the economic thing could be Sony doing something without telling the government and Hitachi doing something and GM [General Motors] doing something on our side or the timber guys deciding finally they'd had enough or something. Many more private actors would impact these issues on the economic side.

ANDERSON: Well, that's correct. At the same damn time as the attitudes in the Diet, for example. The socialists and the communists working against the security relationships said the treaty ought to have been abrogated, and should never have been signed in the first place. Then the OBP has quite an array of different attitudes. So all those guys turn out to be actors as well. The question is how do you maintain the commitment to the security relationship despite those adverse pressures. Then when the Japanese public gets concerned about the way we're treating them on the trade issue, that undermines the political support for the security relationship. So in terms of numbers, yes, you're right.

The economic is more diffuse, but in terms of the broad spectrum of keeping the Japanese people collectively onboard the security relationship despite the frictions of economics is a pretty big job. That, of course, requires an ambassador who can speak in a way that Japanese people feel their interests continue to be best served by the security relationship with us. Up and down the line the other officers, political officers, USIS, play a very important role in supporting that view among the public.

Q: Sounds like there's an opportunity and requirement even to get the two legislatures to interact.

ANDERSON: Well, it is very important, and as I mentioned, for many years we did have parliamentary exchanges, but they fell into disrepair and few people were interested in taking the time to have such meetings. They were, I think, very fruitful at first. In the '60s they were functioning but then it dwindled to just a small group on each side and I don't know whether they even have them at all now. Of course when our congressional people go to visit, they want to see the prime minister. They don't care much about sitting down with a bunch of parliamentarians. They'd rather see the prime minister. That's a problem. When the Japanese Diet people go to Washington, everybody's too busy to see them. So it was a disconnect there, and it's unfortunate because the legislatures have a huge role to play in setting the agenda. We're not dealing with that problem very well.

Q: You're saying one of the administrative things that you had to deal with right away was President Reagan's trip.

ANDERSON: Immediately. Just the day I arrived there, the day before it was announced. So I realized then there was a big agenda ahead.

Q: How does that work out? I mean, you're talking to the embassy for an itinerary. The White House is getting involved. You're having to talk to the NSC, who's your NSC contact? Do you recall?

ANDERSON: You've got to talk to everybody. Was it Doug—?

Q: Yes.

ANDERSON: No, it was Gaston—

Q: Gaston—yes.

ANDERSON: That's who came over. Gaston, well, we immediately formed a task force, an interagency task force, and it was above my level, but we did all the day to day work and the contact. We were very much in touch with Gaston and Jim Kelly who was over there too. Those fine folks who knew exactly what kind of relationship we had with Japan and wanted to sustain it. The Pentagon gets very much involved too. So we started laying out the logistics and what the Japanese had in mind, and we had to discuss the agenda,

what that was going to be and prepare talking points on every subject that might come up and would come up. It was a huge amount of work. It focuses you very quickly on the nature of this relationship and it's immense. The complexity, you've got to take all these things into account and put them together in a way that makes sense, focused on the visit by your president. We also knew that he was very favorably disposed to Japan, and wanted to have a special relationship. So we needed to do it in absolutely the right way. It turned out that way, and he had a lot to do with it too. He was terrific with the Japanese. He knew that was a very important relationship, and he conveyed that to Prime Minister Nakasone in a way that worked extremely well. Of course we had Ambassador Mansfield there, which was a huge asset because they trusted and revered him as no other person I'm aware of that they really revered. He'd been there through the Carter years and Reagan. One of his smartest moves was to get on the telephone and call Mansfield in the middle of the night and say, "I want you to stay on." He said, "Yes." So immediately that produced a different aura in the Senate. And so very positive things except the trade issues which were getting more and more acute subject to a lot of criticism. They had to be dealt with unusual sensitivity. But effectively some way or another.

Q: You know you're talking about all the work that it takes to brief the principal to go on these kinds of trips. I've heard the argument made by the FSOs that it's a good idea for our people to travel because that's our opportunity then to get our leadership focused on some other country. Secondly, it's a good way to get the other principal and the other country focused on his American relationship, that without these trips you wouldn't get that focus at the high levels. You'd have bureaucracies working at them, but you wouldn't get the attention of the high levels.

ANDERSON: Absolutely and because of the importance of the relationship and the fact that we had the trade tensions everybody focused. We had to put together the right trip to really reconsolidate the relationship and move it forward. So everybody on both sides committed to do that. That was a little earlier than say President Bush's visit there. So trade issues were under better control at that point than they were a few years later. So it was a little easier than it subsequently became. I think the force of President Reagan's personality, his strength of character, made people realize that I want a good visit, and he's going to get it because of that. We had a lot of players of course. Mike Deaver and those folks got very much involved and wanted to have all the flags in the right places and everything just right.

Q: That's what I was just thinking. I had a Reagan visit when I was in Bangkok, a little bit later. Working with the White House is always such a joy because they had all kinds of image and security issues that were very unique to them and put particular demands on the embassy. In Bangkok we had, of course, the King and Queen involved, which heightened that and then in Japan you have the Emperor. So I would imagine Japanese security was quite capable of pushing back if the Americans had some unique request.

ANDERSON: Well, we had plenty of them on the security side. So there were some tense moments trying to work specifically with the security people on both sides. They had

very specific ideas, had to be done this way, and had to work them out. Sometimes there was pretty high-level intervention to deal with. I know—a couple of times what you would think could have been worked out far below him.

Q: Security and the itinerary and that sort of stuff. Actually did Reagan go outside of Tokyo or was it mostly done in Tokyo?

ANDERSON: He may have gone to Osaka. Either he or President Bush went to Osaka. So we had all those arrangements. They had to be made as well which complicates it, doubles the logistical requirements. I think he did. I think they visited Kyoto. The main focus though was the political relationship with the prime minister, the meetings with them and with His Majesty the Emperor [Hirohito]. Those were the big meetings. If it was in Osaka, it would've been sightseeing and that's a little easier to deal with. We have real substantive issues to deal with and manage. So a lot of concentration on making sure all that turns out right, political and security. [Note: President Reagan went only to Tokyo.]

Q: Because the new frictions are on the economic side, but I would presume the timing of this visit coming slightly before that all really peaked, helped part of the management. I mean had he not gone and had not refreshed, if you will, I guess it goes back to whose idea it was or was that just what presidents do.

ANDERSON: I can't answer that. It was decided and announced, and I didn't ask who made this terrible decision that I've got to work so hard for the next five months. I think probably it was the top people that decided this. I'm sure Gaston—knew the president well was probably pushing it. They were talking about where he should go first and where he had gone. I'm sure Gaston would have been a prime promoter of that. But I think—White House and the State Department because we had Haig who probably wanted him to go to China first.

Q: John Mellotte was the deputy.

ANDERSON: And a formidable deputy. Wonderful person. And Ray Burkhardt was wonderful too. Really terrific.

Q: By that time Mark Pratt has come back from Taiwan. I would assume, I mean once you get the presidential visit over and things level out a little bit there's a lot of interaction then with the embassy. You're very close to the embassy officers and to the ambassador, to the Japanese embassy, you're working closely with them on all these other issues.

ANDERSON: Yes, in both places we had very, very close relationships with the embassies. They always send first class people to Washington. We generally do the same in that direction. Because the top embassy for the Japanese is Washington, most prestigious and certainly among the top then for us.

Q: Now in early '85 you and Wolfowitz go to a meeting in Paris.

ANDERSON: In retrospect, odd wasn't it. We went to have consultations with the French counterparts and talked about every Asian issue, terrific. I think they even spoke French. I didn't know Paul spoke French. But I think he understood, I recall. Anyway, very open. He had a lot of intellectual friends over there, and I think we saw some of those too. We had a full range of discussions with the French. We did with the Germans too, but the French one was sort of more robust.

Q: And of course they continue to be interested in Southeast Asia.

ANDERSON: And very interested in Asia too, China as well. That's probably the reason that we had, but we had talked about all the Asians issues. Very open, friendly, very good discussion. Enjoyed it very much.

Q: Now you're the director of the Japan desk. There's a daily, weekly staff meeting. You're hearing about all the reporting from all the other desks. Is anything else going on in the Asian context that crosses over into your area that you have to respond to? I think Aquino was killed in '84, for example, and the Philippines started going funny.

ANDERSON: They had a lot going on and what was going on in Thailand. We had all the Cambodia, the Vietnam things going on all the time. So trying to get the Vietnamese out. So that was another issue that the Japanese were engaged in.

Very interested in—and I was too. In Korea we had the Korean Airlines [KAL] 007 shootdown, which was a major event. The Korea desk took the lead on that. I asked John Mellotte to spend all his time dealing with that problem. That certainly impacted relations with Japan. The handling of the Russians in the wake of that was very important to Japan. So we were very much involved in that. But the Korea desk had the lead and the Russian desk, I guess. So we were very much involved in that whole issue.

Q: I think this is an interesting observation because the academics don't fully catch it that you may be in charge of relations with Japan, but even the kinds of things that you talk about aren't just bilateral relations. There's waves and impulses coming from other issues that you have to talk about and coordinate over, and it still illustrates how extensive diplomatic relations with another major country are. It just isn't this one issue and it's just bilateral.

ANDERSON: It didn't matter what happened anywhere in the world. We had a conversation with the Japanese about it. They would come and see me regularly. Somebody on the desk about every problem, it was Africa or Latin America or whatever.

Q: Well, because didn't we have the Iran-Iraq war going on, for example? Operation Staunch to halt the flow of American origin arms to Iran.

ANDERSON: They were very interested in that because they were interested in going ultimately on the Iranian side, very interested in anything to do with the Middle East because it affected their oil flow. So any development in the world of any significance they wanted to talk with us about it. They came to see us there. The embassy went to see them in Tokyo. It was just a constant discussion, every serious problem that emerges around the globe.

Q: Your reward for being office director?

ANDERSON: Eighty hours a week.

Q: Is to be nominated to be DCM in Tokyo?

ANDERSON: Well, we were out at a meeting in Hawaii, was that regular meeting we have.

Q: The chief of missions meeting?

ANDERSON: Was it? Was it chief of missions or bilateral thing with the Japanese? Anyway, it was one of those meetings. The Japanese hands, of course, had their candidate. The name was advancing rapidly and I said to Mr. Mansfield, "Mr. Ambassador, I want to be the deputy." He said, "Fine."

Q: Ooo.

ANDERSON: So that was it. And of course they went through the formal process and several names were there. It came back that they wanted me as deputy. His fourth one. They had a good run.

Q: Yes, because when I started this out I thought oh wow, Desaix, the Japan Desaix and once I started out, found all the Vietnamese stuff because to me, you were Mr. Japan.

ANDERSON: I started out as Chinese. Got lost along the way. I talked to Art Hummel and he turned me down. Are you ready to shift over to Tokyo?

Q: Yes, let's go to Tokyo.

ANDERSON: Well, it was worth all that hard work I did to be his deputy because he was an extraordinary man and someone that I had just revered like the Japanese did. His sense of what is right and balanced, what is just in terms of relations between countries. That just struck me as absolutely right. His dealings, the way he dealt with people was extraordinary. He treats the charlady coming up the elevator with him as politely as he would the prime ministers. He has a very egalitarian spirit. He was interested in what everybody was doing. Knew Japan really well. Knew the artistic community and literary

community as well as the political world. At the receptions the Mansfields had, lots of cultural figures would show up just as much as the business and political people. So it was quite an experience. We ended up having a hundredth anniversary of his birth in the Grand Hall of the Library of Congress. This was in 2002. Howard Baker spoke and Teddy Kennedy spoke and some other people spoke too, but they were the main two speakers. They both used the same phrase that here is someone that's in the league with our founders. That sort of struck me about him too that he was just an extraordinary historic figure and had done so much for the country and very modestly always and was in age, in his eighties still serving the country in Tokyo. So it was quite an experience. And the easiest person in the world to work for. I mean he wanted me to take him up all the garbage and everything. And if I felt like I needed to ask him about something, he was there. He was more interested in the serious big issues than the handling of minor issues.

Q: Give us a sense of the embassy because you haven't been there for six years, eight years. I mean, your previous tour in Tokyo.

ANDERSON: Oh, '76 to '85. Nine years.

Q: Yes, so you're coming back nine years later.

ANDERSON: I felt very much at home because I loved Japan. I had traveled all over the place and got to know lots of people. At the Foreign Ministry of course I knew everybody. So I felt very welcome when I got there and very much at home.

Q: How was the embassy organized? Was it larger or different?

ANDERSON: Smaller. One hundred ten people, which is relatively small for a big embassy, and he had deliberately kept it small and I agreed with that. We didn't need to be flooded with a bunch of people. So you get first class people no matter whether it's the FAA [Federal Aviation Administration] or the Justice department or FBI [Federal Bureau of Investigation] or what have you. They're all there but in small numbers. Most everybody sent very good people. The Japanese staff is incredible, very efficient. Many of them have been there forever, know exactly what to do and the Japanese so they know how everything should be done the right way, and they tell you if you're doing something that's odd. Had a protocol lady that always advised us of when we were doing something funny. So first class embassy. Ran beautifully before and after. It just runs itself almost.

Q: Did you have an opportunity before you went out to cycle through the FSI or DCM course?

ANDERSON: I didn't have time. Bill Clark said I'm leaving on such and such a date and you'd better be here. I couldn't go. No.

Q: Because one of the things that comes out of that course is they instruct DCMs how to coordinate with the ambassador, but it sounds like you already had a relationship since you were his man in Washington, if you will. You were saying that he had a very clear idea of what responsibilities he wanted to hand off to you, what your portfolio was, and that was a fairly easy arrangement to make.

ANDERSON: Very easy, yes. I had an overlap with Bill Clark for about four or five days. He took me around and introduced me to everybody and told me how they had been operating. I assumed they wanted to continue operating pretty much the same way, which was all the detailed administrative stuff he wanted me to take care of. I could come see him if I wanted to about any of that just to keep him well informed about what was going on. He read everything. Voracious reader. So he'd read all those telegrams. But he didn't want to see them all. Just something important, let him clear it or ask him to clear it, but mostly he would just keep an eye on what we were doing. He had a daily staff meeting. So he had a very clear idea of what was going on. Whole table full of all the agency heads and the section heads. So he knew what was happening. It was really just quite easy. The personalities fit very well, same philosophy and just got along very well.

Q: Refresh my memory. How many consulates did we have in Japan at this time?

ANDERSON: Okinawa, Osaka, Sapporo, and Fukuoka. What's that four?

Q: Four. Of course major military presence down in Okinawa—

ANDERSON: Well, Okinawa but also [Yokosuka]. That's a huge naval base—up in the north air force base. Yokota, another air base, and then there's a small marine air base, a couple of those. Big, big, big presence.

Q: Now at this time frame—

ANDERSON: About forty thousand troops.

Q: In eighty-five we're still dealing with all those economic issues.

ANDERSON: Well, they were mounting all the time, steadily and peaked about '89, '90. Now they were already very hot.

Q: Speaking of economic things. The G8 [Group of Eight] summit was scheduled for Tokyo in May of '86. That must've caused a little work for the embassy.

ANDERSON: Yes, what happened with that? Did Reagan come back?

Q: Reagan came back.

ANDERSON: That's funny, I don't remember that trip as well as the previous one. But it wasn't as elaborate as the previous one. But again that was helpful because if he says the right thing, and he said the right thing about Japan and he had the Ron-Yasu relationship at that point, that was just a glorious way of having a relationship, just have him have that close relationship, just mention that. That soothes a lot of people down. But the trade frictions were stronger in '86 than they would have been in '83 for sure. Wonder why I don't remember that one better? I certainly remember his being there, but I guess I went with him or went over there on that other one so that's why it was more memorable.

Excuse me, the big issue or one of the big issues was the exchange rate, and I don't know whether it was right about that same time. When was the Plaza agreement, in '87? I think it was. When I went to meet Jim Baker when he came in on the helicopter, and we're riding in, I said, "Mr. Secretary, this exchange rate is killing us." He said, "Oh." Then of course that's why he was there to talk to—about the Plaza agreement to try to adjust the exchange rates. But I think that was '87.

Q: Exchange rates will do that to you.

ANDERSON: We had mounting problems on the economic side. It was one trade issue after another and Congress going crazy. They were all coming out there screaming. The ambassador would call them into the conference room and give them a stem-winder of a lecture, which ends with, "This is our most important bilateral relationship bar none and it's right all here and we've got to protect this relationship. We'll deal with the trade issues." They would usually go away somewhat calm, not always. We'd hear them afterwards. We had a lot of congressional people coming, and every cabinet secretary showed up and just everybody came. It was an incredible torrent of people coming through there. Wonderful because I get to meet most of them, like Bill Clinton. But just everybody showed up, and they all wanted to see him, and he'd make coffee for them and himself, sit down and talk with them. They'd be mostly wowed as much as anything just because of his mental acuity and so lucid and remembered facts extraordinarily well, give a good spiel. A few people I would hear sort of rumbling when they left but not many.

So one trade problem after another. We would try our best to figure out something. Of course we had that elaborate mechanism that Washington had set up with the Japanese to try to talk about all the trade issues. They'd get together fairly regularly and try to figure out solutions in the broader sense rather than having to deal with each one by itself. Just a huge amount of energy devoted to that. I had first class economic ministers and we had—ambassadors my full support and we trusted them. The one thing I did before I left was insist that half the economic officers had to speak Japanese as well as the political section. Got that done in the time I was there. Terrific economic section. So we just had to deal with them, but we did have those mechanisms that were intergovernmental and that helped a lot because it meant the senior people at the secretary level were trying to figure out solutions rather than tossing it all to the embassy or not dealing with it. So those mechanisms were a big help and they tended to keep people under control most of the time. Occasionally something got really big like the semiconductor issue. The

ambassador would have to call the appropriate minister, and they respected him so much that they would rent the presidential suite in the Imperial Hotel and we would go there to meet them. They wouldn't ask him to come to their offices. So we'd go over there and he would make his points very clearly, nicely, but that was one of the few issues that really got up to him because we did have those bilateral mechanisms. Do you know what I'm talking about, bilateral mechanisms?

Q: Yes. Yes. They were the annual bilateral meetings.

ANDERSON: USDA [United States Department of Agriculture], Commerce, Trade, and State and all huge teams would come and talk about everything under the sun. So we had those in and we had a different set, called them something else, but did the same thing under Bush. So that was going on all the time. The people would call him, Cabinet secretaries would call him about things. So he was communicating with Washington that way. He occasionally would send some messages to the president. Not very often but on something really important. He used to write it himself. So we had good communication back I think.

Then we had the base issue. There was always something going on there because of Okinawa, or reducing our presence here or there, or an accident or something like that. He was very keenly interested in those kinds of problems. We had again first class Pol-Mil people that really took care of them, but he paid a lot of attention to those kinds of things. They had them fairly regularly. But the main thing was to try to reduce our imprint around the country. We worked on that but are still working on it. That took a lot of time in the political section. And a lot of political turmoil too. That's when the LDP started weakening. I got to know Ichiro Ozawa, who was the up and coming protégé of Nakasone who was prime minister, who was the most powerful man there for a few years. When Ambassador Mansfield had to go back right at the end of his assignment for a heart operation, going to do a heart bypass in Hawaii, he said, "Desaix, go over and tell Prime Minister Takeshita, tell him everything you know about my health and why I'm going." So I went over there to see him and he said, I was going to see him immediately. Ozawa came into the room, sat down with just the three of us. He said, "Desaix-san, here is your dear friend Ozawa—" It took me thirteen years to get from his chair to here. But he wants to do it a lot quicker. So cherish your relationship with Ozawa— He used to say—was my favorite prime minister—

Ozawa Ichiro, that's what it was. Then they had the revolt and this was later. They had Ozawa, led a revolt and then split the LDP and he is now back in the democrat side. He was very powerful at the time. So when the Toshiba incident—remember that?

Q: Yes.

ANDERSON: Okay. Well, that was a horrible thing—that lady from Maryland got out there smashing Toshiba radios on Congress, Elizabeth something.

Q: Oh.

ANDERSON: There were several of them, but she was the leading Japan basher. Awful. Then after that was of course that impinged on the fighter plane that they were building.

Q: The FX.

ANDERSON: And that reverberated over in that direction, and that then we had concluded a bad deal on the FX and it had to be renegotiated.

Q: Well, Congress played in the FX thing. I mean the one thing bled into the other because the FX thing was who was going to get the benefit of the technological revolution. The Japanese were tangled up in the argument that they don't export military hardware.

ANDERSON: Well, except to the U.S. The problem was that we wanted more of the deal. So we negotiated a deal, and then it broke down because Congress demanded that we get a better deal. Ozawa came over to see me at my apartment, my house and we talked about what we might do about it. I think we began to come up with a solution. So eventually, he was the guy that worked it out. I was working with him. So we had a first class relationship. That helped when we really got something horrible going on like that because that was really awful. It was nasty and vicious nationalistic on both sides, really endangering the security relationship. So that was an invaluable friendship I had.

Q: So that worked on the FX thing. The Toshiba thing was very stressful.

ANDERSON: Well, it was awful. Well, the FX was even worse. It was just pure nationalism on both sides. I guess less emotional, but it engaged a lot of people very negatively. So those were our two big horrible things. But managed to get past them.

Q: One thing I wanted to ask earlier. Ambassador Mansfield was on duty for almost a decade.

ANDERSON: Twelve years.

Q: Twelve years.

ANDERSON: Longest of any ambassador ever.

Q: In twelve years he's met everybody.

ANDERSON: Everybody.

Q: Does that impact on the ability of the other sections to make contacts and get things done?

ANDERSON: No.

Q: I mean if people think they can call on Mansfield then why bother with the political section.

ANDERSON: No, the people didn't. They respected him and didn't come and make special pleas with him. We had an hierarchical arrangement. If it was a minister he would see them although I did occasionally. Prime minister that was his bailiwick, but the vice ministers I was their contact, economic side as well. Then the next rung down the counselors would see the director general level, all of the deputies. So that was pretty well established. The Japanese accepted those modalities. So it wasn't a problem. They didn't escalate. They just didn't do that. They didn't want to bother him with something that was less important. We had great communications up and down. They weren't a problem. No problem there. Most people just come to pay their respects. Just to meet him. A lot of people would come to the Foreign Ministry. They were going to New York, the UN, they wanted to come and pay their respect. More like having a king or an emperor there that they wanted to pay their respects to. There was a great fondness for him. Yukio Sato, who was the UN ambassador, just adored him. Used to come over and pay his respects. People in Washington. The vice minister of foreign affairs got together with me and we alternated between the political or economic minister counselor and once a month had lunch or breakfast and talked about everything. So that was a very good mechanism for dealing with things in a formal way. I took care of an awful lot of business that way. So we didn't have to troop over there to see them.

Q: What's it like to live in Tokyo? Are you getting any spare time or are you going to the embassy Saturday morning?

ANDERSON: Going in on Saturday morning but had a wonderful time. We had about four receptions of one kind or another every night. So you'd go to those. Have supper, have lobster and asparagus, have supper, but it wasn't horrible. I worked more in Washington. I worked every day until about seven-thirty until it was time to go to those receptions so about twelve hours and go to one or two receptions. He didn't like to go to a lot of those. So I went to most of the national day things. There were 150 countries there. That was a lot. And all kinds of receptions, so he didn't like to do that.

He had very good relations, wonderful relations with Crown Prince Akihito and Princess Michiko. I think before he left he had a dinner for them. Emperor Hirohito was sick at the time and people thought he was on his way out. So we had the Crown Prince, Crown Princess, and just a handful of other people. I ended up talking to the Crown Prince who became Emperor about a month later for about forty-five minutes, and I talked to her for about forty-five minutes as well. He wanted to talk about kingdoms. I said, "Your majesty I just—so I know a little bit about kingdoms too." But he was very interested in that, but it was a small group of us. That was fascinating. The other thing he wanted to talk about was Vietnam. He wanted to understand why the Vietnamese people didn't fight the

communists and why we failed there. So that was quite interesting that he was interested in such.

Q: What was the answer to those two questions?

ANDERSON: What was the answer? The government didn't have the legitimacy. Ho Chi Minh did, the nationalists. So the southern rulers did not have that cache with the public. The corruption bit into what they did have. And he wondered why the American people turned against it. I said, well eventually they realized that we were trying to help the side that didn't have legitimacy and that were not prepared to fight to the end with the same commitment that the northerners were.

Q: Well, the issue basically boils down to which side is able to capture the flag of nationalism. That was what the Chinese civil war was about too, and the academics still thrash about was that the social issues or the nationalistic issue because these were all unfinished nationalistic revolutions.

ANDERSON: Well, that's what it was. We had the hold of the nationalists. Same thing in Korea for a long time. That's not true now. That's been reversed. It was true for a long time. The Princess was very interested in European literature, which I happened to study, so I could talk to her too. But he had very easy relations with them. Prince and Princess Takamoto were assigned to take care of the Americans. They would show up and the ambassador was very close with them.

Once Mrs. Mansfield said, "Hey I've got to go to Washington, but the Tokyo Washington Ladies Association is meeting. Will you meet with them?" I said, "Of course." So about 150 ladies would go there and they said, Princess Takamoto is coming. You should greet her and then take her and pay attention to her. So I did, brushed up on my imperial languages, and she came in and spoke English far better than I did in French even better, absolutely beautiful. I fell in love with her on the spot, just so charming. The Mansfields were very fond of this Prince and Princess Takamoto. He was a little bit loony. He went to 180 ballet performances a year. He died last year. But the whole imperial family they knew well, got along real well socially and so forth. So that was a nice asset too. Once the ambassador was gone and the American governors came over, maybe a dozen, ten or twelve and they were calling the Emperor. So I had to escort them over to call on Emperor Hirohito. We went in, and they met the people there in the Bird Room to tell us what was going to happen and they said, There will be a tinkling of a bell. You all will be lined up and the Emperor will then come in and he will come and stand in front of you Mr. Anderson and you should say a few words to him. Then he will go and speak to each of the governors and the wives should not shake his hand, but if he extends his hand to shake your hand, it's okay for the wives to shake his hand but don't initiate that. He will say a few words to each of the governors and come back and then he'll stand in front of you again Mr. Anderson and you should say a few more words to him." So okay. So he came and I thought up enough Japanese to say something about world peace or something. Then he met the governors and he knew a lot about each state. So I was very

impressed how well he had been briefed. He knew there'd been a drought in North Dakota and the wheat crop was short. It was just amazing how well they'd briefed him. He did exactly that and he came back and then we talked about internal relations between America and Japan. Then he left but that was kind of fun. When Mike Armacost came, we got in a carriage and rode over to the Imperial Palace for him to present his credentials. By then the Crown Prince had taken over.

Armacost was astonished that he was there. Schultz called him and he couldn't believe it. Well, what else there was about that. Well, just a huge amount of hue and cry in Washington from the Congress about trade relations. The embassy's not doing enough about it and the government wasn't doing enough about it. But there wasn't anything, we were doing everything we could possibly think of. Just intractable and there were basic reasons and we see them now with China.

Q: Yes. All the while you're responsible for the running of the embassy and the morale and those kinds of things. I would suspect that the American July Fourth in Tokyo is a big event.

ANDERSON: Huge thing.

I had a great administrative counselor. He was a wonderful guy and he took care of all that stuff. I mean I had to keep an eye on it, but just didn't have to worry about administrative stuff because he was so good. The Japanese were so good. We had two huge events for July Fourth. We had a big reception at the ambassador's residence and had a huge thing with all the Americans in the compound. The administrative things we didn't have anything go wrong. I think it was that the embassy just worked so well. Things took care of themselves in the main. We had good houses, and people didn't complain about that. One of the big fights was that the FBO [Office of Foreign Buildings Operations] wanted to sell my house because of the exchange rate. Fortunately the rates went down, and the prices plummeted. So they gave up but they made a push on it. A student of Frank Lloyd Wright's had it built, designed it for the Firestone people. It was a beautiful house and I got it renovated when I left. We did all the planning beforehand, and we had the marble covered up. I think it was Ed, the guy who was in it earlier, he was ambassador to Burma. His wife came in there and painted all the shogi screens and just covered up everything with paint, with brass stair rails and this marble all over the place. We uncovered all that and restored it to its original beauty. It's gorgeous now. But there was fighting with Washington trying to keep them from selling the place and then getting ready to renovate the ambassador's house. That took some time.

Q: Just maintaining that embassy is a major financial commitment for the department.

ANDERSON: Yes, it's a big budget. What did we have, twelve million, fourteen million I think at that time. So what were the problems? A little bit of drug problem with the kids but not much fortunately. I would go over occasionally and we'd invite all the families to talk. They'd tell me anything they wanted to. I followed Barnes, Shoemith, and

Gleysteen's habit of targeting the other junior officers about once a month to see what they were thinking about. Go around and visit everybody from time to time.

Q: What were the junior officers thinking about from time to time?

ANDERSON: Oh they all wanted to talk about their careers because at that point I had a lot of power over the personnel system. So that was—

Q: The DCM's prime job—get everybody their next tour.

ANDERSON: It was the principal task I did, and they got me back later. But that was the main thing. They wanted to talk about the issues too. What to do about the trade issues. What could we be doing? Political problems. So we just had a good discussion about whatever was on people's minds. They had good people there so I enjoyed that. We didn't have any particularly lethal interagency battles. We had everybody there but just in small numbers. Agency didn't cause any problems and I basically dealt with them. We didn't have any problems. Commerce and State got along pretty well and—had a few Commerce people that were Herb Cochrane was the guy who was in—with me. He was, for a while, a commercial counselor. They were a little more rabid than the economic section. We let them take out the—somewhere. Absolutely first class finance people. Tim Geitman was there for a while, and of course he's now chairman of the Fed or something. He's just gone straight up. Do you know him?

Q: No.

ANDERSON: When I was in Treasury he was just a kid. But just went straight to the top.

Q: That's great.

ANDERSON: I think he was an assistant secretary when I was in Washington. The next time in the early '90s and I just read he's doing something incredibly meteoric. But anyway he was good. We assigned one FSO to work with them and I said, "Okay, tell me what's going on in this economy." In the economic relationships, I found that they were very provincial. They knew about the trade issue, but there was almost nobody in the economic section that could tell me, brief me on the state of the Japanese economy or U.S.-Japanese relations. So I beat them up a little bit and I finally got the counselor so he could do a decent job and the minister could. Then this guy from econ that I assigned to the treasury unit—was good. That was the only huge problem that I saw like that. I just couldn't believe that they couldn't give a decent briefing on what the state of the economy was.

Q: Did the inspectors come through at some point? Were you inspected?

ANDERSON: Yes, they came through.

Q: What was your grade?

ANDERSON: I don't remember. We got a high grade. I don't remember. I don't remember any very bad things they said about the mission.

Q: Following your sojourn to Tokyo you're brought back again to Washington. Short string this time. You're the principal deputy assistant secretary [PDAS] for Asia Pacific. How did that assignment arrive?

ANDERSON: Early on Armacost thought he was going to be the assistant secretary, and he had sent word out that he wanted me to be his deputy. Then it became Richard Solomon, and he called me and said he wanted me to be his deputy. The only fly in the ointment was Solomon's hearings. There was an article in the *Times* right before the hearings saying that a telegram had come from Embassy Tokyo signed by Desaix Anderson saying that if we threatened the 301 action against Japan that it would cause a very strong reaction among the Japanese. So Helms said, "Solomon, I'm reading in this *New York Times* that there's a man that you're considering making your deputy, and if you notice in this article he just sounds like a traitor to the nation," just really tough language like that. "I want your assurance that you won't make him your deputy." That went on for three pages in the *Congressional Record* just on and on about this. Solomon's response was, "Mr. Chairman I will certainly take into account your views." But that's about all he ever said. Then he called me that night and said not to worry about it. Wasn't anything going to change. So that was fine.

Q: Because I mean, that's a fairly dicey threat. I mean Helms has his blacklist of Foreign Service officers.

ANDERSON: Well, Bill Triplett I knew had put him up to that. I had never run into Helms.

Q: Did you know Triplett—

ANDERSON: Triplett did that. They just wanted a nice scapegoat for the frustrations on the trade front. So came back and told Solomon on the phone that I wanted to take care of China, Japan, Korea, and Mongolia. So he said fine. So I had stolen all the big ones.

Who else was there, Dave Lambertson was there in Southeast Asia and he was wonderful of course. Well Bill Clark didn't know anything about China. Who was the other person who was coming? I can't remember.

Q: Let's see, Solomon, Lambertson, Marilyn Meyers—

ANDERSON: She was economic.

Q: Then Steve Piezinick?

ANDERSON: Piezinick. He was the soothsayer, psychological, psychic advisor to Solomon. He writes novels. Isn't that one of those who knew him back there. He was kind of nutty. Well—came from Treasury. That was part of the Reagan—I mean Republicans insisted on having a hard line on Japan, and Marilyn Meyers was economic too. So I guess we had two of them. That's why I was able to steal China.

Q: It must've been interesting because Kent Weidemann is China desk officer, the office director. Let's see who else. Japan is Mellotte. He's the office director. Korea is Spence Richardson.

ANDERSON: Well, they were all friends of mine and they were all terrific. Weidemann is absolutely first class. He and Doug—had a very close relationship. So we were on the same wavelength on China, meaning we wanted to preserve the relationship and do what we could to get past Tiananmen Square.

Q: At that same time. In fact, when do you start?

ANDERSON: May have been July.

Q: You started right after.

ANDERSON: Right in the wake of it, yes. Wiedemann, as I say, was just absolutely first class, wonderful. He and—got along fine, and the White House and we were on exactly the same wavelength. So every question of how to deal with things in a way that you can defend them publicly and with Congress, we were all on the same wavelength. Weidemann got lots of responsibility and kept me well informed so I was delighted with him. I could not have been more pleased. Mellotte same thing. We had worked together several times. Spence, another old friend from Vietnam days, same thing. So I had wonderful country directors and then when they left I was able to get four OIs put into those positions to fill the rest of those positions just to the horror of the Personnel Department. That's what they never forgave me for. They've been after me forever—somehow hoodwinked them and got Chris Lefleura, Lolito, Matt Daily, and one other one. We had Chuck Hartman up in—who was another protégé of mine. So we were well placed up there.

Q: Now you're making a very interesting observation in that those offices, you're interested as much in the staffing of the seventh floor offices staffers as you are your own staffing so the China watch or the East Asia person up there is well known and familiar to you and the secretary's office itself and other places so that you are, your bureaucratic personnel shades are a little bit wider than just the bureau.

ANDERSON: Well, and those two country director positions I realize that that was very important. Mellotte then went to work with John—bureau, which was terrific. So I was very concerned about what was going to be EMPM. Secretary's office, we didn't have

any special person there but we knew how to develop a relationship up there. Kent Weidemann I think he was there. We cultivated them too. But I just realized from the other two jobs that that was very terribly important. I knew if he didn't have good people in those office director positions you were in real trouble because I had seen a couple that weren't very good. I spent a lot of time talking to Personnel—somebody whoever it was over there, put all those OIs there because they were clearly more qualified than other people. So the whole time I was there I had great support underneath them and up, with Kimmett I'd recommended Chuck Hartman. So that worked well too and I knew Kimmett from before.

Q: And Doug Pauls over at the NSC.

ANDERSON: Doug Pauls.

Q: So he's solid and experienced.

ANDERSON: Solid on China. That was the biggest problem we had right then and he was fine on Japan too. So we didn't have a particular problem on that score either.

Q: Let's focus on the China thing. Tiananmen Square is a disaster for both sides. And both the Chinese and the Americans have to propitiate their publics before they can get back together is the way Bush and Scowcroft write it in the book, which I found very interesting. They make it very clear that there's all kinds of things they could've done, but the publics on both sides made it very difficult to get over this event. Scowcroft makes this trip, December of that year, I think it is.

ANDERSON: Was it that late?

Q: No, well the first one was in July.

ANDERSON: Yes.

Q: Then there was a second one later in November or December, I think it was. Of course what that is about is he's trying to get together with the Chinese and saying here's what I need to handle my public to get over this. What do you need and it just didn't work out. There was in fact Deng is quoted as saying, "I can't give you any help, I'm too busy with my own problems here."

ANDERSON: Which book is that in? Scowcroft or Bush. I need to read that book.

Q: It's an interesting discussion. Lampton too gets into the whole business of having to pull apart and pretend you're being tough and whatnot. The difficulty that creates in maintaining a relationship when you're supposed to be not maintaining a relationship.

What does Tiananmen Square look like to you?

ANDERSON: Well, that permeated down to us. I didn't talk to Scowcroft directly or the president directly, but we certainly were getting through ESP that this was what wanted to do and that was—as well. Well, I was in my house in Tokyo when the Tiananmen Square massacre occurred. We had twenty-four hours of coverage. Then a lot of people came and stayed with me when they left China.

Q: They evacuated.

ANDERSON: They were evacuated from— Some students who I had known. The ANA Hotel, that new hotel at the airport, hadn't opened yet, but they turned that over to us and put people there for free. So I had a direct view and direct horror of what had happened. I think I, therefore, felt it very strongly. I had been very excited about the student demonstrations, and thought the regime was trying to do the right, wise thing. So I felt all those negative feelings that most American people did. At the same time I knew how important the relationship was and we could not let it deteriorate beyond repair. That was my mindset and I went back and I found Ken Weidemann—had the same attitude in the White House. So really there were no barriers in trying to work toward the policy goals of President Bush and Scowcroft. Again I knew President Bush and had a very favorable attitude towards him. That helped. It was much better than having a bad attitude toward the president. So I felt quite comfortable then trying to do whatever we could and manage it that way. I will readily confess that there were smarter people dealing with it that gave the right advice like Ken.

Q: And what did that look like? I mean, what, I suppose you're getting a lot of vibrations out of Congress.

ANDERSON: And the public too and the media. It was clear we had to take some actions. We tried to calibrate those with what would send a clear signal but would not show that we could not operate as we had before but that we didn't want the basic relationship upset or overturned. I think we came out pretty well. You were a China hand. What do you think?

Q: Well, given the hand that we were dealt, the view at that time of course was this was Kent State and a lot of people—

ANDERSON: Where were you then?

Q: I was in Beijing.

ANDERSON: Beijing. You guys probably felt stronger than we did.

Q: In one sense, yes, but on the other hand there were those of us who knew that it wasn't Kent State, which was what came off the newspaper reporting. In fact Mike Chinoy wrote a book later called China Live and he was the CNN reporter. He admits to some personal

sadness that he left this impression that it was Kent State or he was part of the process that created this impression because it wasn't, and that impression just keeps people from failing to see all the changes and whatnot that subsequently occurred in China. But I mean it was disastrous. I mean, I had an officer quit the Foreign Service.

ANDERSON: Really.

Q: On me. They couldn't handle it. Whereas I'd been through this before. We went through this in Bangkok, October '73. That was how countries go, it's not a step that you would wish on anybody, but countries go through these kinds of circumstances. We've had our own riots.

ANDERSON: We have them again.

Q: And that kind of stuff and we have them again. You don't approach these things by saying this will never and can't happen. Sometimes if people mismanage their social relations these kinds of things happen, but it doesn't necessarily mean that somebody deliberately sat down and plotted, well gosh, I'm going to create a circumstance in which thousands of people are going to die. You tend to stumble into these things like World War I out of inadvertence rather than out of planning. In fact I always tell people to read in serial Jim Mann's book [About Face], Patrick Tyler's book [A Great Wall] and then David Lampton's book on U.S.-China relations [Following the Leader]. Jim's book uses the Kent State view of Tiananmen Square. That colors everything he writes.

ANDERSON: That's so easy for a reporter to do.

Q: Then Patrick Tyler who is the New York Times is a little more sophisticated and he's writing later. He's interviewing Chi Ling and some of the student demonstrators now in exile who admit they wanted to provoke violence. So he no longer uses the Kent State image. Then you get David Lampton's book, which is even more sophisticated because it adds more variables, more actors. Each of these is more finely tuned so that you're no longer dealing with Kent State analogy, but of course that's where the academics are now. They've dropped Kent State because that's not where the press and the public are, and they're still back there that this is Kent State and this is terrible.

ANDERSON: That's very interesting. Thank you.

Q: But you had to deal with Tiananmen Square, and how does the State Department organize itself for this? I mean—first let's go back to Tokyo. You're getting these people that were evacuating out of Beijing. We evacuated about fifteen hundred people, chartered airplanes, they're coming into Narita, I suppose. I've forgotten at the time, but you were saying that the Japanese opened a hotel for you.

ANDERSON: The new hotel, it wasn't ready, just about to open, but all of a sudden they just let us use it for free. That's the PR [public relations] move but very nice, very

convenient. Those other people came and stayed with me a few days and then they left. They were bringing fresh reports, but really twenty-four hours on the Japanese televisions. I've seen an awful lot, maybe even more than some of them, but they had been directly involved. But very negative comments from them. A massacre.

Q: Yes. Of course all the more when you realize what it really is because the point was the entire city of Beijing rose up in revolt. It had nothing to do with the students. The army had to shoot its way into the city. That's what it was all about. That's why it's not Kent State. It was more like the Paris Communes of 1832, 1848, 1871. That's why the proper Chinese response was two months later—took the mayor out and shot him just as—did in its own time to placate the Taiwanese when they massacred them in '47. They stuck the mayor of Taipei with—took him out in a field and shot him. So the party made its amends in that way.

ANDERSON: Well, I think my experience in Japan convinced me of the fundamental importance of that country to the United States. I felt we don't have that kind of relationship with China, but we need to have that kind for the future of our own country. So that, the preservation of the relationship in the longer run, was what was paramount in my mind despite the horrors of what they had done. That was I guess a sad reality but we have to, we cannot have this relationship disrupted. It's too important.

Q: That being said, how does one go about it? Because it's not going to go over the Chinese embassy and turn the spigot the other way. I mean it's your domestic problem.

ANDERSON: Well, that's why the sanctions were essential. We've still got them, but they were essential, and had to be done. We had to cool down the public relationship but I think sending Scowcroft over there and talking to them was very wise. I didn't know anything about it until afterwards. But we had to send one signal privately, which is not contradicting the other. It's just looking at it from a longer perspective. But dealing with the problem head on had to be some combination of those two. We couldn't just do negative things and not try to send some other signals at the same time.

Q: Shortly after Tiananmen the Chinese tried to handle this too by bringing in another ambassador. They switch ambassadors to help send a signal. You were there when Ambassador Zhu Qizhen presented his credentials [October 1989].

ANDERSON: No, I don't remember, I didn't go to the presentation of his credentials. Who did? I guess Ken did. I think the country director went to those. I think. Am I wrong?

Q: Cite a name on the list.

ANDERSON: I went over to present credentials, somebody presenting to President Bush. But that was when I was deputy assistant secretary. So I guess I did, but I don't know. For some reason I didn't go to that one. I remember others that I went to though.

Q: Can you give us a sense of the general atmosphere, I mean generally nobody wants the relationship to totally fall apart. But what's the thinking as to how long it's going to take to mend this wound?

ANDERSON: I don't think I had a clear idea. I mean, I think the expectation was you were going to take some time, some years to really overcome it. So we weren't thinking of a timetable or at least I wasn't thinking of timetables. We would have to wait and see what happened.

How we dealt with it. We couldn't do it in isolation or where we would be the ones that would suffer all the damage that occurred. So that was another important factor, getting agreement from how the Europeans and Japan particularly reacted.

Q: So again it's bigger than even the bilateral relationship. It's everybody in the neighborhood and everybody that's an important actor.

ANDERSON: Yes, China's a global actor even though they're coming out in a terrible way. But it was a global problem, and so it had to be dealt with in a global context. We needed to round up other people or consult with them so we were doing roughly the same thing that would tend to help preserve the bilateral relationship that was done in concert with others.

Q: In those discussions with the Japanese and Europeans, are they suggesting ways either themselves as the interlocutors or others take the lead?

ANDERSON: I think we took the lead.

Q: Well, you were principal deputy assistant secretary until '92. So in that three years did you feel that you made some progress in getting things back together again?

ANDERSON: I tell people, in one of Solomon's meetings, we got together every afternoon, I said I'm thinking about going to China. Nobody said anything. This was in early '92. So I thought that it was time we started reviewing our relationship. Solomon said, "Okay. Fine." Then when I got over there and I was at lunch in Beijing with Jim Lilly, Ambassador Lilly. I wasn't trying to have any visibility, just wanted to come over and see, get the feel for where things stood. Then the press found out I was there, and Margaret Tutwiler first said, "Oh that's a low-level Foreign Service person who's over there." Then they had a big uproar in Washington, and of course nobody remembered that I had told them I was going and I had. But that was just a tempest in a teapot, but I felt like at that point that we could get at my level, which was not very high to begin to try to get back toward communicating a little better. So that's why I did that. I didn't think any great harm came of it. Just trying to help a little bit.

Q: Also in your portfolio is Taiwan on the China side of things.

ANDERSON: I didn't go there. I asked Dave Roy if I could come from Tokyo. He said, "No. You're too high even though you haven't taken the job yet."

Q: Did you have any interaction with the ACCNA?

ANDERSON: Yes. I talked to them from time to time, particularly when we were having those arms package deals. I got to go, Ambassador Ting Mao-shih was the putative ambassador. So I saw him and went to dinner at his house. I was in touch with him.

Q: Good press. They had good access.

ANDERSON: They had access to me and Solomon too. So they shouldn't have complained. I didn't invite them to the State Department when I saw them. They knew they could call me up if they wanted to. We didn't, I don't think they ever raised Tiananmen. It was more, well, they were more interested in arms, what we were going to sell them, and they knew that I was involved in that. So I think that's probably why they wanted to see me.

Q: You were involved in what?

ANDERSON: I was running that little committee that decided what we would sell to them.

Q: Right. The arms sales.

ANDERSON: So there wasn't anything particularly contentious there except—just trying to cultivate good feeling, and I don't think we had any good response on the arms sales. I didn't feel like there was any other particular thing at the moment. Tell me we had a crisis with them during that time and I didn't realize it.

Q: Again you're responsible for Japan by that '89, '92 timeframe as the economic thing peaks.

ANDERSON: It started the exchange rate and then the recession that began in '89, really '90 in Japan. It was getting past peak. So things got better. They were still at high pitch, but still they were much better. Eighty-eight and '89 were the worst two years. But for Mr. Bush on his trip in January '92 we had planned an absolutely magnificent trip.

Q: Oh this is where he got sick.

ANDERSON: We were going to, they were going to issue the Tokyo declaration, Miyazawa and Bush. We had sat down for months working out this august piece of paper, touched on everything that we were going to deal with and how it was going to be dealt with. This was supposed to be the centerpiece, and the Japanese were ecstatic about this

because they made a lot of concessions on a lot of the language, security and trade issues, commitments that went far beyond what we had gotten out of them in trade negotiations. Then Dick Thornburgh lost in Pennsylvania [Note: May 1991 U.S. Special Election] and the Bush administration panicked. That's when he invited Iacocca and those nut cases from the automobile industry to go with him, and Solomon was invited to go on the trip. We had done this wonderful planning and everything was in place. There was this high-minded declaration announced and with Iacocca on board they went over there and it just made Bush vomit. I said, "You've just ruined your election prospects, re-election prospects. Because here you could've had a wonderful trip over there, managed the trade issues, but taking Iacocca with you and getting sick just took all the luster that you could've gained from that trip."

Q: I'm not sure I understand the reference to Thornburgh losing the Senate race.

ANDERSON: They thought this means that the Republicans are in trouble. What was Bush going to do in that month or two that remained to burnish his credentials as a great leader. Instead of going over and being a great leader with the Japanese which was his natural instinct, he got—tricked him into all this—convinced him to take the automobile people over there to go and scream and shout. Then his getting sick got him, I don't know whether that was because of something he ate or because of his mood, but that was a terrible blow to his presidency. It just made him look like a third rate car salesman. It was awful. I'm convinced that's why he lost. At least that was a big reason because of that awful trip whereas he had a very high-minded trip and issued this glorious declaration, and I think it would've been a big—

Q: Did this declaration get lost in the whole process?

ANDERSON: It's just nobody paid attention to it instead of building it up as the centerpiece. We in the bureaucracy over there and Miyazawa himself, he and I had talked about it because he was a good friend. I went to see him after Tokyo, and we talked about exactly that. He as prime minister had gone to all this trouble to put all this stuff together, and then Bush just sort of put it aside and vomited. (laughs) Oh it was terrible.

Q: It raises an interesting observation. I mean even with your position now in Washington, you're making trips and touching bases out in Korea, out in Japan, out in China so that you keep fresh on the issues or with the personalities that are there.

ANDERSON: Are you asking me a question?

Q: Yes, I am.

ANDERSON: Yes, I do. I keep fresh. I try to go to Asia once a year. I did a blast at the administration on the Asian American Forum, a TV channel up here. It was a Korean president of some university. I think he was there and then there was a guy from Dow Jones who was quite, rather negative, John Chambers. I, of course, am very critical of

North Korea policy. This Korean president liked it so well he said, “You’ve got to come to Seoul to make a speech.” “Fine. I’ll be there.” So I got a—trip with some already paid for. So I try to go once a year. I go to China, Japan at least, and either Korea or Vietnam.

Q: During your P-Desk period you did the same traveling too.

ANDERSON: Well, I went to Japan and Korea a lot. I went with Secretary of Defense Cheney twice, and thought he was a nice fellow. Had no idea.

Then I went with Vice President Dan Quayle too. We went on an extended tour. We were in Indonesia when Rajiv Gandhi died. So they had us hold there and we went to India for the funeral, which was a magnificent occasion. Just incredible. Just millions of people on the streets and you didn’t know whether they were violent and were going to come and destroy you or the president’s house or what. But just the tension and all was enormous. We were very close and could see the funeral pyre and her [Sonia Gandhi] lighting it, children walking around. We got there and Carl Jackson was with me. You know him? Okay, so we were the two escorts, and Dan Quayle and Mrs. Quayle went in to see the president of India. They put us in this enormous room for about five minutes waiting. Then we would go join them. Lo and behold who walked in right behind us was Arafat. That was before we could say anything to him. He looked like a huge toad coming in the room and walking straight, those big eyes poking straight. “Carl, what the devil are we going to do? Just run past him and get out of here.” But fortunately he turned and went that way and then we did walk there. It was terrifying, as bad as all the millions of Indians running around in the streets. I like Dan Quayle too even though he was kind of light-headed. But he would do, like Reagan, what you told him to do. We got to Alaska and some guy asked a question about the whales and I got him to say something calm rather than, “Yes, we’ve got to beat those god damned Japanese up for eating those whales.” So then he said exactly the right thing. So it was a pleasure to travel with those guys because they’d always say exactly what you told them to say. So those were three trips I made during those three years, and then I went to China by myself. I’m sure I went out to Japan a couple of times too. We also went to Korea a couple of times, went there with Cheney and Colin Powell for the security talks. We went out there pretty often.

Q: That brings us back to the point you were raising earlier, when you had these extensive thick relationships, you have these annual meetings that you do so that you have an opportunity to talk it over and whatnot. With Korea, now you’re at a position where you’re going to these SSCs [Security Sub-Committee] and with the Japanese too so you’re not just covering it from the embassy side. You’re one of the principals now at these meetings. I think you did one of the U.S.-Japan SSCs held in Washington in June or October of ‘91. You’re one of the primary people on the U.S. side conducting, going through this agenda. My characterization of those agendas again are extensive. I mean they cover a number of pol-mil and political issues. I think the Japanese at that time were, well there would be one representative from JDA and one from—Matsuura—

ANDERSON: Matsuura.

Q: Came here at that time.

ANDERSON: He's the head of the—

Q: North American—

ANDERSON: UNESCO [United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization] now.

Q: Oh okay.

ANDERSON: I saw him in Paris not long ago. Wonderful guy. Yes, we would talk about everything, and they were usually pretty harmonious. There were other times we were trying to convince them to do something. I recall Ford and Jackson and I went to Tokyo once to try to nudge them on something. So there were issues that would come up. There was a lot of good will in the U.S. government towards Japan, and usually if we could talk this through with them and explain the rationale with them, we probably could come out with a solution that was acceptable to both sides. So there was not a lot of tension on those sides. It was more just reasoning together. Close relationship. We knew each other very well. So there was no animosity, just reason together, come around without—problem.

Q: Shifting focus a little bit. There's another main actor out in the Pacific that we haven't touched on very much. That's CINCPAC [Commander in Chief, U.S. Pacific Fleet]. You were talking about a conference one time in Honolulu. At the P-Desk level are you having more interaction with CINCPAC?

ANDERSON: Well, CINCPAC was certainly at the consultative meetings with both Japan and China, uh Japan and South Korea. So they were certainly there. I stopped occasionally to talk to CINCPAC. They encouraged me to do so, and then they of course came to Tokyo when I was there. I think they came to Washington—I saw them as a pretty important figure. Prueher got to know real well, for example. He came to Vietnam. I was very pleased. Then Ron Hayes I guess before so I always regarded them as an important actor and I always tried to communicate with them. I don't know if that answers your question or not.

Q: I think it does because we don't often get a chance to mention the role that they play in these games, in these interactions because you're so focused on diplomatic issues or trade issues because you've got a full command, U.S.-FK, FJ, and FK, Korea, Japan. You've got CINCPAC. These are major actors out there.

ANDERSON: Well, I think in Japan they certainly took his visits very seriously, and if we had something we were trying to promote then he would put it in a broader context. So that was very helpful. They played a major role, and I think they played it well. Very

helpful in terms of getting things done. When we get around to Vietnam, I'll tell you about Prueher, what he did.

Q: Actually why don't we move on.

ANDERSON: I need to tell you about one other thing. It's the funeral for Hirohito.

Q: Oh yes.

ANDERSON: Well, it was in January of '89.

Q: Yes, it was months before Tiananmen Square.

ANDERSON: Okay. Bush had been sworn in four days, I think, earlier. But there was no question that he was going to come to the funeral. It was right when I left. Immediately they told us he was coming and the ambassador left in December because of his health. Wasn't going to be there. Immediately told the Japanese that he was coming. They started enormous logistical things that they had to work out. The Secret Service said, "We want him to sit in this seat," even though they had a whole audience there. So the Japanese got into their computer and used every combination that they could come up with: when people had visited, how many times they had visited, and was it a state visit or an official visit, every combination they could think of to get him in that seat. They did of course. So the Secret Service was happy, but there were some other problems associated with them, which I don't need to talk about. But at least in terms of where they put him, he was there in the right place. Then after the funeral—this is something out of *The Tale of Genji*—just one, just all these people, a gray day, here comes the Crown Prince walking alone and following him the Crown Princess.

Q: Everybody in traditional dress. I remember.

ANDERSON: Oh it was just, it was something. Then they had a reception, and I was escorting President Bush around, and I, it was unbelievable how many people he knew and who recognized him. I mean, he recognized that many names, just incredible. Here's the King of Jordan, obviously your majesty, and then president of Zambia and the vice foreign minister of Japan. He turned around, "Hi, Kiki. How are you doing?" Called him by his first name. The Russians had somebody from the Politburo. Just everybody on the globe was there, and he knew them all. It was unbelievable. He remembered their names and chatted with them all. So I was very impressed with his abilities. Somebody had come from Paraguay. I don't remember what his rank was. Maybe the president of Paraguay. I don't know. Maybe it was. He introduced himself. Bush didn't know him. He said, "We're making some reforms in our country." Bush said, "Well, I'm glad to hear it. You need them." And then turned around and talked to somebody else. He was a natural. But most of it was a very warm relationship, just very impressive. What a fine diplomat he was and how many people around the world that he knew. Of course he had been in the UN and that made a lot of difference and had been vice president. So he was someone

that was, I think, well prepared on a diplomatic front to be the president. It was a real pleasure. Jimmy Baker came along with him and he said, "Jimmy, come ride with me." It was fun to see them together.

Q: Hello, today is January 5, 2006 with Desaix Anderson. Let's jump right into it. I thought reading the last transcript that I would like to try and start over a little. In 1989 you had just come back from Tokyo to be the PDAS. When did you get back to the department, do you recall?

ANDERSON: It was very quickly after Tiananmen, maybe the end of June, very soon.

Q: Very soon after Tiananmen. Can you talk about what Tiananmen was all about?

ANDERSON: First I was in Tokyo for Tiananmen and I had some of the refugees from Beijing.

Q: Refugees meaning embassy personnel?

ANDERSON: Embassy people who stayed with me for several days and a student and also an embassy officer's wife. In Tokyo twenty-four hours a day it was covered so it was very emphatically impressed on me what was going on. I saw the major events, which was the man before the tank and so forth, and I had been keenly paying attention to it beforehand. The basic statement had been made by the U.S. government and the basic thrust of the policy was that the profound concern had already been pronounced. I was not involved in that but the follow up in terms of the sanctions and the political posture and the degree to which we would talk to other governments and so forth I was very much involved in that.

Q: How did that work out? I mean Tiananmen is a big thing in our relationship with China at the highest national level.

ANDERSON: Highest national level, President Bush of course was still the president and Scowcroft the national security advisor and nonetheless I had an absolutely wonderful China country director, Kent Weidemann, and David Keegan was the Taiwan director, and I had worked very closely with both of them and they were both absolutely first class—I think he got that first and I didn't know him but we just got along.

Q: But now as policy unfolds what kind of pressures do you feel under? I mean Congress is making statements, where are the balance points, who is pushing for and what might have been some extreme motivation?

ANDERSON: Well certainly in Congress there were all sorts of extreme motivations but also publicly as well editorials. Within the government though we had interagency groups but the key facet was that we were working directly and very closely with the NSC and that meant we were working directly with Brent Scowcroft and the president. Eagleburger

was of course at State and he was close to Scowcroft as well. So it was almost seamless, they were talking about everything. We wanted to have an appropriate reaction but it had to be very strong and very clear, profound disapproval of what they had done but we did not want to destroy the relationship. We wanted to preserve that but we had to make it very clear that we had to react very strongly and quickly. Because there was that harmony of views in State and with NSC that was basically driving the policy and other agencies weren't going crazy like they do with Japan, Commerce and USTR [U.S. Trade Representative] and so forth or the Pentagon. It was a very rational policy making period in which we were determined that we would do the right thing but not over react.

Q: One of the things that got involved in that was a broadening military-to-military relationship with the Chinese and the main sanctions that were put in place fell on to that thread, the military-to-military thread, peace pearl and all of that. Was there anything in particular about selecting the military-to-military relationship to damage it?

ANDERSON: It was because the PLA [People's Liberation Army] had been the main force that had attacked the students and the demonstrators so there was an instrument and therefore we had to aim the reaction in their direction.

Q: In one sense it also helped it to narrow their reaction, you weren't taking on the entire Chinese government.

ANDERSON: That is correct that it was pointed and discrete but had people to carry out the terrible events in Tiananmen.

Q: One of the interesting parts of Tiananmen was that Scowcroft went back and forth to Beijing twice in 1989. How much did you know?

ANDERSON: He went without my knowing. I only read about it in the papers like you did. Nope, that was kept a very closely held secret so I didn't know.

Q: What was their intent?

ANDERSON: Well I think it was just to emphasize directly to Deng Xiaoping and his leadership that what they had done was totally unacceptable and beyond the pale but at the same time that we wanted to preserve the basic relationship between the United States and China. Those were the two main political policies and they wanted to make it clear directly to the Chinese leaders, to Deng Xiaoping.

Q: Now Scowcroft was unmasked at the second trip and subsequent academic research suggests that it was Deng's opponents that pulled off this stunt rather than Deng himself because it certainly made the process all the more difficult, the acknowledgement that Scowcroft was out there. Did you feel any of that at that time?

ANDERSON: No I didn't feel that. I was pleased that they went because I thought that because of all the brouhaha here in Congress and so forth that we needed to speak directly to the leadership there and tell them what we were trying to do. It was not to subvert the sanctions or the public reaction but just to make clear that at the same time that we thought those actions were not justified we also did not want to destroy the basic relationship.

Q: This issue is so large, I mean the reaction to Tiananmen Square is so strong and the relationship between the two countries is so important, the Scowcroft visit is very unique. It's not like just calling in the resident ambassador and chewing him out and telling him to send a message which you were suggesting that we were very actively engaged with the Chinese government at all kinds of levels. Did you call in the Chinese ambassador?

ANDERSON: He was called in by people above me. I think Eagleburger or the secretary may have, I can't remember exactly but no it would have been up above my level. But certainly that was done and it was done in Beijing as well. But this was to go, as you said, well beyond what's the normal level of dialogue on such matters and that was to stress the importance of both our profound chagrin in what they had done but also that we wanted to maintain the relationship, so it was very important that it be done at a level that showed it was the president's policies. President Bush had been instrumental in helping to build the relationship so sending his personal envoy over there made it that much more emphatic both in terms of our horror with what they had done but also that we wanted to preserve the relationship.

Q: What did we presume we wanted them to do?

ANDERSON: Well I can imagine a lot of things that would have been very nice but we didn't expect them to do them. I think that we would have hoped that they would have moved toward measures of reform and dialogue which they obviously didn't do. But that's what we would have hoped—that military occasion would have ended and that beyond that they would again look at the down relationship with the nation and with the people and try to achieve a reconciliation and overcome the event rather than do as they exactly did. Until this day there had been no hint of an apology as to what had happened.

Q: How long did it take the Golan Dong to apologize for March '47?

ANDERSON: Oh it took awhile.

Q: But there we expected Beijing to be on a faster track.

ANDERSON: Oh I don't know how quickly they did. Do you know?

Q: Forty years.

ANDERSON: Four years?

Q: Forty.

ANDERSON: Forty. Okay, well we still got some time to go.

Q: That's what intrigues me because it's our standard that they're supposed to apologize to their people that are unrelated to their own domestic event.

ANDERSON: Well I think we knew that they weren't going to do anything that quickly but the quicker they did try to achieve an internal reconciliation and that is what we had hoped and they would have had to figure out how to do it.

Q: Or some sort of reconciliation that looked good to our people.

ANDERSON: No, I think we would have preferred they had something that looked good to their people but we knew that it was not going to be coming quickly but we hoped that it would be the goal that they would opt for in the longer term. They didn't execute Zhao Ziyang so that was obviously a good thing. They treated some of them with a little bit more discretion. Still, personally, I would hope that there would be some kind of reconciliation acknowledgement and that that would be something that needed to be overcome directly by the Chinese leadership.

Q: But that is a long range goal. At the time that this was unfolding Congress was getting excited.

ANDERSON: That was out of the question, of course, we knew that, which made it more difficult because of the world reaction, including in Congress. But that still was the underlying hope in the longer term, that they would find some way to reconcile themselves internally.

Q: The main penalty was breaking off the military-to-military relationship, the peace period. Did you get in much of that or was that handled over at the Pentagon?

ANDERSON: No, actually, I think even before I got back the parameters of what they were thinking of had been pretty well decided, so I was not involved in the details of that. It would have been in the first instance the Pentagon but again it would have been State working with NSC very closely as well but I think it had already proceeded before I returned.

Q: You picked a particularly unique way to start a new job.

ANDERSON: Well I picked a unique way to start the job on the Japan desk. The day before I started they announced that President Reagan was going to Japan in the fall. I was lucky.

Q: Now as PDAS let's review. You were in charge of Japan, Korea, China, and Mongolia.

ANDERSON: Right.

Q: So those desks report through you to the assistant secretary—who was whom at the time?

ANDERSON: It was Dick Solomon.

Q: Dick Solomon. So you were the last bureaucratic stop, if you will, between the desk and the Asia Pacific front office and then the rest of the building. Shortly after you came on board and after Tiananmen Square you had a chance to travel to this area again. I've got notes that you traveled to Japan at least in September; do you remember any orientation trips like that?

ANDERSON: I don't remember much about them. I know I went to Japan, I went to South Korea, didn't go to China until two years later but China was way at the top of the agenda.

Q: In fact, I have a note here that the Chinese changed their ambassador and Zhu Qizhen came in and on December 18 presented his credentials. You were the State rep at that presentation. What's that ceremony like?

ANDERSON: Well there's usually a handful of ambassador's there and each one of them is accompanied by the assistant secretary or the principal DAS and they go in and talk with the president for not very long. They present their credentials and exchange a few words and I frankly don't remember exactly what was said.

Q: I imagine it's fairly unique since it's just after Scowcroft's trip?

ANDERSON: It followed the same line that we were taking publicly and that Scowcroft had taken—that large blow to our hopes and relationship but that we wanted to preserve and build a relationship, to sustain it. I think if I recall it was a fairly brief meeting, usually they were anyway.

Q: What does the life of a principal deputy assistant secretary look like?

ANDERSON: Well my secretary figured out exactly half the time I was there Dick Solomon was gone so every other day I was at the secretary's meeting. We had a small meeting. The first thing to talk about was whatever happened over the night. Or if there was something special that a country director would come up with. Then we had weekly meetings but I was in constant touch with the three country directors involved and also with the regional affairs that came under me too. So that got me down to Southeast Asia. A huge volume of traffic came in, looked at it, talked to the desk about whatever had come up and saw how you wanted to deal with it for the day, quickly decide if there was

anything that we needed to prepare press guidance on, and send up the word we are sending something.

Then we had a lot of visitors. We had a lot of policy meetings to discuss what we wanted to do particularly with China at that point, other interagency meetings and not chairing them but attending them. Solomon chaired them although he tended to let me chair a lot of interagency meetings. Then there were all kinds of press people who wanted to come and see me all the time. The Japanese of course knew me well, and not just the Japanese but the Chinese wanted to come all the time, so it brought a lot of attention to public affairs and our relationship. Diplomats all wanted to come and see me so it was just a host of calls, as well as trying to have the internal and interagency meetings to discuss how we proceed or dealt with a particular event.

Q: If you are covering for Assistant Secretary Solomon from time to time I noticed that Mrs. Aquino [president of the Philippines] came to the States in November of '89. Would you have been involved in that on the protocol side?

ANDERSON: I was involved. I think Dick Solomon was there but I certainly went to the receptions and saw her and met her. That was a very positive event as I recall. Solomon was there and actually they were taking care of the arrangements but I did participate. That was a wonderful event, very positive and I remember actually escorting her around and introducing her to dignitaries, some congressional people, at receptions. She's very charming, very well received, a glorious event.

Q: And you were saying old colleagues from Japan would come by from time to time.

ANDERSON: Oh very often. The embassy and the press and we had a lot of visitors from Japan to calibrate our policy toward China and we worked very closely with Japan on it at that time.

I attended half the staff meetings that the secretary had. Solomon was there right at first but he began to travel a lot. Then he began to spend a huge amount of his time on Cambodia because he was an effective negotiator so that's why I had the pleasure of dealing with the secretary and Eagleburger directly quite a bit, not right at first. So it was really after the China crisis had subsided and sometime had passed, when I spent a huge amount of time serving as the acting assistant secretary and also worked with Solomon on Indo-China because I spent a lot of time there. That was very much on my mind.

Q: At that point besides the Wall we had the desks who were monitoring and handling some of these issues. Ultimately the senior leadership and the narrowing pyramid would have to pay attention to these issues. Solomon is being observed by Cambodia, he has to hand off or—

ANDERSON: Well after that summer I really had to be able to be close on everything and he was wonderful about that. He invited me to participate in all of his meetings on

Cambodia and Indo-China and everything, he was very open with me and very supportive of my involvement.

Q: In February of 1990 I think you traveled to Korea with Ambassador Holmes?

ANDERSON: Yeah, didn't we go over there for talks on the military? He was the pol-mil right?

Q: Yeah, I think so.

ANDERSON: I think there was nothing unusual about that, was it 1990?

Q: No, just that it's an illustration of the combination of the traveling that you do and the issues that you cover.

ANDERSON: You know we had high-level consultations with both Japan and China. I think I went with Dick Cheney out there two times and Colin Powell and I went with Vice President Quayle on two trips with Cheney, at least two times. I got closely exposed to them.

Q: You were mentioning that in June '90 you did KL [Kuala Lumpur], Bangkok, Beijing, Shanghai, and Asian Round Table trips.

ANDERSON: I think that was down in Kuala Lumpur wasn't it?

Q: Yes.

ANDERSON: Those were talks with everybody and there were a lot of those going on in those days. You know we were a lot closer to Asia at that point, all of Asia. We were the most preeminent power and that is before we handed it over to China so we participated in all kinds of Track II and events which is what that was, governmental and NGOs [non-government organizations], academics. So I did a lot of that and we had a lot in Washington too so I felt like we were much more engaged with Asia across the board than we are now and at a more senior level.

Q: At that time in fact I think as you were saying, Zhu Rong Ji, Chinese vice premier, made a trip to the U.S., the first one after Tiananmen Square. How was that seen?

ANDERSON: That was a major event because he was considered not being directly involved in Tiananmen and he was mayor of Shanghai at the time. Well the crack down in Shanghai was not as strenuous as elsewhere.

So that was the first high-level visit and we were very pleased with that visit because he spoke well and talked about economic reform and certainly did not dwell on Tiananmen or what was hovering in the background. He came with a reputation for not having been a

leader in the Tiananmen events and was very well received both in the government and also we went to a congressional lunch for him. It was a very big turn out and he charmed everybody by his moderation and his interest in economic reform and managed the political problems in ways that were superb. He really impressed everybody.

Now wasn't that when we were trying to negotiate something? Or was that later?

Q: No this is about '90.

ANDERSON: Well, this is when we were talking with the Chinese about trade relationship and ultimately the world was still GATT [General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade] then and we I think it was during that visit that he made an offer and we made one back but he went back very disappointed in what we had offered. So he was disappointed in what he got in terms of the trade relationship and we were looking for a breakthrough on the economic side that would start to repair the damage from Tiananmen. That was a key visit and that is why that was so important. But he left disappointed because we didn't respond very generously to what he had proposed. But he was very well received personally and I was quite heartened by Congress. That was the first time they had the opportunity to be positive about China for a year.

Q: At this time, 1991-'92 timeframe there's a lot of talk about Track II mechanisms to get people to talk and spread out. I see that you went to an ISIS [Institute for Science and International Security] round table.

ANDERSON: Well there was a lot of that going on there and I just don't get the feeling that we are doing that nearly as much as so much attention has been on Iraq. The Asians have been concerned about building economic institutions and we are sort of sitting outside letting them do it without our participation. So I don't think we are as nearly engaged as we were. There we were talking about everything. Obviously Cambodia and Vietnam were still big issues. Korea was sort of on the rise as an issue but China was a huge issue and how it was going to be accepted into the Asian family of nations. We were very much a part of that discussion with the Southeast Asians as well as Japan. Then we sort of disappeared from the scene a little bit later. I think to my regret but a lot of talk and it involved Track II and senior officials.

Q: Another kind of interaction that we have going on at this time and illustrative of another thing is with Japan and the SSC meetings, Security and something Council. Anyway this is a high-level—

ANDERSON: We had that with Japan and also with South Korea. I mentioned earlier that it's supposedly the secretary of state and defense forum but usually the secretary of state didn't show up so that is when I went with Cheney when he was secretary of defense at least twice.

Q: In November of '91 you and Carl Ford—to Tokyo.

ANDERSON: To Tokyo.

Q: For these high-level pol-mil as you recall.

ANDERSON: We were going out to talk about pol-mil, it was NSC Carl Jackson, the three of us as the NSC and Pentagon. The three of us worked very closely together. We went out particularly to talk to the Japanese. I think they were writing their new defense plan and we wanted to talk in detail about that and we wanted to talk about China and Southeast Asia. Mainly though it was Japan's defense posture. They were in the process of devising a new defense plan and that is what we talked to them about and what equipment made sense. I remember talking about aircraft carriers and fuel replenishes and various things and discussing what would make sense. I think we were still talking about the FSX fighter at that point too even though we had gotten that under control early on while I was still in Tokyo.

Q: But this is the kind of meeting where you really have critical military coordination with your major allies.

ANDERSON: Oh absolutely and no distance.

Q: In considerable doubt.

ANDERSON: Considerably and the three of us worked very closely together so there were no conflicts there. We might have some differences in the office but the goal was to expand the relationship with Japan on the defense area. We'd help them build up their defenses—I mean we were not encouraging them to become a super military power but in the areas we felt that they could build up and would compliment what we were doing.

Q: I think one of the subjects that came up at the time was Japanese contributions to peacekeeping.

ANDERSON: Yeah, we talked about that. I don't remember much detail but we were talking about what they possibly might use some transports and various things for. Equipment they might need to participate in peacekeeping was one thing we talked about.

We met with the defense minister and slightly lower level people that we were working with, really one echelon down, but they were senior policy makers and those kinds of talks have continued. Very similar to the kinds of talks that Rich Armitage has had in the past administration. Intimate, friendly, positive, and with this group a frank exchange about what we thought would best be done. They told us what they wanted us to do too.

Q: You know I have in 1992 you left that position and took up Diplomat in Residence.

ANDERSON: One thing back there before that. In early 1991 I had decided I would go to China and thought it wouldn't hurt for me to go over there a little bit. Of course I raised this at one of Dick Solomon's afternoon weekly meetings that everyone probably forgot was to become an issue. So I went to Beijing and Shanghai and at that point Zhu Rong Ji was still the mayor of Shanghai, wasn't he, because he invited me to lunch in Beijing. That was early '91, January or so, so he was still mayor but he was in Beijing but invited me to lunch. Jim Lilley was the ambassador and so he sat between us and we had a wonderful lunch. He was very moderate and we wanted to talk with him so we weren't carrying any swords or disagreements about things. It was just an exchange about how we could move forward and how economic plans were coming along. In the middle of that somebody found out I was there. The press found out and Margaret Tutwiler was responding to questions about this. "Have you ended the boycott of dialogue with China?" "Oh no, that is just a low level visit." Then she finally upgraded it to mid-level but not a change of policy. Because Doug Pall and at the Pentagon, neither one had bothered to pass up to their bosses that I was going, they were all surprised to find out I was there. I got a lot of press play on that, that was a lot of fun.

Q: That's an interesting juxtaposition, here you go to a meeting with the Japanese and you get in deep and intimate detail on various other issues. There is this sensitivity and it's not just a faulty sensitivity, it's a public perception sensitivity to even having lunch with the Chinese.

ANDERSON: Well yeah it really was. We had a fantastic relationship with the Japanese and still do but the relationship with China after Tiananmen backed up several degrees. I had been there before and there was nothing sensitive about it. I thought that it had been long enough. We were trying to renormalize relations somewhat and Solomon literally said yes, the embassy said fine but nobody told Margaret Tutwiler. Nothing came of it; it was just a little flurry.

Q: Well then in '92 you were off to be a Diplomat in Residence. How did you manage that?

ANDERSON: Oh well just fell in my lap like a plum. There was a widespread expectation that I was going to be an ambassador and some little funny thing happened that I don't care to go into and so suddenly all posts had been given away and I harangued that.

Q: Did you get to do some writing at Princeton that time?

ANDERSON: Yeah, I did some writing. I taught courses at Rutgers, I was assigned to both of them. I taught at Rutgers and I was writing at Princeton. I wrote either the first chapter of a book or even more on America's role in Asia in the twenty-first century. I never did turn it into a book but I did write that paper, which I tried to pedal, but didn't find anybody reputable to take it. It was a good paper though; it's all coming true.

Q: That's a one-year assignment and so what did you do after you finished your Diplomat in Residence at Princeton?

ANDERSON: I didn't have anything to do for two reasons I guess. There was when Winston Lord [assistant secretary for East Asia and Pacific] had in the back of his mind to send me to Hanoi from the start.

Q: Toward Japan and Hanoi.

ANDERSON: I had six assignments on Vietnam so actually during the Bush administration I was going to go to Vietnam if they had normalized or if he had been reelected. So anyway I inherited that in the next administration so I was sent up to the UN [United Nations] briefly to be the East Asia guy.

Q: With UNGA [UN General Assembly] thing and Nepal.

ANDERSON: Then after two weeks APEC [Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation] leaders meeting out in Seattle was in terrible shape and they brought me back immediately and put me in charge of that in the State Department. I was very heavily engaged in that. It took three months.

Q: How did State organize itself for something like APEC? It is one of those multinational—

ANDERSON: Well we had the regional people who are traditionally regional affairs taking care of it. The economic DAS would be in charge of it but this was a leaders meeting. The White House was very interested so it was being taken care of but not by anybody who was able to work very well with the White House. So that is what they wanted me to come back to do, to help put together the plan—it needed some work, a lot of work.

Q: In the interim Bush lost the election to Clinton so in 1993 you have a new administration.

ANDERSON: They took Solomon out early which hurt and then Bill Clark came in but that was probably no more than an interim.

Q: Then Warren Christopher becomes secretary of state.

ANDERSON: Yeah, when Lord came in too but Clark was sort of a fill in there for the time being. So that was a totally new cast of characters who showed up, which didn't work to my advantage very well. That is how I was sitting off at Princeton.

But anyway those people knew me and they brought me back to do this and they brought me back to do that. I did that and that was very successful. Then they named me to follow

up the initiatives that we had concocted, the education initiative and all of them to follow up on, so I spent the next several months doing that.

Q: Now the education initiative was an ASEAN thing?

ANDERSON: It was APEC.

Q: Was it APEC?

ANDERSON: Yep. I thought it was APEC. We had several things. We had six of them and I can't even remember what they were but that is the one I spent more time on. We had several conferences and things like that trying to launch. Then in the summer at that point I knew that Maudy had never told me what everybody else told me that he wanted me to go to Hanoi and we were working in that direction and so Jim Steinberg asked me to come to Policy Planning, the senior Asia adviser. My good friend Bill Brill was already there so we worked together very well. I worked on China and Korea.

Q: About what time was that?

ANDERSON: It was June of '93. Right, is that right? No, yes, of '93. I stayed there almost a year. Maybe it was the summer I went there and I worked on China and Korea and Vietnam since I had a vested interest in Vietnam.

Q: In November you went to the senior officers meeting of APEC in Jakarta in '94?

ANDERSON: Right. I was still; I mean I was in Policy Planning—

Q: You were enjoying Policy Planning?

ANDERSON: But I was still playing around with APEC. I had gotten involved in setting up some of those programs with APEC. I still was involved.

Q: Well, let's sneak up on Vietnam. In 1995 the Liaison opened. January 28, 1998 you are in S/P [Secretary's Office, Policy Planning] and in fact you wrote an article, which was published in the University of Washington Law Journal.

ANDERSON: Was it about Vietnam?

Q: No, it was about APEC.

ANDERSON: APEC, yeah, I was a big staunch supporter of APEC.

Q: But prior to this back in '93 you received a meritorious service award, a senior Foreign Service presidential award?

ANDERSON: I got those all the time.

Q: You got those all the time. Gee. Have you seen the latest State Department magazine? All retirees are now going to get a certificate, a flag, a crystal weight, and something else.

ANDERSON: That's if you behave well.

Q: We are going to treat our retirees well. July 11, 1995 the Vietnamese-American diplomatic relations were established.

ANDERSON: Okay, well I knew in the spring that I was supposed to go—Winn told me finally—then come in the summer.

Q: Now when we get into this you'd had six tours in Vietnam.

ANDERSON: Five.

Q: Five and your name had been battered around for this assignment by the Bush administration.

ANDERSON: For the Bush administration.

Q: But because of a slight by the Bush administration why didn't that totally process when the next administration came in, why is it still alive?

ANDERSON: Because I was the obvious candidate. I ran the desk, I had five, four assignments, three in Vietnam and I had been an Indo-China watcher in Thailand and I had written about it in Policy Planning.

Q: But Vietnam was a very, very touchy domestic American political issue. You've got the POW-MIA people out there, you've got defense has its interests. On one hand your stereotype is a professional Foreign Service guy.

ANDERSON: Well, I had when I was director for the Vietnam/Laos/Cambodia I had fastidiously cultivated the POW folks including and—

Q: I won't say—

ANDERSON: And what? You know the POW lady.

Q: Right.

ANDERSON: So we were big friends and that community knew me and I went out of my way to go to their meetings and to talk to them. So they knew me and I was not a negative with them. Actually I went to a reception—

Q: Going to a reception?

ANDERSON: It was a POW reception and Senator Dole was there. He was a big strong supporter, of course, and Anne Mills Griffiths was there and she is my big friend and she went over. I had met Senator Doyle before but he didn't know me from Adam and she said, "Senator, this is Desaix Anderson, he's going to be the first ambassador to Vietnam." He kind of turned gray. So it was widely known and accepted that I was the leading candidate. There were other people who wanted it; they deserved it as well, like Dave Lambertson who was well prepared. I had gotten him an ambassadorship to Thailand and logically they could have shifted him to Hanoi as he had good relations with everybody and sent me to Thailand but anyway that's what was commonly accepted that I was supposed to go to Vietnam. I had good decent relations with the Pentagon and for the POW people so I was not a negative and pretty good relations with Congress.

Q: But you did get chosen and went out as chargé.

ANDERSON: Well that was the president's decision.

Q: That was part of the politics of it—

ANDERSON: Yes.

Q: Sneak up on it, I mean acknowledging that it is a sensitive issue that each step needs to be perceived as majored and when that is solved the first official—

ANDERSON: I could understand the rest. Christopher told me before the—

Q: Chris?

ANDERSON: Warren Christopher. I had seen him and he went over to see the president and the president told him that he wanted to send a political appointee. So Christopher called me back up to say the president wants to send a political appointee, do you still want to go out as chargé and I said, "If I'll be there as long as three months, yes." He said, "You will be there a lot longer than that," and I said, "Fine." But this I don't know if you want this on the record or not but—

That's what happened and it made sense. I got things going the right way and he came in and had the clout with the Congress so I think it worked pretty well.

Q: Well actually this is an interesting adventure all the way around because one doesn't get the chance to put together an embassy these days.

ANDERSON: Certainly not with the former enemy.

Q: And then it's with your former enemy. So could you talk about just setting the place up.

ANDERSON: They had the Liaison Office since January so had three functioning sections: admin, econ—

Q: So you had to deal with—

ANDERSON: We had a building, we had thirty people I think and they had done a good job and done it pretty quickly so there was an organization there. They had not been dealing with the Vietnamese government though except the North American Ministry of Foreign Affairs people that they had to deal with but there was nothing beyond that. There was no political relationship at all so all economic relationships for that matter. So we had that organization there but I was able to develop the rest of the relationship so it was helpful that we already had the structure/infrastructure there for me, an immense help so I didn't have to worry about that so much.

Q: Can you describe how the mission was organized? Jim Hall was—

ANDERSON: Jim Hall was the head of the Liaison Office and we had Political Officer Scott Mosheal who had quietly got to know the diplomats around town and had some good contacts. He was first class. He's the head of the desk right now and then we had a big admin section and a few economic people but not many.

Q: Chris Uncle I think was there.

ANDERSON: He was admin. Yeah.

Q: I've worked with him before.

ANDERSON: And when I got there I was technically assigned as the DCM. Jim Alsey had left but I said I want him to stay as my DCM because I need one. He knows how to speak Vietnamese and I like his mannerisms and attitude toward staff and so forth so they said fine.

Q: And in fact how is the Vietnamese language capability of the mission as you were starting out?

ANDERSON: It was pretty good. Jim's was quite well and Runkles' was good and the political officer great and the economic officer was fine. It was good.

As an anecdote I had tried to get them to let me study Vietnamese and they said, “No, it will tip everybody off, so you can’t study Vietnamese.” So what I did was I got the tapes and I got some newspapers, and I could read again but I hadn’t spoken for twenty-three years. I worked on it anyway but they wouldn’t let me because it would tip people off in Congress. See, that’s again the sensitivity in Congress to this new relationship, very sensitive and that persisted after I was there.

Q: In fact, I mean, your job now is to spread the mission’s contacts over a wider area and with officials in part to facilitate that by the string of visitors that began to come. Because didn’t former President Bush come?

ANDERSON: He was coming and that’s why they sent me there immediately. I had to leave in two weeks to meet him and that was wonderful. When he was the ambassador at ESLO in Peking, the first time he went through Tokyo I was his control officer so after that I was always his control officer and he would write to me, “Send me some tennis balls. My son George is coming through. Would you take care of him for the night?” And I took him out to all the hot spots and good drinking buddy but he didn’t ask a single question about Japan that first time he was in Asia, not one. So I got a good fix on him. But the former President Bush was, I considered him to be a friend. I’d seen him when I went to Peking, had dinner with—actually he had left, but I had dinner with Mrs. Bush so they were friends. So when he was vice president I knew him then, traveled with him. When he was president, when we presented credentials like Zhu Rong Ji I went over there and I saw him. He always remembered me and that was very nice.

So when he went there, going under City Banks’ aegis, they got me out there just a few days before he arrived just in time for the annual liberation march, which I enjoyed thoroughly. Then he showed up and I stayed with him for maybe three or four days. We went down south and went to Da Nang and Quy Nhon and various places and it was just wonderful. He could not have been better, where Senator Dole was criticizing the president and the elections were having normalized relations, on the campaign thinking about normalizing relations. He said, “I absolutely support President Clinton on formalization of relations,” and then forgive my immodesty but he said, “And you have the very best person in the world to open the embassy. I’ve known him for years and he’s one of our top notch people.” So everywhere he went he said that and of course it was a very helpful introduction with the opposition leader to express faith in me as well the present administration.

Q: Because Terry Rowe wasn’t Vietnamese, probably themselves were still wondering what—

ANDERSON: So I—was split in the U.S. politically, their acrimonious discussion about normalization and so he was wonderful for the relationship and for me to come out and tell everybody that I was a good guy.

Q: I think that trip was September 4 through 8.

ANDERSON: It was something like that. Before he came, as I say, I got there just in time for national day and I got in line with everybody else since seven o'clock in the morning and it started raining. Everybody was very curious about having an American there for the first time. Traditionally, of course, half the floats come by in the two hour parade of "Down with the American Imperialists" and there was not a single mention of America except that Ho Chi Minh had cooperated with the OSS [Office of Strategic Services] in the guerrilla movement in the '40s. Not a single word and there was also a huge photographic display and not one photograph was critical of the United States. It talked about the anti-imperialist struggle but never mentioned the United States and everybody was astounded. All the East Europeans came up congratulating, "You weren't here a good three days, your relationship is turning around, that is fantastic." The diplomats were all, of course, very curious about what the reception would be and what I was going to be like and what I would say and do and my instructions were wonderful. Secretary Christopher didn't say much of anything and finally I said, "Mr. Secretary, I understand my instructions are to go and top priority will be POW-MIA counting of the missing and I understand that, fully support it, to try and support human rights but I don't want to get into any kind of controversy we have with China so I will do it discreetly rather than bombastically." "I agree," he said. "And then thirdly to go build a new relationship with Vietnam." "Absolutely, that's it." Those were my orders. I never got any more orders.

So I took him at his word and that's what I intended to do. I got there and worked hard on the POW-MIA thing. I think we did a lot too, of course—the military, that team that was there working and the Vietnamese wanted to cooperate so that just really went well. We just had to make clear to people who were visiting how well they were cooperating. Mills Griffiths came out with a big group of people and a lot of others did so that was mainly to sustain the cooperation and enhance it and that worked fine.

I got to work, we established a dialogue on human rights and kept that under control, and then otherwise I just tried to meet everybody in the establishment in every element of society. That's what I did for two years and it was terrific. I said I want to see everybody and go call on them and they set up the calls on all the ministers and the religious leaders and the Communist Party. I said I want to go quickly to meet them and everybody. I want to go to all the universities. There was one element; I said there was one person I particularly want to see which is the Communist Party czar, the political czar, commissar, in charge of keeping the party on the straight and narrow. What do they call that the—

Q: You mean the secretary general of the party?

ANDERSON: No, not secretary general but the reception early on the ideological czar, he was in charge of ideology. So they arranged for me to meet him. Now let me backup a little bit. I went to see everybody. I went to see the defense minister, I had a very good talk with him. I had developed my little spiel that as President Clinton said, "We want to look to the future, not to the past and we want to build a solid relationship and the Seventh Fleet, the military presence here is yet to promote stability and peace and I think

that you can see that at least in recent years that's what we've done and that from my standpoint we have no conflict in our national interest." And later on I started saying the reason we shouldn't develop a strategic relationship.

Of course, Washington didn't tell me to say any of that stuff but that is what I did. They all took it well and I kept getting feedback from the Defense Ministry that I was a man of good will and then the head of the Veterans Association. I went to see him and expected that at least that he would seek some kind of aid for the veterans or Agent Orange and all of that. The outcome was that I said, "The best thing that we could do was to build a better economic relationship so that your economy can grow and help these people all get work and have meaningful lives." There was very positive feedback from that.

So all of them, the whole power establishment. Then a little bit later, but it wasn't much later, I went to see that ideological czar. He has a reputation as an absolute Stalinist, hardliner and came in and we sat down. I went through that same little spiel and I said, "I know that also there are some rumors around what we are trying to do and I would like to discuss them with you, raise them as I had with other people. One that we are arming the Vietnamese in Cambodia to invade Vietnam." I said, "We absolutely are not, that is against our law and we can't do it and we're not doing it and I can assure you of that." And then there was this notion of peaceful evolution with the Americans who come here in pursuit of peaceful evolution. As the president has made it clear to building a new relationship and the president in his announcing his establishment in diplomatic relations had said, "That normalizing relations just as changes have been made in Eastern Europe that we expect those changes in Vietnam," and that was what the main thing the hardliners focused on. I said, "That was not a policy statement, that was an analytical statement by the president and because he has made very clear what our policy is," and was told that, "this is what I have come here to do—to build a new relationship, not to in anyway undermine your government or your system, that is for you to decide."

And then one of the other ones said that we were trying to foment dissidents and I said, "You know that's nonsense, there is no way. People know what I'm doing," and I spoke very openly. About a month after that an American businessman came to see me and he said, "I'm connected with somebody who's very close to Minister Dao, they call it Zhou Dao. Anyway Mr. Dao, the party's ideologue chief, and at the end of it he said, "Let's have a drink of scotch to U.S.-Vietnam relations." I said that was a wonderful idea, so we had it and he spilled it all down his coat. But then after that this guy told me, he said, that he had the Politburo briefed on everything that I had said and they all agreed that I was a man of goodwill and that I could go anywhere and see anybody in the country. So that just cleared the way for me to do anything—I spoke at universities and no foreigner had ever done that before, no Western diplomat had ever done that, certainly no American. Just do whatever I wanted to do, anybody I wanted to see I could see they just really opened the way.

This was a combination of President Bush's having come there and those meetings that I had early on with the leaders, particularly the meetings with that ideological czar paid off

immensely. I think they regret following me around because these people were following me around all the time. There was no sign of them following me around, they got tired because I walked around in my shorts on the weekend and they just got exhausted from one of my walks. I didn't really see anybody following me around. I think they generally accepted that I was there to work in a positive way and they did accept it earlier on and I just did things so easy.

Q: That's really worthwhile because you've got this whole refugee community in the U.S., which they must be worried about.

ANDERSON: They were very worried about it and that was another point that kept coming up as the FBI started trying to hire agents out in San Francisco to spy on the Vietnamese and that blew up shortly after I had got there. That was another point that they kept raising but I said that's a local law enforcement agency in the U.S. and nothing to do with us.

But they fed into the right wing people in the Congress and they were very hard on me and hard on the relationship but as we began to build and work very positively on the POW-MIA issue and people saw that they were being cooperative, it was extraordinary what they did. They lost three million people and three hundred thousand missing and yet they were working very hard with us to try to resolve all of these issues. So that began to wear away and at some point I want to get to my first trip back to Washington, which was about a year after I went.

Q: Go ahead.

ANDERSON: But that is what I spent the fall doing and it was very well received. I went to see all the newspaper people, just anybody who had any influence at all. The Vietnamese got up to par pretty quickly.

Q: Was the consulate in Saigon set up by then?

ANDERSON: No.

Q: So that happened on your watch?

ANDERSON: We made all the arrangements but that was done shortly after I had left.

Q: What did that involve? Again, in setting up the new consulate.

ANDERSON: Again, one of the most interesting aspects of dealing with the Vietnamese was the debate within the party and the security apparatus in the military about the nature of relationships they wanted to have with the United States and China and how to deal with that. The hardliners tended to believe that they should in a traditional fashion develop a closer brother-to-brother relationship with the Chinese and maintain a distance

from the United States, whereas the more progressive people in the Foreign Ministry and some of the military as well and, I think, in the government felt that the best thing to do was to build up the relationship. When they joined ASEAN they normalized their relationship with Japan, with Australia, South Korea to build up this connection with the noncommunist world as a protection against China in the long run. That, of course, led to important normalization with us, if they wanted to have a relationship with us as a protection against what they continue to be concerned about—China's ambitions.

Both schools of thought feared China's long-term intentions. The discussion about which way to deal with—was something that I was paying close heed to. It fed into the discussions about how fast they wanted to move with us and the whole military question whether ship visits should be considered. I think that debate is still there but it's probably abated somewhat. Economic progress in the relationship with the United States has developed so rapidly on the economic front that they've decided that they got a great deal to—it's to their advantage to develop a relationship with us.

But that was very much in play at that time and I'm sure that there are still hardliners that feel that they shouldn't move too fast or too close to us. It was still very much under debate at that time.

Q: That's an interesting illustration of how the embassy plays a role in listening to them, talking to themselves, and finding out where the factions are and then what factions' success might be of benefit to us.

ANDERSON: Well then also, in the '97-'98 Taiwan crisis when the Chinese started shelling, sending the missiles out toward Taiwan, and we sent the Seventh Fleet in, it came into play then again. Privately they were applauding what we were doing but publicly, of course, they said we shouldn't be interfering in internal Chinese affairs.

I took a visitor to see a very senior influential person in the Interior Ministry about that time. He went on and on about, this was about the same time they had the problem with the FBI out in San Francisco, that for about thirty minutes it was nothing but, "How can you treat us like this? You can't have a friendship if you are acting like that." Then suddenly he smiled and said, "But I want you to know that our security relationship is developing very nicely. We recognized the importance that the U.S. military presence contributes to peace and stability in Asia and we are glad you did what you did vis-à-vis Taiwan."

I kept with the military people particularly but other leaders as well but just kept strengthening what I said about the natural harmony and lack of inconsistencies or conflict in our national interest. When Admiral Pruitt was there, in April of '97, that was the first CINCPAC [Commander in Chief, Pacific] visit. I publicly said in introducing him—and we had several people from the military there, I think the deputy chief of staff—I said, "I was so happy to have Admiral Pruitt come to visit, we've had very good talks but we feel very strongly that the American military presence contributes to peace

and stability in the region.” So then the deputy chief of staff made his speech in Vietnamese and he said pretty much the same thing. Specifically though, the American military presence gave stability in the region. The colonel who interpreted it was a good friend of mine. He said, “And many forces have contributed to the peace and stability in the region.” So I went over afterward and I said, “What did you say or mistranslate that for?” He said, “I had to correct it.” I said, “How could you correct it? The Chinese and the Russian ambassadors were standing right in front of me and they both speak perfect English so what good was your correcting?” So they said a very important thing that was going on debating the background of their relationship with us.

Q: This was an American colonel that was translating?

ANDERSON: No, Vietnamese and he translated all the time so he interpreted so I knew him quite well, and to correct it.

Q: And to correct it, oh. But you were talking about Admiral Pruitt’s visit in March of ’97. What was unique about that?

ANDERSON: He came and he had the talks, he didn’t push the discussion as far as I would have liked but we did agree that there would be high-level visits. That was part of the thing I worked on from the time that I got there, was to have high-level military-to-military, develop relationships between the two militaries and have a high-level visit even before I left. We worked very much in that direction but it didn’t happen. We sent a bunch of colonels over there, which was the first time we did that and they were very well received. Let’s see, somebody came from Defense. Who was it? It wasn’t Cohen, was it? No, he wouldn’t have come. No, it was a pretty senior—

Q: Tony Lake was there in ’96.

ANDERSON: Well that was glorious, wonderful.

Q: Well tell us about Tony Lake.

ANDERSON: I told you I never got any instructions except for Christopher saying yes three times when I told him what my orders were and I never heard anything from Washington. We heard about the refugee problem and the visa problems and got instructions on that but we received virtually no instruction on anything else so I figured that after one year I should go back to Washington and see what people thought about what we had been doing. Got back and asked to see a bunch of people and was immensely pleased that virtually everybody wanted to see me. So whom did I see in State? I don’t know, did I see Deputy Secretary Strobe Talbot or Christopher? I think I saw Christopher, if he was still there, I saw Christopher. Then in NSC I saw Nancy Sodeberg but she said Tony wants to see you so I saw him too. Defense I saw high-level people and before I had gone in the first place I offered to see twenty senators and I saw fifteen I think or twelve. Helms was the only one who really didn’t want to meet. He

chose to have one of his staff people see me but she canceled at the last minute. But I saw John Kerry, Bob Carey, Kit Bonn, Chuck Robb, John McCain, who else, Craig. Anyway everybody was showing interest in Vietnam and offered to see Helms but he didn't choose to see me.

So when I went back in April I saw all of them again and reported on what I had been doing. I went back with a fairly robust description of what we had tried to do and how many people we met and the reception that we got but that I wanted to move ahead more rapidly on a few things. One was on the military side to move to upgrade the military-to-military contacts and to eventually move to having a ship visit because even some of the Vietnamese mentioned that to me. So specifically on that front I wanted to move forward and I also wanted to try to see if we—and you had to be very careful politically but I thought that the two areas of greatest needs were on education and health and that I would like to try to do something on those fronts to help Vietnam. I saw Health and Human Services Secretary Donna Shalala and I saw NIH [National Institutes of Health], I went over there too. The reception was fantastic. Everybody said great. Donna Shalala on the spot said, “Yes we will do it, I will make Vietnam my top priority foreign policy wise, foreign in terms of our relations with any foreign country.” She went to the Cabinet after that and said I am going to make Vietnam my number one priority in our foreign efforts and the Cabinet said, “Great, that is done.” NIH agreed to send a CDC doctor out there so we could have the first CDC doctor assigned to an embassy. Even though they didn't give me much money they encouraged me and said that they would do what they could within the constraints of not having any aid money that they could give. I was immensely pleased with that.

With Tony he was very excited about what had happened and he said, “I can't say anything about this but I want to come and visit Vietnam.” I think he said in June.

Q: He visited July 12.

ANDERSON: Okay, July.

Q: It was to establish relations.

ANDERSON: This was the end of April and he said, “I want to come.” He said, “What would it be like if I came?” I said, “Fantastic, nobody would be better, only the president's visit would mean more to the Vietnamese and you can really move things forward and here are some things that we can do.” Very specific things like that program we were trying to reinterview the people down in the south that we interviewed twenty times and a great hullabaloo in Congress about how they were, that we had to go interview them yet one more time and see if they didn't want to come. The Vietnamese thought we were going down there to stir up trouble and create dissidents so I said, “Okay, you can deal with that issue, with the party chairman and also with the prime minister and so that would be a good thing to do. We can talk about the developing military relationship. We can talk about human rights certainly and we can talk about the

economic relationship and then we can go down south and meet the leaders down there, much more liberal, and they'll want to hear about when we are going to open the consulate general because they want it very much."

Anyway he said, "Wonderful, keep it quiet and I will send a message as soon as it is all clear, that is what I want to do." He came out there and he was just wonderful. It was really glorious. It was like he was having an epiphany, just ecstatic. When we went over the area between Hue and Da Nang it was like incredible joy that he was feeling, finally he was coming back to the place that had caused him a great deal of anguish. We did some wonderful things on the POW-MIA thing. Actually we had some remains they found while he was there and went and looked at where a B-52 bomber had crashed. Then down in Saigon. The head of the Communist Party I knew down there was very liberal and so anything Tony said would work. The prime minister was down there so we had a meeting with him in Saigon rather than Hanoi and they had a terrific meeting. They were communicating very well, even Doh Moy and even the defense minister who was then to become president, President Ang. He had a good talk with him and made some good progress on defense POW-MIA but also on this other program we were trying to get them to agree to let us interview, re-interview people down in the south. They had already come back and adjusted and were living, and why go down there and stir up all of that trouble. So Tony had an absolutely wonderful visit and just across the board advanced everything we had been trying to do. He was obviously personally joyous about the whole occasion.

Q: Now his trip in July of '96 coincides with Pete Peterson's nomination.

ANDERSON: It was August I think. I think it was after that. Back to when I went back in April, while I was there the diehard congressmen sent a letter to Secretary Christopher saying I should not be allowed to return, that we should end the diplomatic relationship and go back to the liaison office and that if I went back it would be illegal for me to go back. I could probably remember who those leaders were, there were a handful of them and you can imagine who they could have been.

Q: Lou Sterns is writing a book and it's in there.

ANDERSON: Is it? Okay, everybody knew about it. It was hilarious because it was in the newspaper as well that I should not be allowed to return, it was illegal for me to return.

Q: Well, in fact that this Congress had tried any number of mechanisms to either block State Department funds, block State Department from spending funds. The domestic American opposition to this showed how even more sensitive than it was.

ANDERSON: It was but the POW-MIA people and Mills Griffith came out to Hanoi after that and had a good visit. She saw Doumou, the secretary general of the party and he promised to do everything they could. Whoever was the head of veterans affairs who wanted to be ambassador to Vietnam, he came out there too and he was quite lavish in his

praise of what they were doing. So despite this resistance in Congress the POW-MIA community was moving to accept that the Vietnamese were indeed doing a great deal, it was very impressive what they were doing. So it was beginning to change but that was kind of the last ditch effort. I called the lawyers and said, "Am I going to get arrested if I go back?" They said, "No, just get on your plane and go on back."

Q: Now was this the time, remember there with some congressman who chained himself to the embassy doors? Was that on your watch or was that later on?

ANDERSON: No.

Q: It was a congressman who claimed that he knew where Americans were being held.

ANDERSON: A nutcase. No, that was after I had left. So I guess that's it and we're up to Peterson.

Q: How did Pete Peterson's nomination look to you sitting in Hanoi? That's the fulfillment of another domestic American process.

ANDERSON: Despite my personal desire to become ambassador. Even at that point I was hoping that they would see that I was doing a great job and elevate me. I could see the rationale for it so I didn't feel funny about it. I was out and somebody from the Congress has got a friend or ostensibly a friend in the president and that would work.

Q: That is right because he had military experience and then he had been a congressman in Florida.

ANDERSON: He was a POW, yeah and he was in Congress. So I thought that made sense and I hoped he wouldn't come too quickly because I was having a wonderful time.

Q: Well actually he didn't show up until May of '97.

ANDERSON: That is right. That was a long time.

Q: He was nominated in August.

ANDERSON: In August.

Q: Ninety-six. What was that delay? Was that just getting the Congress to accept it?

ANDERSON: I think so, and things were going well so I guess to let the political heat die down, mainly Congress. He called me in early April I guess and told me roughly when he was coming and I made the horrible mistake of saying I just don't think he was very excited about coming soon and all the press people ran out and did their stories. Not long after that he called me again and said, "What should I bring to save Desaix in my

airfreight?" I said, "Bring sixty paintings and twenty Persian carpets," because I lived in a hotel, which is another funny story.

After the seven months I had been looking, going up and down the streets looking for a place to live and turned around and there was going to be a French colonial hotel, a new one under construction and I thought, Okay, this would do fine, it's big and clean and I wanted to entertain a lot of people. Ultimately I think I was inviting a thousand people a week there because I wanted as many people as possible to get to know us. The art community, the musicians, the military so I had a couple of big receptions of one kind or another and so I needed a big house.

We started negotiating with the landlady who was Chinese-Vietnamese. We finally got the okay from Washington so we could formally do so and then suddenly we heard that the Interior Ministry, which was just down the street from me, a hundred yards maybe, that they didn't want to be so close to the embassy. They were pretty afraid we would zap them or listen to them or something or another. So that same guy, who I talked with at the Interior Ministry, was one of my main contacts there, had dinner with me and said, "Oh, Mr. Anderson, wouldn't you much rather live out with your own people? We are going to set up a new diplomatic community halfway to the airport and we want that diplomatic community to set up residency there." I said, "Absolutely not, I've come here to be with the Vietnamese people and find out what's going on here and get to know them and they understand what America is up to. So absolutely no one will move out there, or want to move out there." So he went on and on but I stuck to my guns so finally they brought this up at the Cabinet meeting level and the Foreign Ministry supported my being able to rent this house and the Interior Minister insisted that no I would be spying on them and that this was just out of the question. So the prime minister who knew me and liked me said, "You two go back and work this out and come back and we will talk about it again." My driver happened to know the landlady and he also knew somebody that was connected with the prime minister's residence. So that's how far I was going and had to get intelligence from my driver. So I got the report on the Cabinet meeting. He told me the second time that they had taken the same position but the prime minister had said, "We are going to let him move in there." So he overruled the interior minister. Those people always are extremely helpful, the foreign minister and that side of the house.

Actually the Interior Ministry was helpful on things like human rights and people who get thrown in jail and he helped us get a couple of people out. On the whole human rights question I was talking with them as well as the foreign minister about it but they were quite concerned about my living so close and what I might be able to do to them.

Q: You were talking about Ambassador Peterson bringing lots of pictures and lots of rugs.

ANDERSON: Well I was a painter of course and had all the paintings I needed and all the rugs I needed so the place looked great but he didn't like that place and eventually moved into the Daewoo Hotel. We had part of an agreement on the housing, I mean on the

transfer, we had about thirty-three properties I think and they had only a couple in Washington. We were going to give them the embassy back. I was happy that I had worked to preserve it because it was about to be destroyed by water. So we fixed it up and it was in good shape.

Q: The State Department would be responsible for handling diplomatic missions.

ANDERSON: We did that one and the Cambodian embassy and kept them and got them back in good shape. We got the Saigon property and the old embassy and we got a beautiful house built in the 1900s in the style of the opera house, a French gorgeous governor general's house, just beautiful and right in the middle of town.

I got there and I had renovated three townhouses in Washington and started from scratch and said, "Look, let's go in and do this, there is no point in waiting to do this." FBO said, We have to wait. They went on and on with it and finally we had plans and we had the money. We had gotten some money from the Vietnamese, sixteen million dollars I think, it had been far more than we needed to do that and build the embassy as well. I spent a lot of time and finally located a big beer factory that we could have gotten to build. So we had the plans for the renovation of the house and I said, "Look, let us do it here. I can find an American contractor, and it was an African-American." We had gotten him to bid on us and he had given us a bit of one million dollars plus a little change. I said, "Let me do it, I've had a lot of experience renovating and I'll get this thing ready and I can even move in myself and at least be ready for the ambassador." FBO said, "No, we've got to watch this very closely, it's a very important project and we've got to get a minority contractor in America to deal with this." So they finally got an ex-ARVIN [Army of the Republic of Vietnam] South Vietnamese helicopter pilot who had written an article that had been quoted in the newspaper violently anti-Hanoi government and he got there and he couldn't speak English or Vietnamese. It was very embarrassing and I said, "Don't send him back out here again." That was too much of an embarrassment, horrible.

Ultimately what happened was I guess he stayed in the job back there but they hired the same African-American to do it. It took three years and it cost over three million dollars. So the house wasn't ready when Peterson got there. He had to wait about a year or two.

What was the other thing I was—

Q: The beer factory?

ANDERSON: The beer factory, oh yeah. I looked everywhere because I wanted to get started on building a new embassy and we had a consulate property but it was too small. So I looked all over the town and went to talk to the mayor.

Q: Was the consulate in Hanoi at some point?

ANDERSON: Yeah, in the late '40s we had a consulate there after the war in '45. I looked everywhere and went down and talked to the mayor's office and got them to help me. They gave me some plots and I went and looked at them. I finally found this wonderful place right out across from a bar, my favorite bar there, Apocalypse Now, in a very leafy, between two big avenues with leafy trees. It was so big that we could have put a lot of residences in there, a swimming pool and an embassy, everything right there, right in the middle of town. I talked to the foreign minister and he became the deputy prime minister, I talked to the prime minister and I talked to the Construction Ministry that controls the spot. They had all agreed but they said there is only one last thing: the labor unions have to agree. The labor unions think that it would be more profitable for them to have somebody come in and build commercial enterprises where they could get jobs. So they are holding back. So that was where I left it. I had the prime minister, deputy prime minister, the construction minister and the mayor all on board and all they had to do was convince the labor minister.

Q: Sounds like democratic politics to me.

ANDERSON: Well, the CIO [Congress of Industrial Organizations] came out talking about labor practices and I said you want to see an example of labor playing its role, there it is and a few other things. So I had a good talking point for dealing with anybody that complained about labor practices in Vietnam. The CDC and Donna Shalala really came through and set up programs. She put in a pilot program that CDC was running, an early warning infectious diseases program and a lot of other stuff. It arrived after I left but we had gotten started even before that. So she was terrific.

On education I didn't get any public money but I grabbed every university in the U.S. that I knew that came through or I could invite to come through. By the time I left I think there had been almost forty universities that had set up programs with the Vietnamese institutions, so I was very happy about that and that's continued too. My successor has continued on both of those tracks. We got the aid program also and one of the special countries for the aid program that's in the Bush administration.

Q: Certainly underscores that diplomatic relations cover a multitude of interactions.

ANDERSON: For forty years we had no relationship with all the institutions in the country and we had to build them fast so I was working very hard to set up those necessities so that we could have it moved to a normal relationship. I spent a lot of time and I think I was very successful in doing that.

Q: Did the Vietnamese community play any role, either being of assistance or a hindrance?

ANDERSON: The establishment did not. They continued to do things that were pernicious like get the Congress to put the old South Vietnamese flag flying on the flagpole and a few other things like that. But increasingly young Vietnamese were

coming back and their attitudes were dramatically different. There was a big schism developing in the Vietnamese community in this country. I think, I hope it's abating but the young ones came over and they just felt very excited and many of them stayed and decided they were going to return and build their lives there. I knew a lot of them and talked to a lot of them and it was very exciting in what they had to say.

There was one called David Thai who came down and came up with the idea of putting up a coffee shop around the lake, Hoan Kiem Lake. It happened to be right across the street from the police station which was an odd choice but somehow he got them to let him have a kiosk there which existed and set up an outdoor coffee shop. Anyway this was the rage and all young Vietnamese just loved it. Foreigners and everybody came in and at first they had trouble with the police. The police would come over and harass them and ask them for their permits and their identity and all this stuff. That went on for a while but finally David was able to convince the police that this wasn't a bad thing and that he was doing nothing harmful at all. The police turned out to join as a supporter against other critics who thought it was polluting the society. They turned out to be real good guys and David's still there. He said, "I came back here from Seattle and I didn't know what to expect at all but I wanted to come and at least see what was going on here and got here and just immediately felt that I was back where I really belonged. I'd decided to stay here, set up this business, get married, have children, and live and build a beautiful Vietnam." There are a lot of young ones that feel that way and many more businessmen too, so a little older the ones that traded in—and a lot of the older Vietnamese started coming back too. But there is still a hardline attitude among the older ones.

Q: Now you leave on May the seventh.

ANDERSON: Before I left there were some other people that came out, Robert Rueben.

Q: He was the treasury secretary.

ANDERSON: That was right before I left too; I think it was in April.

Q: Yes it was.

ANDERSON: And he came and his handlers said, Desaix would you mind riding in this car as the secretary likes to be alone so he can think. The first stop he said, "Desaix, come ride with me." So I spent three days with him and just loved him, he was absolutely wonderful. An absolute perfect diplomat. There was another time we were having troubles about the U.S. trying to undermine the Vietnamese government and I said, "Would you say that the president told you that we are determined to have a strong relationship and a constructive relationship with Vietnam and we have no intention whatsoever of trying to undermine your system." He said that and it was just wonderful, wonderful, to see the change in their faces when he said that.

We went out into the countryside and went to some schools and the banks and he was just an absolutely marvelous diplomat and understood absolutely immediately what was wrong with the economy and what needed to be done. In a very diplomatic way he discussed his ideas and encouraged them because they were not that different and they were speaking publicly about what they intended to do, what practice was happening was not quite up to par. But just an absolute consummate diplomat and understood how the society was functioning, where the problems were, and I couldn't imagine anybody who could dissect and analyze the economy in three days so aptly, it was just wonderful.

Q: What were some of his observations?

ANDERSON: Well the banking sector had to be dealt with, the state enterprises had to be privatized much more quickly they had been very slow to start it, but very slow. Attention needed to be paid to the urban community as well. They had done well with the farmers but there was an underclass urban wealth problem going on. There was one thing after another, perceiving what needed to be done and telling them in a very nice way. It was not that different from what their public plans were but this served a further impetus to it. So that was one of the highlights.

Another couple was Senator Tom Daeschel and Linda Daeschel and I just adored them, they could not have been nicer. They loved the place and they had to leave early. On the first—I got there in August so the first Fourth of July when we had normalized relations the following year, I had mentioned to my Senator Thad Cochran from Mississippi, “Thad why don't you come out for a visit,” and had no idea that he would even think of it. Lo and behold he sent me a letter one day and said that he wanted to come for the Fourth of July. Wonderful.

Also the mayor of Oklahoma City was coming at the same time too, Frank McCall, anyway a very energetic, charming fellow too, a Republican. So they were there for the first Fourth of July and I had this big house. We invited five hundred people starting with the prime minister and we didn't know who would come. This would be a test of how well we had done over the previous year, if we got the same response that the Russians and the Chinese did; that was my standard, and lo and behold we had about four hundred people who showed up. The deputy prime minister came and the military was there and I think at least the deputy defense minister. The foreign minister came, high party officials came, so it was quite a success. I was very pleased with that. I invited Thad Cochran to speak. He did and he said glowing things about what we wanted to do with the relationship. He said, “I'm a conservative in the U.S. Congress, Republican, and fully support what is going on.” And I invited the governor to speak too and he did and he made some nice remarks. So it was great having them there, having that tie with Congress, of course, was very useful.

Q: Because the Vietnamese would be very aware of the role of Congress in setting the pace.

ANDERSON: They were indeed and during the election in '96 before I went out there, right before I went the foreign affairs chief in the Vietnamese Foreign Ministry came to Washington and I had invited him to come over to my house. I said, "I'm having a little party, why don't you come by." I said that through his own people. But I didn't really hear from them and the party started at seven or seven-thirty or something like that and at about ten-thirty I got a call from the Secret Service who said, We've got a Communist from Vietnam that wants to come to your house to party. I said, "Oh cool, that's wonderful." I said, "How will I know you are here?" He said, "You won't have—there won't be any problem because we've got the flash lights going and we will be there in ten minutes." Then the whole caravan showed up and they came in and fortunately I had lots of cognac and we had wonderful toasts. So he became my friend when I got out to Hanoi and I called on him in the Communist Party headquarters. I said, "I'm having a terrible time finding a place to live." He said, "Look, just move in here with us, here in the party headquarters." I said, "That would be mighty nice but I'm not sure my Uncle Jessie would appreciate it."

But anyway we were close to them after that party. And before the elections, long before it they said, Can't you send some people over here, your political officers, and get them to tell us about your political system and how it works. I said, "I would love to." So our two political officers regularly went over to brief the Communist Party and talk to them about how our political system works. They also talked to me and they said, How does that woman Deng stay in power for so long and Jin Man Toh in Japan and what's it PEP and PPI in Singapore [PAP, People's Action Party] and Mexico PRI [Institutional Revolutionary Party]? I said, "Well, I don't know, let's talk about that," and we did talk about it and my officers talked about it too. So when the elections were coming you know you normally invite the Republicans and the Democrats to your residence to watch the returns. We decided we'd invite the communists too and we did and they were the first people there and the last to leave, sat there through the whole thing and just as excited as anybody could be and they knew who the people were. Like early on the return said that Bob Smith had defeated—you never heard the uproar. Well they started it and everybody else joined in. There were a couple of other folks that were in the doghouse and they knew who they were and they were applauded when it looked like they were in trouble. It was a huge success.

Q: I remember we did that once with the Chinese embassy in the 1980s with the Reagan election.

ANDERSON: The first one?

Q: The first one. So we invited them out and thought we would be there all night you know and they came a half an hour late and the election was over fifteen minutes later.

ANDERSON: It surely was.

Q: It wasn't the educational experience we had hoped it to be, sort of long drawn out and now the West coast comes in. But now you are following it in Hanoi so you've got USIA links and stuff like that or—?

ANDERSON: Yes, we had USIA there. They were suspicious of USIA. They thought they were putting out propaganda, like the peaceful revolution. I had a couple problems come up with USIA and it was clear that the Interior Ministry had reservations about what they were doing. We did have all sorts of stuff and they did a great job. What's his name? Well whoever he was he was a great guy and he was a former military guy, pro-Vietnamese, and terrific. He set up a lot of programs and had lots of stuff going because he worked closely with me, plus we were getting the universities to come over.

Q: Now as I recall when you arrived you talked about your deputy, the political officer whatnot, does a defense attaché show up in due course?

ANDERSON: Yes, he came in early '96, which we wanted to have as quickly as possible and we waited a little while but I wanted one as soon as we could. He came and he was terrific.

Q: Who was that?

ANDERSON: Can't remember his name.

Q: Was it Ed O'Doud or was it later?

ANDERSON: O'Doud, that's who it was, he was terrific, got along well, fit right in. And we of course had those military people, the joint task force, there and they got along beautifully with the Vietnamese. We had no problem with them and then we finally got the marine guards, no problem on that front. Ed O'Doud did a great job, very happy with him. USIS came a little bit later too but they were a little skeptical, suspicious about what they might be up to, but he did a beautiful job.

We got an agricultural attaché eventually. I took great interest in that and the agriculture deputy secretary came over there I think and we got some good programs going because of that, including the Cochran Fellowships which I was pleased about. They had some money to take people over to the U.S. to visit and for technical agricultural seminars and training. We arranged some of those too. I was pleased to tell Thad I arranged that. Everybody who came over there wanted to help and they were all wonderful and went back and followed up so I was immensely pleased with the support I got in Washington.

Q: So you really were able to move the relationship along both in private ways and public ways?

ANDERSON: Well, I think we really did move it and we set the tone of it. Peterson followed up exactly as I had expected, he had the clout, and Ray Burkhart who followed him, the same thing. I assume Mike Marine is now, I don't know.

Q: You are going out there?

ANDERSON: I am going out there for two weeks to set up some more educational exchanges but it's very positive. The one thing when I went back there to Washington in April of '96, was the key to our success in all fields, political, propaganda wise, and every other way was getting the bilateral trade agreement completed. I just preached constantly and hounded those people constantly to come out and negotiate because I knew that more than anything else was what the Vietnamese wanted—a trade, economic relationship with us. That would be the key to the IMF [International Monetary Fund] and the World Bank, Asian Development Bank, who had gotten there earlier but to move even faster if they knew the relationship with us was normalized and then eventually get them to FTO—I preached that endlessly in every telegram that I sent in and I said, “Get those Goddamn USTR people back out here and negotiate.” That has made all the difference in the world; getting that done really was the key to this success we've enjoyed. Everything else is easy because the economic relationship becomes so important to them and that is one thing I talked with Tony Lake about, preaching as I went around in Washington that that was the number one priority.

Q: And then you came out? What did you do after Vietnam?

ANDERSON: I quit the day before I left.

Q: You did? You hit the top rung?

ANDERSON: I resigned before I left, the day I left, and then they called me back that summer. They had the coup in Cambodia and I went through Cambodia on my way back. Hun Sen, the prime minister who overthrew the crackdown—a terrible situation there so I went there. Then pretty soon after I got home the East Asia Bureau called me and asked if I would go with Steve Solarz out there to meet with ASEAN, they were having ASEAN meetings, and go to Cambodia and go to Peking and see Sihanouk and go to Japan. I said, “I would be delighted.”

Q: With Steve?

ANDERSON: With Steve, he was a good friend.

Q: He's played a very interesting role in all of our lives and took a special interest in Asia.

ANDERSON: Well he was going out then and they wanted somebody from State.

Q: Had he lost his election?

ANDERSON: He had lost his election. I had volunteered.

Q: He was a congressman from Brooklyn?

ANDERSON: Brooklyn. When he was running we had been friends since he came to Tokyo in 1976 and said, "I want to see the Communist Party," and I said, "Mr. Congressman you can't do that we don't have any truck with those communists." He was furious but not really and so we've been friends ever since. So the State Department wanted to send somebody and I was fresh from the area and had worked with ASEAN a lot because of APEC and had worked on Cambodia from the other border. I agreed and we went to Tokyo and had fine talks there and went on to Beijing and had lunch with Sihanouk and Woneek and saw somebody high level—I've forgotten who it was—in the Chinese Foreign Ministry but we had a wonderful time with Prince Sihanouk and it was just the four of us.

Q: What was the message for Sihanouk?

ANDERSON: Well we were trying to find out how he saw things, that's what we were trying to hear from him. What way there was out and what to do about Ronarit who had been shunted aside even though he had won the election and what his thoughts were about the right thing to do. I can't remember the details but basically there were a bunch of cutthroats down there and he was very disturbed about what was going on. I don't know that he gave us any advice that encouraged him to move to open I guess by what we were saying too but I guess we probably understood that.

Q: How does it work out that you and Steve were picked for this special mission?

ANDERSON: I don't know. Steve's always been a fair, big friend of the East Asian Bureau and he lost the election. When he was running before that election I saw him and said, "Steve I would be glad to come up there and campaign for you if you wanted me to." He said, "No, come up and campaign for my opponent." So afterwards I said, "I did a pretty good job didn't I?" I don't know whether they raised me with him, they probably did just ask some people around saying he's just been to Cambodia.

Q: He had a good reputation and he was involved in all these issues very early on and I mean I met him in Taiwan.

ANDERSON: Well he knew me well anyway so I was a comfortable person, easy to travel with and he said, "I know they are sending you to keep an eye on me." I said, "Of course." But we had a great trip and then we went down to Indonesia to talk with the Indonesian foreign minister who had been instrumental in dealing with the Cambodian problem. He was very sympathetic to what we were trying to do and then went to KL [Kuala Lumpur] where they were meeting. We met with his foreign minister whose name

I can't remember, and Steve said, "Look, our basic message was let's stick together and hold out and compel Hon Sen to come around just like we worked together on Vietnam." So that was basically our message, We want to work very closely with you and want you in the lead but we are right there with you. They were worried about our being too close to the Chinese as usual because they had always been about Cambodia but we assured them that we were with ASEAN and they were the primary people we wanted to work with. With the foreign minister Steve said, "Please tell the prime minister we are looking forward very much to seeing him in a few days and that we would hope that we would not dwell on the past. Let's talk about how to move forward and get things back on track. That is what we want to do, talk about moving positively." And he said, "I will certainly tell him."

Then we went to Bangkok and saw Ronarit and we saw Sun Ron Che and their top Thais and then we went to Phnom Penh and we walked in to this long wooden table and Hon Sen was there and Steve and me and I guess there must have been an interpreter there but that was it. We were sitting about five feet from Hon Sen with his glass eye and he started talking and he went on and on about all the villainies and how Ronarit was trying to subvert the government, in sum Ron Che was a renegade trouble maker and on and on. Finally Steve said, "Mr. Prime Minister this is fascinating and I wish we had all day but you know we've got to go and catch a plane in an hour. Let's talk about the future." He started like this and I thought he was going to pull out a pistol and shoot Steve on the spot. He really was furious that anybody had stopped him and said let's talk about something else. I really thought he was going to pull out a pistol and I thought, What am I going to do? Am I going to keep talking with him if he kills Steve? Or pull the body out? But then he calmed himself and figured out that wasn't the right thing to do and they actually had a pretty good talk. We had come up with three ideas and I can't remember exactly what they were, things we could do to try and move things back in a positive track to soften the hard line. I mean to move away from the crackdown and try to bring the people back in and some other thing I can't remember exactly what it was but that ASEAN wanted to work with them but they weren't going to be able to work with a government that didn't represent the Cambodian people. We wrote a nice memo, I wish I had that, it is classified but would be a good description of that trip, if you can get your hands on it.

And we thought we had gotten things started. Then Steve went to Province and the things were sort of falling apart again. It was thought somebody ought to go back out there again and talk to the ASEANS again and go back to Phnom Penh and try to get them moving in a positive direction again and they had appointed that foreign minister as the minister in the meantime. So they said, You go be the envoy. I said, "Fine, I don't have anything better to do." So I went back over there. I went first to Indonesia and talked with Madani. I had a wonderful talk with him and we were very much on the same wavelength about the kind of approach needed to be made by ASEAN, we wanted ASEAN to go up and talk to Hon Sen. Hon Sen had told him—they had one visit up there but it worked out very badly—go and see him and then to KL where they were having another one of those ASEAN meetings. I went to Singapore first and talked to my good friend Keshol. We

were on the same wavelength and then went to KL and talked to them. Bangkok and talked to them. At that time you know I knew all those people real well and so talking with friends. Then I went toward my sidekick Phnom Penh Hon Sen and he and I worked up six points. We wanted to urge them and I might be able to uncover those in some way or another but it was to eliminate the—he had a militia there that was still—they were the black thugs. I said, “Eliminate them.” Let me see if I can’t find that because I don’t know whether that is classified or not but I will declassify it in some way or another. His mother was sick so he was sleeping in his car outside the hospital. I saw the new prime minister instead. Ken Quinn was there as ambassador. We went in and I talked to him and I laid out these six points. They were pretty tough things like eliminating your militia, freeing up the judiciary or something to do with the judiciary, liberating them from your influence, and moving to elections in the crackdown, and stuff like that.

Q: Pretty direct.

ANDERSON: It was very direct. What was his name? John my sidekick, we invented those on the way out and nobody had seen those. We came up with those six points and delivered them and then left. I got back home and I got a call from the State Department. They had already talked to me about running KEDO [Korean Peninsula Energy Development Organization] when I was in Hanoi, so they asked if I was interested and I said, “Yeah.” They called and asked if I was and I said, “Maybe.” They said, The secretary wants you to go as ambassador to Cambodia. I said, “Cambodia? What about KEDO?” They said, “This has higher priority.”

Finally though if they decided to pull Ken Quinn out, I mean Ken Quinn’s assignment was up and they would never be able to get anybody approved because of the attitude towards Phnom Penh and Hon Sen was as it should have been. It was horrendous.

Q: In the Congress?

ANDERSON: In the Congress. So they decided that Ken would have to stay on so that fell apart and I went to KEDO. That was the end of my career with the State Department.

Q: Explain KEDO, the Korean Peninsula Energy Development Organization. This all comes from the North Korean negotiations.

ANDERSON: The agreed framework that Clinton and Bob Gallucci worked out after we were about to go to war there to go attack the Yongbyon site. President Carter decided he would take up a long-standing invitation from Kim Il Sung and go and see him. He asked the White House and they were very unenthusiastic but they didn’t say don’t go. He got there in June and he announced on CNN [Cable News Network] I think that the U.S. had agreed not to take the case to the UN and based on that he had worked out an agreement with Kim Il Sung to work out an agreement where we would provide them with help on their energy needs and move to normalize relations and they would freeze their nuclear activities. Gallucci negotiated until October in getting that agreement done.

Steve Bosworth went and set up KEDO. I was the second person to replace Steve. I understood that this was a non-governmental organization and had a board of directors. I did not work for Washington but I worked for KEDO.

Q: What was it supposed to do?

ANDERSON: We were to build two light-water nuclear reactors on the eastern coast of North Korea, they had started working on it, and provide five hundred thousand tons of heavy fuel oil a year until the first reactor was completed. The political things were taken care of by Washington and others but that is what we were supposed to do. I think we were already doing a great job and KEDO continued to do an excellent job, built up a lot of trust with the North Koreans and we knew them. We knew we could negotiate in good faith with them and we have been able to negotiate some things with them and Washington as well. In '98 it looked like things were falling apart because Congress was saying, Eliminate or abrogate the agreement and they are building nuclear weapons under Kim Jong Lee mountain. Fortunately the State Department prevailed and Chuck Hartman negotiated an agreement to go and look under that mountain and did and there was nothing there. It was not designed for a nuclear facility or for whatever it was designed. Then Bill Perry came along and he understood what the problem was and he spent months talking to the Japanese, Chinese, us and he came up to KEDO and sat down and talked with me for a long time.

Q: He was really involved in the serious construction. Where does the money come from?

ANDERSON: Well each of the four countries of Europe that joined after I got there provided the support for the mission here, the office. But then the U.S. paid for most of the fuel oil and we had to scratch around and get the rest of that. South Korea and Japan were coming up with the bulk of the money, South Korea 70 percent and the Japanese somewhere between 20 and 30 percent. I think the South Koreans came up with a billion and a half and the Japanese five hundred million. The U.S. had probably come up with five hundred million for the fuel oil and so forth. But, of course, Colin Powell said in March of 2001, "As we look forward to continuing these talks on the missile issue to get those under control." The next day Bush came out and said, "We're not dealing with a tyrant. He is a dictator and untrustworthy." That was the end of it.

*Q: After the KEDO thing you must have spent some research time because you have published a book, *An American in Hanoi, America's Reconciliation with Vietnam*. What intrigues me is that it's part of the Mansfield Program, weren't you together in Japan?*

ANDERSON: I was Ambassador Mansfield's fourth and final deputy from '85 to '89 and it was worth all the travail that I had to suffer in the State Department to be his deputy.

Q: Oh, what is that?

ANDERSON: Well, he is just a fantastic person and his wisdom, understanding, and modesty. He would speak to the charlady in the same respectful manner he would speak to the prime minister. His desire to understand the Japanese point of view, even on things like computer chip issues, was profound. That's what he understood diplomacy to be and that was the greatest lesson I learned, it was a little late in my career but certainly I thought him a fantastic person and man to work for. She was a wonderful woman, too. She was the backbone of his whole life I think. He attributed everything he had ever done to her support.

Q: Tell me about the artistic process of getting this book together and getting it published.

ANDERSON: Most of that book I wrote when I would go home in the evening in Hanoi. Whatever had happened during the day, I would sit down and write it up. Then I began to put it into chapters and it was mostly written before I left. Then after I got back that summer, I went to Cambodia but otherwise I didn't have anything to do so I pretty much finished it that year in '97 and just took a while to find a publisher.

Q: How does one find a publisher?

ANDERSON: Well I sent it out like whomever it is that wrote Harry Potter, she sent it to twenty-one different publishers before she got accepted. I sent mine to only eleven so I figured I was doing better. No, I sent it to a lot of universities and some would write back intrigued by it and said it was not on their list but some of them liked it very much, others just treated it as something they weren't interested in. But I got enough support so I thought it was worth continuing and I finally found these folks and they happen to have a connection with the Mansfield Foundation and I am on the board of directors on the Mansfield Foundation because of my working for the ambassador. While talking I suddenly discovered that they had agreed to—they had this Mansfield series and they talked with this publisher that I had talked with and they offered to support it, so they did.

Q: Well that's great because the book itself, which I have read, follows the theme that we've been pursuing over these last few tapes and that is, it is important to know what the local power structure thinks because that is your entrée to influencing them. You talk in there about a dinner with this person and a meeting with that person and how you moved some issue along. I thought it was a very good Foreign Service memoir and so I wanted to make sure we mentioned that.

We should also mention that you had spent most of your time or a lot of your time and now in this stage of your life doing a lot of painting and your paintings are in a number of collections, including the State Department's art program. I look around me here and I see a lot of Asian influence. How does a boy from Mississippi—?

ANDERSON: If you live twenty-five years in Asia, love it, the sites, smells, sounds like I did—by choice I was there, I went to a lot of museums a lot of the time, just the artistry

of those people some can and I don't even think about that when I am painting, it's just naturally there. I actually started in Tokyo in 1989. The embassy had an art show and a show for whatever art you might undertake and I hung four paintings then. Actually one of them is right there. Actually my first painting was the night that Vice President Dan Quayle was coming through Yokota Air Base at three am and what can you do before you go out to meet the vice president. I decided that I may as well start painting and I did. That was one of the four I painted and I put those in the art show but didn't do anything more about it under 1985 when a friend said a street merchant—

(tape 2, side B inaudible; start tape 3, side A)

ANDERSON: There was a street exhibition in Georgetown and a friend asked if I didn't want to paint and I said, "Sure, how many do you need?" And she said, "A dozen." I had painted about forty because I had three months waiting to go to Vietnam. I sold enough to pay for a two-week trip to Spain and France. I said, "My God, why have I been doing all this other nonsense all my life? I should paint." I've never ever stopped since.

There is one other thing I should mention which was the highlight I guess of my whole Foreign Service career. Working for Ambassador Mansfield certainly was over a period of time but the day before I left Hanoi the foreign minister said, "Wouldn't you like to call on Premier Pham Van Dong who had been the premier during the war?" I said, "I would love to, that would be very nice." They said, Okay, he is prepared to see you tomorrow morning at nine. So I said, "I would like to ask him some questions, if possible." They said, We'll tell him that.

So I walked into a beautiful house in the back of the French house, back of the presidential palace, a big nice house, and he was standing there in a white Mao suit and he is blind but he greeted me warmly. I noticed up on the ceiling there was a "Congratulations on Your Ninetieth Birthday." He was ninety-two. So we sat down and he first said, "I want to thank you, I understand that you know Vietnamese history well, you studied Vietnamese history, and you know our people and understand our country very well. I know that it's been difficult for you to be here for these two years." I said, "Mr. Premier, this has been the most wonderful time of my life and I worked in nothing but pleasure to try and build a relationship and I have found nothing but a very serious response and willingness and desire on the part of the Vietnamese people and government to do just that so it has been an exhilarating experience. Perhaps I could tell you a little bit about what American policy is and what I have been trying to do, which is what President Clinton said, we want to build a new relationship, look to the future not the past, and we feel that this is an important country. You have a million and a half Vietnamese in America and we are very proud to have them there so the ties of blood as well as philosophy, I think and a lot in common. I think we can be very helpful to each other and we want to build past what the past has held for us and I think that we can do that. I think that U.S. military presence in the region has been beneficial for peace and stability. There is no national interest, conflict of national interest, between our two

countries and so that is what I've been trying to do and that is on instruction of the president." I said, "Would you like to comment on any of that?"

"Well I agree with all of that, but I'll bet you want to ask me some questions?" I said, "Indeed I do Mr. Premier." He said, "Go right ahead, I have all morning." In fact, I had to go and see the prime minister about an hour later so I knew I only had a certain amount of time but I asked him things about if the United States had not chosen to support France in 1945 and if we had stayed and normalized relations with Vietnam as Ho Chi Minh and OSS had worked to do, would it have made any difference in the political and economic system that you would have had here? He said, "I never answer hypothetical style questions."

I said, "Okay, I'll ask the same question in a different way. When did you and Buck Ho decide what kind of politico-economic system you were going to have?" "Oh long before this is both out of the family of the Vietnamese people. We believe that we are one big family and that we should—our socialist system means that you have to take care of everyone, the weak and the strong." I said, "If after the coup against him, or before the coup against him was there any possibility of working out a settlement between North and South so that we could have avoided war?" He said, "No, because his brother Nu was intent on taking the North and he kept talking about the North and he said no the brother-in-law knew was intent on marching North and it was only because of the Americans that they didn't do so." I said, "Well could we have worked after Diem was assassinated, was there any chance that we could have worked out something in the aftermath of that?" He thought that all of those folks, and he mentioned a couple of them by name, that they didn't really want to have a settlement so it was— "We had actually broached with the South the notion of a ceasefire and they weren't serious about it. I don't think there was anything possible." I said, "Well, if we had talked directly with Vietnam much earlier rather than talking with Beijing and the Soviet Union, Moscow, to stop the war or break the war would that have made any difference?" "Yes, you should have talked to us because we wanted to talk with you but you refused to talk with us. Ho Chi Minh sent eleven letters to President Truman seeking to have normal relations and many of them have been made public but we never got any answer. But we wanted from the start to have normal relations and so it became— You talked to other people and if you had talked directly with us we might have worked out something." I asked, "What about your invasion and occupation of Cambodia, was that the wisest course?" He said, "Well, I've been thinking about that a lot myself," and he laughed and it was clear to me that he—when Ko Tak had told me directly that—he said, "I ordered for a quick strike, get rid of Pol Pot and come back, you can't impose democracy or any other form of government on another nation by force." So I think he was saying the same thing that he thought that that was not the wisest thing to do.

Then I said, "Do you have any final thoughts about our relations?" He said, "We want to have good relations and be able to talk directly and honestly with each other and to build trust so we can have peaceful relationships, that is what we want another nation that seeks—with whom that speak peace and seek peace we can have good relations with

those countries.” I said, “I hope you can consider the United States as one of those.” He said, “Indeed I do and I am answering not as a diplomat but person to person and if you are ever—I would like to keep up this dialogue with you so send me a letter, send it to the embassy, come to see me every time you come back, it doesn’t matter what the capacity you come in, but I want to keep in touch with you.”

Afterwards I asked the Foreign Ministry guy who was there and they had just loved this conversation. I said, “What did he think of it?” He said, “He was absolutely delighted,” he said, “and he never met an American like you.” Whatever that meant.

Q: Now are you conducting this conversation in Vietnamese or are you—?

ANDERSON: No, I had an interpreter, the Foreign Ministry guy who was there. But I could understand what he was saying and he occasionally used French. I had a little French.

Q: Aha, and your French is good too?

ANDERSON: Actually, that’s in my book.

Q: Yeah, that vignette is very interesting and it goes back to, you know, be careful on how you characterize or label the other side. You may be cutting yourself off from a path of influence.

ANDERSON: I remembered Mansfield as saying you’ve got to understand the other side, what they think, what their reasons are and what they are doing, that’s key to diplomacy and success in promoting American interests.

Q: Well, it’s interesting that you speak of Mansfield in that way because he had this very successful legislative career and what’s working in the legislature, the Congress, but influencing people through your words showing them where their interests are, how their interests coincide with your interests, what better definition of diplomacy?

ANDERSON: There is no better and that is why he was so good at it. He was able to quietly understand other people’s point of view and take it into account and then to work out something that made sense to both. That is what he tried to do in diplomacy. That is what I learned from him and that is what I firmly believe in, that’s the instrument of diplomacy.

Q: Well Desaix I really appreciate the time that you spent with us and this has been absolutely fabulous. I appreciate this opportunity to come visit you.

ANDERSON: It has been my pleasure.

Q: Over and out.

End of interview

[Desaix Anderson died February 11, 2021.]