The Association for Diplomatic Studies and Training
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ROGER ERNST

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Early years and education	
Military experience	1943
Joined ECA as desk officer for Austria	1948
Transfer to the Pentagon – Office of Foreign Military Affairs and the beginnings of NATO	1950-1955
Attended the National War College	1955-1956
Return to the Pentagon – Deputy Director for Plans	1956-1959
A call to plan US military assistance programs – The Draper Commission	1958-1959
New assignment to the Technical Cooperation Mission in India	1959-1962
Assigned to develop the Peace Corps in India	1961-1962
Deputy Director USAID mission in Taiwan	1962-1964
Transfer to the USAID mission in Korea	1964-1968

Observations on Korea and the Vietnam War

New assignment as Mission Director USAID/Ethiopia 1968-1973

Direct transfer to USAID Mission Director in Thailand 1973-1976

Return to Washington and special assignments 1976-1978

Hawaii 1978-1980

Observations on a career in US foreign assistance programs

INTERVIEW

Q: Thank you Roger, for being in the oral history program, and traditionally, I'd like to start out with your early years, something about your background and education.

Early years and education

ERNST: Alright, I'm pleased to be able to contribute to this program. As you know, I've supported it. My early life was spent on a small island off the east coast of the United States, Manhattan, and one of my earliest sets of experiences that interested me in the world were activities that my mother and I did on Wednesday afternoons. These were my earliest memories, I was six or seven, she was a librarian and entomologist. She would arrange to be off on Wednesday afternoon, and at three o' clock after school we would go to a museum and we'd concentrate on a country. And as soon as I started collecting stamps, which was when I was about eight, we would link the museum visits with the stamp collecting, and then we would look at the stamps in a new light. "Who is the face on the stamp?" "Oh, it's the Queen of England." "Who is Victoria? Where is England? What is their currency? Why do they have pounds and we have dollars?" And then, if it was China, we'd go to a Chinese restaurant for dinner. If it was Turkey, we'd go to a Turkish restaurant. So we had interdisciplinary, integrated learning in a five-hour period once a week, from three to eight, when I was a kid.

Q: What about your father? I hear your father was well-known.

ERNST: He was a lawyer in New York. His practice, his joy, was in the First Amendment. And he was one of the founders of the American Civil Liberties Union, and I was named after Roger Baldwin, who was the main founder. He had enough rich clients to afford a lot of pro bono work. He was an inventor, he would construct new legal theory, and sometimes he would write a law to legalize what he thought should be accepted practice, and then he would lobby to get it passed by the state legislature or down in Washington.

I can remember one instance in which he sent to Mr. Roosevelt, while he was President, two packages of equal weight. One had trash magazines off the bookstand and one had a Bible. Not that my father was very orthodox in any religious sense, but the 3rd class trash cost less than the Bible. And my father said "Isn't this wrong?" And Mr. Roosevelt said "Yes, go work it out with Jim Farley," who was the Postmaster General. And out of that came the book rate. My father believed that we had to work in ways in our society that facilitated the flow of ideas to people's minds. So this was the lead.

Q: Did he have a special interest in foreign affairs?

ERNST: Not much. He had an interest in England, which grew out of my mother's interest in English poets. She was a poetess and writer of her own. But he also had a lot of British clients, who were also actors, authors, playwrights, inventors, and every spring, he and my mother would go to England for two, three weeks, on a ship, the Berengaria, one of the old Cunard ships. A lawyer from his British counterpart office would come to America, and they would each take an intern with them, a young lawyer. The American would learn about the British practice of law, and the young Britisher would come and learn about the American practice. They would stay in each other's houses, so while I was staying in Manhattan, in the household, here would come a British lawyer, a young guy, usually a man, to learn about America, and it was cross-serviced, like when I was in the Pentagon, we set up a program to bring an officer from the Department, across the Potomac River, to serve for a month at a time in the opposite International Security Affairs which was the little State Department in the Pentagon. So they could know how it worked. So he was doing this with the British. But that was about the extent of his interest in world affairs.
Q: Well, moving ahead to your education...

ERNST: Yes, well, Quaker co-educational boarding school where there was a good deal of international concern and interest. I had one great teacher, Walter Mohr, in history, who I remember vividly illuminated my interest in history, and I had an English professor who made English literature exciting. Then I went to Williams, and again I had a mixture of history, economics, and political science, and among my professors, teachers, were James McGregor Burns, who did the work on Roosevelt. Vincent Barnett, political science, who later served in the Embassy in Rome, and later when I was running the AID program in Ethiopia I hired him as a consultant to evaluate the AID program in Ethiopia along with a fellow named Emile Desprey, who had been an instructor in economics at Williams and later was with the World Bank.

Q: When you went to Williams, did you already have an idea of going into service?

Military experience - 1943

ERNST: Not at all. But then the war came, and I enlisted in the Army in December 1942. I first tried to get into the Coast Guard. My father had a 37-foot wooden ketch, and I went down to someplace in lower Manhattan and volunteered the ship and myself for the coastal picket patrol, which was wooden ships running ten square miles off the coast of

Boston and New York to protect against German submarines, because they were wooden hulls and they wouldn't respond to electronics. And they said no, they had a rule the ships had to be 40 feet long. So I said "Take me" and they said "No, you wear eyeglasses." So I went and enlisted in the army. I was called up on April 1, 1943. One day there was an announcement on the bulletin board about a program called the Army Specialized Training Program. It asked for people who would be interested in German or French or Italian, European languages, and I signed up for French or German. I ended up in the German program. They ran some tests, and after basic training I was sent to the University of Maryland with a group, there may have been 200 of us in the ASTP. The object of this was to turn out - I was a private or a corporal (can't remember when I got one stripe) - was to turn out individuals who could serve in the military government in the occupation of Germany. We arrived on the campus, and we went in our rooms, and there were three or four in a row, double-deckers, and everything was labeled in German. Der Tisch, die Stuhl, das Zimmer (table, chair, room), and it was taboo to speak English. We were told we could dream in English, but it was preferred that we dream in German. After two months they took the textbook away, and tested us, and you either knew the rules, the grammar, and had a minimum level of vocabulary or you didn't. If you didn't, out of the program, into the infantry. At that point we were looking at February, before D-day. Your chances were that you were going as a filler into a division for D-Day and would not survive. So the motivation to do well in that academic course was three hours a day of German, with three different instructors, on purpose. One was from East Prussia, one was from Hanover, and one was from Vienna. So we ended up with no regional expressions. We were taught pure German. Then we had three hours of other classes every day, in addition to the language. German, geography, culture, history, economy, political structure, administrative structure, and off we went into either French or German military government.

I went first to England in April 1944, and spent about a year, fourteen months in England, in what was the planning staff for the occupation of Germany. There were five of us enlisted men who came out of this ASTP program, and of the assignments they handed out, mine was to research German source books that they had in London, including telephone directories, no more complicated than the Tampa directory, which I have here in my hand, and you take the Government pages in here, which are in Blue, and we would take the Government pages for the German telephone directory, and you knew then where in a county or a sub-county was the Public Health Office, where was the Police Station, where was the Waterworks, and we translated that information from German into English and put it onto little maps. No extra detail. So here was a package of fifteen or twenty pages, handed to a young lieutenant, or captain, who was going to be the head of the county in Germany, in the American, British, and the French zones of occupation. So he knew, I don't think there were any she's, but he knew he would be responsible for Civil Administration, so he knew where the Waterworks were, where the Police Headquarters were, where the Fire Department was, where the electric station was. So it was very exciting. And I worked for two guys, Navy reserve officers who came out of the university world, and they helped train me.

Q: And then did you go onto Germany?

ERNST: And then we went to Germany... No, then we went to France. And one day I was sitting at my desk doing whatever I had assigned to me. By then, we were outside of Versailles and I had a call, somebody came to the office and said, "You gotta go up front, and see General Brian Millburn, in Millburn's office, at 3:30 or 4 o'clock, mid-afternoon." This was April 1945. So I went up to General Millburn's office, not knowing what was going on, I had probably never been there, well maybe once, no reason to. There were five of us, and we were marched in, and told where to stand, and the General came in and said, "I want to congratulate you, you've been picked for commissions." Somebody came with a little old razor, and cut off our corporal stripes, pinned Lieutenant bars on our shoulders, and the General said "Now go back to work." And we said "Well, what are we gonna do?" He said "What you were doing." And the big difference was the living.

We moved out of the barracks to a little apartment at Saint Cloud, looked out over the Bois de Boulogne, went to dinner in the officers' mess, and about three weeks later, I was given a new assignment, which was to be the senior U.S. officer of an operation called Goldcup. The American senior guy was Sinclair Armstrong, who came from Brown University, and its function was to locate from intelligence sources, the documents and civil servants of the German government, who had been evacuated from Berlin, and to pick them up. We would locate them and then tell the Military Police or a local operational unit to go and arrest the people and take control of a railway wagon or car of material, papers. There were 15 of these British-American teams, and I was told I was going to be the senior American guy on a team with the Brits. With a British, there were four of us on a team. I had a German-speaking American sergeant assigned whose native tongue was German. My British counterpart turned out to be a brigadier in the British army and I was a second lieutenant, of three weeks standing! A fellow named Michael Waring, wonderful fellow. We each had a car assigned. I was 21 at the time when we met. Michael Waring had a brilliant military career, he was probably 41.

Q: The war was just over?

ERNST: The war was just coming to an end, it was April. We were going to go into Bavaria, our assigned area was Bavaria and Austria. There was another group who worked in the central area. We agreed we would ride together, swap cars day by day, so we would get to know each other. He was senior so I rode with him the first day and he rode with me the second day, and we got along famously. He later retired in what is now Zimbabwe, in Rhodesia. He took a land grant in lieu of a pension, because the British government was almost bankrupt, as you know, after World War II and they offered their officers land in Rhodesia and Nyasaland, as it was called, Malawi, maybe elsewhere. Like our land homesteading thing. Anyway, we had a great time, we picked up 1,200 German civil servants. They weren't hard to locate, because they weren't local inhabitants of any village; it was obvious that they were outsiders. After a few minutes of conversation, locals would tell you "Well, there were some visitors who came last month, they're living over there in some guest house." You'd go and pick them up. And they had these files. And the priority was information that could be extracted that would be useful in the war against Japan and then information useful to the governance of Germany. We

moved all the documents into a former munitions factory, in Furstenhagen, near Kassel in central Germany. There the French joined us, so we had a tripartite operation. There were thirty or forty of us in the staff, and we ground out, every day, as many units of output as we could; extractive documents and interviews with German civil servants. We had all their personnel files, because it was very important to the German bureaucratic mind to have your "file." So they preserved their files, so we knew everything about every German civil servant.

Q: This was primarily intelligence collecting, you weren't in into civil government or anything?

ERNST: Well, it was for the purpose of civil government. It was how they ran Germany, what the decisions were, the decisional process, who was involved. How things worked at any level. National, state...

Q: But meanwhile who was running things?
ERNST: Well, in the meantime, the guys who had been given our little manuals were out taking over Hillsborough county, Polk County, whatever county they were in, doing whatever they did. We were not operational, that's correct. We had a tripartite American-French-British group. The head of the American group was a wonderful fellow named Henry C. Newton, who had been, in civilian life, an ecclesiastical architect. You've never heard of that? He designed and built churches. This was his specialty. Design, location, functionality, where should it be, what kind of materials, the budget for building a church. He goes in the army. He becomes a tanker. He then goes to tank school, he become the Commandant of the tank school. And out of the tank school, I don't know how, he got into this business. And after the war is over, he ends up at Holabird doing counterintelligence as the head of The CI [Counterintelligence] School in Baltimore. A wonderful guy, very conservative, right-wing Republican politically, from Kentucky. Years after we met, I remember him. I introduced Henry Newton to my father after the war and they clashed immediately for the whole time of the luncheon meeting in New York or somewhere.

Then I went to Berlin, in December. Well, I went to Berlin for a few days in August, about the time of Potsdam, on a special assignment, in support of the head of our unit, making a presentation. Then I was assigned back up to Berlin to something which later became the Berlin Documents Center, BDC, out near Tempelhof. And I have to say, it was the unhappiest assignment of my professional life. I wasn't there more than six weeks, which was partly because I was unhappy. Very frankly, it may be my fault. I didn't get along with the guy who ran it. He was a Lieutenant Colonel, I was a Second Lieutenant, and we were there exploiting documents and Germans who could read the documents, who were working with us for current information that would be useful to the occupation, to the framing of policy. It didn't work. I happened to run into - you know, life is full of these wonderful "If you wait around long enough at the corner of Bruce Downs and Fletcher long enough, you're going to meet somebody that will save you." So I ran into a guy who knew a guy with whom I had had training in Greensboro, North Carolina, in '44. Connection. And he was an Adjutant General type, and he was working in the personnel

division. And he asked me what I was doing, and I said I'm not happy. He said he might be able to fix me up with a transfer, and would I like that, I said "sure!" About three days later, out I went.

My next assignment was really serendipitous. I was assigned as an Assistant U.S. Secretary to the Allied Control Council, which was the four-power, quadripartite governing body for Germany. There was, on the control council, General Eisenhower, Marshal Zhukov, I think either de Lattre de Tassigny or General Koenig for the French, I can't remember which came first, one first, one second. And Sir Shotto Douglas, Marshal of the Royal Air Force, later Brian Robertson, great, great figures. Robert Murphy was the US political advisor, Jake Beam was his deputy. Exciting. I was over here on the pecking order working for a fellow named Harrison Allen Gerhardt, West Point class of about '32. Political scientist, taught at West Point under Herman Buchema who set up the political science, history and social studies program at West Point after World War One. Gerhardt, a Brooklyn, New York, fellow, had as his deputy a fellow colonel named Paul Birdsall, and I didn't know that, when the guy on the street said "hey, I'll fix you up with an assignment" Birdsall turns out to have been a professor of history at Williams, who knew me, knew who I was, I never had his class, I knew his name when I heard it. Links in the world don't hurt. The staff there consisted of myself, a Russian- speaking lieutenant colonel named Eric Oulashin, a woman Major in the US army, Emily Gormon, later became head of the WAC. Hal Buchema, who was the son of Herman Buchema, later married Lee Bradley, General Omar Bradley's daughter, plus Phil Barringer who is still working in ISA in the Pentagon, with whom I later connected in the Pentagon in the fifties. There were a couple of others, and we took the minutes at the meetings. We were also each assigned to be the secretary for what they called the committee structure. And I had the Directorate of Economics, DECO. That was one of mine, and I had refugees and repatriation and I had resources and economics, and then one of the other guys had political, security, different subject areas.

Q: There were some quite contentious meetings.

ERNST: Oh, very contentious meetings. We would take the minutes, and we would have a set of minutes, and the Brits would have a set of minutes, and the French would have a set of minutes, and the Russians would have a set of minutes. Then we secretaries would meet to try to agree on an agreed minute. So here I was in diplomacy, of words. "Did your boss really say that?" We didn't have tape recorders. And sometimes we sensed that our colleagues were being given instructions as to what to record... how to write that which had been said perhaps inelegantly. The rewriting, like the Congressional Record, you rewrite it.

Q: So how long did you stay there for?

ERNST: I stayed in Berlin until the summer of '47. It was too exciting. I was learning too much, learning more than I could have in a classroom. And, I was working with wonderful people.

Q: Did you see the beginning of the Cold War?

ERNST: Cold War, I was in the room. One of my assignments, as I mentioned earlier, was with DECO, Directorate of Economic affairs, and the US representative in DECO was William H. Draper, who later headed the Draper committee and then the Population Crisis Committee. He'd been a banker and then he was with Douglas Dillon and he was later head of the Mexican Power and Light company, head of the President's commission to study the Military Assistance Program for President Eisenhower in 1958-1959. I worked for him then in the White House. And I was in the room, March of '47, can't tell you the date, when we split, we and the Brits split with the Soviets over the question of the level of steel to be produced in Germany. The beginning of the tightening, the hardening. I was there when the Czech liaison mission was withdrawn suddenly. We had foreign liaison missions from allied powers. Not the four powers, but there were Brazilians and Canadians and Australians and Czechs, and all of a sudden the Czechs disappeared, and it was the beginning of the crunch in Prague. And I was, very hurt by this personally, because the head of the Mission, Vatslav Polichek - I had gotten to know him, and I'd mentioned his name in a letter to my father and my father had at one time represented Jan Masaryk and there were connections with liberal Czechs. But I also dated his aide, Maria Petrachkova. I still have a picture of her, from 1946 at a party in Wannsee for C. D. Jackson who came out from the White House, where he was an aide to - I guess he was a spin doctor or what would today be a spin doctor - President Truman. The Cold War started, and we couldn't travel anymore in the Soviet Zone.

Q: What about the issue in your commission of emptying out the factories, taking all the equipment...

ERNST: That was happening, everything, this table would be gone, everything that wasn't bolted down was taken by the Russians. And the French did some of it too, mind you. The Russians assigned non-European troops to Berlin and Eastern Germany, their sector, their zone. They assigned people from the Asian parts of Siberia, who came with non-European facial configurations, they were Mongolians.

Q: Why did they do that?

ERNST: Because those people would not be sympathetic, by definition, and they would obey the orders to take everything and they would then go into the restaurants and take the refrigerators. Take the toilet out of the toilet room. And you'd see it every day. And off they'd go, and then they would go home and be replaced.

Q: Wait a minute, how did you see it every day? You weren't in the Soviet zone.

ERNST: In Berlin you'd know, through reports. And if you went through the corridor, out to the western zones, you'd see it along the road. And in the early days in Berlin, Checkpoint Charlie didn't exist. It was an open city for the four powers. We could go anywhere in Berlin. And we were invited, once, more than once, but once that I went along, to a place in Brandenburg, an hour and a half outside of Berlin maybe, which had

been Goering's getaway. Baronial estate, with a great room, dining room, forty, fifty, sixty feet long, great big table, could seat 60. In the middle of the table (these are little footnotes of history that are fun), was a statuette of a beautiful girl, maybe 30. Lovely figure, nude, as a centerpiece, with flowers around. This was his first wife. Swedish girl, before he married Emma.

Q: What kind of shape was the building in when you went there?
ERNST: Maybe it'd been repaired, the Russians were using it, it was one of their facilities. But Berlin was an exciting place.

Q: What were the living conditions like?

ERNST: For us?

Q: And for the Germans.

ERNST: Well, for the Germans there was still on a hot day the smell of roast human meat from bombed buildings, the people were underneath, decaying. There were very poor people. I was offered, which I didn't take, a six-meter sloop in the port of Bremen for four cartons of cigarettes. Gives you a measure of the poverty. And nobody in Germany had had a cup of coffee made with beans in five years. There were those Germans who threw themselves at us, but there weren't many compared to the total, and law and order was pretty high. There was a certain sympathy for the loser. Kind of a fascinating footnote on history - America's role that we have treated so magnanimously, helpfully, those whom we defeated in war. Germany, Italy, Japan. It's sort of a halfway step... It's not the iron rule, which is to do unto the other what he might do to you before he does it to you, and it's not the golden rule, but maybe it's the bronze rule, to bring evil to justice but to treat the defeated with kindness.

Q: How much of that do you think was due to knowing that we were going to want Germany on our side vis-a-vis the Soviets? Was that even discussed?

ERNST: That was not discussed, certainly not in '45, '46; there was every anticipation of working together, the spirit, if you will, of San Francisco, of the Charter of the United Nations was with us; the agreements that had been reached with Yalta were to be honored. No, I don't think there was any anticipation, not till '47, on my part, that I could see. Maybe others knew, were wiser. We had two senior Russian guys in the Secretariat. Old school guy named Igknaghkin. Went back to World War One, almost, I think. Charming, civilized, courteous, if you will, in the Peter the Great tradition. Look to the West, integrate. And then we had a fellow who's name I can't remember, who was the other extreme, he was a nationalist, anti-western, which you see again today. The middle one, the name started with a G.. and he was a Major General. And then there was a guy named Sergei Koudryatsev. He was roly-poly, very friendly, and we finally got a line on him... took some time. He had been the head of the KGB operation in Canada, which changed our behavior with him very quickly. But he had been one of the people who was very open and accessible and would respond to your phone call and would find a way to agree.

Q: What was the attitude of the Germans towards Hitler? Were they bad-mouthing him at that time?

ERNST: No, silence. Didn't know anything, never heard. Even when we were in Bavaria, I was stationed at one time in Pulloch, outside of Vienna, and one time at the Starnbergersee leutsletten, one end at the Crown Prince Rudolph's house, castle was our headquarters. A couple of the concentration camps were within 45 minutes' drive, and nobody had ever heard of them.

Q: Did you have any personal experience with the Holocaust?

ERNST: We saw people who got out of the concentration camps wandering down the street in Bavaria in the striped costumes, all they had. The ones who got out and walked around were obviously in better physical condition than those who didn't. The immediate reaction of our little group (which was being supported by an anti-tank battalion, we were satellited onto an anti-tank battalion for messing and food, we didn't have organic support of our own) was for our Colonel, Carter, to tell the tank battalion commander that a little extra security may be needed, because there are these vagrants or whatever word he used coming out of the camp, who had nothing and had no reason not to attack, or to take, to maraud. For all we knew, they were crazy. And they have a right to be, I mean, Mandela's the exception, coming out of 27 years of prison; these people had been tortured. I wouldn't say there was a great deal of empathy.
Q: How about when you were in Berlin? Was the enormity of the Holocaust recognized? Was there any evidence of the Holocaust there?

ERNST: No.

Q: That was left to Nuremberg.

ERNST: The focus then was on repatriation of those who were alive. Where do they go, how do they get back, how do they reclaim their life, their property? First priority would be those who were non-German. French in the concentration camps, for example.

Q: Moving along, when you left Germany, by that time, had you pretty well decided on an eventual career in government?

ERNST: In government anyway. I went back to college, and I negotiated an agreement there for what they called a viva voce exam, and four professors interviewed me in European history, etc., and gave me a year's credit for that, and I got a year's credit for my ASTP German area/language study, which was legitimate, because I told them I was not going to come back for two years or three years. I'd been a freshman, and I wanted to come back as a senior. I came back as a senior. It had one negative effect: I never had my quota of science and math. I had freshman biology and I had algebra 1. I'm deficient on that side of my educational experiential base. Then at spring break, in '48, I went to Washington and I had an appointment with a personnel officer in the Marshall Plan office

for an interview. I was staying at the University club, and I went to my appointment, and I had a lifetime habit that I got from General Clay to be 15 minutes early for every appointment. I also have another habit that I got from General Clay which was to always carry three-by-five cards because you don't want to trust your memory. Jot down the word, the punch line on the joke, the telephone number... anyway, I arrived in the Miatico Building at Connecticut and H early, and I was standing by the elevator, I had 15 minutes, and I looked at the blackboard with all the names and the Marshall Plan here was Paul Hoffman, Howard Bruce, Dick Bissell, all the names. And then here was Edward T. Dickinson. And all of a sudden, that name jumped out at me. I had met a young Lieutenant in the Marine Corps who was with OSS, stationed in Stockholm, at a party in London, given by Lord Beaverbrook for Leon Henderson. Henderson had been one of my father's clients.

Q: Not Loy Henderson?

ERNST: Leon Henderson. He was the head of the Temporary National Economic Committee on the Hill, in the '30s, and then he was OPA Price and Wage administration with what's his name... Nelson, War Production Board in that era. He was a client of my father's, lived off Connecticut Avenue.

Q: When was this party in London?

Joined ECA as desk officer for Austria - 1948

ERNST: '44. And my father had said to Leon "When you get to London, look up Roger and see if he's okay." So Henderson was at the Embassy, and a call came out to Bushy Park where I was working, US group CC, under General Clay, planning staff for Germany. "Get your tail to a party at six o' clock at such and such a place, so I went to a party and I met, I knew who Henderson was, but at the party I met this young guy, Dickinson, a Marine Corps lieutenant. I was a private first class. And here we were in Washington in '48, and I go up to his floor, and luckily his door was open, and I said to his secretary in a loud voice, in case he didn't remember who I was "I'm Roger Ernst, I'm an old friend of Ed Dickinson's from London." And if I wasn't, so? I still had my appointment downstairs with the personnel office. He came out, and he said "Roger Ernst? We met in London at that party Beaverbrook gave! Hi! What are you doing?" "I'm looking for a job, I'm at Williams," he said, "Gee, I'd love to talk to you, but I've got to go to a meeting, can you come back at two o clock?" I said "Yes." He said "I might have a job for you working on Austria." So I went to my appointment with the personnel people and they went over my forms, and stuff. Then I went, hotfooted, back to the University club, right next to the Soviet embassy, and went in the library, no lunch. Looked up Austria. Size of the state of Maine, population of the city of New York, uses the Danube and the Port of Trieste for its transport, has an energy imbalance, some seasons it exports hydro energy, and some seasons it imports energy from Germany, coal-based. I go back to Dickinson's two 'o clock and Dickinson says "By the way, do you know anything about Austria?" "Yes. Let me think," I said. "Size of the state of Maine, population of New York, exports energy, uses Trieste" Dickinson said to me, "You know, you know more

than anybody I've met, you've got the job." So I was hired to be the Austria desk officer.

Q: Come on, you had just come back too, you knew a fair amount.

ERNST: No, I hadn't been in Austria. Well, I'd visited Innsbruck and Zurs, but I didn't know that much. I knew what it looked like and smelled like, mountains...

Q: And you had the language.

ERNST: So he said "You're going to be the Austrian desk officer." And we negotiated back and forth during the summer. I graduated, then I went to Nantucket. And they said "How much do you want? What's your starting requirement?" And I said "$6,000." I ended up working for $2,974 a year, just under $3,000, because they said "Your Army experience has no value." They couldn't give me credit. Which Williams had done and which obviously made me what I was. It was wrong, shortsighted. I went to work, there was Dickinson, Hoffman, Howard Bruce, Dick Bissell, later CIA, Bay of Pigs. Dickinson later became Secretary of Commerce for Governor Harriman while Harriman was governor of New York. And a guy named Charlie Marshall who had Austria, Germany, and Trieste; he came out of US Rubber. He'd been in the Navy, I think. And I was Austria, and I said. "What are my instructions?" And they said "Well, get Austria on its feet." The aid level for 1950 or whatever fiscal year it was, had already been set, it's 274 million dollars. "See that the money is spent wisely."

Q: And what kind of staff did you have?

ERNST: No staff. A third of a secretary.

Q: For all of Austria?

ERNST: There was a staff in Vienna. I was the desk officer. I had nothing but Austria, and I had a third of a secretary, so what am I going to do? I didn't know about the State Department. So I called up the Austrian embassy and I said "I'm Roger Ernst, and I'm the desk officer just appointed for Austria and I'd like to come over and see the Ambassador." Secretary said "Fine." We made a date, went over and introduced myself, his name was Ludwig Kleinwaechter. I explained my assignment. I said "It's your country, I think the message is, you've got to set the priorities. You've got to make the major effort. We can assist you in an augmentation context. If you're doing it, we can help you. If you're not doing it, we can't make it happen."

Q: You were really saying that in 1948?

ERNST: Yes. I was saying that. I got that out of my childhood. "Set your priorities; sometimes we may not be able to respond, either for reasons of inability, or because we don't want to. But you make the picture."

Q: Was this approach the party line? The Marshall Plan? You weren't freewheeling or

anything?

ERNST: That was why the OECD was set up, or its predecessor, to get the Europeans to co-ordinate their own planning, to set their own priorities, to be supportive of Schuman and Monnet and their attempts to tie France and Germany together so they'd never fight again. Anyway, the next morning, Charlie Marshall came into my office and said "Roger, I hear you went over and saw the Austrian Ambassador yesterday, that's a quick start." I said "Yes." He said "It may have been a little too quick; I had flak down from the Department." I said "What department? I have a job to do, I did it, it's all on track, it's moving Charlie. I think that by the end of the week we'll begin to get some idea about what their priorities are." Beyond relief and coal and food which we were doing for their survival. So he said "You'd better go over to the Department."

Q: Where were you? What building?

ERNST: The Miatico Building, Connecticut and H. Diagonally, sort of across from the White House. Across from the Chamber of Commerce building. It was then a new building, has subsequently torn down and rebuilt. Later the Peace Corps was in there, may still be in there, not sure. Anyway, I went over to the Department, and made phonebook inquiries, who should I see. Turns out the person I should see was Eleanor Dulles. And she and I just got along famously, we loved each other. I was very sad when she died the other day, well, not sad, because she'd had a full life. But we just hit it off from day one. She said "Don't worry, Roger. Let's work together on this." She said there's some things you can do...

Q: What position was she in?

ERNST: She was desk officer for Austria, on the economic side. There was someone else doing political and military and relations with the Russians and the zones. She wasn't yet into the Berlin phase of her life. And we just got along great and we never had a problem again. We talked to each other every day, there were no memoranda.

Q: How do you explain the fact that you got along so well with her?

ERNST: Just personal relationships, I was enough younger that I was respectful, she was enthusiastic about my enthusiasm, and she recognized that I could do some things with the Marshall Plan that she couldn't do but she wanted to do. That she would like to get done. We cooked up a deal. For example, we were getting all kinds of stories out of Vienna, through the mission, of the requirements, uncoordinated between heavy industry, light industry, transportation, urban development, agriculture, exports, tourism promotion, everybody was out there flipping his own little beat. So she and I, I don't want to sound fancy about this, I don't want to say "cooked it up," but had the idea, that they needed a co-ordination mechanism in the Austrian government. We told them. I became the voice to tell Ambassador Kleinwaechter. “We think we're hearing too many Austrian voices. You are one in Washington. But we're hearing six things out of Vienna. Can you tell your guys in Vienna to get their act together? Our aid will be more productive.” And the word

went back and presently a cabinet office for the co-ordination of the reconstruction of Austria was created with a guy named Wilhelm Tauber as the head of it. It took three or four months. And they produced a coherent plan, rebuilding the Linz steel mill came at its appropriate place; new seeds for agriculture, because they had wrecked their seed supply, came earlier. Rolling stock, Roy Chalk, you remember Roy Chalk? He ran the Washington streetcar system. Donated 50 streetcars to the Marshall Plan, for which he got a tax deduction under some remote provision of the Foreign Aid Act. We paid for the shipping out of the Marshall Plan money, and they became the first postwar revitalization of urban transport in Vienna.

Q: What about your relationship with the Austrian ambassador? I understand it became quite close, with both him and his daughters.

ERNST: I was there for Sunday lunch at least once a month at the residence, and I never needed to have official appointments to see the Ambassador; by then there was an officer in the embassy, Willi Gertz, appointed to be the liaison with the Marshall Plan. I dated, mostly, the older daughter, Gunda, and occasionally the younger daughter, Ebba. We were friends, good friends, but it wasn't much more than that. But it was very solid. They were a little younger than me, not much. And then, about four or five years ago, my wife Jeannie and I were going to be in Vienna at the end of a trip through the Balkans (a learning trip with alumni, Williams, Dartmouth, Amherst, Hopkins alumni trip, Istanbul to Vienna, thirty days with lecturers, up the river). So I called the Austrian Ambassador's office, and said "By any chance, is Ambassador Kleinwaechter still alive? I would love to go and pay my respects." And the answer was "No, we know about him, illustrious figure." I said "Well, what about his daughters?" They said "We don't know where the older daughter is, but we know the younger daughter is living in Vienna, and she married Carl Herbert Schauber, who was a young political officer in the Austrian embassy in '49, '50. And we knew each other slightly. Later he went on to be the Austrian Ambassador to the common market in Brussels, he was in Copenhagen, and in Washington, in the ‘70s. And he's retired, said the secretary to the current Austrian Ambassador. “He's retired, living in Vienna, here's his address.”

So I wrote, I would be in Vienna, at such and such a date, we're going to stay at the Intercontinental, love to come and see you, or call you. We got to Vienna, and there was an invitation, "Please come and have lunch with us on Thursday." Turns out, where did they live? They lived in the Schonbrunn. In the castle, the palace. There are 30 or 40 two-three-bedroom apartments, in the wing to the left, over the public cafeteria, for retired senior foreign service and civil service officers. And there they are, and after five o' clock, the garden surveyors. So we went on the tour, we went and saw the Schonbrunn, then we went up and had lunch with Ebba and Herbert. And had a wonderful afternoon, this was 1992, August. And I asked Herbert about the war in Yugoslavia. We had just had been through Vukovar, just been through the Balkans, spent three days in Budapest, and a couple of days in Bucharest, and three days in Istanbul. I said "What about the problems across the border with the refugees, the whole problem with Bosnia and the dissolution of Yugoslavia?" He said "I want to ask you a question, Roger. Did you notice that the countries that are immediately around Yugoslavia are very silent? Ukraine, Hungary,

Croatia, Slovenia, Austria, Italy, Czech, Turkey, we don't say anything about it. You know who talks? You guys far away. Yap, yap, yap. You can afford to moralize, and maybe make it worse. Secondly, if you ask us what our priority might be, we might like some help handling the refugees, who come streaming across the border here and to Germany. See, no one's asked us that." Very interesting, insightful comment by a retired Austrian former Ambassador.

Q: After you left the Marshall Plan, Austrian desk?

Transfer to the Pentagon - Office of Foreign Military Affairs - and the beginnings of NATO - 1950-1955

ERNST: I went to the Pentagon, and it happened again.

Q: What was your status in terms of the bureaucracy?

ERNST: Ed Dickinson, from the party in London, was asked by Louis Johnson to come to the Pentagon, to a new position. They were going to establish a civilian counterpart to the Joint Chiefs of Staff, which is the Chiefs of Staff of the Army, Navy, and Air Force. They were going to establish an organization called the Joint Secretaries, who were going to be the Secretaries of the Army, Navy, and Air Force. And Dickinson was to be the Secretary for the Joint Secretaries. Not quite like the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff - Powell, Shalikashvili - but more like a staff officer. To get better co-ordination on the civilian side, on a range of issues, political, budgetary, logistical, conflicts with roles.

Q: To do with Europe?

ERNST: To do with the world. This was to co-ordinate the three secretaries on everything. And Dickinson said "Roger, I want you to come with me." By the time he got to the Pentagon, Johnson had been fired. Dickinson got over that and was there, six, maybe ten weeks. Johnson was fired May or June.

Q: Who was Johnson?

ERNST: Louis Johnson, Secretary of Defense.

Q: Johnson, after Forrestal?

ERNST: After Forrestal. He'd been a hero in World War II, he was the fellow to whom Mr. Roosevelt turned and said "We need 50,000 airplanes and nobody says we can build 'em." He built them. Cut the red tape, the white and blue colored tapes. Went out and got it done. Work three shifts. Whatever was required. Allocate the resources. But Johnson, I don't know whatever happened, he got fired. By Mr. Truman. And I arrived in the Pentagon, so the Joint Secretaries concept disappeared. And Dickinson hung around for a little while, but he left. Probably by the end of the summer of '50, he was gone. Meantime, I was on the train to go across the river to the Pentagon. So I got put into what was then

called the Office of Foreign Military Affairs in the Office of the Secretary of Defense. It was headed by Major General James H. Burns, who had been the military assistant to Harry Hopkins in lend-lease. So we had continuity of experience. And there were, oh, six of us. Altogether, maybe seven. The number one civilian under Burns was a fellow named Frank C. Nash, who later became Assistant Secretary of Defense for International Security Affairs when the office of Foreign Military Affairs became an assistant secretaryship. Najeeb Halaby, later head of the FAA, later General Dynamics Corporation, later PanAm, later TWA, and today, at 80, the father of Queen Noor. So a lot of fun things, people. And there was an Air Force Colonel, Eugene Beebe, who was in the first graduating class from the National War College. There was an army Colonel named James H. Bhillips. The Bhillips gas and oil people in Texas, West Pointer, class of '38 I think, and a Navy Captain, A. R. Matter, who had married Admiral King's daughter.

I don't want to over-emphasize it, but there's a point, which is that there was a group who had a sense of responsibility for the conduct of the nation's affairs. And the names kind of repeat. If you went to West Point, if you had these opportunities, you then owed your state. Europeans have had that, British have had it. Is it elitism? Yes. Is there any society without an elite? No. The Chinese had an elite. The Soviets had an elite, it was the hierarchy of the party. But you've got to have an elite, you've got to have somebody who runs your society. And has a sense of duty, responsibility. So you see these connections emerging. So you see, here's A. R. Matter married to Admiral King's daughter. No question, there was a linkage. Something came up, I've got a boy, throw him in, he'd do it. So we were the bridge to the [State] Department, to [the Policy Planning Staff], but then a subgroup was set up, the Office of North Atlantic Treaty Affairs, and I became the Deputy Director, or Assistant Director, whatever the title was, of the NATA in the Pentagon, and we worked with a group in EUR/RA [Bureau of European Affairs/Regional Affairs]. George Perkins was Assistant Secretary, Ed Martin, not the Ed Martin from China and Burma, but the other Ed Martin, economics side; Doug MacArthur the Third, Ridgway Knight. Joe Wolfe, who's around Bethesda. And Norman Anschutz, later on, lives in Washington, Beirut, I guess and other places. Wonderful cast of people. By then General Marshall, with all his eminence, was at Defense.

And I will never forget.. I'd been on the job about three weeks, so it's the end of June, it's July. August the 15th. And the Secretary of State was going on an official trip. The Secretary of State was Dean Acheson. General Marshall went out to the airport to see him off. To wish him godspeed on his trip. The message was clear. The pecking order was there, the Secretary of State is ahead of the Secretary of Defense. We will get along. We will be polite, we will be helpful, we are there to support your effort, Mr. Acheson. We work for the President, this is the way the pyramid operates. And it was wonderful. Because in that day, there had been a lot of bickering across the river. Practical things happened just at the low level. Guys in the Department had a hard time getting a car to come to the Pentagon to a meeting. And if there was a big meeting with eight people from the Pentagon and two from the Department, logically it was better to have it over in the Pentagon. But they couldn't get a car. The Department didn't have a motor pool, I mean it had, but... The Pentagon had plenty of resources, always had had. Extra supplies. Anybody with a State Department ID could get on the Pentagon shuttle to the Pentagon.

Facilitate that co-ordination. Make it happy. If you're stuck in the Pentagon for lunch, you can use the SecDef's mess, dining room. You don't have to go into the noisy cafeteria. People in the dining room are two, three, four star Generals and Admirals and civilians who are making the decisions, you ought to be working with them. Facilitate that coming together, to do what Frank Nash said (who was by then Assistant Secretary): "We must find the national interest. I am not here to represent the Department of Defense. Yes, I am paid by it, but our job is to find the national interest." And I learned that lesson, it was very important, and I have used it all my life. Subsequently, '50s, '60s, '70s, '80s. I use it in my teaching.

Q: Did you ever have anything to do with General Marshall? Directly? Personally?

ERNST: Yes. General Marshall had a wonderful proclivity of picking up a piece of paper and reading it, and if he liked it, every so often, I don't know how often, but every so often, he would get up from his chair, walk down the hall, or if he had a question. He walked down the hall, I don't mean he went to the other side of the building. He was on the E-ring of the third floor, we were on the D-ring, not very far away. He'd walk down the hall, he'd come into the office, he'd find the desk officer who wrote the memo, it had been signed, if I wrote it, RE. It had been signed by Beebe, through Nash, through the Deputy Secretary of Defense, who was either Steve Early or Bob Lovett, to the general, to the SecDef. And General Marshall came wandering into the office one day (Thelma Stubbs was our secretary. She later became secretary to the Secretary of Defense, for four of them, I think her last was Carlucci). General Marshall wandered in and he said "Which one is Ernst?" We were all sitting there, and we had one room, with four of us in the room. Inside room, no window. And I said "Sir" and stood up. He said "I've just seen this memo on the admission of Greece and Turkey", or whatever the subject was, he said "I like it. I just want you to know. I'm going to rework it a bit, have Pat Carter rework it." Pat Carter was his military aide. "I'm going to send it over to the President. I wanted you to know." That's all it took. It was like a hot knife in a cake of butter. It goes right through the bottom. The General would go right down to the bottom, and apparently he had done that when he was Chief Staff of the Army. He would go right down to the officer who knew, had written the memo, not the guys who cleared it, who signed off on it, who kibitzed, the Assistant Secretary, the Undersecretary. Right down. That guy knew. Very exciting.

Q: He was very extraordinary, too.

ERNST: Yes, yes, yes.

Q: Too bad he never wrote his memoirs. There hasn't been a good biography on him yet.

ERNST: No, there hasn't. Pogue did one, I guess. Forrest Pogue. When I did the NATO business, then we sort of scrambled things around and I drew the card which said I would be responsible for putting together the NATO infrastructure program, which was the common financing for the common-use military facilities. Airbases, pipelines, headquarters, ammunition depots. And negotiate the formula for contributions. And that

happened at the North Atlantic Treaty Council meeting in Ottawa, whatever year it was, maybe '51. And I was assigned to work with Frank Pace, who was Secretary of the Army. He was representing the Defense Department in the negotiations but representing more than that. We ended up with the US putting in 40%, pretty quick after World War II; yes, the recipient countries wanted our forces, but there were also some political liabilities of having foreign forces in your town, we see it in Okinawa today, we see it in various places.

Q: What did you thing of Frank Pace?

ERNST: Very able, personable, smart, reliable.

Q: He's the one that went on to found the International Executive Service Corps (IESC).

ERNST: Yes. He was also a good tennis player, so was his wife, Peggy. Jeannie played with Peggy a number of times. Very impressive guy, he'd been the Director of the Budget, so he knew how things were wired, put together. He was a great guy.

Q: How do you explain the quality, the caliber of the people who were in the government at that time? Because this was, this wasn't exactly the war effort, the war was over. Course, we were moving into the Cold War.

ERNST: There was duty. An appeal, there was loyalty, there was duty, there was your familial responsibility. If you went back to another generation, one son went to the clergy, one to the military, one to the government, one to business, or farming.

Q: Were they really that superior? Were they as good as they now seem to be thought of? Or are we being nostalgic about it?

ERNST: Well, I've got to be nostalgic, but I think there was a quality of commitment, of responsibility, of commitment to your job. If what you were doing meant you stayed overnight, you stayed overnight. It was the priority, do your job. As I said earlier, the parochialism was not there, we were there to try to find the interest in the United States and pursue it, not to push the interest of the Army or the Defense Department or EUR or SP or E. And that was very important.

Q: It was also very exciting times.

ERNST: Very exciting.

Q: Very challenging times.

ERNST: But the leadership was strong. The leadership was so good. For us young guys. Marshall and the President. You knew, you knew that was happening. And the stakes were high, the rewards for America were big. This was the payoff for why we had fought the war. We had the right to remake the world, okay, let's make it well.

Q: Now, what was your status in the bureaucracy of the foreign service or the civil service, you have a very unusual career beginning here. Were you a civil servant?

ERNST: I was a civil servant, paid for, actually, because of convenience - the Secretary of Defense didn't want to have a big administrative office - so they put us all on the Navy civilian payroll. So it was Civil service, first Marshall Plan and then Navy civil service. Then I was, I don't know where the idea came from, I really don't, it was suggested that I should go to the National War College in '55.

Q: So you were there five years, you were in NATO and European affairs, you really got NATO off the ground.

ERNST: Going, going. We brought in Greece and Turkey, I worked with Ambassador McGhee to bring Greece and Turkey into NATO. I then worked with various people in the creation of the Western European Union. It was the device by which we then could do "the German trick." You had two images; Germany became a member of the Western European Union, where, as I recall it, for practical purposes the French had a veto, and at the same time became part of NATO, where the French had a veto, but was much diluted. We began to push the European cohesion function through WEU, which never became real - that is, the military embodiment of WEU never really emerged. Probably never was meant to emerge.

Q: It wasn't the European Defense community that De Gaulle vetoed?

ERNST: Well, yes. That was later. There were big problems with De Gaulle. I represented the Defense Department - this was in the later '50s - with Len Unger, Leonard Unger, Ambassador to the Republic of China and to Thailand, and Phil Farley, maybe that's the right name, from S/AE, Secretary's office, Atomic Energy. And we worked, going back to De Gaulle, we put together the package of amendments to the US Atomic Energy Act to permit the sharing of nuclear technology and secrets with NATO allies in order to envelop the French, keep them on board. Didn't quite work. But we tried.

Q: This whole period, it's so important in our postwar history, has been very extensively documented. From your own experience in reading and all, do you feel that it's been accurately depicted and that it has been very well documented, or is there much that has fallen through the cracks?

ERNST: I'd be hesitant to answer very fully because I'm not sure I'm up on the literature.

Q: But there's been so much...

ERNST: Oh, no, well, maybe too much, I don't know. I come out of this period with a great sense, that there ought to be a great sense of accomplishment, solid accomplishments. The peace was preserved. The relationships may have been rough, but

there was no war with the Russians, with the Soviets. There were proxy wars, start at the beginning of the alphabet, Angola, if you want, a lot of Africa, to some extent in Asia, which might have been unnecessary; that part of the dream, of the vision, may have not been as well thought through. But the European side of it worked.

Q: But do you think the bright people, for example, got the credit? Truman, Marshall, Acheson, were there unsung heroes?

ERNST: Oh, of course. Plus staff,

Q: I don't mean staff, I mean people that really were major players, major contributors that do not get the same recognition.

ERNST: Schumann, Monnet, Adenauer.

Q: I mean in the US.

ERNST: Yes, but I would put in the top rank, those three. More than the Brits, who for continuing reasons are not sure who they are. Are they a small island off the continent of Europe, or are they part of the continent?

I think it is vital that the qualities of leadership in members of the U.S. Congress in support of a policy avoid partisanship. Partisanship stops at the borderline, doesn't go abroad.

Q: Okay, how about this one? Looking at the foreign affairs community, at that time, in the late 40's and the early 50's in terms of the leadership, what was the role of the State Department? Was the State Department playing a real leadership coordinating role? Or was it elsewhere?

ERNST: As far as the development of NATO was concerned, the answer is yes. I can't speak of other areas, although I suspect, with varying patterns, that the answer is yes. The leadership at the Assistant Secretary level, George Perkins, was accepted and tremendous in the Defense Department, where we sat. Other agencies of government, traditional agencies, Agriculture, Commerce, were not that much involved. All the "hangers-on."

Q: There were very strong Secretaries of State, too.

ERNST: Very strong Secretaries of State, and team play, the NSC staff. Well let me put it this way, you see today in the newspaper, one reads: “So and so of the National Security Council said today... “ That person is not a member of the National Security Council. He or she is a staff officer. But you never saw references in the press. The NSC was there to advise the President, it was not there to deal with the public, and Bobby Cutler, who was I think a Boston lawyer, was the director of the NSC staff and Jimmy Lay was his deputy, and there were other eminent people. And they were there, again, to facilitate the process of coming together. Of finding the common ground. Of, in a non-emotional way,

presenting to the President varying views on subjects of importance, but not as matters of conflict, not confrontational. Here are three options, with different values, different results, different costs. Different implications. Occasionally, Defense would write an extra memo to the President saying "We agree with the NSC paper, it correctly states the three courses of action, options, implications, costs. We want you to know our preference is this, because, or we think you should also know that domestic effects may be greater in domestic procurement, or the budget or some other subject." But that didn't happen very often. Very seldom. The NSC staff played a very constructive quiet role. I have always thought of Wilson's remark, his obiter dictum - attributed to Wilson, I don't know that he said it - that the way to conduct diplomacy "is secret negotiations, with openly announced outcomes." And I like that. You don't do your romance with your bride in public; after a while, you get all the permissions, and then you make the announcement. But what happens in the back seat, your rumble seat, that's your business, be quiet about it. And in some cases, no memoranda. Let it happen. We cooked up a lot of stuff, in NATO, between the [State] Department and the Office of North Atlantic Treaty Affairs in the Pentagon, but I don't think there's a memo. We didn't want to write memos until they reflected the agreement. We weren't adversaries. Occasionally we would launch Frank Nash, or sometimes Mr. Lovett, into a meeting to find the way, because we had failed. And when we had to send the problem upstairs, Art, it was because we had failed. That was a different idea. We weren't looking for a fight; we were looking for the best course. And that idea is very important, very precious to me.

Q: So you stayed on, then, after you got out of NATO affairs, you stayed on in the Pentagon.

Attended the National War College - 1955-1956

ERNST: I went to the War College for a year. And I don't know who put up my name for it.

Q: Yes, that was very unusual. What are we talking 1955-56?

ERNST: I was then, 31, 32. I was the second youngest ever to go to the War College. Secretary Forrestal had sent Townsend (Tim) Hoopes, who was one of his assistants, when Tim was 28. Tim later became president of the American Publishers' Association, when he has Assistant Secretary of Commerce in the Johnson administration. I went to the War College and it was a wonderful year. They organized carpools by districts, so you could talk together on the way down; it was 30, 45 minutes, twice a day. I had, in my carpool, a Navy Commander, Fred Janney. I had Jim Hyde, West Point class of '41 lost his sight; became a lawyer, and was at the War College representing the Bureau of the Budget.

Q: Blind?

ERNST: Has been since '44. Brilliant guy. Later worked for the Grocery Manufacturers Association (GMA). Head of the legislative review department of the Bureau of the

Budget. I had Ed Freers, in the [State] Department, from the EE [Eastern Europe] side of it; had served in the Eastern Europe. And Marshall Green. The five of us carpooled every day, from August till June. I think three of our wives had babies, first time in our careers we got home at 6 o' clock, and didn't have to work on Saturday or Sunday! Home life, relaxation. We lived next door to the Hydes, the Greens lived half a mile away, the Janneys lived half a mile away. Lifetime friends Stu Rockwell, my class. Ed B., who was in the Commerce Department. Wonderful, wonderful people. Lifetime friendships. A military fellow who was the commander, Red Johnson, but that may be wrong, he was Comnav for Mideast when I was in Addis Ababa. He had the little fleet that floated around the Red sea. Came ashore in Asmara, I knew he was coming, I went up to Asmara to Masawa, with the Ambassador and the Military Naval Attaché to greet him, a classmate of mine. Wonderful links. And I learned that we did interdisciplinary co-ordination, every problem you were given was given to a committee of Army, Navy, Air and civilian, and you had to write up a paper. Wasn't your paper, it was one you all agreed on. There was no dissent allowed. You could write a dissent, but that wasn't the idea; it was to find the common ground. Very important lesson for Americans. I don't want to sound academic, but I hear Confucius in this, in the sense of finding the joint interest and being less individualistic.

The War College then taught me two other things. Incidentally, on the faculty of the War college was Colonel Harrison Alan Gerhardt, for whom I had worked in Berlin, who then went to the Pentagon and became the head of the Office of Plans for the Secretary of Defense, for whom I then went to work in '56, when I got out of the War College, so it was three times I worked for the same man. He was by then a Major General. Coast artillery man to start with. Two things at the War College, they urged us, and I would think this is important for young Foreign Service officers. They urged us to write a paper on a subject about which we knew nothing, in order to broaden our horizons. If you know a lot about containers for holding water, here I am, holding a water glass in my hand, I could write a paper about water glasses, saying that you could make them out of different materials, you could make different sizes, but I'm not contributing to anybody. Pick another subject. So I wrote on the Middle East, about which I didn't know anything. And I took the ideas of Schumann and Monnet of tying iron and coal together in steel, Germany, France, so locking them together that they couldn't fight, and I said, "Can we do this, with our resources, with the Middle East? Can we take water and oil, which don't mix, but some guys have got water and some guys have got oil, can we build a water-oil community, not to make the desert bloom but to make people realize that they're worse off if they fight." We can't redo the existence of the State of Israel (I happen to disagree with Mr. Truman's abrupt action, or Mr. Balfour, if you will. And I don't mind saying that. The pain in the you-know-where.). But I did the Middle East paper, because I didn't know anything about it. I had to do research, all year. Then, the other lesson was, we each had a spring trip. We had 30 days, in a DC-6 with 28 other guys, and a couple of faculty. And they said "Go to an area you've never been to." So I went to Asia and that gave me my new career, when the time came. We had briefings, and country understanding, and then I went back to the Pentagon. I did planning.

Q: One question on the War College, how big was the class?

ERNST: A hundred. 25 Army, 25 Navy, 25 Air Force, 25 civilian. And the civilians were mostly State, a few CIA, one from Commerce, one from USIA, one from Agriculture, FAS, one from AID, one from Treasury, one from OMB, one civilian from the Pentagon. Literally, that's it. Wonderful year. You work your tail off, you learn.

Q: Then you went to the White House?

Return to the Pentagon - Deputy Director for Plans - 1956-1959

ERNST: And then I went back to the Pentagon, I was Deputy for Plans. A fellow named Struve Hensel came in' there had been a change of administration. Hensel was Assistant Secretary, had been General Counsel of the Army. A Republican.

Q: This is only '56 isn't it?

ERNST: Ike Eisenhower was still there, till '60, till Kennedy, but Nash had been replaced by a more partisan person.

Q: A new group?

ERNST: New executive group. Because I had been identified with Democrats, I went to Mr. Hensel when I got back from the War College and introduced myself; he didn't know me. And I said "I'm supposed to be the Deputy Director of Plans, but I must tell you, if you're unhappy with me in that capacity, move me. I don't want to be in your way. My father is an avowed, liberal Democrat, ACLU, all kinds of things; if that's an embarrassment to you, what's important is that you get the right people to do the best job this office can, and I'm not going to be in the way." And he said "No, I want you to stay. I like that attitude." He was a great guy. He tried then to build a thing called DOD/ISP, the Department of Defense International Security Plan. And we wrote a book, thicker than two phone books. We spent a year doing it, all of us. And we did our operational stuff too, co-ordination of shore visits and base rights negotiations, and whatever comes up. But we all contributed country studies and topical studies to a comprehensive master plan for the Department of Defense International Security, on a five-year look, '56-'61. Where would we be? What bases do we require? What facilities? What are the new technologies coming out of Army, Navy and Air Force which will impact our overseas involvement? What countries that we now rely on will fade, or will become more reliable? We had to work crossways, back with the Army, Navy and Air Force, and through them with their technical folks, and across the river with the Department, and with the CIA, and their projections of stability, proclivities, potentials. Run a scenario in 1956 for Taiwan, or Jordan, or Panama.

Q: What became of it?

ERNST: Nothing. It got put away. I don't think it got torpedoed.

Q: It got published?

ERNST: It never got published. It existed in print, as mimeograph text, typed. But it never got published, it never got approved, it never went anywhere. Hensel, I think, had a view that he would carry it up to the NSC, and say to the NSC, "This is the whole view of the defense establishment for the next five years. Let's move." What he was trying to do was to get away from ad hoc-ery. His first year in office, while I was at the War College, he thought he was getting nibbled to death by individual minutiae; one bug bit him on the ear, and another bug came and hit his shoulder, and another was under his seat, he wanted to have a screen on his porch and a fly swatter; he wanted an assistant to deal with hundreds of phenomena. He was looking at cables from forty places a day, and it's a load to deal with all this, and they're not all that important. He was right, but the method he chose didn't work. I don't know whether this document physically exists. A fellow named Frank B. Elliot, retired Air Force Major General, was in the office at that time, he now lives outside of Charlottesville, and I have his address if somebody wants it. He would be a good source to go and talk to about DOD/ISP, he was the Staff Officer, Action Officer for the DOD/ISP. And he might know what happened, whether it exists, as a historical document, looking at '55, '60, or '62. Be an interesting thing to do. Frank, incidentally, went on later, after the Air Force, to the USDA, and the IESC. He was one of our principal negotiators of overseas bases, and he worked with Jim Wilson, who had been a lieutenant colonel in the Air Force, who then went into the Foreign Service, and served in DCM in Madrid, and as DCM in Manila, maybe. Joan, his wife, set up, was one of the proposers and creators of the Family Liaison Office.

Q: On the base negotiations, do you recall anything on the one in Dhahran?

ERNST: No.

Q: Did that already exist?

ERNST: I think so. There was a fellow named Smith, footnote to history, who was an Air Force Major General, who Frank Elliot would know about, who was a friend of Eugene Beebe's, the Air Force Colonel in the office of NATO affairs, Dale O. Smith was his name. He was in and out of Saudi Arabia, and was on a first name basis with the Saudis who should be talked to about coordination of military plans. I think we're talking 50, 51, 52. And somebody, I don't know, Smith's probably not around, big job, complicated.

Q: What would you say was your biggest accomplishment in that job?

ERNST: Biggest accomplishment was directed backward into the Pentagon to back off, to get the services, to back off on 100% extra-territoriality. If you're going to live and work in another guy's backyard, you need to have operational freedom, but you must behave yourself, and it's his terrain.

Q: Did you have to negotiate Status of Forces Agreements?

ERNST: Well, I was doing policy in the Pentagon, there were people negotiating Status of Forces Agreements, I didn't actually do the negotiation, but we were setting the policy instructions, and I was continually pushing the Army, the Navy, the Air Force, to back off. Now, if we went in where the Brits had been, like Diego Garcia, Kagnew in Ethiopia, there's one in Morocco, not Nuasseur, maybe Kinetra, where we piggybacked on the Brits, that was very nice, because we could finesse the Status of Forces issue. We will take the British agreement. It was already there, we didn't need to make a new agreement. We were tenants of the British.

Q: Or French?

ERNST: I don't know that there were any.

Q: Morocco must have been...

ERNST: Yes, yes. I think we made a fresh agreement with the Moroccans. I have a feeling, because I think there were dealings then with Hassan, was it Hassan Deux (II) or his father? Mohammed Cinque (V). It was Mohammed Cinque. And part of the quid pro quo, for example Nuasseur, was the building of a whole city. Not just the field and the barracks, but there was a school and a hospital, a theater, and then they got it all when we disengaged. And the other thing on the bases was that they weren't just American. They were for those who are joined together in whatever the goals are in the particular theater. So if it was in the western hemisphere the forces might be Mexican or Brazilian or Canadian or American.

Q: You were pushing this?

ERNST: Yes. Didn't get very far. But it would have taken that little extra sting that comes from the American white long nose sticking into somebody else's business; it's not then always the American.

Q: Moving on, how did you get the next job in the White House?

A call to plan U.S. military assistance programs - The Draper Commission - 1958-1959

ERNST: Thanksgiving morning, there was a call on the phone from a voice that said "I'm Bill Draper, and I knew you in Berlin. And I've just come out of a meeting with President Eisenhower, and I'm going to head a 10-man commission to review and make recommendations regarding the military assistance program and I want you to come work for me. I'm putting together a staff." And I said "I'd be charmed, sounds great. But I already work for somebody, and I don't have the right to dispose of myself, I don't make my own assignments." He said "I've already covered that." I was working then for the Assistant Secretary of Defense, who at that point was Jack Irwin, later Undersecretary. And married to one of the Duponts. And Draper said, "I already talked to Jack, he says I can have you." I said "Well, okay, that's great." He said "Okay, I'll see you at three this

afternoon." This is Thanksgiving morning. I said "What?" He said "Yes, I'm working in Mexico, I'm head of the Mexican Power and Light Company, and I'm going to split my week, spend Thursday, Friday, Saturday and Sunday in Washington, go down to Mexico on Sunday afternoon, spend Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday in my office there and come back, be here for Thursday. So get ready for that schedule." "Yes sir." "We're setting up at 709 Jackson Place, across from the White House, to the west of the square." In one of those old brownstone buildings. One of the guys who came into work there was Hal Buchema, with whom I had been also a staff aide to Allen Gerhardt in Berlin in 1946.
Q: You could say you were part of the old boy network. In the immediate postwar period.

ERNST: Yes. The commission was very distinguished. It included Joe Dodge, who did the revision of the whole Japanese financial world, came out of the Detroit bank, head of the Detroit bank. Joe McNarney, who had been Chief of Staff of the Air Force. Admiral Radford; Al Gruenther, Chief of Staff to Eisenhower. Marx Leva, who had been General Counsel at the Pentagon. Dillon Anderson, had been national security advisor to the President, in the first Eisenhower administration I guess, from Texas, or Louisiana, and was a Gulf Coast banker. Very distinguished panel, who worked hard. Draper kept them moving. They met every week, on Friday. We had Thursday to prepare all the position papers for Draper. Draper had an operating theorem; he didn't want to ask a question to which he didn't have an answer, including the preferred answer. So the staff work got done, against an agenda that we had agreed with Draper on Sunday after the meeting of that week. The agenda focused on the issues, the options, and what he wanted out of it. And then we would stack up those answers. It was a very dynamic process. Two senior co-ordinators were a colonel named George A, for Abraham, Lincoln, who was a senior professor of political science at West Point, and who, incidentally, was one of the authors of the theory that bringing Latin American military officers to America would democratize them. Thanks a lot. The idea was that they would be exposed to the American culture, and go home with new ideas of a different role for the military in their societies. And the other co-ordinator was C. Tyler Wood. Had been a banker. He had been the AID Director in Korea. He had worked for General Summerall, War Production Board. He was a widower. He was the other senior co-ordinator. One of the things about the Draper Commission Report, this is 1958-1959, was that Draper was already on the track of the overriding requirement to get world overpopulation under control. And in that report on military assistance, there is a page and a half on the threat to America and the world's sanity and security from overpopulation. And he got an agreement on it and he got President Eisenhower to approve it. That overpopulation is going to deplete the resource base, it's going to create refugees, it's going to trigger ethnic warfare, it's all in there, page and a half.

Q: Now, to finish up with the Draper commission, and the Defense program, you were mentioning the population that Draper was to emphasize, back in 1959, the danger of overpopulation. Quite extraordinary.

ERNST: It was very important, in my view, in hindsight, the most important recommendation that got to the President, who approved it.

Q: How did Draper get onto it in such a big way? Do you know?

ERNST: No, it must have been, maybe, his exposure in Mexico. He'd been there a couple of years, as President of the Mexican Power and Light company.

Q: He had been living in Mexico city.

ERNST: He just saw the terrors of overpopulation. We were in Africa, in November this year, last year, '96, and here we are in Africa with 700 million people and doubling in 26 years. And out of the 700 million, almost all are unhappy; they have less food per capita then they had in 1968, when I lived in Africa. There will be a billion, or a billion and a half, in Africa before the middle of the next century, Draper was right. Anyway, the senior co-ordinator, Tyler Wood, was asked by Ambassador Ellsworth Bunker to come to India to be Economic Counselor, Minister of Economic affairs in the embassy, and director of the AID mission, which was then called TCM, Technical Cooperation Mission. The individuals who were there before 1958-1959, the AID Director and the fellow in charge of the Embassy Economic Section were feuding all the time, and were making life unproductive for America and making life difficult for the Ambassador. Issues to be settled should have been settled. They were making life hard for the DCM, who was himself very volatile: Lane Timmons, E. L. Timmons.

New assignment to the Technical Cooperation Mission in India -1959-1962

So I went in to congratulate Tyler Wood - this was August, a hot August afternoon in Washington, '59 - and I went in to congratulate him on his assignment, and I was going back to the Pentagon, where I was to work on the next year's budget on a special task force for the then Secretary of Defense, Tom Gates, who came out of the Morgan establishment, again, traditions of responsibility, J. P. Morgan would send a senior to work in the government for a couple of years, it was their duty, to go back to your earlier question.

Anyway, I congratulated Ty, and he said "You sound so enthusiastic, why don't you and Jeannie..." I'd married my wife in '52, we had two children. "Why don't you and Jeannie come to Delhi with me?" And I said "I can't, I'm going back to the Pentagon to work for Mr. Gates." I didn't think anything of it. And then, in about November, maybe it was the first week of December, but I think it was November, I came home one night, to the house we still have. Jeannie talked to me when I came in and said "Roger, I had a call from Tyler Wood this afternoon. He said 'Are we going to go to India with him?' He's leaving before Christmas and he wants to know, because he would need to get the paperwork set up to get you appointed in the Foreign Service to go to India as his aide, his assistant." This is the assistant to the director of the AID mission and assistant to the minister for economic affairs. So we sat down, I was still drinking in those days, and we had the second Martini, and I called Tyler Wood back, and said, "Ty, we'll come with you." Our kids were three and five. We had just moved into our house in January of '59; here we were in December of '59, packed up, and we had a midwinter crossing, I said "Tyler, I agreed to go, I'm really tired, I need time to study about India, we're going to

take a footlocker of books, 30 books, we'll go by ship, it'll take 30 days, we'll get to India, we'll know a little bit."

So we took the ship, December 18th, the old S.S. Constitution, which is now in Hawaii. The Department's policy was to give you the lowest priced first class accommodations available, but at the peak season, which this was, but on the Christmas Cruiser to the Canaries and Mediterranean, some of the second class staterooms were priced up to be first class. So we were in a second class stateroom, inside, four people in one inside stateroom in a rough December crossing. And we went from New York to Naples. The last night of the trip we were in the bar, and on the end of the bar was a synthetic, three foot high silver Christmas tree. Decorated. I said to the bartender, "What are you going to do with the tree?" He said "We'll throw it out." I said "Oh, that's terrible." He said "Would you like it?" I said "Yes". He said "I have the box." He pulled a box out from under the bar, the branches pulled out, they were on wire. The trunk, which was two pieces of wood, came apart. They all went in the box, and the decorations. We took that to India. We thought, "Here we are, going to a country where they won't know about Christmas; who knows whether there are trees?" We still have that tree, and that is our Christmas tree, 1959. And we transshipped in Naples; we went to Pompeii. I went down to Lloyd Triestino and said, "What are our accommodations on the *Asia* (the ship that went from Naples to Hong Kong)," and they said, "You're in such and such a cabin" and I said "Have you got anything better? We've been in the same room with the kids now for 12 days." They said, "We have two adjoining suites on the top deck." I forked out my own money, extra you know, whatever 500 bucks, and on the Italian ship they had a mess for the children, they had a nursemaid for the children, and we had a lovely trip with a stop in Suez. The first time we saw people hooked up by rope to a barge, human power. Along the canal going from Suez, driving, we were on the road - we got off the ship at Suez and rejoined at Port Said - we smelled dung smoke for the first time, dung cakes. We then stopped in Aden, we stopped in Karachi, we went to Bombay, we were standing on the deck and we saw little bandy-legged men carrying our steamer trunk. There's a trunk! One man carrying one trunk, probably 250 pounds. We then had 36 hours in Bombay. We took the train to Delhi, 26 hours on the train, and had our first Indian food basically, and pan to chew on after dinner. Arrived in Delhi just after New Year's, and started our foreign service life. That was 1960, and it hasn't ended.

Q: Well Roger, how did you move into the capacity you were in, and could you talk about the positions you occupied in India?

ERNST: Alright. Well, India was, as you say, our first Foreign Service post. And charmed it was. Lots of people say "Oh, India, how dreadful." It turned out to be one of our two most favorite posts, partly because it was our first post. There's a certain affiliation, affection. But I was there, working for a remarkable gentleman named Tyler Wood, who had been the AID director in Korea, but before that he had been an assistant to one of the senior officials in the Lend-Lease Administration in the War Department, in World War II. He was a widower, so when I went out as his special assistant, Jeannie became his housekeeper, took care of all the social events. He had two hats, he was Minister for Economic Affairs and he was Director of the AID mission. He had been

asked by Ambassador Bunker to take both jobs, because the AID staff and the Embassy Econ staff had not only been at loggerheads on issues, but the disagreements had gotten to a point of incivility, they wouldn't go to the same parties.

Q: What were the disagreements?

ERNST: Assessment as to the potential for stability and growth in the Indian economy, and the possibilities for development of a private sector in India; development of institutions to support private sector development.

Q: Who took the private sector side?

ERNST: The Embassy was very negative.

Q: About developing the private sector?

ERNST: Yes and about India's prospects, and that nothing could be done with these Fabian Socialists. Tyler Wood had come from an industry and banking business background and decided he'd give it a whirl. Ambassador Bunker, of course, had come out of the sugar industry. In the Caribbean, a private sector background.

Q: And it was a huge program at that time, too.

ERNST: Yes, the program grew and grew. And there were some successes. Anyway, my job, as Tyler Wood explained it to me, he said, "My name is Wood, and there are two pieces of Wood, and you see that they stick together. You're going to shuttle between my office in the Embassy and my office in the AID mission to make sure that I am internally consistent."

Q: That wasn't the first time the Economic Counselor and AID Director were filled by the same person?

ERNST: It may have been, I don't know.

Q: Anyway, its pretty rare.

ERNST: It may have been. I might just interpose here, as a more general observation, that the people I had the opportunity to work for, in my career, from then on, were with just one exception, just tremendous men and women. Ambassador Bunker and his wife Harriet couldn't have been better schoolmasters, leaders. Courteous and charming and perceptive and prompt. Their behavior was wonderful. They set a model. His deputy, Win Brown (later ambassador in Laos and Korea) had been in London, was superb. And [Win's wife] Peggy, whom he had met as a Red Cross girl in England in the War. The third day we were in Delhi, [while] we were staying in the hotel, I got a request to come to the DCM's office and Jeannie got a request at the same time of day to appear at Peggy Brown's, and we were given our instructions about how to behave. Couldn't have been

more helpful. If you're invited to the Ambassador's for 6 o clock, you will be there at 5:40, which will provide an opportunity for whoever is running the event to give you your instructions about what you're going to do. Lessons I never forgot. We had some other wonderful people in the environment, working in Delhi. It was a large country, Tyler Wood delegated to me coordination responsibility to bring the pieces of the program together, including PL-480. We had a senior officer from the Department of Agriculture, Horace Davis. We had a representative of the Export/Import Bank, Sydney Sherwood.

Q: Now were you and Mr. Wood able to end this conflict between the Embassy and AID?

ERNST: Yes, the conflicts were no more. They stopped. And anyone who wanted to continue the argument could seek reassignment. There were no further arguments. We heard all the arguments (in the traditional way, with an upper case A). State your case. Hear out the whole story; what's your substance? But we are all working for one President, we are working for one Government. We must find the interest of the United States, and not narrower perceptions of purpose. We had good co-operation with the Indians, with the people in the Planning Board, with the people in the Ministry of Finance; we worked, obviously, on those relationships, and with the Central Bank. And it all paid off. India began to move. There were still terrible problems, and there still are today.

I think one of the exciting ways to think about India today is this: when I was in India in '60, there were 400 million Indians, of whom only five million weren't poor. And there are now 950 million Indians, and at least 250 million aren't poor. Now, there are more poor than there were then, but a middle income group of 250 million has a very propulsive, big, important, economic, political, social function. A study last year revealed that there was a demand, a market in India for 400 million toothbrushes. Another big point is that [in India] we've got a country that has had functioning democratic organization and institutions since independence, with one brief [exception], 17 or 18 month period, during which time the Prime Minister, then Indira Gandhi, imposed what's called President's Rule, and took over from the state governments. But it has a record that should be of tremendous appeal to the United States. The third thing I would mention, which is not unimportant, was that the philosophic antecedents of Martin Luther King's non-violent approach to changing America's posture on civil rights came out of the Gandhian movement. I just say that because Americans somehow back off from the relationship with India. We have a lot going in our relationship, very important.

Q: How did you become, now you went there...

ERNST: I went there with AID. I went under President Kennedy.

Q: But you went before Kennedy was elected?.

ERNST: Well, I went there in '60, I left Washington in December of '59.

Q: But Kennedy was elected in November '60.

ERNST: Yes.

Q: So, was Bunker there?

ERNST: Bunker was there.

Q: Bunker was not Kennedy's appointment?

ERNST: [Right] Bunker [was appointed by Eisenhower]. Then, [under Kennedy], came my [next] ambassador, John Kenneth Galbraith, after Mr. Bunker, and that was, I'll be frank, a great disappointment to me, because the luminous luminosity of the man, the sage from Cambridge, didn't carry through. He felt very cheated, he had wanted to be Secretary of State, he made it quite clear. He spent a large part of his time closeted privately, writing memoranda to Robert Kennedy or someone else about extraneous issues, like the Berlin Blockade. He didn't pay that much attention, he didn't even care about India. His wife was wonderful, Kitty. Patient and involved in the community. Splendid person and a "foreign" service wife. His performance was always colored by, in my perception, by this tremendous sense of ego that he should have been Secretary of State. And that he felt exiled. He wanted publicity. When Mrs. Kennedy came to visit in '61 or '62, he wanted nothing out of it except to have his picture taken as many times with Mrs. Kennedy as he could, that it might flatter the White House into bringing him back to be Senior Official. It was strange; he writes beautifully, he thinks well.

Assigned to develop the Peace Corps in India - 1961-1962

In the meantime, at one point, I was at the table one morning when the Ambassador went through the list of upcoming visitors of importance, and he said "Now we have the President's brother-in-law, Sargent Shriver, coming on a tour of exploration to see whether the Indian government would accept the American Peace Corps." And he looked around the table, he said "Ernst, you're the youngest, you're more like The Peace Corps." This was 1961, so I wasn't 40, 37 or something. He said "You take care of Shriver, you be his control officer." And that was wonderful. I made the hotel arrangements, set up the cars, arranged the meeting at the airport, and the itinerary, and I took the notes at the meetings. And the last night Shriver was there, he dined with the Ambassador, and the next morning I was called in and he said, "You're going to set up the Peace Corps in India, I loaned you, I've donated you to the Peace Corps. And I made some reply to the effect, "Well, I'm not in a position to dispose of myself, I belong to Tyler Wood." He said "That's settled." I went to Tyler Wood and I said "What about this?" He said "Well, you do have a choice." I said "What do you think I should do?" He said. "You've got to settle whether you want to stay with AID or go with the Peace Corps. I don't know how long you'll stay with the Peace Corps." And I must have looked perplexed. Wood went to his bookshelf, he was in his home, his residence. And he took out a volume of Winston Churchill's works and he opened it, he knew what he was looking for, he said "I quote Mr. Churchill: 'To few is it given to know their interest, but to all to do their duty.'" He said "Roger, you have to do your duty, your interests will be taken care of." He said "Your duty, probably, is the Peace Corps job, because you sat through all those discussions,

some of them just Shriver and you with X, Y, and Z India staff. And you went to the meeting of the Ambassador and Shriver with the Prime Minister. There was only one other Indian there, you know what went on. That's your duty, make it happen." So I spent a year with the Peace Corps.

Q: Did you go back to Washington for orientation?

ERNST: Well, there wasn't any orientation. This was before the Peace Corps existed. We created it. So I negotiated the agreement with the Indian government. Shriver had a vision of 500 volunteers for India. The Indian government had an idea of having 5; the embassy, the political section, was very unhappy about the idea, more Americans would make trouble. They were thinking 25.

Q: Wasn't that the general sentiment in the Foreign Service?

ERNST: Yes. And the Indian government was thinking five. Well, I was rounding up votes, if you will, lobbying the government. And one day I went to see Ras Kumari Amrit Kaur, who was the Minister of Health, wonderful woman, to whom I'd been introduced by a third party. Another story. And I was talking about the Peace Corps, and she said "Do you know, Mr. Ernst, if we take the American Peace Corps, we'll have to take Russian volunteers, too." She was playing on our alleged antipathy with the Russians. I said "Madam Minister, we have no problems with that. We know the sophistication of your Government is such that you can handle any group that comes in here." She said, "Alright." And then there was a meeting with the Prime Minister, and I'll give Ambassador Galbraith the credit for pulling off the agreement. The Prime Minister had been briefed by the Minister of Home Affairs. Half the cabinet - security people, Defense, Foreign Ministry - was against the Peace Corps. The only people for it were the Ministers of Agriculture and Labor, plus the leader of the Socialist party, Ashok Mehta, and the planners.

Q: Not education?

ERNST: Yes. The Minister of Education. But the most were against it. And Mr. Galbraith turned around finally to face the Prime Minister, and he said "You know, Mr. Prime Minister, I want to tell you a story about my childhood, my youth in the province of Ontario. One summer I worked on a farm. And at the end of the summer agriculture had not declined, and public morality had not been abused, because of my presence. I will guarantee that 25 young Americans will not cause a decline in your agriculture." And the Prime Minister roared with laughter, and he said "Bring 'em. You overrode the Foreign Ministry, the Ministry of Interior, the Defense Ministry."

Q: For 25?

ERNST: We actually brought 26. I went back to Washington, I made the agreements with the Punjab government, got them approved in Delhi, the central government. Learning a little about the federal structure. Back to the States, ran the computers with various of the

staff at Peace Corps headquarters.

Q: Gee, you had computers?

ERNST: IBM, those big three-by-ten cards. They had all these kids who had signed up as being interested on cards, and we were looking for land grant college graduates from farms, farm backgrounds. I made an agreement with Ohio State University for training. We picked Ohio State because they already had a number of people who knew India; they had a contract with AID in the Punjab. We were going to use the PCVs as the technical mentors in the extension apparatus of India. We invited 100 to training, 65 came, I brought two people from India to help train and select, so that if there were some who were unsuitable the decision wasn't just American, it was Indian. 35 qualified, we actually ended up with 26. I brought them out to India just before Christmas, and stayed with the program until the following summer when Shriver asked me to become a permanent Peace Corps Officer. He said "You're going to have to take Peace Corps salary and give up your diplomatic status, take your children out of the American school, give up the commissary." I wasn't prepared to do that with my family, two little kids who were five and seven. So I went back to AID. And someone else took over the Peace Corps. Joe Wheeler, a good person.

So, anyway, Peace Corps turned out to be a great success. The volunteers were spread on the Grand Trunk Road between Delhi and Damritsar, in pairs, working with Indians. No one got in trouble. They were constructive. They used their knowledge. They all learned. One of them, for example, Tom Kessinger, is today the President of Haverford College. He came back to India as the Ford Foundation representative. Got the spirit of the foreign adventure in his genes. Another young fellow came back to Washington and became a lawyer working for the Federal Trade Commission, left the Federal Trade Commission, went to the Department of Interior, became the Counsel for Agana, Guam. Still lives in Guam. Another fellow went to finish business school after the Peace Corps, went to work for Kodak, became their West African representative. A lot of payback for America.
Q: More than for the Indians?

ERNST: Well, I think so, yes. I think it enriched our society more than it did good in India. Individual villages were improved. Out of it came some methodologies that were useful, but total impact, not much. And I spent my time, I traveled, I was three days a week in the Punjab, one day a week at the office, and two days a week I went to other parts of India to negotiate agreements for additional programs. I got to see all of India, practically. I didn't go to Assam, and I didn't go to Manipur or Cape Comorin.

Q: You were there how many, three years?

ERNST: Three years. And been back several times. We had wonderful collaboration, I should mention, very importantly, with what are now called PVOs, in particular the Ford Foundation and the Rockefeller Foundation, and with the international institutions, with IBRD. We worked together in a very close collaborative manner.

Q: What about relations with the CIA? The Embassy, and the Peace Corps?

ERNST: There were no relations between the Peace Corps and the CIA that I was then aware of. There were relations, obviously, with the Embassy, and were with the AID program.

Q: I mean, were they good?

ERNST: Yes. Constructive. My own knowledge may be limited, but what I knew did not upset me. One individual who worked in the Food for Peace Program, his assignment for AID, for Food for Peace, Title II, was to follow up on use by the recipients of the food, which gave him a ticket to go everywhere around India wherever there were "work for food" projects, where you got paid in food. He traveled all over India, traveled five out of four weeks, so to speak. And he did a good job for the Food for Peace Program, Title II. What he did for the Agency, I don't know. I never was privy to that. My experience in Ethiopia was a little different, it wasn't uniform, let's put it that way. Let me say, the people who ran the stations were mostly friends. People we respected, enjoyed socially. We respected what they were up to.

Q: Then you left India, you returned to Washington?

Deputy Director USAID mission in Taiwan - 1962-1964

ERNST: I came back to Washington, and was fishing around for a new assignment. I had the summer as home leave. I had said that I really didn't think I ever wanted to go to Taiwan because it was a dictatorship. This is the summer of '62. And I got a call, please to come to New York from Nantucket, where I was vacationing, and meet Howard L. Parsons, who had been in the Foreign Service, who was going to Taiwan as the AID mission director. He'd been the Counselor of Embassy in Bangkok for Political Affairs, he later was Counselor of Embassy for Economic Affairs in Bangkok on another tour. Howard and I met in New York at a hotel near Penn Station, and we liked each other immediately. I said "Alright, I'll come to Taipei with you as your Deputy Director." So that was my next assignment. We finished our home leave, we came to Washington, we went to the FSI, Jeannie and I, for one of those 21-day quick courses on China. Excellent, well done. Arthur Hummel's father was one of the mentors, instructors, who happened to be in Washington, I suppose, because I think he lived in China, most of his life, been a missionary. And he taught us something. He took out a bowl one day, and in the bowl he put marbles. And he swished them around. And they all ran around among each other, yes there was friction, but everything got resolved. He took out the marbles, and he put in sugar lumps. And he swished the bowl, and of course the lumps were all corners and angles, and they banged up against each other. He said, "I want to tell you, don't ever forget..." And I haven't. "The first is Chinese culture and way of dealing with issues. The second is Western confrontationism. We, in our juridical system, in a traffic accident, right and wrong. In our courts, right and wrong. Win and lose in our sports. The other is Chinese. Yes, there's friction, yes, there are problems, but they get worked out, the corners are rounded." And I saw that so many times, both in Taiwan and in other cultures

where Confucianism and Chinese culture are important. I learned that from Ambassador Hummel's father. I've told Art about it. One of those little nuggets that you learn, if I didn't get anything else out of the FSI, that was worth the price of 21 days. Gave me a clue. Went to Taiwan, here were an exciting people, living in a shadow of defeat. It's as if we'd had a civil war here in the North American continent, and the government had been run off the continent and had to evacuate, say, to Puerto Rico. Two million of us, government, businessmen, educators and chefs. If San Juan was Taipei...

Q: What was the emphasis in AID?

ERNST: Our emphasis - this is related - was to build the confidence in the Chinese on Taiwan that they could run their own economy, or, as our Ambassador, Admiral Alan Kirk said, who was a great man, he said "They can paddle their own canoe. They have to." So we said to the Chinese - the dialog with the Chinese - was: "You're so good you don't need an aid program, and we're not going to continue an aid program, so you'd better be that good." We played the coin both ways, with the ambassador's approval and agreement and support. It gave the Political Section problems. They were afraid of the "China Lobby" of Senator Knowland.

Q: Madam Chiang Kai-shek.

ERNST: Madame Chiang and others. And we were lucky in that Senator Knowland came to Taiwan. And Howard Parsons, with me in the background, had an opportunity to spend about an hour and a half with him. He told him how capable the Chinese were, and how debilitating our aid would be over time. (Do we see some parallels in Israel, with American aid creating debilitating overdependency? Or the welfare syndrome at home?) Knowland said "You're right. I agree we should terminate the AID program." And he said so publicly. So the specter of John Service, the China Lobby, China First group, was dissipated.

David Bell, who was the AID Administrator, came to Taiwan, maybe twice. Anyway, one time he came, and I can remember a conversation with Administrator David Bell, and the assistant administrator for AID, who was a man named Seymour Janow, and Howard Parsons, and me. In the men's room, at the Grand Hotel. And we were talking about terminating the AID program. And David Bell had been through this with us, but Janow hadn't, and Janow said "Is that right?" Howard said "Yes, I think so" And David Bell said, "Yes, we're going to talk to the Chinese about a gradual phasedown, transfer from grants to low-cost loans and from low-cost loans to commercial terms. A transition. Several years, not abrupt. They can do it." And that was the official decision, in the men's room at the Grand Hotel, as far as I can tell, it was then documented in papers pushed through the machinery.

The Chinese had a terrible time, because they'd gotten used to aid; there was a whole bureaucracy that was living off administering the AID program. This was 1963. When I went back to Taiwan in '75, as a private, as an unofficial visitor, I had dinner with P. Y. Shu, who was Head of the Central Bank; with C.K. Yen, who later was Prime Minister,

who had been Minister of Finance; with Li Kwo Ting, who ran the AID Administration group, and others. Jeannie was there. Official dinner for me, for us. And they went out of their way to toast us, for giving them their wholeness again by terminating the AID flow.

Q: When did we actually get out?

ERNST: In '66 or '67.

Q: That's amazing, that that philosophy was prevalent then.

ERNST: They took the challenge.

Q: But it doesn't seem to have caught on with AID generally speaking, in the world, at all.

ERNST: No, no, bureaucracy wants to project their jobs.

Q: In both the donor and recipient investing.

ERNST: Exactly. And true with the UN too. There was a very exciting time in Taiwan. Averell Harriman came once, and we had big discussions with him. He was then peddling the position that the Chinese in Taiwan should work on assistance to Africa, in order to get African votes in the UN to protect the seat in New York. So we provided some help to the Chinese in Taiwan to beef up their ability to provide assistance to the newly independent African states who had come into being in the '58-'62 period when they got their nationhood. A lot of sidelights; it was very interesting. The Japanese were increasing their role; private business, we brought the first three American banks into Taiwan, held their hand, lubricated the way. National City, Morgan's and Hanover. I don't think Hanover exists anymore, Manufacturer's Hanover. Private businessmen. The first nuclear power plant. It involved a lot of very interesting things.

You asked about policy. Ambassador Kirk was a tremendous person. If he had worked half-time, he'd be better than most Ambassadors. He was so prescient. Economical. He knew what was wanted. And his wife, Lydia, was wonderful, too. They were lucky, we were lucky, they were in Moscow, and he'd had that UNSCOB job, UN in the Balkans. Commander of the fleet that crossed the channel, under Eisenhower to liberate the continent. Little guy, and his son, Roger, Ambassador in Somalia, and in, maybe in Eastern Europe [Romania]. Retired recently. Anyway, Ambassador Alan Kirk said that his instructions from President Kennedy, leaving out the bureaucratic language, were "Not to permit the government in Taiwan to mount an attack against the mainland, nor to liberate the mainland, because that will get us into the soup." So he turned to the head of the Military Assistance group, and he said "Make sure that they never have enough aviation gas and diesel for their ships. I don't want them to be able to get to the mainland. We control their oil supply." We, the U.S. military.

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We later had Ambassador Jerauld Wright, who had been CINCLANT for NATO, in

Norfolk. Fine gentleman. Didn't have the flair that Kirk had, but did a good job. Again, blessings are the men we worked for. Very important.
Q: Yes, you did have a lot of special people.

Transfer to the USAID mission in Korea - 1964-1968

ERNST: Yes. Then from Taiwan I was asked to go up to Korea, and part of the request for my transfer was based on an understanding that we would do in Korea what we'd done in Taiwan, we'd get them going and we'd get out. The head of the AID mission in Korea was a fellow named Joel Bernstein, an economist from Chicago, a Milton Friedman type. And I was really going to run the mission, I'd be the deputy, but I was in charge of all the operations. Joel did the theory and serious economics - most critical, too! There was Winthrop Brown as ambassador, who had been DCM in Delhi. We just flowed in together. And he was followed by Bill Porter, from New England, a superb guy. And the military side, one of the most outstanding individuals I ever worked with, Ben Davis, whose father was the first black general in the Army. Ben was one of the Tuskeegee guys, Air Force. Later he was Assistant Secretary for Aviation in the Department of Commerce. Smart, sensible, he knew how to do things, knew how to work with the Koreans. Koreans were wonderfully rewarding to work with. Very volatile. The Irish of the Orient. In some ways they're a little like the Poles, because they were squeezed between the Chinese and the Japanese and the Russians, they had these big countries sitting on them for all these years. Very inventive people. They fought hard, they loved hard. When you had an argument with them, you'd be rolling around on the floor with them, not literally, but tremendous arguments. And then when it was done, best buddies, and agreements would be honored.

Q: I've been told the Korean workers made the Japanese look lazy.

ERNST: After President Park Chung Hee went to Washington, there was an agreement to establish a Korean Institute of Science and Technology (KIST). And I was on the Board, as the American representative on the Board of Directors of the Institution, and there was a schedule for construction. Batelle Memorial Institute in Columbus, Ohio, had the substantive contract to help build the laboratory and train the people. The ROK fell behind in their construction schedule. And President Park was there one day, visiting - he used to go visit projects to beef them up, make them happen. And he said "Why are you falling behind?" And they said "Well, it's too cold to pour concrete." He said "Well, why don't you make it warm?" And they said "What do you mean?" He said "Put up a temporary shelter, put in space heaters, and pour your concrete." And they did.

Another example: We were pushing with them to build their exports, when I got to Korea, the total Korean exports were 100 million dollars a year. That was in 1964. In 1968, they broke a half billion, 500 million. They're now 130 billion, you know, astronomical numbers, but the point is that we did a study, had a study done, of how many steps it would take to make an export. And it was 35 procedures, “okays” to be obtained. And the President said "That's impossible! Cut it to seven, by Monday." And his staff produced a new plan with seven steps, with a one-stop shopping center, and it was objected to by two

members of the Cabinet. The President said "I'll take your resignations. I'll get a new Central Bank Governor and a new Minister of Finance. We're going to do it. It's that important." He made it happen.

Q: I've also been told one of the secrets of the Korean success, economic miracle, was the number of Koreans went to the United States for training. Did you have a role in that?

ERNST: Yes, one of the biggest elements of our AID program was sending individuals at all levels and all across the board. And some people complained that we were doing was sort of like spreading marmalade on bread: There were too many. We said "Some will disappear, they're going to fall off, but they're going to come back into the picture somewhere and be constructive." And they have been. And it was a very, very exciting time.

Q: Did you succeed in terminating...?

ERNST: The AID program closed a couple of years later. I was there 'till '68, and I think the last year of the AID program was about '73, after the Shanghai Agreement, that sort of eased things up a bit. '73 or '4 when it was closed out, and of course Korea now is an exporter of both capital and technology.

Q: Now, how did the Vietnam war come into play here?

ERNST: President Johnson asked the Koreans for support, and they agreed, and they sent first one, and then another, division down to Vietnam, to fight with the Americans and the South Vietnamese against Communism. We paid most of the costs. Two footnotes, one important, the other fun. The fun one: The Koreans said "We have to have our kimchi." That's their spiced cabbage with peppers that they eat, it's usually fresh. A whole new industry grew up, to produce, for each soldier, an individual little tin, like the size of a pet food tin, cat food. One tin per soldier per day. The first export of kimchi in a tin didn't work because the kimchi had too much pepper in it. It ate through the tin plate. They had to do a revision of the can-making industry. But they learned. They learned in two weeks. And politically, the contracts for growing the cabbage and producing the kimchi were handled by the Korean government, and I'm sure the contracts were handed out on the basis of friendship and favoritism. Call it corruption.

I was asked, before the House Asian Affairs Committee - Ross Adair was the ranking Republican member, and Frances Bolton was another member, “What about corruption in Korea?” I was testifying for the AID program. I said "Well, I want to explain corruption in Korea. There aren't enough schools to accommodate all the children. So an individual will go to the principal, and slip him the equivalent of five or ten dollars so his child will get into the school. Wouldn't I do that, wouldn't you do that, Mr. Congressman? You would. I would. Second, in going to the classroom, the kids in the front five rows get pencils and paper, but there aren't enough supplies to go to the back of the room. You go to the teacher. Say 'Despite the fact that my child's name starts with a W, at the end of the alphabet, and is going to have to sit in the back of the room, here's five bucks to put my

kid in the front. I want my child to learn.' I would do that, Mr. Congressman." And they all laughed, and said "You're right." And I said "I'll tell you one more thing about Korean corruption. It is increasingly democratic." And some member of Congress said "What do you mean, Mr. Ernst?" I said "It's not skimming off the top, it's not a percentage of the big contracts; it's like the policeman in my childhood neighborhood in New York used to walk into the grocery store and have an apple. It insured that he came everyday to check security. He got an apple. Or he could use the bathroom. Community based. One can think that while corruption is growing, it is at a lower rate than the GNP grows. Then we're winning." And it was accepted. Accepted in the sense that it was an acceptable explanation of a factor of reality in the life of a peon. It was interesting. I learned to ice skate.

Observations on Korea and the Vietnam War

Q: What was the feeling among Korea elite and among the Ambassador, the embassy people, about the Vietnam war?

ERNST: Supportive. About the wisdom of the war, there were the divisions that we found elsewhere in American society. Was it necessary? Could it have been avoided?

Q: Was this '66, '67, '68?

ERNST: There were those who knew, not including me, that Ho Chi Minh had pleaded, after World War One, for support for a free Indo-China; he had heard Mr. Wilson's statements about the self-determination of small nations. He said, "We're a small nation, we want to be free, too." He did it again after World War II, he got turned around. There were those who knew. Not me, I didn't know then. We probably could've avoided it. Wrong side. The Domino Theory never was right.

Q: And the idea that the Vietnamese would not fight the Chinese, and all that. See, what I'm getting at is here you are a major embassy in East Asia, as opposed to people like me who are off on the other side of the world, who may be critical, but not knowing anything. Who was the Ambassador? How about Porter?

ERNST: William Porter? He was supportive, neutral. Can't say anything now, he's passed away, but I would say the Koreans saw it as an opportunity. The other thing I was going to say, I told you the story about the cans of kimchi, the other factor, which was very important; senior Korean officials turned to me one day at a function, and said "You know, this is the first time our troops are walking on somebody else's soil, not being walked on. We're not being walked on." They had been walked on by the Japanese, by the Chinese, by the Russians, by the Americans. Now their soldiers were walking on somebody else's land. He said "This is very important for us, psychologically."

Q: The Turks have always been great fighters in the Korean War, and Vietnam too, I remember. Did you ever hear any comparison with the Koreans?

ERNST: No, haven't. But it was used, it spread their economy, they got a lot of orders. Japan got lots of American contracts, but Korea got some, and it gave a boost to their economy.

Q: And they were in favor of a large American presence in Asia.

ERNST: Yes, they were. And we went from Korea.

Q: You had two pretty successful years in Taiwan and Korea. Putting AID out of business. I mean, two in there, two in the Tigers.

New assignment as Mission Director USAID/Ethiopia - 1968-1973

ERNST: Yes. Then we stepped back a millennium. And I had a direct mid-tour transfer, no home leave, to Addis Ababa, as the AID Director for the first time. And then Bill Hall, Ambassador William O. Hall, was there. He'd been in Pakistan, he'd been the City Manager of Portland, Oregon, he'd been with the Bureau of the Budget. He was Assistant Administrator of AID for Administration at one time. Quite a career. When the occasion arose, fairly shortly after I arrived, he made me Minister Counselor of Embassy for Economic Affairs, so I had the two hats. And then I had a third hat, which was U.S. Alternate Representative to the Economic Commission for Africa. Which was sort of a one-day-a-week thing, and I had one staff officer to cover the ECA beat. We set up a one-stop shopping center for the business community, for both Ethiopian and others and Americans. Anything the Embassy could do, it didn't matter whether you were in Econ section or Political section or AID. My office would do it. We would see that it was done for you. Businessmen, Americans, Ethiopians who wanted to buy in America, Italians, whoever they were. Very successful.

Q: I'm surprised the programs in Ethiopia, really 25 million dollars?

ERNST: Yes, about that. And one of my jobs there was to build a track, open the doors for the World Bank. And the bank had not been active, because they felt they were not wanted, that this was an American preserve, a Cold War preserve. And indeed, it had been. We had inherited the Kagnew station, up in Asmara, from the British, as we did Kenitra in Morocco. Diego Garcia. All three, incidentally, were on the communications tracking facility route for Presidential aircraft. The White House number one. The World Bank had not wanted to get involved, because they felt it was our show. One of my jobs was to work with the Bank, go back to Washington, talk to the Bank, get them to come, take our files, take our pre-appraisal studies, convert those ideas into projects that the Bank would want to finance. We helped build a Bank presence that got to be bigger than the American AID program. It was one of my jobs. Leverage, yes, leverage, we would put three million dollars in and they could put ten. Work together, collaboratively with other institutions. Encourage the Germans, encourage the Swedes.

Q: What was the main objective of the AID program in Ethiopia?

ERNST: Rural development, education. Education for agriculture because that was their business. Improvement in standard of living, water supply, public health. Preventive health...

Q: On Ethiopia: Was the conflict with Somalia taking place at this time?

ERNST: Continuously.

Q: Continuously. Okay, the question is: Was our overall objective of the U.S. Government in Ethiopia, was it the, was there an intrinsic interest in Ethiopia itself, or was it only seen in the Cold War context of preventing the Horn of Africa from falling under the domination or influence of the Soviet Union?

ERNST: 60:40, in the latter. 75:25 Prevention, hold, support Haile Selassie. Some emotional overtones, we owed him one for the failure of the world to respond when he went to Switzerland at the time of the Italian invasion. But it was more fundamentally related to prevention of further Soviet expansion. Somalia, leapfrogging. Decay in Sudan. Trembles about what was going on in Socialist Tanzania.

Q: The reason I ask that, and I think it's very relevant, to try to put ourselves back in that period?

ERNST: And Marxist. Across the other side of the Red Sea.

Q: Because with the end of the Cold War, we just walked away from most of those conflicts. Most of those countries. So, you wonder, whether we ever saw any intrinsic interests in the country itself.

ERNST: Well, there was an intrinsic interest in Ethiopia, I think. Perhaps there is in every country. Here, we were dealing with a country that had become Christian in the third century.

Q: That influenced Washington's thinking?

ERNST: Sure. Semitic peoples who had had elegant relationships with the west. Haile Selassie, as you may remember, was an exile in England during the Italian occupation and then during most of the war 'till late '42. Lord Wingate brought him back through the Sudan into Ethiopia. Very poor country, very beautiful country. When the emperor went back on the throne, there were about 50 to 75 thousand boys and girls in school out of a cohort of 7 million school-age children. There were 25 million head of cattle and 25 million people. Poverty. So, here was a potential also for a breadbasket of Africa kind of concept, fertility and productivity. We got involved in rural development, in education, in health, primary health services, in building a school that trained public health sanitarians for the rural areas, in helping the university train trainers. There wasn't much private sector interest. There was and is gas and oil on the Somali border. Tenneco was working on the Ethiopian side, and British Petroleum across the way in Somalia. Nothing much

happened. It's a big coffee producer. 60% of its exports are coffee. The rest is hides and skins and live animals to Yemen and Saudi Arabia.

Q: Was CIA pretty active in Ethiopia?

ERNST: Yes, in a small way. Small scale. Wasn't a big pond, you know, it was a puddle. Wasn't a big sea, it was a pond.

Q: I don't know, as I recall it was considered a pretty strategic country at the time.

ERNST: Yes, well, Soviets were active in Somalia, and in Ethiopia, the Soviets were there, but they weren't active. Their proxies were the Czechs. This was discovered once when there was a flood of leaflets all over the city that were anti-American diatribes. In several languages. And the paper was taken and analyzed, and where did the paper come from? No what they called "stockists," no wholesaler of paper [in Ethiopia] stocked that. Where did it come from? It came from the Czech Embassy; it was Eastern European manufactured paper. They got caught. I had a close Yugoslav friend there, and the Yugoslavs were, and so were the Hungarians - this was about 1970 - were beginning to split from the Sovs. And I remember at a November annual party at the Russian Embassy, Soviet Embassy, my Yugoslav friend, Ranko Radulovic, who was my counterpart, he was the economic counselor of the Yugoslav embassy. Great big fella. Six three, six four, 220 pounds. Booming big voice. And he was standing eight or ten feet away from me, and he said "Roger!" We'd just had the toast to the Red Army. He said "Roger! Free Yugoslavia forever!" And the Hungarian Ambassador took Ambassador Hall and me to the Hungarian quote model farm unquote. And he said to us, "It doesn't work. It doesn't work here, it didn't work in Hungary. Can I come and visit your farm?" We had set up, quote, model farms, unquote: this was an Oklahoma State University contract to build a college of agriculture and outreach farming demonstration centers. "Of course Mr. Ambassador." We took him. He made the swap, picked up stuff out of the American experiment, but ours wasn't altogether successful in Ethiopia either. What worked in Oklahoma wasn't working necessarily in Ethiopia. But there were the beginnings of the rifts in the Communist Bloc; this was '69, '70, '71, along in there. But it was a wonderful country to work in. We worked very closely with the University. There were a lot of Ethiopians that had been trained at Purdue in Indiana, and at Cornell.

Q: Yes, very extensive program, too. For 25 million dollars.

ERNST: Big program for a little country. One of my jobs was to cut the staff. We had 500 people on the payroll, including Ethiopians. We came out at 200, with about 60 Americans and about 150 Ethiopians.

Q: When was Haile Selassie overthrown?

ERNST: He was removed from power '73, '4. Just after I left. Not cause and effect, please.

Q: Just after you left, everything changed after that.

ERNST: Yes. There were some historic ties, going back to your earlier question. We went to visit the Governor of Tigray in the north. He was married to one of the Emperor's granddaughters. After dinner, he said "Would you like to see my grandfather's throne? My father's throne, in a throne building." He lived in a little Italian type villa. We said "Yes, love to." Flashlight, over we went, second floor, here's this great big chamber. Like one of the rooms on the seventh floor of the Department. There's this throne, gold throne. Where did it come from? "Victoria gave it to my grandfather on the occasion of his ascension to the throne." Links. Which were important emotionally. Attractive people, interesting country.
Eritrea, lot of unrest in Eritrea because they felt cheated. There was supposed to have been a plebiscite on their independence in '62 or '63, but the Emperor canceled the operation or smothered it, and incorporated Eritrea into Ethiopia. Eritrea became independent, if I got the year right, in '91. They're going along at a good clip now, Mrs. Clinton was just there to visit, with her daughter. I heard a briefing by Ambassador Houdek about a year ago in Washington that investment is coming. The Italians had Eritrea as a colony for half a century, so a lot of training and a lot of cultural transference took place, plus the fact that Eritrea is on the seacoast. Now here's the smart thing. The Ethiopians were very antsy about Eritrean, the Amhara, particularly, were very antsy about Eritrean independence because they would lose their ports. All the ports were controlled by Eritrea. Masawa and Assab, particularly. Assab being the oil port. The Eritreans turned around, about day three after their independence, and they said to the Ethiopians "You have rights unfettered, in perpetuity, to these ports. Any cargo inbound and outbound will be given priority one over all other cargoes." Second, the Ethiopians had a new constitution. In it, they had recognized, I think, nine or eleven peoples and languages. No one coached them to do this, history coached them. They had said "Any one of these components may elect to secede at their own option. No one will ask any questions and there will be no war. You may teach and conduct government in your own language, but when you come to the national capital, we will do business in Amharic." They've got it all set out. There may be a model for Zaire, or maybe for ex-Yugoslavia, I don't know. It, so far is working. They've had two good harvests, their exports are up...

Q: We've got to stick to the history.

ERNST: But it's very exciting!

Q: It's very exciting, but it's another field.

ERNST: But the basis was laid in the people we trained. Again, going back to the question you asked earlier, the most important thing we did was training. And we got cut way back on that in 1969 or 70. The Congress kept jumping up and down saying "We want to have projects that we can see." So AID swung to building buildings and roads, waterworks, dams, that you could show the congressmen. What they needed was another generation of training.

Q: I thought that emphasis on infrastructure was earlier, in the '50s and '60s..

ERNST: Well, not in Ethiopia. It came while I was there, against our judgment. I had Ambassador Hall, and then my next Ambassador was Ross Adair, who came out of Congress. A wonderful gentleman; he's dead now, gone unfortunately. He'd been a Republican member of Congress. Number one or two ranking member of the House Foreign Affairs Committee. He knew what was going on. Bill Hall was so wise that we, his counselors, could never make a mistake, because he knew enough to counsel us not to make mistakes. When Ross Adair came in, he sat at the table the first week, and he said "Now gentlemen, you are my Counselors, I don't want to make mistakes. Counsel me." So we shifted roles. For my first AID program, I had to get the Ambassador's signature on the face page to go into the Department. The Ambassador had to approve the proposed program for fiscal year 1970. Ross looked at the summary table. He said "Mr. Ernst." He didn't call me Roger yet. He said "Mr. Ernst, where's the fat?" I said "Sir?" He said "I've been in Congress, I know you've got fat in that program." I looked at him, I decided, I said "Mr. Ambassador, I have hidden a few thousand dollars in supplies, this number, in training slots, and in transport." And he looked at me, I said, "You know, Mr. Ambassador, about six months from now you're going to call me up on the phone, ask me to come over to your office, and you're going to tell me that the daughter of the Minister of Health has got to go to an American medical school for training, and I'm going to say "Yes, Sir, I have the money to do it. Because it's an important element of a strategy you have got to carry out to get a vote on disarmament, or some other subject. I'll protect you sir." He said "Good, I'll sign the paper." We had a great relationship. And Bob Yost was my DCM, the late Bob Yost, unfortunately passed away. A gem of a guy. Ambassador to Burundi and to the Dominican Republic after that. Again, wonderful people in the Service that I worked for. I can't emphasize that enough.

Q: And you had another direct transfer? You really stayed away from Washington.

Direct transfer to USAID Mission Director in Thailand - 1973-1976

ERNST: 17 years. I direct transferred to Thailand. And the theory was, the Ernst magic of terminating the AID program. It didn't work. The war went on with such intensity that there was no predisposition to make the move to close the door, go from grants to soft loans. Secondly, the Thai are smart as hell about how they handle relationships. And outfooted me all the time. Not unpleasantly, not unpleasantly. The program has been terminated subsequently, I was there '73, '76, during the democratic interregnum between a military oligarchy and another one. When I arrived, I had as my Ambassador my old friend Len Unger, with whom I had worked when he was in SAE and in EUR, and I'd been in the Pentagon. He had dated my sister before I knew him. I had visited with him in Taipei, when he was Ambassador there. Len and Ann. Charm, to work for. Ed Masters was the DCM, later Ambassador in Dacca and in Jakarta, a close friend, I just talked to Ed on the phone ten days ago. Links. He went for me ten days ago to a briefing by Ambassador Sasser, who is the U.S. Ambassador to China, 'cause I couldn't go, was in Washington. I got my notes that I've shared with Harvey here at USI.

Then we had Bill Kintner, came out of the Army, worked in the Pentagon in Nelson Rockefeller's OCB, Operations Co-ordination Board. After his foreign service tour in Bangkok he went to the University of Pennsylvania, the head of their foreign policy "think tank." Difficult guy to work for, a little self-important and know-it-all. But he was right on the issues. When the Thai asked us to leave Thailand, after the Shanghai communique, the Thai felt very exposed. If the Americans are going to make peace, make friends with the Chinese, the Thai said, "We're their neighbors. We've got a common border, you don't. We've got to have a shift in our diplomatic relations. And the way we can show the Chinese that we are sincere in their friendship, and we don't want their boot in our country, is to tell the Americans to get out of here." We had a visit from the then Deputy Secretary of Defense, a fellow from Texas named... I'll think of it. And we briefed him, around the table, in the bubble room. And Kintner went around the table, very openly, he said "Political Counselor, Head of the Military Assistance Group, Economic Counselor, Head of the AID mission, what do you think about the proposition that the Thai are serious about asking us to leave militarily?" And we each said "Yes, we hear it from our contacts. And the Deputy Secretary of Defense didn't believe it. He went home and got Kintner sacked. He was a political appointee. For the wrong reasons, Kintner was right. Kintner had an arrangement made with the Thai that, if we were prepared to have an outfit there out of uniform, could be military, DOD contractor, to listen, an elite operation, it would be okay to listen to Lop Nor and the Russian...

Q: Who was Lop Nor?

ERNST: Lop Nor is the Chinese missile testing station in Western China, Sinkiang. This was a station up in the northeast of Thailand, and it was a great big ostentatious place. Fences, guys with guns, soldiers, the Thai said "Hey, you want to do your listening. Put 'em in civilian clothes, contractor, we'll do it. But we don't want your military, we'll take your Military Attaché, we don't want a lot of military stuff, the war in Vietnam is over for us. We've honored our obligation to you. " It goes back to, it was interesting, back to World War II, Mr. Churchill tried to keep the Thai out of the United Nations as charter members, because he said they had obliged the Japanese by letting them walk through to Singapore, and if they had fought the Japanese, the British could have held Singapore for another two months, and it would have changed the dynamics of the war in Southeast Asia, in Malaysia. And the U. S. Government prevailed, got the Thai a seat as a charter member of the UN. The Thai remembered that when we went back to them and said "We want facilities to mount the war in Vietnam." The Thai said "Yes, we owe you one. For what you did in '45" Little important note of history. But they were caught, because we hadn't told the Japanese, we hadn't told the Chinese, we hadn't told the Thai, we hadn't told any of our friends, about the Kissinger discussions with Chou En-lai, and Nixon's trip to Shanghai, left them all in the bloody lurch, and Kintner got the backwash of this from the then Deputy Secretary of Defense. I had known Kintner, we got along fine. And then he was succeeded by an absolutely super guy, Charlie Whitehouse, who was a smooth professional. My pleasure, I interviewed Charlie for this Oral History Program out at his place in Virginia.

Q: Didn't he become Deputy Secretary?

ERNST: Assistant Secretary of Defense, ISA, or Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense, ISA. He may have been in the Department, but his official job was in Defense. He's retired and is out in Virginia. Super guy. Everything marched along, support.

There had been some bad feelings between AID and the embassy when I arrived in Bangkok. I routinely would go to the Ambassador's staff meetings, Unger and I went to the Econ counselor's meetings, the Econ counselor came to my staff meetings, sat next to me, we were friends, we put on an act of friendship, the staff knew they were to work together. We all work for one Ambassador, and I was insistent on that in all my assignments. The Thai assignment was the least satisfying, in the sense that they needed us the least, they had the most to work with, and it was the least pleasant conditions of life, because it's dirty, noisy, harassed, hot, humid. The countryside is lovely, but Bangkok is not a nice city to live in.

Q: One thing that strikes me. It was a small program, 20 million dollars, but you had a staff of 500. How is that?

ERNST: Left over.

Q: Left over from bigger programs in the past.

ERNST: One of my jobs was to bring that down. I think when I left there were 40. So I wasn't very popular.

Q: 40 out of 500?

ERNST: 40 Americans and maybe 100 Thai. We outplaced, I set up a program, everybody got outplaced that wanted to. We were ahead of the pack, so if they had done a good job I could give them a recommendation.

Q: Is it unusual to have 16 years without a Stateside assignment? It wasn't so unusual in AID, was it?

ERNST: I guess not. I didn't seek a Washington assignment, I didn't want it, really. I still don't. I went back from Thailand, and I had two years, '66 to '68. I spent a year with the Assistant Administrator of AID, who was in charge of the Technical Assistance Bureau.

Q: In '76, after Thailand? '76.

Return to Washington and special assignments - 1976-1978; Hawaii 1978-1980

ERNST: Yes. Looking at where the investments in research went. And if you contemplate that there had been a hundred million dollars investment in AID research grants, out of a hundred million dollars of investment in research grants, you should have had a benefit stream of at least 500 million; something would come out of it, water resources, or training of agricultural agents, or...

Q: Hard things to measure though.

ERNST: I spent a year setting up systems for measuring - and going out in the field and measuring. For example, a big dam was built in Pakistan. Not Tarbell, but anyway. Great big dam. And it was beautifully built. We put money in, the World Bank put money, the Germans... It generated a lot of electricity. It had a reservoir. It wasn't in the plan to train people to fish for the fish in the reservoir, or how the farmer could use the water that came downstream to improve his agriculture. Wasn't in the plan. Was all done by the engineers to build the dam, for the power. So here was a defect in the program. I did that kind of thing, I looked at that, we looked at livestock, I looked at about six different project areas.

Then my second assignment was a fascinating time, I was loaned to a group with a guy named Southworth, and two other people, and we worked for Harlan Cleveland, who was then IO [International Organizations], to find out where the money the U.S. contributed to the UNDP [United Nations Development Program] went, and what it produced. And whether the instructions were vague or clear, I was shuttling back and forth to New York. I got some idea about the UN. Some good ideas and some conflicts.

And then the third assignment was a year with a lawyer, a woman, who happened to be black, named Golar Butcher, who was Assistant Administrator of AID for Africa, and I worked on Economic planning, jointly with the Department. Planning for assistance to Zimbabwe, assuming Zimbabwe would come into being, it was still Rhodesia. And looking at the interrelationships of economic policy for all of the southern cone, South Africa, Lesotho, Botswana, Swaziland. Maybe Angola; Mozambique, if there were peace, Zambia.

Q: Didn't she come out of Legal Affairs?

ERNST: Legal Affairs, yes. Very radical.

Q: How did she get into AID?

ERNST: Through Charlie Diggs, Congressman Diggs.

Q: She didn't have any overseas AID experience at all.

ERNST: Black Congressman from Michigan, Charles Diggs had been an undertaker, funeral director before he went to Congress.

Q: Let's talk a little bit about the politicization of AID, because that is something that took place, isn't it? Back in the '60s and '70s, back in Washington.

ERNST: The first crew recruited for the Marshall Plan, recruited by Paul Hoffman, were recruited from private industry and were outstanding people. And academia. And banks.

Outstanding people. And there was a whole group of executives who were brought in laterally.

Q: Under Kennedy. I remember.

ERNST: And it was good. And they were good, like Bob Nooter. Nooter came in that way.

Q: We got a Kodak person in the same way. Gramlick, Red Gramlick.

ERNST: Yes. They were good people. I think it sort of, it ran down. The enthusiasm, the standards.

Q: In the politicization? The politicians wanting their people to get jobs...

ERNST: Overdone.

Q: Had to put them someplace. Tragic because it destroys institutions. Well anyway.

ERNST: And then, I had a parting of ways with Mrs. Butcher. I was pursuing the path of peace, that there should be an attempt to work with South Africa, there was no premonition on the horizon about the end of apartheid. And she was following a policy which, in the crudest form, was that there had to be a bloody revolution, and the sooner the better.

Q: That was contrary to American policy. Constructive engagement.

ERNST: Yes, but not until later. So we parted company. And I got rescued by whatever, the system, and I was sent off to Hawaii in '78 on a two-year assignment, as an experiment. I was on loan to the State Government. AID paid half my salary, the State Government paid half my salary. AID paid my transport and Hawaii paid my local costs. I worked at the University. The College of Tropical Agriculture. Helped set up the University of the South Pacific College of Agriculture at Alufua, Samoa. I helped shape the capabilities of the University of Hawaii to provide technical assistance to the newly independent island states in the South Pacific, from the Cooks to Papua New Guinea. Not the American flag territories.

Q: That include the Marshall islands?

ERNST: No. Not the ones that were still U.S. flag; this was '78 - '80. And then a little time with the State Government to try to bring life into a theory which Senator Daniel Inouye had developed with the late Vice President Hubert Humphrey, which was that some of the experiences that Americans had had in AID overseas could be adjusted, adapted, mutatis-mutandis, to be helpful to America. So I worked with the State government in some of their public health planning, in development of their Agriculture Extension Service, how to get from Honolulu to the far end of Maui, get out into the

hinterland. And it was very rewarding, two wonderful years.

Observations on a career in U.S. foreign assistance programs

I then was offered a new job. I had 37 or 38 years of service, more than the 35 years which is creditable. So they called up one day, they said "Your two-year tour is coming to an end, we're going to offer you a job in Riyadh as the Deputy to the U.S.-Saudi Financial and Economic Commission. That's not its exact title, but something like that. Treasury sits on the board, and you would be the worker. But the duty station is Riyadh, and you take your instructions from the Assistant Secretary of Treasury for international financial matters. I had visited, with Jeannie, I had visited in Jeddah, and in Dhahran, and didn't really want to live there. I said "Thank you, no." A gal got on the phone, she said "Well, you've got 38 years of service, unless you're gonna go play up and be a superstar Ambassador, you're better off retiring at this point." So I retired in '80. No regrets. Rich career. I owe so much back to my government, my people, for the experiences. I try to pay it back in teaching, and doing my sixth grade group downtown with Junior Achievement and summer lectures that I do for free up in Nantucket. Wonderful life, and great people. I go back to the people. If I had to pick one, there were fascinating places to live, but the people we worked with were so wonderful. Not everyone, but by and large.

Q: Do you find that talking about the foreign service family generally, did you find it a little surprising, outside that family, the kind of people you end up dealing with? Universities...

ERNST: Surprising in the sense that there isn't the supportive collegial family feeling. You arrive at a post, everybody gathers around, gets you integrated and functioning. In Delhi, our first post, I had a position that had no... no one had ever filled it. So there wasn't somebody I was replacing, nobody worked for me, I worked directly for the Minister, Counselor, Director of the AID mission, he was new. We lived in a hotel for awhile. People came to our rescue. Doug Ensminger, Doug and Mary from the Ford Foundation. Ralph Cummings from the Rockefeller Foundation. Cummings was going on home leave, and said, “Roger, why don't you and your family use our house while we're on home leave?”

Q: Course, you had a lot of contacts. From your early days, and from your, even from college.

ERNST: But the support was so good.

Q: I agree. Did you find any, or how did you assess that the feelings between the State Department, Foreign Service, and AID Foreign Service? Generally speaking, mainly in your posts overseas because most of them were overseas.

ERNST: Well, I think that at the senior level, there weren't that many problems. The problems grew up down the line. If an AID mid-ranking person had access to the motorpool - it was perks and operational, housing, that made for problems. My approach

was to try to treat everybody equally and to give them what they needed to do their job. And different people needed different things to do their job, depending on their circumstances, where they were, and how they were working. And as an AID employee, I would seek out the wisdom, judgment, thought, of the regular Foreign Service political section, economic section. A, because they had a lot of thought to give, a lot of good stuff to give. B, the function of it, also, then, was that they liked being asked. And it wasn't foreign to them. I would get the Second Secretary, or Third Secretary, or First Secretary, in the political section, over to brief our agricultural people, or our health people, or whatever. What's going on? They've got to know. And reciprocally. When the Ag guy game back from a field trip upcountry, "What's going on?" Was it intelligence? Yes. Information, yes. What's going on? What are people thinking about? What are they worried about? What are their priorities?

Q: Did you let them brief military Attachés, too?

ERNST: Yes. But not in a formal sense; the Attaché would be present in the room. One or two would.

Q: What about CIA?

ERNST: I would do that myself, or my deputy. And I would make a point of it, both in the field and when I came back to Washington. I would do it regularly; if they hadn't asked, I would ask. I want to go to Langley, I want to spend the day, I want to be milked, I want to be debriefed. I don't know what you're interested in, but here are the people I've seen in Thailand in the last six months since I was in Washington, here are the subjects we discussed. Can I help you? I owe it to my government.

Q: Weren't you usually asked?

ERNST: I was, but if it wasn't in the schedule, I would say, "Hey, where is it?" Because I felt that obligation. Who knows better? We owe it across the board. I would always, as an AID officer, when I got back to Washington, seek an appointment with the Assistant Secretary, or the Deputy Assistant Secretary, or at least the Office Director in the Department; I wouldn't just come back to an AID consultation. If there were some issues with the Pentagon, I would go across the river, see somebody over there. Here's another view, here's how I saw it. Here's the issue about the military budget, and our support thereof. This was particularly true, for example, in Korea, with the proceeds of the PL-480 program. We sold the wheat to Korea for won; the won went into a 104-C account, which we then granted back to the Korean government to use for their defense budget. It was 2/3rds of their budget. I controlled. AID controlled. The Ambassador controlled. Whoever you want to say. The Pentagon needed to know that sequencing. So when they put pressure on the MAAG Chief, some Major General, wonderful guy, to deliver, to do something, they better know that it was going to have this kind of impact on the Korean defense budget, which he didn't control. They had to know that in the Pentagon.

Second example, in Ethiopia, the World Bank and the Americans were lobbying for - were pushing the Government of Ethiopia to pass - a land reform bill. Land to tillers, as was done in Taiwan, if you will. And we'd had all kinds of experts there, and previously, traditionally, whatever the crop, the landowner got 50%, minimum. And if there was a failure of crops, he got 50%; if there was a bountiful crop, he got 50%. There was going to be a land reform bill, beneficial utilization for five years, would entitle the user to keep 75%. The cabinet was going to take up this issue on a certain date, and we sounded out CIA, which was very helpful to us. Who was going to vote what way? The Minister of Agriculture was for it, the Minister of Land Reform was for it, the Minister of Health was for it, the Minister of Education, the Head of the University, the others were against it. I went and talked with the MAAG Chief, who was Rip Collins, Major General in the Army. Wonderful guy, friend of ours, in fact, he goes to Nantucket in the summer, we see him, he is retired in Texas. And we knew that the Minister of Defense was going to be a big voice against this bill. Partly for personal reasons; he owned a lot of land, and his Major Generals and Lieutenant Generals owned land. We cooked up a deal. The Minister of Defense went on a fishing trip, 3-day fishing trip, during the time that the cabinet was gonna deal with the issue, with Rip Collins. In Rip's airplane. So he wasn't there to vote against it. Now, collaboration, based on intelligence from the Agency, as to what was going on in the Ministry of Defense about this vote in the cabinet. Wonderful. The way it should work. How they got the information, I don't know. Honorably, presumably, I don't know.

I do know that I got a call one night, to tell me that two professors we were payrolling at the University were demonstrating on the street with some of the U.S. Peace Corps volunteers against the war in Vietnam. This was 1970, in Addis Ababa, off the campus, on the street. Peace Corps volunteers. The Peace Corps director was either Jess Portugal, who was a great guy, or Jamie Andrews. "Those volunteers are going out of here on the morning plane. They can't do that. That's American politics; it doesn't belong here."

Q: Who said that? They're going out?

ERNST: The Peace Corps Director. I called up the head of the University, Dr. Akililu, who's now living in Bethesda. Spent some time at the World Bank and at the UNDP after he left Ethiopia, in '74. I called Akililu, I said "What about this? These two professors are under contract to you, I'm paying for them, they were out demonstrating against my government." He said "I will use section 702 of the contract and they will be on the plane, too."

Q: These were American professors.

ERNST: Yes. Because the intelligence people said it, they were out; the [intelligence people] knew what was going on. We knew who, there was no denying it. So click, it worked. The way it should. With the Ambassador's, not only knowledge, but support, obviously. Exciting times. And they still are.

Q: Well, thank you very much.

ERNST: I'm honored.

End of interview