

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

AMBASSADOR CHARLES B. SALMON

Interviewed by: David Reuther
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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Background	
Born in New York City	1938
New York City—Fordham University, AB	1955-1959
New York City—Columbia University, MA	1959-1960
Arlington, Virginia—Pentagon, Army Service	1960-1962
New York—Columbia University, PhD program	1962-1964
Joined the Foreign Service	
64 th A-100 class	Oct 1964
Washington D.C.—State Department, Bureau of Public Affairs Office of Media Services (P/MS)	1965-1966
Washington D.C.—State Department, Bureau of Far East Affairs (FE) Staff Assistant	1966
Accompanied Assistant Secretary Bundy, Secretary Rusk and President during Far East trip	
Vietnam Working Group	
Washington D.C.—Foreign Service Institute, German Training Background on fellow students	1966-1967
Vienna, Austria—American Embassy, Consular Officer	1967-1969
Characterization of Consular work	
Involvement in Prague Spring refugee flow	
Opportunity to travel around Europe	
Saigon, Vietnam—American Embassy, Staff Assistant to Mission Coordinator Larry Pickering	1969-1971
Comments on Embassy officers	
Vietnam assignment impact on subsequent careers	
Living conditions	
Little interaction with Vietnamese officials	

- Congressional delegations' visits - Snapshot of Cambodia - Handling senior journalists	
The Hague—American Embassy, Political Officer - Description of the American Embassy building - Labor and political portfolio - Developed contacts with Parliamentarians - Substantive issues, Vietnam, colonialism - Value of International Visitors Program - Reverberation from U.S. opening to China - Insights on the diplomatic corps - Description of Dutch political parties	1971-1974
Manila, The Philippines —American Embassy, Political Section - Handling Congressional delegations - Extensive in-country travel - Contacts with the opposition - Reporting on the insurgency - Observations on Embassy leadership - Preparing for a Presidential visit - Observations on Ambassador Sullivan - The fall of Saigon and Embassy Manila's response - Bicentennial activities	1974-1977
Washington, D.C.—National War College - Field trip to West Africa - Excellent speakers and staff	1977-1978
Washington D.C.—State Department, Bureau of Human Rights And Humanitarian Affairs, Office Human Rights (HA/HR), Director - Establishing a new bureau against internal opposition - Israeli opposition and demarches on human rights - HA/HR staffing - Travel, public speaking - Impact of failed rescue of Tehran hostages	1978-1980
Wellington, New Zealand—American Embassy, Deputy Chief Of Mission (DCM) - Comments on FSI DCM training - Arrival and soon became Chargé - Issue of U.S. ships' port stops in NZ - Observation on Mission facilities - Observation on talented NZ interlocutors - Interacting with the diplomatic community	1980-1983

- Handling ranking visitors - U.S. election and transition - Fourth of July celebration - Introducing new politically appointed Ambassador - Travel - Māori matters - Wine and other agricultural products	
- Rangoon, Burma—American Embassy, Deputy Chief Of Mission (DCM) - Issues: narcotics, ethnic unrest - Unsatisfactory Embassy facilities - North Korean bombing - Relations with Burmese officialdom - Working the narcotics problem - Evaluation of Embassy Public Affairs - U.S. visitors - Currency conversion problem	1983-1985
- Washington D.C.—State Department, Bureau of Far East Asia and Pacific Affairs, Office of Thailand and Burmese Affairs (EAP/TB), Director - Approaching the Vietnamese Boat problem, refugees - Approaching the Thai on pre-positioned ships	1985-1986
- Washington D.C.—State Department, Bureau of Far East Asia and Pacific Affairs, Office of Philippine Affairs (EAP/P), Director - View of Aquino's government - Wolfowicz's so-called EAP informal - Strong Congressional interest - Senate delays Nick Platt as Ambassador - Ms. Aquino visits Washington - Working with Philippines Embassy - Aspects of base negotiations - Secretary Shultz participation in ASEAN meeting in Manila - Colonel Rowe's assassination - Insurgency concerns - Consulate Cebu as a listening post	1986-1989
- Vientiane, Laos—American Embassy, Chargé ad interim - Observations of Laotian diplomats - POW-MIA issue reflected strong interests in U.S. - Permanent U.S. military POW-MIA detachments stationed in Laos - Narcotics issue: pushed crop substitution - Observations of government facilities, housing	1989-1992

Accompanied tours and establishment of an international school Quality of Lao officialdom Relations with the Department No USIA, public affairs programming was modest The refugee issue Consequences for Laos of post-Berlin Wall relations with Moscow Growing Lao participation in ASEAN Selling the Peace Corps was a bridge too far	
Vientiane, Laos—American Embassy, Ambassador Summary: after 3 years Laos was opening up FSI training for Ambassador Senate confirmation hearing	1992-1993
Honolulu, Hawaii—Commander in Chief, Pacific Command (CINCPAC), Foreign Policy Advisor Name Political Advisor (POLAD) changed to Foreign Policy Advisor A sample day Travel with CINCPAC CINCPAC visits, first to Ambassador, next ranking host military Indonesia trip, yes or no Regularly scheduled high level conferences Checking with State before morning briefing CINCPAC and Korea CINCPAC and earthquake in Japan CINCPAC response to Beijing missiles bracketing Taiwan Taiwan's Lee Teng-hui passes through Honolulu Relationships with resident diplomatic community CINCPAC attendance at diplomatic events Visiting Vietnam, China Background on three CINCPACs	1993-1996
Retirement	1996
Honolulu, Hawaii—Asia Pacific Center for Security Studies Teaching and advising Area travel	1996-2014
Honolulu, Hawaii—East West Center, Senior Adjunct Fellow Designing classes and lecturing The think tank scene	2014-present

INTERVIEW

Note from the interviewee: I deeply appreciate the Association for Diplomatic Studies and Training and Heather Ashe its Oral History Director for encouraging me to undertake my oral history. I thank David Reuther for conducting this interview so effectively. I thank Colonel William Boswell, Kristine Boswell, Dr. Stephen Noerper and Ms. Olga Miller for their assistance in helping me edit the final transcript

Q: Today is March 7, 2024. We are interviewing Ambassador Charles B. Salmon for the Association for Diplomatic Studies and Training, and I am David Reuther. Charlie, you were born in New York almost right after New Year's in 1938.

SALMON: Right, I was born in New York City. I was born in Bronx Hospital which no longer exists. I think it is now part of the Bronx Botanical gardens. My father Charles and my mother Regina had come to New York City from Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. My paternal grandfather was an employee of the Post Office. My maternal grandfather had come from Ireland in 1870 or maybe a little earlier, and worked in a steel mill for all of his life. He died when my mother was quite young. My mother was one of 13 children in a good Irish Catholic family and that gave me many first cousins and also first cousins on my father's side.

Q: Your paternal side, when did they come to the States?

SALMON: Oh, I presume they were born in the States.

My grandmother was of German heritage. And my grandfather, Irish. I presume their parents or maybe even grandparents came right after the Civil War or even before the Civil War. I have not been a keen student of genealogy, so I have never really delved into that at any great length.

Q: They moved into the Pennsylvania area.

SALMON: They came to Pittsburgh. As I say they were in their 30's when they came to New York City.

Q: Now what was your father's job?

SALMON: My father worked for his entire life for the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad. Which is of course a historic railroad as the first shovel of dirt was dug up by Charles Carroll of Carrollton, one of the signers of the Declaration of Independence. My father started working manual jobs in Pittsburgh and then moved to New York City. He was on the clerical side of the business: ticket sales, marketing, and tariff schedules for his entire career, at the end of which they brought him back to the B&O headquarters in Baltimore. The company was letting people retire somewhat early presumably with some financial incentive to retire.

Q: Now we are talking about the years before the outbreak of WWII. Was he drafted?

SALMON: No, my father was not drafted. He was born in 1907, so he would have been 31. One might have expected him to be drafted but he was not because he was in a war related industry. My father was thinking at one time of trying to get a warrant officer commission in one of the services and do exactly the kind of work he was doing for the B&O railroad. My mother was not very keen on that so that did not happen. I always regretted that he did not have the opportunity to try that. On the other hand if he had tried that I would not be having this interview with you now.

Q: Well now you were saying your mother had lots of brothers and sisters. Did any of them serve in WWII?

SALMON: Yes, she had a brother who was in WWII, but more importantly her oldest brother who was the patriarch of the family served in WWI. He was a naval officer. He was also a lawyer and a politician and not a very good one I gather. He was running for congress as a Republican in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, at that particular point. But he was in the first world War and had a younger brother in the Second World War, and of course I had several older cousins who had served in the world war.

Q: Now about 1943 in the middle of the war, you were about five years old. Do you have any recollection?

SALMON: I had. I won't say they are vivid but your chronology has inspired me to rack my memory. I think if I am not completely mistaken I was only three years old but had a sense of Pearl Harbor. I cannot get to that completely but I think I was aware of Pearl Harbor. Then during the war we had blackout curtains and air raid drills. By the time I got to school, which for me would have been '43 or '44, we had the whole phenomenon of saving stamps for war bonds. We trucked our old newspapers to collection points. We saved animal fats which were given to some place where they made soap. We collected silver foil that used to be in cigarette packages. My father smoked two packs of Camels a day. So those are my wartime memories. I very vividly recall VE day and VJ day.

Q: How was the victory in Europe celebrated in New York?

SALMON: Well in my neighborhood I came from a small enclave which was then actually part of Manhattan called Marble Hill. People were in the streets waving their arms and banging on any instrument that would make noise. So that is how I remember that. VJ day is much the same. That was the culmination of my war memories except when I turned in my war bonds many years later at the Embassy cashier's office in Paris much to the irritation of everybody behind me in the line. I remember the Naval Review. I think it was September of 1945 on the Hudson River in New York where President Truman had come up and had the battleship Missouri and the Augusta which had taken President Roosevelt to Canada for the wartime conferences with the British and Truman, too, when he went to Potsdam. Then you know literally hundreds of destroyers and overhead aircraft. It was really remarkable. I think they said more than a million people

turned up. I remember my father taking me there. So that was the culmination of my WWII experiences.

Q: I have seen that New York was a big disembarkation point for the troops being taken to Europe. So, New York would be a very key and memorable part. You don't always see those pictures of the troopships coming back .

SALMON: Right. The troopships going out were under intense security which of course never worked in New York City. I know my two cousins, one of whom served in the European Theater and was in the Battle of the Bulge and the other one was a Naval officer engineer and was building runways in Liberia. Both of them came through and visited my parents and my father through doing whatever he did with the railroad and was aware when they were coming in and when their ships were leaving. So, you are right in your observation about that and the embarkation.

Q: Now you started at St. John's Elementary. I assume that was a Catholic school.

SALMON: That was a Catholic school in the neighborhood of Kingsbridge. I could walk to it from where we lived in Marble Hill. It no longer exists but I went there for eight years and for all of my years except for 8th grade I had Catholic nuns. In the 8th grade I had the Brothers of the Christian schools who had been brought in by the church pastor I guess to have a masculine element for the boys. They immediately started a very active athletic program. I had one at that time, a lay teacher. I still remember her, Miss Mills. A very attractive young woman. That was the 6th grade, and I remember she was very interested in world affairs, and she did a lot of talking about the formation of NATO.

Q: What other things were you being exposed to at that time? Did you have a favorite author?

SALMON: I wasn't a prodigy, that came a little later. But my favorite for a long time was Edgar Allen Poe. That unfortunately did great damage to my own personal English style. I became somewhat Poe Baroque. Basically, my interest began not with fantasy but with fairy tales. One of my aunts sent me, when I was only about four or five, a child's guide to mythology, which I still remember, was very good. Then also I had both Grimm's fairy tales and Andersen's fairy tales in a nice boxed set. Then early on I discovered our local library. I admire Andrew Carnegie in this particular philanthropic activity. We had a terrific local library, the Kingsbridge Public Library not very far from where I went to school at St. John's. So, I became a frequent user. I still remember the name of the head librarian who when I would bring books to her that were way over my head, she would politely talk me out of them. Eventually she went along with what I wanted to read. There was a lot of historical fiction and a lot of biography. Some really strange books that I liked, Hadrian the Seventh, that was later made into a play by Alastair Crowley the author called himself Baron Corvo. I remember she said, "Oh you don't want to read that," but I did want to read it, and I still remember some of it. I am sure you remember from people those public libraries where people at home did not have a large library, were terrific.

Q: There you are in New York and New York is Broadway. Did you have an interest or frequently go and see the theater?

SALMON: My interest was derivative. Because my parents were keen playgoers and also liked musicals. They would bring home those playbills. I had a huge collection of them and when I began going to plays, I did the same thing. They eventually were thrown out by my parents when I was overseas. But yes, we went there, and you had the Radio City Music Hall Christmas show with the Rockettes when they were in their prime and a variety of other things. I never had a great interest in early popular music. I discovered WQXR which was the New York Times radio station in New York City. I don't know whether it was pre-public radio, but basically it played mainly classical music. From the time I was about 13 or 14 that was about all I listened to.

Q: Well, that is good preparation for high school. Now you went to high school in '51,

SALMON: '51-'55, yes, I should mention just parenthetically that growing up in that particular area of New York and going to parochial schools I can't over emphasize the influence that particular religious acculturation had on my early days. I was very keen on going to a Jesuit high school, so we picked Fordham prep. The tuition was supposedly modest I guess but not for my parents. But I really cherish my time there. It is when I first began studying Latin and German, and it was just generally a very good education.

Q: Then how would you characterize that? I mean were you in ties and a coat.

SALMON: Oh, of course, a coat and tie always.

Q: Including elementary school.

SALMON: No, in elementary school we had a uniform. We had a white shirt and blue tie. I remember in my very earliest time in first or second grade I actually wore knickers and long socks. Then I graduated to long trousers. That particular dress code was very much part of the parochial school tradition, and I guess it still is. The thing is many New Yorkers are electing to put their kids in parochial schools rather than the public schools.

Q: For the discipline as well.

SALMON: Oh yes for the discipline, certainly. And maybe for the content I don't know. Because of course when I was going to grade school I wanted to go to PS-7. Public School 7. Which was amazingly enough right next to our parish church, St. John's Church. My parents vetoed that particular desire.

Q: Do you recall why?

SALMON: Well, I think it was again suggesting their own religious background and acculturation. My mother had an older sister who was a Catholic nun. My father, despite

a certain anti-clerical streak, was basically a good practicing Catholic, so they wanted to put their progeny into the same institutions that had molded them. I guess that was maybe their thought.

Q: Was there much of a transition from St. John's to Fordham Prep?

SALMON: Yes, there was a transition. I am a great believer in the Jesuit educational system and of course a lot of the teachers were what they called scholastics. These are Jesuits in training. I think they are in their eighth or ninth year of formation and they served for three years. So I had a lot of good young scholastics as my teachers and then the lay faculty was very good and much more obviously sophisticated than the nuns who had taught me at St. John's. Although those nuns were pretty good and educated. They were facing the post-war phenomenon of very large classes, at least in Parochial schools. I think one of my classes had 65 kids.

Q: Wow.

SALMON: Wow exactly that was prehistoric. I managed despite the numbers of kids to get at least a good beginning that gave me a foundation for Fordham Prep. And just as an aside and you can cut it out later if you want to get a feel for what growing up in the parochial neighborhood which I guess Irish Catholic was my particular thing. Take a look at Garry Wills' writing. You probably know Garry Wills, he is 89 or 90 now. I think he has written 50 books; he has contributed to the New York Review of Books. I think it was his bit of a memoir where he talked about growing up in Catholic neighborhoods as a frame of reference, parochial, but very limited. It is a good summation of at least the kind of experience I had. He tried to be a Jesuit and then he was associated with Northwestern.

Q: You give me the impression that your neighborhood was pretty homogeneous.

SALMON: Yes, homogeneity, that is a good word. I mean we had a few Italian Americans, and they were also Catholic. And then a few who were Jewish. But very few, to be honest, in that neighborhood. Actually, there were no people of color. That was also to be the case at Fordham Prep. We had one black fellow and he had been in class very long. I have to think it was a non-welcoming atmosphere.

Q: Before Fordham Prep what did the kids do for fun after school?

SALMON: After school even though it was part of Manhattan there were lots of undeveloped lots with lots of trees. My particular group climbed trees, and I have broken bones to show my credibility in that area. We also took our bicycles on adventure trips across the George Washington bridge to New Jersey and right up next to New York City in Westchester. So, I did a lot of bike riding. And there was a lot of irritation. In those days the chains didn't seem to work all that well and the chains were coming off and the tires were always flat, and we were always patching them up. But that was fun. I didn't do any organized athletics although we had a pretty good basketball team at St. John's Grade School.

Q: Now did your folks have a car?

SALMON: No, we did not. We were dependent on public transportation.

Q: That would cut down on vacation travel.

SALMON: In a way I guess it did but finally at my behest we got a car a little later. We always used the Baltimore and Ohio train and we made an annual trip to Pittsburgh, and we had a drawing room in the train, and I always remember lifting the curtain just in time to be passing the steel mills outside of Pittsburgh. You'd see these great fires still burning and also jumping back to WWII and in various periods the train was completely loaded with service people. We had to wait in line to get into the dining car but eventually got in.

Q: Now at Fordham what was the academic schedule if you will.

SALMON: Well, it was pretty intense if you will. I guess there was a bit of a core curriculum in classical civilization. I continued with my Latin, but I started Greek in college. But just for I think two years. Then I majored in American History and European History; I think there was a required Biology course. No Physics. No Mathematics because I had such a difficult time with Mathematics in high school. It really handicapped me in terms of my testing abilities, and I would always get super marks on the verbal and then marginal marks on the math. I can see now why I am a big fan of the STEM movement. Try to get the kids into science and math and technology early on. Again, as teachers, my first Algebra teacher, an Annapolis graduate, was the football coach who had been hired after the war. I may be a hopeless student, but I thought he was a hopeless teacher. Then my geometry teacher the next year He was a Jesuit and a very nice fellow, but I didn't think a very good teacher. I guess my Waterloo was trigonometry. One of the only times I failed a test. So, we had a system where you could do conditional or make-up tests. So, I was intensively tutored by some good friends, so I managed to pass the trigonometry test. I really feel that lack of science or lack of vigorous mathematical training has been a bit of a handicap especially during the testing periods of my career.

Q: Now you say you were a pretty good reader, did language arts courses...

SALMON: Yes, we had German in Fordham Prep. You had your choice. You could take German or French along with Latin. The French people also took Greek. And I took scientific courses, I did ok but not all that well. Clearly, extracurricular activities reflect what you do. I was in the school paper, the school magazine, those kinds of things.

Q: Well, if you are on the school paper you are a good writer.

SALMON: I had a good editor, the editor of our paper at least when I was there until he graduated was a fellow named Lew Bacardi who later became president of the AP. He also worked on the Fordham University paper. He was a good editor and I did specialty

things. I reviewed films on my own time. I didn't pay for movies. It was fun, and I enjoyed the writing part of it.

Q: Well films at this time frame, '55 to the '60s were quite interesting. This is when Sayonara came out. Lemon got his start. So, you were reviewing those kinds of films.

SALMON: Right. I remember one of my reviews was B-52 with Jimmy Stewart. A good old war film. And I remember that I reviewed that, and it was how I came up with one of my foreign service answers later. It remains to be seen. Some people think it is good, some people think it is bad but go.

Q: Are you thinking of 12 O'Clock High?

SALMON: 12 O'Clock High I saw. It was actually used. We did a high school play about it. The other one that we did was Command Decision, and both 12 O'Clock High and Command Decision you may know are used as teaching films in the military.

Q: Now about your junior year the Russians launched Sputnik.

SALMON: I remember Sputnik very well. Because I came in late from wherever I was because my father had been taken to the hospital with a suspected heart attack. So, I always equate my mother's concern and my concern obviously with the little chirping of Sputnik. That whole Cold War phenomenon if you were brought up in the 50's that was the background music including air raid shelter type things going down to the basement. Those old signs that show you where to go. I did not start going to the Broadway theater and the Metropolitan until I was probably in high school.

Q: Well, my high school when Sputnik came there was a great rush to turn all of us into engineers.

SALMON: I know and also to turn us into Russian speakers. Several of my friends had some of these lucrative government scholarships to study Russian.

Q: That must have been the NDA scholarship.

SALMON: That is right. Exactly.

Q: Now were you into sports in high school?

SALMON: No, I played with friends, I played a little tennis but not very intensively. And I was never, to be honest, very interested in sports. We had a fairly decent football team and track team. I had one experience with track from the eighth grade. I ran in a relay, and I thought I was pretty fast. In my portion of it, I was in a vaguely secluded part of the track and one of my competitors knocked the baton from my hand. I had to pick it up and lost a lot of time in that activity. I don't want to be associated with people who

don't play fair. So, I think it was probably an excuse to validate my desire not to play at all.

Q: So, after prep school you went to Fordham University.

SALMON: Yes, that was the easiest thing to do. I mean we got a lot of pressure from the Jesuit faculty to at the minimum go to Catholic colleges. Preferably to Jesuit colleges. I remember I had one classmate who was to be the valedictorian, and he was accepted at Dartmouth and decided to go there. He lost the honor of being our valedictorian in a fit of pique by the Jesuit administration. I keep up with Fordham Prep and they have done extremely well. Now they just get you into as many Ivy league colleges as they can. I am sure the Catholic thing is not as important as it used to be.

Q: Now once you came to university what were you majoring in?

SALMON: I was majoring in American History. I had a very good American History teacher, Robert Remini, who specialized in Jackson, Van Buren, Clay, Webster, Calhoun, the Silver Age of American politics. He was very good and influential and oddly enough when I did my master's at Columbia, he had been brought in for a year. I had a very good medieval history professor who was of the old European tradition. He was Viennese and everything would have been great if the Hapsburg empire had not been broken up. He was very good. I still remember I ran into him when I was in Vienna. I was down in Cortina, Italy, I don't think it was skiing, just a little trip. I ran into him. He was at the check-out and check-in counter of the Cristallo Palace which was a very nice hotel. I went rushing up to him and called Dr. Ladner, and he had this very alarmed look because this was the time of much terrorism. I was devastated that he did not remember me. But then after I taught for 18 years at APCSS and could only vaguely remember who had been in my seminar. Only then did I realize that teachers do not remember everybody. Even though you think you may be memorable.

Q: Now as you are going through University what did you do throughout the summers?

SALMON: Even though I was younger, I went up to Lake George in the Adirondacks. My aunt had a big place right on the lake and we would go there for vacation. But then I believe it was my second year my father got me a job as office boy messenger for a small company. It was 468 Park Avenue South. It was an unusual company that was run by an Irishman. His trade was selling high quality shirting material for custom shirt makers in New York City. You had to sign a thing that said the only shirt you would make would have long sleeves, no short sleeves. So, I had messenger duty bringing parcels. They weren't very heavy and would go to stores like Sulka and Charvet and a lot of the high-end men's tailoring stores. And also, stuff in the office, so that was one summer. Then the next summer I didn't make much money, but it seemed to me like good money. Then for the next two years I worked for a firm down on 34th Street. It was one of the early catalogue stores. It went out of business years ago. It was called L. C. Mayers. So, and then in the summer of my junior year I went to ROTC summer camp at Fort Bragg in

North Carolina. It was briefly renamed Fort Liberty. Braxton Bragg not being acceptable in our current environment.

Q: Now for your senior year did you have a dissertation that you had to write or how did your academic program roll out?

SALMON: We had an honors program at Fordham. It was like a variation of reading the great books. And seminars. I was in that I think it started in the second year and I was in that until I graduated. You graduated with a special degree that I thought was a bit idiosyncratic. Instead of summa cum laude you graduated with something called egregia cum laude which no one else knew. My research project was a partial biography of Aaron Burr. But the honors program is still going and I try to be supportive of it. I haven't decided yet, but the development person is so relentless. Establishing a yearly bequest, I am getting ahead of myself. I did that with appreciated stock the way I did it at East-West Center.

Q: So, you graduated in '59

SALMON: I was also commissioned when I graduated. I had a choice of going right into the military or putting it off for a while. Jumping ahead I put it off and went to Columbia and got my master's in history in 1960. So I did it in one year, one of the hardest working years I ever did. Library daily from 8am to 11pm. A few research trips to Washington, Boston, and Albany.

Q: I was going to see who would you designate as one of your favorite teachers at Fordham?

SALMON: That was Remini. Robert Remini and he went on to teach at the University of Illinois in Chicago and he also was a favorite of Newt Gingrich. Gingrich made him Historian of the House of Representatives or something. If you looked in this bibliography it is quite impressive but when I began with him he had just published what was his dissertation at Columbia. Martin van Buren and the Democratic party. Then from there we had Jackson and as I told you before, Clay and Webster and Calhoun. There was a lot of research in that particular area. So, he was I guess in a way the most influential professor I had but that other fellow was a partisan of the restored Hapsburg Empire. He was a very good teacher there, my European History teacher. Personally, I didn't keep up contacts with any of them except Remini by chance at Columbia. They were all good and I felt I got a good education.

Q: Was there anyone influential in encouraging you to go to Columbia?

SALMON: No, when I went to Fordham College my father was, I guess smarter than I. He thought Columbia would be better and more prestigious in which he was right, but no I had to go to a Catholic college or else I would lose my immortal soul. Which in a way I did because I always identified as Catholic. I am a bit of a lapsed Catholic. More than a bit, a totally lapsed Catholic.

Q: Columbia doesn't strike me as a highly Catholic institution.

SALMON: No, but I already had my AB from Fordham so I could do what I wanted.

Q: Okay, now you were saying Columbia was very intense. History, American History. Remini was there; any other professors.

SALMON: This is where you were paying your money; I had what they called a regent scholarship for Columbia, so the tuition was quite manageable. I had a very good seminar colloquium with Richard Hofstadter. The colonial history teacher was Richard Morris. The European history teacher was Garret Mattingly who wrote the great book on the armada. The American history teacher was William Luchtenberg who did a lot on Roosevelt. So, it was an excellent faculty and class size except for the colloquium with Hofstadter was large but that was OK. As I said I worked hard on getting my master's paper done. And was quite happy when it was over, and I could go off to the Army.

Q: What was the subject of your dissertation?

SALMON: It was a biography because I always leaned towards that kind of history. It was a biography of Robert Troup Colonel Robert Troup who was a good friend of Alexander Hamilton. In fact they had been roommates at Kings College which was the original name of Columbia. Troup was a Lt. Colonel in the war. He was an aide to General Horatio Gates. He was at the battle of Saratoga and afterwards he was suspected of being anti-Washington. And part of the so-called Conway cabal. He was appointed a federal judge in New York and he quit pretty quickly there because he could make more money as a land speculator in northern New York. But it was interesting. I am sure I left a lot uncovered. But it was interesting to get into the whole practice of reading manuscripts, compiling notes and everything. From those days if you remember from your own education, it wasn't so easy. There was no Google, there were no pictures you could take of the manuscript, it was all 5"x8" or 3"x5" cards. That you wrote out this or that quotation. But it was fun doing the research. That gave me the desire to find a picture of him or a portrait of him. I never was able to find a portrait of him. He is in a painting of the Battle of Saratoga. He is way at the end. I am trying to remember who the painter is, a very famous American painter, I think John Trumble.

Q: Now you were saying you went to libraries in Boston and Washington to research this project?

SALMON: Washington, yes. That was the advantage of my father working for the railroad because I could just take the train to Washington early in the morning, work at the Library of Congress until it closed and then take the train home at night. I drove up to Boston and Albany. It was a good research experience, and he was an interesting person to write about. A very dyed in the wool federalist. Which is not in my political party if I were back in Washington. But it is still very interesting.

Q: A lot of work has been done stimulated by the musical Hamilton.

SALMON: Well, that is right I have seen Hamilton twice. Once in San Francisco and once here in Hawaii. I liked it very much especially after I had seen it one time. Because it was much more intelligible. When I saw it the second time because I am not all that adept at hip-hop type lyrics. But there should have been a role for Troup. I should talk to Miranda and get him written in.

Q: Now at Fordham University you were saying you were in ROTC.

SALMON: Right.

Q: And you got a commission out of that, so after your Master's you have to.

SALMON: I had to go into the service. That is what I did. I elected that as the time to go in. I was in what they called the Adjutant General's Corps. I went out for my basic training orientation course at Fort Benjamin Harrison, Indiana. I remember driving out there and being impressed by these wonderful iron deer that stood on so many people's lawns with huge iron fences around the properties. I enjoyed that and an interesting cross section of the country in that course as there had actually been training at Fort Bragg which I think was just eight weeks. Then the question is where are they going to assign you and originally I was going to be assigned to some base in New Mexico. Sandia Labs, which I think is connected with the nuclear program. But then at the last minute the Army said we are sending you to Washington. I was part of the office of the chief of information, but I should mention that because they were under strictures about expanding staff in the army, they created in a way this really bogus thing called a unit under the chief of information. Basically we worked with the chief of information. Although I was in the Pentagon a little, I was basically over in the naval gun factory down in the southeast. First it was a naval gun factory and then it was a naval weapons plant and then the Washington Navy Yard Annex. Now it is except for a few old houses and the CNO's house. They are huge office buildings and part of that whole southwest development project.

Q: Now when you went off to Fort Bragg was that the first extended trip out of New York?

SALMON: Pittsburgh and I should have mentioned we added on Columbus, Ohio on some trips and then on up to Lake George in the summers when I wasn't working. Then I guess my first overseas trip my parents, brother and I went to Montreal, Canada by train and saw that. But you are right, the trip to Fort Bragg and the eight weeks there was my first extended time away from New York City.

Q: Now what were your duties in the Office of Chief of Information.

SALMON: I was in something called the Troop Information Support Unit. I wrote military pamphlets. When we had the extension of the troops in Berlin, I contributed to a

pamphlet called 'Why Me?' Everyone was complaining about being kept on in the military. Another thing I did was we offered a speech preparation service for general officers. So, we wrote speeches for general officers. I remember I did one for then Major General Creighton Abrahams. He was giving a speech at Princeton for his son's graduation. I wrote him a speech which I don't think was all that successful. Because I had a tendency from my awful influence of Edgar Allen Poe, I was a little florid and wrote whatever words I wanted to use in the speech. I enjoyed it and just being in Washington at that particular time with the change over to the Kennedy administration. The PT-109 was kept prior to the parade down on the docks at the Anacostia where I was stationed. I was there for Kennedy's inauguration and the big snowstorm. So, I developed I guess that people loved to call Potomac Fever and took the Washington Post every day and that kind of thing and always thought, oh well, it would be a nice place to work and get to. That I guess the origins in a way of my foreign service career but of that, more later.

Q: At this point where were you living?

SALMON: In Washington?

Q: Yes.

SALMON: In Washington I shared an apartment with two other lieutenants off of Glebe Road almost at seven corners. One of those red brick buildings two stories which are not I guess pretty much an Hispanic neighborhood. But it was easy. I could commute to work in those wonderful old days. I could be downtown to the Navy gun factory in maybe 25 minutes. Sometimes even shorter. But I was up there and so before I discovered real estate, if I had any common sense, I would have been buying some place in Georgetown. Which would be now worth ten million dollars. But I never did that. I wasn't very imaginative. After I had come back from Vietnam, not even then did I buy a place of my own. As I say all of my friends were using all of their Vietnam service money to buy a place out in Georgetown or McClain.

Q: Now at this point did you have a car?

SALMON: Oh yes, I had a car. The period without a car was immediately after the war and a little after. As I say we relied on my father's B&O railroad pass and when we were in New York City. And on the bus you mentioned during the war earlier I remember going on the bus with my mother and brother. And literally as she went from place to place to try and find things that we could use her ration stamps for. Like meat and that kind of stuff because there was a real as you remember it was rationing and a shortage. Not that it was ever all that, to be honest, arduous. You do remember those kinds of things.

Q: Well, you were there during the Kennedy-Nixon campaign.

SALMON: I remember listening on the radio. I was mailing something at the post office. There in the Union station, listening to one of the Kennedy-Nixon debates. I think it was the one where Nixon criticized President Truman's language. Kennedy just gave one of those looks that he could give of total disdain for Nixon and like 'who is this character?' I remember I watched one of the debates with an old college friend from Fordham who had gone on to Harvard Law. We were in the apartment of this guy and his wife. He was a supreme court clerk and later became a very distinguished federal judge. Very right wing but very distinguished in Illinois. I think his name was Richard Posner, and yet in the whole excitement even though it took me ten hours to go to Glebe road in Arlington during the storm I did watch the thing on television, the bright sunny on the snow, Cardinal Cushing not being able to read. Robert Frost, reciting his poem from memory because he couldn't read his text either. You know just being in Washington at that time Mrs. Kennedy taking Ayoub Khan to dinner at Mount Vernon, the first time that had been done and you just had a sense of excitement Kennedy was a very conservative individual. His private life was really quite reprehensible.

Q: Now the Berlin Crisis began to boil and then spill over into the Berlin Wall while you were on duty.

SALMON: That is one of the things I wrote in the pamphlet 'Why Me?' Because we extended the service of the people in Germany. They were supposed to get out of the army and what have you and we extended it, so that is what I remember. Of course, I remember the Berlin Crisis. And as I told you when I was in graduate school about the Cuban missile crisis, which I told you in one of my reports, some of my classmates were getting ready to fly to Brazil. They thought they would be safe there. There was also a newspaper strike. The New York Times so that was the time when they established the New York Review of books which I have subscribed to ever since.

Q: Now when you were in the military did you ever have an opportunity to do some travel?

SALMON: Yes, I did that with the great advantage of space available and also knowing people in the Pentagon. I went to Europe twice on basically aircraft assigned to four-star generals. They made room for me. They stopped in Iceland I think it was. Our air base was there and then stopped in Northern England, and we ended up the first trip I ended up in Paris and the second trip I started out in Frankfurt. I remember the one trip I got all the way from Frankfurt to Spain by the way and then the other trip I was in Paris, and I never got to England or Northern Italy, but I got to Madrid and went on to Lisbon. I also visited Innsbruck in Austria from Germany. These were the days when you could just show your military ID card and a copy of your orders, and you didn't even need a passport. In a way towards the end of the American occupation in Europe because it was only 15 years after the war there, we still had an enormous presence there. It was interesting to see, and then coming back one trip I was diverted, I guess I got on and was kicked off by a one star general. Not kicked off, they said, would I mind waiting. This was after a big scandal about enlisted men on emergency leave being bumped by general officers. I said well, I don't mind waiting if I get a ride out quickly which I did. I went to the Bahamas, not

Bermuda and the last leg of my trip I flew with two students from the National War College who were getting their flying time in and were literally using a Mobil Oil map to look down on the countryside and get us back to Andrews.

Q: Now on this kind of travel what guarantee did you have that you would wind up in a city for two, three or four days.

SALMON: Yes, that could happen, but I was lucky. Going over there was never any problem because I was on a dedicated aircraft for General this or General that. I was looking to get one from McGuire. I had a cousin who was a colonel in the Air Force. He was up in Otis Air Force base. He called one of his friends and he got me on the only time I had to wait to fly on SA, or space available. I was going to Oklahoma City, and I was marooned in Omaha, Nebraska for two days. All these little stops have their own rewards. I didn't get all the way to Oklahoma City, I was somewhere in Texas, like Amarillo. There was no plane going back. So, I had to take my first major trip on a Greyhound bus. I put on my uniform, and it was about nine hours, and I got off about three or four in the morning at the Oklahoma City Greyhound bus terminal. And let me tell you if that isn't bleak and desolate, I don't know what is. My friend picked me up right away and took me off. I enjoyed Oklahoma, that was something. A thunderstorm had come up right away and it was something I had not been familiar with in New York City.

Q: Now when did your Army service end?

SALMON: It ended in 1962. I continued my service in the reserve. I got myself nominated as what they called a mobilization designee. That meant if we had a mobilization, I would be assigned a certain job in the office of the chief of information. That required two weeks a year training which I did in Washington so that was actually quite agreeable. But immediately after I went back to Columbia and resumed my graduate training and began my second full year to get all the qualifications for the Ph.D.

Q: Now this semester were you on a GI Bill?

SALMON: No, there was no GI bill similar to WWII veterans. That didn't come until after 9/11. A friend of mine is going to school on the GI bill. I still had the second year of my State Of New York regents' scholarship. So that paid my way into the second year at Columbia.

Q: Now why the return to Academia?

SALMON: Well, because they wanted me to stay in the army. Some of the people said you should get a regular commission. I just wasn't interested and since I started this thing in Columbia with a Ph.D. I went back to it and then of course that two years in the army in Washington even though I was making only I think \$227 a month. That was when I went back to being a student in New York City. That seemed to be the golden age. I shared an apartment with a friend of mine in Brooklyn Heights with a friend of mine

from Fordham who was also in the army with me. He was working in WNYC, the radio station trying to break into show business. Which he never did. He has since passed away but that got me into non-Ph.D. habits like being out late at night and drinking and not going back to study so the thing got very tired quickly I mean the graduate stuff. That is what motivated me. When I was in college most of my friends, a lot of them, became lawyers. Or they became doctors, or they went to IBM and stayed forever. And they made a lot of money over the years. I, this is the rosebud of my foreign service study. My friend had thought of the foreign service, the CIA and I read what was then published, maybe it still is, the foreign service Newsletter, and I found it so interesting. This would be worth taking and I took the test, and I passed. That was when I made a career. That is what prompted me. I also took what they used to call it, the management intern program. And was offered a job in the OMB which I did not know how important OMB was. And was offered another job in of all things the department of Labor. But I chose the service.

Q: Well now getting back to your Ph.D work, was this an extension of your American History?

SALMON: The Ph.D. was again going to build on previous work but I didn't really have a dissertation topic. But it was going to be building on the work I had done with Colonel Robert Troup in my master's essay.

Q: So, you had some of the same professors then.

SALMON: Well, I had Remini and then I had the others. Then after I did the second year required credits Then you know the drill, you have to qualify. You take a qualifying exam. And you get another language. I had German but I passed so I tried to swot up Italian using my Latin. It was not all that successful. But, it just seemed the right time to change paths. Although some of my friends who were in the course with me went on to very distinguished academic careers. We had the one fellow John Cooper who did the wonderful biography of Woodrow Wilson and nearly got the Pulitzer. And some other very agreeable people. These are about the only ones whose names I remember.

Q: Now at this time there are a number of things going on in the States. You had mentioned the Cuban Missile Crisis in October, '62, and your colleagues, classmates contemplating flying to Brazil. But James Meredith enters Ole Miss, and this is the start of the Civil Rights movement. Is that coming to your attention or were you so deep in the books?

SALMON: Well, I mean I was out there. One of my friends from Fordham who had gone to Harvard Law School joined something called the Lawyers Committee for Civil Rights Under Law. He went down to I believe it was Mississippi. He was very involved in the movement down there and you know, through him I became aware personally of what was going on. In terms of James Meredith, President Kennedy and Robert and General Walker the fellow down in Arkansas, where his state was. You couldn't not be affected by these terrible pictures of these students throwing rocks and assaulting the black students who were reintegrating at the University of Arkansas. No, but I was certainly aware of

the civil rights movement. Jumping back to when I was in Fort Bragg, we had black students within our group. The group was pretty much from the states chosen were New York, North Carolina and several others from the colleges in those places. And I remember going into it when I met my family. They were going down to Florida on a short vacation. I was meeting them at the train station in Fayetteville, North Carolina. There it was right in the I mean it was the first time I had ever seen it. There were segregated water fountains and segregated waiting rooms in the station. And jumping back a little further I remember Brown versus Board of Education. Being very approving and excited about that. I mean I knew about the Civil Rights movement and I thoroughly supported it but I didn't have that kind of personal identification with it that some of my friends did .

Q: Now one of those events that everybody remembers is Kennedy was assassinated Kennedy is assassinated in November of '63. You were at university working on your PhD. How did that affect you in the environment you were in?

SALMON: David could you just repeat that because my hearing is one of the things going with my age.

Q: I was just referring to Kennedy's assassination.

SALMON: Oh of course no, no. Senator Kennedy and Martin Luther King. I remember the Kennedys of course and President Kennedy's assassination. I will never forget that I was going up for a wedding rehearsal in a church in Riverdale. I was working at that time as a researcher at an executive recruiter. I went down those newspaper stands, and most roads had newspaper stands. There were big, long lines of people waiting to get newspapers about the assassination. We went through with the rehearsal . I remember the place where I lived in Brooklyn Heights. It was almost like a civil war, 19th century. All the stress and windows were hung with black crepe. And that very effective funeral at St. Matthews and then the walk to Arlington. And Mrs. Kennedy. It was something you will never forget. And then of course the Robert Kennedy assassination I will never forget. It was in Los Angeles, I remember. I remember it a little more because I was visiting Moscow when I was in Vienna and visiting somebody who was working at the embassy. I was invited to lunch at Spaso House. One of the guests was Jackie Kennedy's half-sister or something. She talked a lot about Bobby. I was a very keen supporter of President Kennedy. I was much less disposed to Bobby Kennedy but that is another matter.

Q: Now you had mentioned in that issue you came across an advertisement for the State Department or let me ask you how did you begin to become interested in the State Department?

SALMON: Well, going back I mention the roommate I had in Brooklyn Heights had a copy of the State Department newsletter. I read the newsletter and was very much taken with the articles and the people going here and there and the whole business. So that is when I decided that I would take the foreign service test. There was absolutely no one in my extended family that really had any experience not to my knowledge of the foreign

service. My cousins who fought in the war later became lawyers. That was never part of their particular experience and that may be because going back to my mother's family which was led by her brother who was a Republican would-be Congressman. They were members of America First and they were very anti-British. I could see that in that environment somebody who said they wanted to do something with the state department wouldn't be looked on too kindly. But anyhow this is an example where the newsletter had a decided effect on me because I decided to take the test.

Q: When was that when you took the test?

SALMON: That was when I came in in '64 and I think the test was earlier in '64. I remember taking my oral exam at USUN. A panel of white males of whom I have no recollection I have a recollection of the questions they asked me but not of them personally.

Q: What were some of the things they were asking you?

SALMON: Well, the one that would go to the heart of your interests. If you had the power to change anything in foreign policy, what would you change? I said very boldly this was 1965 after all I said I think I would recognize China. They purported to be a little shocked but were not shocked at all. So that was one. It was the international geophysical year. And the whole question on the moon and everything. I remember a question 'what would you do if we got to the moon first?' or something. I gave some incredible Cold War answer like 'well look at the national security implications before you answer that.' Establish a base there and I did well on that. The questions I did less well on were what are the American export products. I had wheat. I didn't have cotton or sugar but then I came up with alfalfa. They chuckled. But those were the questions they had.

Q: Did they go with the old three men on a table and you in front.

SALMON: Yes, of course. I can remember what I wore, this is a selective memory. I wore one of my best very dark suits. I took the chance of wearing a blue shirt buttoned down, not white with a chalet tie. I passed the test. You had to sit down and do math and English.

Q: Now at the end of the interview did they tell you that you had passed?

SALMON: No. They said something along the lines of 'we will get back to you'.

Q: So, when did you hear that you passed?

SALMON: I guess maybe a few months later. You forget these things after so many years. I heard it and then I got my orders and went to Washington and began the 64th A-100 course.

Q: Why don't we break it off here so we can give full time to this very seminal introduction to the foreign service. So, there was a considerable wait between the oral exam and

SALMON: I may be exaggerating. This all happened within the space of about four months I think, and I don't have my journals to go back into. I didn't think it went as expeditiously as I thought it would be.

Q: Ok, well, let's take a break.

Q: Hello everybody. It is March 12. We are returning to our conversation with Ambassador Salmon. We stopped with you just joining the Foreign Service in October, 1964. As you walked into the 64th A-100 class what was your impression of the other people in the class?

SALMON: I was very impressed with the other people in the class. Obviously after we made our little introductory statements and found out what all of us had done. I was interested in the backgrounds of the people in the course. It was a very diverse group. I guess there were some pale Yale male participants, but it gave me the sense that we were all starting on an equal footing and starting on this new adventure together. So, I would say I was impressed by my colleagues. I also thought and my memory is shaky, but the junior officer course directors were Garret Solun and Bob Barnard. They were both very agreeable people and so I was looking forward to beginning the foreign service adventure.

Q: Now you have already had a military career and had been working on a doctorate. Did that make you kind of the senior citizen of the class?

SALMON: No actually not. If there were a chronology, I think there were a few who were older than I. My colleague Dennis Lamb for example. And there were other people in the course who had been in the military. We were at the cusp of the change where most people had served at least two years because of ROTC obligations or the draft or what have you. We also had at least one Peace Corps volunteer. Maybe more but I think only one. The one I remember was Lee Bigelow. I think if my memory doesn't trip me up I think he was in the Peace Corps in Burma, but I am not sure. I was very impressed at the outset by his background and familiarity with Asia.

Q: Who was that again?

SALMON: Lee Bigelow. Who was later consul up in I believe it was Udon Thani and served a tour in Paris.

Q: Now did you have any women in the class.

SALMON: Yes, we did. We had at least three women, maybe four. They were impressive, too. One had previous experience with the CIA and then had joined the foreign service. Eleanor Savage who was later consul general in Melbourne and Montreal and I remember visiting her in both places. She was the only one of the women who survived because the others got married, and that of course was not permitted in those days.

Q: Do you recall if there was any particular geographic spread among this group?

SALMON: Any what?

Q: Yes, you are from New York, the East Coast.

SALMON: Oh yes, I was from New York. There were one or maybe two others from New York or Long Island. From New England and from the West Coast. I remember one of the women was from Oxnard, California. Some of the others were I don't know but it was a pretty well dispersed geographic group.

Q: And what did you think of the A-100 class itself?

SALMON: Well, you know you make your judgements on how it was conducted. Yes, I was impressed. I thought it was a good orientation. You got to meet career officers who came over and lectured us. Alternatively, we went over to their offices for briefings. I specifically recall going for a briefing on North Africa I think it was. The Director was David Newsom. Who went on to much bigger and better things. He was remarkably articulate. I just thought if all foreign service officers are like David Newsom, it must be a pretty good group. I was introduced to another aspect of the foreign service. We met his various desk officers and later during the course I had to do something about Sudan about which I knew zero. I went and talked to the desk officer that I had met briefly when I was in the department. I can't recall his name. But it was around Thanksgiving time, and he very kindly invited me to his home to have Thanksgiving with his family. I couldn't do it because I had my parents in Baltimore, but I was very impressed with that offer of hospitality. During my time in the Foreign Service, I thought that was one of our very strong suits in that we welcomed people we hardly know into our houses for drinks or dinner. Then in addition to the actual departmental lectures and that thing they had field trips if you will. We went up to Baltimore to see a harbor operation. That was quite interesting. Then in a way much more memorable was a briefing we had at the national gallery of art. The briefer was then the deputy director. I believe he later became a very distinguished director, J. Carter Brown. That was very good. So, I thought it was a good course and discussions of things. One of the big issues in those days was the multilateral force, the idea of making NATO ships manned by all people from NATO and that was a big issue at the time. We talked a lot about that, and now it has lost its strength.

Q: Do you recall whether any of the students in the A-100 class had strong interests in one region or another?

SALMON: In Asia. Yes, my sense was that Bigelow had an interest there because he had served there in the Peace Corps. Then we had one of my colleagues become I think a very distinguished East Asian specialist both on China and Japan and that was Alan Romberg. You may remember he was a very young director of Japan Affairs when Richard Holbrooke appointed him. His first assignment was Hong Kong. I remember visiting him and his wife there later on. He was a very solid, somewhat scholarly type, and he was quite clearly interested in Asia.

Q: To that extent did you see yourself as interested in Europe?

SALMON: No, in those days I was interested in Africa. It was not that long after Gold Coast independence and the emergence of Nkrumah and also the visit in the Kennedy Administration of Sekou Toure, the President of Guinea. So, I was interested in Africa at the time and I put it down as a place I might like to go but, in the end, of course I didn't go anywhere in my first tours except Washington.

Q: In that tour selection for the whole class was anybody assigned to Vietnam.

SALMON: I don't think that anybody asked for that. The one who went early on was David Brown. There are two David Browns as you know, and it is not the David Brown who was hostage or was at SAIS. It was the David Brown who went to Vietnam as a very junior officer starting out, I guess with language training. I don't know if they had CORDS training at the time but whatever the CORDS equivalent was. I later saw my first weekend in Vietnam where he was getting married to a Vietnamese lady and I remember going to his wedding. She was a wonderful person, quite young. But David was young, too. I don't think their parents were too keen on it. When I would see them over the years she did very well in our country and got a master's degree in psychology and raised two great children and sent them both to Ivy League schools. I haven't seen David for a very long time. He was last living when I saw him in California in Fresno.

Q: Vietnam as a policy issue was really beginning to be in the newspapers. Did your group sit around and discuss Vietnam?

SALMON: No and you also asked in your prompt, did we discuss the election a lot. No, I don't remember that. The election was everything and it wasn't because everyone was of one party. I guess the election felt pretty much in the bag for President Johnson. And Goldwater had very little chance at all. In terms of Vietnam, I remember we would all read Walter Lippmann, who was early on and very dubious about the whole enterprise. There wasn't the passion about the whole issue that later developed. You know, to be very honest there were some people in the group that were not terribly passionate about a lot of things. I guess you build up that kind of feeling in the field to get that kind of feeling about issues. When I was in the military, I had several colleagues, mainly Colonels who had served in Vietnam. Early on he went in '62 when we only had what, three or four hundred people there. I had talked to them about it a bit because I had already been reading Lippman and other critics of the war. They were totally persuaded

that Diem was going to be there forever and was doing a great job for the people and so that was my previous contact with Vietnam.

Q: Now right after the A-100 course, normally everybody takes a consular course and gets ready to be a junior consular officer somewhere. Did you take the consular course?

SALMON: I took the consular course, but I don't think it was right after. I somehow, I thought that was later before I was assigned to Vienna. That is when I did the German. Looking back, I probably did take the consular course. It was fine I guess a workmanlike operation. And it was very useful because my very first post overseas was as a consular officer in the consular section in the embassy in Vienna. So, it had no significant impact on me.

Q: So normally at the end of the A-100 course there is a little ceremony, and it is announced where people are going.

SALMON: Yes, that was very much part of it. I was assigned to Washington, and I think there was only one other person assigned to Washington. I felt a little like I was getting a blank diploma. I had no idea what I would be doing in the Public Affairs Office, and all of my friends were going off to various places usually preceded by language training. So the camaraderie we had established in the 64th A-100 course continued for a while as we kept in touch. They are abroad and I am working in the office of media services in the Bureau of Public Affairs.

Q: Now at this time where was the A-100 course held?

SALMON: As I recall it was in the old FSI building. Which was in the basement of Arlington Towers. Which now has a different name. They are those red brick buildings right across the bridge. Actually, I lived in the Arlington Towers, when we had to find a place to live, I just rented a studio in I remember the Jefferson building of Washington Towers. I was actually able to take the elevator down to work. I usually went outside and came in another entrance, so it looked like I was actually going somewhere.

Q: OK now the assignments you were given in '65 was to the Bureau of Public Affairs. That is terribly unusual. How did they explain that?

SALMON: Well, they didn't explain that and like a good soldier or a good foreign service officer except I indicated that I was a little disappointed that I didn't get an overseas assignment. I just don't understand. Part of the rationale I think might have been I was not married, and I think they might have wanted to, and I was a little older, I was 26. They wanted to get me lined up with a good American citizen and not have a marriage between an officer and a non-American citizen. Just a speculation but even though I was disappointed I mean the people I worked with were nice people and interesting people and very helpful at certain periods later in my life and career so it turned out to be and it was a good way to get to know the department early on and going

back to your query about Vietnam. That was becoming more and more the obsession of the building and also of the Bureau of Public Affairs.

Q: Now in the Bureau of Public Affairs you were in the office of media services.

SALMON: Right.

Q: It almost sounds like they were trying to train you to be a USIA officer.

SALMON: Well, I guess it could be, but it really was not. The head of the office was a former correspondent for Newsweek, Bill Blair. He was a terrific person, and he had a deputy named Paul Auerswald. He was very much interested in films. Then we had a catch all. We had a lady who was the widow of a very famous journalist. She set up meetings in the press and sat in on them and our office used to assign people to sit in on meetings as I said. Rusk was giving an interview with I don't know if it was a magazine or what. It was fascinating to hear his background. The young man from Cherokee, Georgia who went off and had a good career in Southeast Asia where they were flying the hump and there were several foreign service officers there. I remember taking Maxwell Taylor to one interview with a German publication and the military even though he was then ambassador to Vietnam of course he was a distinguished military officer and former Chairman. The military came rushing in with these huge cue cards. Written in German which enabled him to give his flawless German answers. I thought that was a bit of cheating but we had a nice little conversation going up in the elevator. We had opportunities like that. I remember we had the work going back to the inauguration for the diplomatic reception after the inauguration up on the eighth floor and seeing the members of the diplomatic corps. There were fun aspects of it.

Q: Now the Office of Media Services was broken up into broadcasting service and magazine and general publication. Were you assigned to one of those sections or did you...

SALMON: No, I was like a utility player. As I recall the magazine section was probably Jim Hurd who was a wonderful man. And a very nice fellow very well connected in Washington and good friend of Katy Locheim who had several contacts in the department and all over Washington. Then we had another fun person, Dorothy Bradford. She did stuff with the broadcast industry. A lovely person and an old New England family. Dorothy Amory Bradford. I remember then we had Kate Marshall who knew a lot of the people personally who lived up on Highland Place in Cleveland Park and who had important neighbors. But it was a very congenial group.

Q: Now was it attached or coordinated with the USIA?

SALMON: No not really. Not that I was aware of. Maybe in big staff meetings they sent a rep or something. But I don't remember we were pretty focused on the department and in the department. One of the things I did work on is we had an education project which was between the State Department and NEA. I remember seeing the people at the NEA.

We gave a debriefing on the project. I didn't remember contact with the USIA until I was in the mission coordinator's office in Vietnam. We had the joint U.S. Public Affairs office.

Q: Now you are in Washington. And there is an organization called Junior Foreign Service Officers Club.

SALMON: JFSOC.

Q: Why did that come to your attention?

SALMON: Because all the young people were there. I have got to remember the acronym. I bet it was INJDO or something like International Junior Diplomatic Officers. They were the same kind of people. So the JFSOC had some of them with more experience and were interested in the department. They got themselves in this general questioning of things. They became more papal than the pope in a certain way. The older young people were people whose name you will know, like Lannon Walker. And people who really led the effort to get the foreign service more for foreign service people. There was resentment against people who came in as Wristonees or lateral entries or what have you. But the JFSOC I recall I liked the people in it. The basic thing is we put together each year for the fourth of July party up on the eighth floor using the balcony to watch the fireworks. Some very nice people and its avatar, the International Junior Diplomats' group, had luncheons with younger officers at various embassies. That was a good way for someone who was in Washington like I was to get some contact at their embassies, junior people who were always very friendly and invited you to their houses which were always quite grand. It seemed to me for junior officers in Washington. You could tell the hardest workers were always the South Africans who I found despite their odious system were quite agreeable. I had a good friend who had gone to Stellenbosch. His wife was a Boer but they were very nice people. They were always, I remember going to their house and they had I believe he was a prospective naval attaché. We were leaving and they were just loading him down with propaganda about Bophuthatswana, Transkei and all of the allegedly independent entities that they were building in South Africa at the time. Then I met a very good friend from the Netherlands. She was in The Hague when I was assigned there. It was just a nice way of getting to know people and having a real diplomatic life.

Q: So, it did give you an opportunity to begin to make these international connections and hope that you will meet them in a foreign ministry somewhere.

SALMON: I don't want to get off of the way you want to go but even though it was extremely satisfying, it was not what I thought the State Department and the Foreign Service would be. As you know from your own career, whenever there is an opening, and they have somebody they will put you in that opening. That is the way I got to the Far Eastern Bureau. Something happened or someone left at the staff assistant level, and they said they are going to send me there.

Q: Well now going back to public affairs for a moment. You just said you did a lot of public speaking in local high schools. Did that include some of the universities in the Washington area?

SALMON: No, it did not. It was pretty elementary.

Q: What kind of reaction did you get from the high school students?

SALMON: Well, I was prejudiced. Much later in my career I was asked to fill up some time by speaking to a high school class in Naples, Florida. Obviously a very privileged group of young people. This was when I was running Philippine affairs, and The Philippines was a hot item. This is emblematic of my whole thought about high schools. I found an almost impossible audience. They were polite but uninterested and had no questions. I had a very jaundiced view if I may say so of high school students, but I am enormously admiring of the teachers that do so well there and mold our young minds, but I wasn't overly impressed.

Q: Now you were saying in early February '66 you were plucked from public affairs to go to the Bureau of Far Eastern Affairs.

SALMON: Right. And that was totally I think you used the word in one of your notes to me. How did you score some positive affirmation of the way I got there? But it was absolutely. I think it should be more like so many of the things that happened. They had an opening, I was available. I wanted to do something other than what I was doing, and they wanted to satisfy me.

Q: Now you are coming to the far east bureau in the middle of all of the Vietnam activity. You are working with the assistant secretary, but you are a staff assistant. Is that correct?

SALMON: Right. I was a junior staff assistant. The senior staff assistant was a fellow named Pete Lakeland, who was a much more experienced officer. Who had served a lot in South Asia. His brother, he had a brother in the foreign service, Bill. Who had served in Egypt and who knew Nasser. I was always quite impressed by that. Pete later became the foreign policy person for Senator Jacob Javits and was very instrumental as I remember in a bill that Javits and some other people brought in to adopt the War Powers Act. But Pete was a very good boss and showed me the ropes. You can imagine parachuting into a bureau like that where your job is to get the boards ready for the assistant secretary and keep track of messages and so on and the whole nomenclature dealing with NODIS, EXDIS and LIMDIS. And due each morning by eager young officers on the geographic desks. It is a little bit of a baptism of fire. Fortunately, we had agreeable people and Bundy himself was obviously. His brother McGeorge was a national security advisor and had been in DOD and ISA as an assistant secretary. He was married to Dean Acheson's daughter. Who was a very nice lady, Mary Acheson. He was a little aloof to say the least but basically quite good as long as you did your job. Deputy Sam Berger who I later worked with in Vietnam was a brusque old labor expert who had been DCM in New Zealand for exile because Nixon didn't like him but then he had a

very distinguished career as ambassador to South Korea. He handled things like the Pueblo and the revolution in Indonesia. Also at the top was Leonard Unger who I didn't deal with much. Tony Lake was his staff assistant. They worked totally on Vietnam and then there was an economic fellow, Bob Barnett who I think his wife or former wife was in INR, he did the economic stuff. So, I guess I learned quickly and then you learn in the department when you are in a job like that you learn to know the people in SS and our staff assistants and the other bureau. So, it was again a good learning experience.

Q: Now Leonard Unger was up there as the deputy assistant secretary and the chairman of the Vietnam coordinating committee. What was that about?

SALMON: I was most familiar with the Vietnam working group. That was headed by a very good officer who later became ambassador in various places, Bob Miller. I can't say from a worm's eye view on what they were doing on Vietnam policy because so much of it was reacting to daily or day by day things. There wasn't a great deal of thought about the bigger picture and what it meant and the few people who were expert on it and clearly were not. There were a few who were very dubious about the wisdom of our policy, and they were just ignored.

Q: Did you get a sense of how State was interacting with DOD or the White House?

SALMON: Sure, just in terms of our own bureau I mean the interactions were facilitated by the personalities involved. I mean Bundy was a good friend of John McNaughton at ISA. His brother was a national security advisor. But they also worked with Mike Forrestal. Secretary Forrestal's son who was in the NSC. So my sense was a lot of it and Unger was he had been ambassador to Laos but he was in a certain sense a minor player contrasted with Bundy and McNaughton and people at the NSC.

Q: Now it all sounds pretty busy. What were your work hours like?

SALMON: Oh, you had to get in early to get traffic ready and to pick up things and sometimes we had a messenger. You know the EXDISs and the NODISs. What you learned very quickly was that these principals wanted to be totally aware of everything. If they felt they were late getting information it would not be good. In a way they sometimes played games, it seemed to me. Somebody would fall, Bundy or McNaughton or somebody asked if you had seen Saigon 895. If they had it, then we would be in trouble. So, there was a certain element of friendly rivalry you could say. Occasionally Bundy had personal interaction. Certainly, observable to us in the office. He was there right after a Marcos visit and everybody was priding everybody else or priding themselves on how well it had gone LBJ called Bundy and I certainly remember and everybody in the office stood back and looked and expecting Bundy to be praised, and there was a headline in the Washington Post that morning that talked about what we had given Marcos or something. LBJ was obviously livid, and it was interesting to see Bundy go a little bit white, and it was 'yes' Mr. President and 'no' Mr. President'. Those are just the things you remember.

Q: Now were these long hours?

SALMON: Yes, I mean I would go in early, and I would say we worked because we tried to spell each other a little bit the senior and junior staff assistant. I would say I was probably working from seven in the morning until about six at night there. Maybe sometimes seven. And of course, every Saturday, that was to be expected. But we went in a little later on Saturday. We went in about 8:00 and you went in in your Saturday uniform: a tweed jacket and flannel trousers and of course a tie. I guess as things evolved people first gave away the tie and then maybe gave away the jacket and then maybe some people didn't come in at all. That actually was a good introduction to what I would face in Vietnam because there we pretty much worked seven days a week from seven to seven or eight.

Q: Now the front office has to interact with the desks below it. What was your interaction with the China Desk or the Southeast Asia Desk?

SALMON: It was essentially a bureaucratic reaction in the sense that as I say the eager beavers on the desks would be up there besieging the staff assistants as early as possible about was there anything from and it was usually the distribution of the EXDIS/NODIS traffic I believe I recall only three copies. One would go to the assistant secretary or the deputy assistant Secretary. The one would eventually be routed down to the office director. But these younger eager beavers and many of them very nice people would come up and say 'oh Charlie did we get anything from Jakarta or anything from Manila?' or something like that. They wanted to be at least aware if not see until their boss let them look at it. That particular sensitive bit of traffic or at least perceived to be sensitive individuals who I remember were Dan O'Donohue who was later my boss in Burma. Down on the Korean desk I am trying to remember who was on the Korean Desk. Dan Sullivan was maybe on the Indonesian Desk. They had a lot of people, so you got to meet a lot of people, which was good. Presumably later for your career.

Q: Now if you are a staff aide and the principals are moving did you have an opportunity to travel with Bundy?

SALMON: I did. That was my first trip to Asia. We had the Manila Summit conference of 1966. The troop contributing conference, which was in Manila. LBJ was going to begin. It was a big trip. It was Australia and New Zealand and then Manila. Then Manila, Kuala Lumpur, Bangkok and then Korea and that was the end for him. I went on with Bundy who briefed General Chiang Kai Shek in Taipei. He briefed the Japanese in Japan. In the beginning the antipodean stops, Wellington and Canberra I guess maybe it was Sidney, they went. We weren't on that part of the trip. We got squeezed out of it. Then in Manila everybody and his brother was here and that is when LBJ got into one of his little snits and half of the people had to go home. So, I was lucky enough to stay on the trip and talk to people. Tony Lake had to go home but I think at that time he had a relatively new child and sure was happy to do so. But obviously for me it was my first exposure to high level diplomacy, and it was very good. I got to see a few of my friends. John Kelly who was stationed in Turkey and was the most successful person in our A-100 course. He

went on to be Ambassador to Lebanon and Finland. But more important the assistant secretary for European Affairs. I met him in Bangkok. He was out there working the visit. My friend Eleanor Savage was stationed in Manila. I remember her taking me to the Army-Navy Club for drinks the first time I had calamansi and soda. There was no gin in it. It was a good visit. Going out on the trip with Tony Lake and then Dick Holbrooke was there. In his capacity as an aide to Robert Komer, who did the actual Vietnam work in the White House, had also been in charge of CORDS , I don't know what program, I don't know whether it was called CORDS then or whatever. A development program. The three of them, and I was reading the biography of Holbrooke, and somebody had given the biographer of the story where Komer came out and Holbrooke and Lake and I were sitting together and he immediately began to tell Dick do this and do that. Holbrooke wrote it down in his little book. Finally, Komer said I didn't know you took shorthand, Holbrooke said I don't and showed him a page of squiggles. Actually, when I was being interviewed by Holbrooke for the DCM job or being approved for the DCM job in New Zealand I told him about that story, and he chortled.

Q: Now what were your specific duties in this kind of travel?

SALMON: Oh, basically to assemble the traffic. Any particular traffic. It was always difficult in your other embassies if you don't get the full take. But obviously we tried to get this. I mentioned this from Washington with a lot of phone calling as I recall in those days. So that was about it. When he went up from Bangkok, he flew up from Bangkok to brief the Lao king and I remember having to go out to the airport to put him on the plane and be at the airport when he got off the plane. Then other things as they arose. It was a trip when Johnson was about to get rid of Robert McNamara and replace him with Clark Clifford. Clifford came on the trip and then in Bangkok we got him an invitation to the King's dinner but the dinner was white tie and he didn't have a white tie. I and others had to go around scrounging up a white tie for Clark Clifford. So those are the kinds of little things you get involved in.

Q: In trips like this where the secretary is involved doesn't he have a traveling group of staffers.

SALMON: Yes, but this was a presidential trip, and everything was subordinate to that. In fact, I remember Rusk there was a big thing to do for the Korea stop, which was an extraordinary triumph for LBJ because the Korean President Park Chung Hee got a million people in the streets of Seoul. I didn't actually see it because we flew up by helicopter up to where we were really staying at this new hotel, the Walker Hill. I remember the big fight about who would get the premier suite up there or cottage. Was it going to be Secretary Rusk or was it going to be Johnson's Chief of Staff, Marvin Watson, not a very nice person. Those were the things that happened on the trip. I haven't been on many others, but on the receiving end at least there were some.

Q: Did you have much interaction with the White House staff?

SALMON: No not really. During that period nothing at all. We saw them but I didn't have any direct contact nor liaison with the White House staff.

Q: Now you start in this office in February '66. When did you leave it?

SALMON: I left at the end of '66 to take three months or maybe four of German at FSI. Then from there I went to Vienna. So, I was only there for a year and a half or so. My place was taken by Bob Blackburn who was later one of our administrators who opened up Cambodia. Then they brought in a young lawyer from Yale who somehow was a friend of Bundy's. One other person who was very important in that front office, who just passed away a few years ago was Jonathan Moore. He was a special assistant who had a lot of political experience both on the Hill and with individual politicians, I guess mainly in Massachusetts. So, he was a very vital part of that whole operation.

Q: So actually, you were only in the front office from February '66 to December '66. Now when did you take the consular course?

SALMON: I must have taken it right after the A-100 course.

Q: Ok now you are assigned to Vienna and Vienna requires German, but German was also your college language, wasn't it?

SALMON: Yes, but college language is always pretty much at least it was for me the emphasis was on German literature. We actually read stuff in that Gothic script. So actual opportunities for conversation were pretty few and far between but it was an enormous help in terms of the course. We had, I thought, some good German teachers, Herr Lehman, Frau Plischke, and Frau Bisonette. And some good people in the class, another old hand in Asia for a long time and a good friend, Richard Mueller, was in the course. There were good people, and I thought it was well done. It was obviously easy because I had the basics of German.

Q: Today language training can be long or short.

SALMON: I remember it was basically four months so was that 16 weeks?

Q: Yes, approximately.

SALMON: It was a standard. The same time was a year later after Vietnam when I took Dutch.

Q: Right now, the German course everybody was starting together and ending together. Or were people coming in and leaving?

SALMON: No, I think it was a core group of us who were there for the whole course together. One of them was a foreign commercial service fellow. He later became a commercial attaché to Manila. There was one fellow, I don't know what his name was but

he got himself into trouble. Later on, he had married a Vietnamese wife, and I think he was working for USIA or something and was accused of passing cables to the Vietnamese or something. But he was in the course. Those are the ones I remember. From the other course which was running at the same time we sometimes saw them. There was Sandy Vogelgasang who later became ambassador to Nepal and my old friend Tom Timberman who was going off to Switzerland. Anyhow those are the ones I remember from that course. And the teachers, Mrs. Plishka had been in East Berlin and had all that good Berlin personality and great tales of negotiating her way out. With the Russian Army. It was a congenial group of people.

Q: So, you joined the Foreign Service in October of '64. Here it is April of '67. It is your first overseas tour. How did it come about?

SALMON: Well, I guess it was about time. I went over and talked to the junior officer people and said obviously it was time to go overseas. I have never been a great believer that you should spend all of your time trying to manipulate all of your assignments. I just told the junior officer division. I don't remember them, but they were quite sympathetic and agreeable. I just wanted an assignment. By that time, I had lost my interest in Africa. I had said that I would like a European assignment obviously with the German, so Vienna was absolutely an ideal first assignment .

Q: Now your assignment was as a consular officer.

SALMON: Right.

Q: Is this a very large visa mill?

SALMON: No, it wasn't a visa mill at all. We didn't have that many applicants. It was basically visitors' visas. What made it interesting to me was a lot of visitors from Eastern Bloc Countries like Poland and Czechoslovakia. Many of them I took it as a little bit of a personal cause. We had many who had been in Polish intelligence and purged because they were Jewish. Somehow, they were in Vienna and would apply for visas, they were obviously ineligible. I don't know if you did any consular work, but we had something called an advisory opinion where we could get the opinion to review the thing and give waivers. I made a little personal crusade to try to help these people with their spouses and their kids in a waiting room which was not all that well configured. So the mother would come with the kids and be sitting in the waiting room for the whole day. Every time you came out of your door, they would give you these looks of sadness and the poor kids, so I tried to get at least some of them to be able to come to the United States. I had some successes at that because I remember Evelyn Colbert who just passed away in EAP. She was on some panel and remembered acting on these requests. The most important thing in terms of consul, well I shouldn't say that Consular work could be very gratifying. I guess if you are not at a visa mill. I not only did visa work, but I also did consular actions when you were duty officers. And on many occasions I was able to help American citizens. I remember one. Her husband passed away. I had to go meet her at the hospital. I spent the whole weekend with her trying to help her get organized to take the body home.

Then you would have other cases, some of which were somewhat amusing but not all that amusing. When Americans would go to some of the fancy restaurants in Vienna, and then have a big fight about the bill and they were screaming and calling the restaurant employees Nazis. And then the police would be called and then you would have to try to negotiate an end to that. But I guess the big moment came with the invasion of Czechoslovakia. They had finally gotten free or thought they were, and out of the country and were visiting Vienna. You could see their little Czech cars on the street. And of course, the Soviet invasion. So, on the protection and welfare side the embassy mobilized as only embassies can to help the Americans set up a big thing at the Sudbahnhof. And coffee and donuts and the whole bit. And what was interesting to me were so few, they were experienced sophisticated travelers. They didn't need any help. But there were a few that needed help so that worked out. But in the aftermath of the invasion, we had all of these Czechs marooned and they didn't want to go home. They were applying for visas. They were not only applying to us but to Australia and England. If you know our system, it is so cumbersome and this whole visitor business and presumption of residency. I had a very nice but very old-style consular officer as my boss. I remember her words when I would say we could do this, 'it is not in the regs, Charlie.' She chose strangely enough to be away during the aftermath of this thing which meant that I was there pretty much on my own. So, I just issued lots of visitors visas out, knowing fully well that these people would never come back. The problem I felt was why should we be turning away these tremendously well-educated people, doctors, engineers and so on. The Australians were scarfing them up and the New Zealanders after a fashion. So, I gave a lot of visitors' visas, and I never got any complaints. In fact, I got some very nice letters of praise which were sent to the ambassador about how I had given these people hope. I called it my mini-Raoul Wallenberg moment. Anyhow these turned out to be actually rewarding. I had a good consul General Matt Ortwein who got a distinguished honor award for what he did later on. Actually, he came to some grief from a Mexican post later on and was allowed to retire. Bob Maule was one of the later heads of one of the divisions. He later became a deputy assistant secretary. The locals, the FSNs, that is what you value. They were a tremendous group in terms of their support and their knowledge. Like all Viennese they were overwhelmed by titles which people were not supposed to use but did. Even on their passports. But it was a good tour.

Q: Now let me ask if it sounds like you are doing a lot of IV work. Did you rotate through NIV?

SALMON: It wasn't that big. I gave some IVs and a lot of visitor's visas. The IVs were the only strange thing we did, and I wasn't all that keen on it but because we had such a relatively speaking low workload other people were able to come and apply in Vienna. My colleague Robert Maule I think he had been in Haiti. He was a career consular type. There were a lot of immigration attorneys who got permission to have their people apply in Vienna so you had a lot of Haitians applying. Some were very good cases and others were doubtful but the idea that here are these people you see them freezing on the streets in December with practically no coat or whatever. And the idea that they would come all this way and then get turned down always seemed to me a little preposterous. That was my experience with long term visas.

Q: So, were you specifically rotated through the different sections?

SALMON: No, I was in the visa section and the visa section had two people, my boss and me. The protection and welfare part had one person and an Austrian lawyer who helped him. And then our consul general who was Matt Ortlein. So I mean there was not and I guess assigned some of the protection and welfare work just as a bit more of an experience. There were other things. Our Ambassador was a very distinguished Douglas MacArthur II. He was interested in a lot of things. I found myself as a last-minute fill in at one of his innumerable black-tie dinners. So, I had that on my plate too. Which was fun. He was a great hunter or shooter what have you, and a lot of these Austrian aristocrats had lost everything, but their property and it was still good shooting. A lot of the people who had big properties he used to entertain at his black-tie dinner so he could shoot on their property.

Q: I would assume there were a fair number of junior officers at the Embassy in Vienna.

SALMON: There weren't that many. I had one who became one of my best foreign service friends. Jim Scholaert died a few years ago. That was a first tour for him. Then we had another junior officer, Mike Habib. He has passed away now too. He was head of the political section in London. We had as a staff aide Eric Ronhovde who came over from Berlin. A great linguist and a great friend. There were one or two younger people in the USIA, but it wasn't an enormous number of junior officers.

Q: Did some of the senior officers in the Embassy try to include the junior officers in representational events?

SALMON: Oh, sure we had as I say MacArthur and I was drafted into a lot of things. People really, as always at big events, got invited. Mrs. MacArthur was Alban Barkley's daughter. She got the ladies at the Embassy working the way she wanted at the receptions. The first DCM I worked with was Fred Irving, who later was a deputy assistant in administration or something. Then he was Ambassador to Iceland. A very nice fellow. He was succeeded by the political counselor Rollie White who was promoted from within. Then we had some of the others, I remember Jack Brendhal. These were a little older than I. Several tours but again a very agreeable Embassy family.

Q: Did you get much of a chance to travel around?

SALMON: Oh yes, a lot. I skied a little on the East Coast but there I got into the as you know it is the location of the International Atomic Energy Agency. Which was then not so important. We had the IAEA ski club. So we went skiing each weekend at a different resort. A lot of them were local family resorts around Vienna. And with other diplomats. Then I made a trip to visit friends in the Soviet Union. Not without much hassle about the visa. And then skiing trips to places like Zermatt and Davos in Switzerland, St. Anton, Kittsebuhl in Austria. So there were a lot of travel opportunities.

Q: Now you were mentioning Prague Spring burst out in January '68 but then the Soviets crushed it in August. When Prague Spring broke out in January '68 did that affect your work. How aware were you of the changes in Czechoslovakia?

SALMON: I guess the Embassy was pretty much aware and we had a huge station there, so surely, they were aware. Those were among some of the young people there too in the embassy, junior CIA officers. But we were aware of changes and in fact I am trying to remember I visited Bratislava one weekend and Dubcek was there speaking from the balcony of the hotel. And the enormous enthusiasm for Dubcek and everybody chanting his name. So, we were aware of the changes and the desire for changes in Czechoslovakia. And were thrilled at least on how things turned out in the beginning. Obviously, they didn't turn out so well in the end. You know not to the extent that the people in the chancery who we are reading all the political cables which we did not see in the consular section.

Q: I am under the impression that the population of Austria responded by driving their cars into Czechoslovakia and bringing people back.

SALMON: Back from Austria to Czechoslovakia?

Q: Bringing them from Austria traveling to Czechoslovakia to bring Czechs back into Austria.

SALMON: That may well have been, but I was not involved. Most of the people that I helped who had come to Austria had come on their own. They came in their own cars. They took the train or what have you. I don't think there were any others, I am sure there might have been people going over to help people out. Because there were friendships and familial relationships in some cases obviously, but no I wasn't aware of that kind of behavior by some, but I am sure it happened.

Q: Now there must have been a lot of refugees.

SALMON: Oh yes, the people in my consulate and my local staff were saying it was exactly like, well not exactly because the magnitude was a lot less, but of the Hungarian crisis. The Hungarian uprising. But again, the Czechs were there. My particular dealings with them were a somewhat elastic interpretation of our visitor visa laws to get them to the United States.

Q: OK well your next assignment is Saigon and that probably encompasses a great deal so why don't we break off. And save that for the next opportunity.

SALMON: Yes, well you are the empressario so fine and I got a little early start to the day so maybe I can do some things I have been putting off.

Q: It is March 16, and we are returning to our conversation with Ambassador Salmon. You were saying you wanted to add something to Vienna.

SALMON: Basically, going back to Vienna and connecting it with your question early on and the thing about my travels I told you were pretty limited. Except for those trips to Europe while I was in the military. But in those days, we were allowed to travel to our new post by ship. I went on the Independence. There were two, the Constitution and the Independence. The Independence was later used in Hawaiian waters and somehow burned. I had a good trip out via Madeira, the South of France, Genoa and I got off the ship in Naples. I went up to Rome by train. From there I went north to Florence where I spent some time, and from Florence I took the train to Vienna and miscalculated the time of arrival. So I got there about 5:00 in the morning instead of 6:00. I had to wait for the embassy to meet me. It was quite illuminating because I had an opportunity to use my FSI German in ordering something for breakfast. The lady when I began my painfully slow German finally just got an irritated voice and said, "Speak English." That was one of the things. Everyone I worked with in Vienna spoke English so well that you were intimidated about trying to use your German because you would be wasting time. But the other aspect of the Vienna side when we talked about the Czech invasion by the Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia, was the opportunity that Vienna itself gave to me for travel. I visited fairly regularly. It was not without effort to get visas and get your time across the border. But I visited Budapest and Prague which were an easy drive from Vienna relatively often. I liked both cities. Actually I preferred Budapest to Prague. And Budapest as you may recall had given refuge to Cardinal Mindszenty, and he was occupying the executive suite or at least the part of it that had been dedicated to the DCM office. He used to celebrate mass on Sunday, and you would sign up as if you were going to the Spanish horses in Vienna, the Lipizzaners. He was quite a nice person. I didn't talk to him, but he just had a good priestly air about him. The other aspect of Budapest which was quite beguiling was you could send a check to the embassy ahead of your visit. We had this extraordinary amount of blocked Forints, Hungarian currency. Then you would show up at the embassy and they would have an envelope for you loaded with what looked like Monopoly play money. You could shop and dine in great style in Budapest. Also, it was a place you could drive or take the overnight train to Venice, which I did several times and drove to Yugoslavia. And then one of the more memorable trips was when a colleague and I went to the Soviet Union. My first trip to the Soviet Union. Which included stops in Riga. We went to Riga by train and then flew to Kiev as it was then called in the Ukraine. Then on the cultural side I thought it was very extraordinary. The Embassy had a box at the Opera, the Vienna Staatsoper. I used that quite often. I mean you paid but it was a terrific place to watch the opera. And I was within walking distance from the opera so I could walk over. We were also very close to the Volksoper. Which were more akin to American musicals. I went to those places quite frequently so from a cultural vantage point it was a very attractive place to be. As I mentioned in earlier discussions it was a great place to go skiing. On weekends to take longer trips I think I mentioned going to Daos and Zermatt and places like that. So that is a little coda to the Viennese discussion.

Q: I would say that is a great segue to what we are going to get into. Basically you are going from Vienna to Saigon. There couldn't be more of a contrast.

SALMON: Yes, and you mentioned about in those days people were being assigned to CORDS without any say in the matter. Well, that was also the story of my assignment to Vietnam. Fittingly I learned of it when I was on a ski trip with people from the Embassy. One of my colleagues, Mike Habib, was in the political section and went on to be political counselor in London many years later. He is no longer with us. Mike called and said that I had been assigned to Saigon. Going back to that, one of my favorite novels is *Magic Mountain* by Thomas Mann. In the novel the hero goes up to the sanitarium to visit his cousin and stays there for eight or nine years. Maybe even more, and he leaves. When he leaves, he is called into service in WWI. So, I thought there was a little flavor of that. So, I got on a Pan Am 1 and made the trip via Istanbul, Beirut, Bangkok, and in those days the plane stopped in Saigon.

Q: Now you are arriving in Saigon in the post-Tet atmosphere, and you are a special assistant in the front office. So, first of all give us a description of the embassy itself. What did the facilities look like?

SALMON: It was like any other, tremendously talented with younger officers and I thought a tremendously able direction team with Ambassador Bunker who had two previous embassies, an ideal political ambassador. Deputy Sam Berger who had been Ambassador in South Korea and a variety of counselors. Martin Herz was political counselor when I first arrived, and he was replaced by Bill Hitchcock. On the economic side there was a young economic whiz kid, Chuck Cooper. He was a great favorite of the ambassador. The Station Chief was Ted Shackley who had written his own book. I think he has passed away too. He was Chief in Laos and also in Vietnam. Bunker thought very highly of Shackley. My own boss and I think that is how I got there was Larry Pickering. We talked about how you snag assignments. I mean I think I got the assignment because somebody may have fallen out. And Larry Pickering probably remembered me from when I was a staff aide and he was on the Thai desk. Larry was called the Mission coordinator; I was his civilian assistant; we also had a military assistant, a Lt. Colonel. During my time we had three of them because they were only on six-month tours. In any event it was a huge embassy and needed coordinating USAID, the Joint U.S. Public Affairs Office and mostly MACV (Military Assistance Command Vietnam). So it was a terrific place to know the whole of the mission. Alan Wendt who went on to be ambassador to Slovenia was a duty officer that night. He was able to dine out on that experience. Of course, it was also the time for the Easter Offensive, which was when I left, so, it was a bit of a drop in activity, I would say, in my time there. Basically the other side as we would like to say, or the VC or the DRV basically used that time to reconstitute. I only say that in retrospect, in hindsight. There was a certain tendency to think our policy had been so effective that we had changed things to where the other side was no longer the threat it had been. That of course was not the case at all.

Q: Now let me focus on Ambassador Bunker for a minute. You were saying he was very talented and very capable but being ambassador to Vietnam at this time was very unique. What would you say, how would you describe his approach to his job?

SALMON: Well, first of all I thought he was a very nice person. He, as you remember, was married to Ambassador Carol Laise who was in Nepal. He had stipulated that if he was going to have the job, he needed a plane to get him back and forth to Nepal or fly her down. Actually my office would control who would go on the plane. Because he used this as an R&R Mechanism. We were totally fair playing no favorites. Bunker, as you recall, had a very patrician background. He grew up in Yonkers, New York, I guess it was. He had a German governess I remember him telling me. He had previous ambassadorial experiences. In Rome and Buenos Aires. He knew how things worked; I thought had done a very great job using Ambassador Sam Berger for whom he had very great respect. Berger was somewhat a gruff character. He had been a labor attaché at some time in his career and had somehow irritated Nixon. So that was not good for his career, and he was exiled for a while to New Zealand as DCM. Then I later lived in his house. He had planted a tree in the garden, and I later had an argument with Jeannie Tere, whose husband also was DCM, over who planted the tree and what kind of tree it was and when it was planted. Berger had been ambassador in Korea which was a huge job. I think it was somewhat a bit of a comedown to be a deputy at that stage. He probably thought he should have gotten much bigger, well you can't get much bigger than South Korea was in those days, Bunker used Berger very well. Their relationship was a very good one. Then he also used people he had confidence in. I remember I think I said he had great confidence in Ted Shackledy and the Agency. He had great confidence in my boss Larry Pickering who got into many aspects of embassy management. When I was there we had President Nixon visit, Larry was the control officer and I helped him with that. Larry also briefed the ambassador every morning. Using sad things like the statistics on how many people had been killed in the various corps. First Corps always had the highest, Second Corps was sometimes high and Fourth Corps much less. Larry was on SMA when he went to visit his family. Larry's wife Charlotte was a wonderful person and was in Bangkok. So then I got to brief Ambassador Bunker. He was just always asked about this and asked about that. He was liked by most of the Embassy, even the young people. The people out in the CORDS who began questioning the policy and what we were doing and had an annual dinner for his fellow Yale graduates. A very decent man.

Q: Now how did Bunker use Berger? How did it divide up?

SALMON: Well, I think he left a lot of the operational details to Berger, and Berger worked on various issues with senior officers. You probably know it was unique for Saigon; they called it the mission council which is a very grand designation. I remember we had a visitor, and I was briefing him, and he thought this was like the county team. He was quite right about that. The big thing of course was the management of MACV which of course was done mainly by Bunker and Berger. That depended on how that went. In a certain way it was about their relationship with the MACV commander. Bunker had a very good relationship with Westmoreland. Westmoreland had left before I got there.

Then I remember I guess General Goodpaster was the deputy and obviously one of our most distinguished soldier statesmen. And then of course General Abrams and Bunker didn't go out of his way to say but he made clear that in terms of effectiveness and his being able to work with him he found Abrams frankly superior to Westmoreland. That is the way I thought things worked. I think I am fairly accurate in my estimation.

Q: Now while you are there a number of things unfold. You have Nixon in two visits at Midway and you have Nixon announces troop withdrawals. How well aware was the embassy with the White House moves?

SALMON: We had the weekly message or cable to the president. And Bunker drafted it pretty much himself. I guess I had it once and I guess Larry Pickering helped out too. I guess the communications between Bunker and the White House were very good at a very rarefied level. The first level involvement with the new administration was a visit by the Secretary of Defense Melvin Laird. He came out but I guess he came out to basically let the Embassy know that they had the highest-level consultation to begin the Vietnamization Program. Because when I was there, we were at the highest level of our troop presence. I think there were 560,000 stationed there. Laird came out and I remember going to a Mission Council meeting. I was sitting in the back as I always did. Laird basically announced that this was basically an adjustment to the timetable. I don't know what the adjustment of troop strength was, but it was significant. I do remember one of the people at the table said, "Well I think this would be good if we could let the Vietnamese know and they could make the announcement." Laird looked at the person making the suggestion like they were from another planet. He said, "No, the President is going to get credit for this, not the Vietnamese." Laird, I thought, was a pretty straight shooter. He had a long life that is for sure. Like everybody else Bunker respected the Vietnamese needs to know. I think he felt that he knew pretty much everything. He took good care of himself. It seemed like he was an old man then. He was 11 years younger than I am now. I remember occasionally we had something that had to be brought over to the residence. There at 7:00am he was there in his pajamas. Having his supper before retiring. He also played tennis a little when Ambassador Laise came down. As I say, he was pretty good in terms of health at 75 years old. He was always in the office. My boss Larry Pickering, if he was out, Bunker would say, where is my boss today? "Oh, he is not feeling well," I replied, "he has an upset stomach," which is a chronic condition in places like that. But Bunker was always in very good health. It was nice. He had little irritations. I remember that he was fuming that somebody had re-set VOA on his radio. He couldn't get it, so we had to get that taken care of right away. Otherwise I remember when I accompanied him to a meeting in Bangkok one time. I think it was called SEACORDS, you know, meetings of American ambassadors from Thailand, Laos, Vietnam. There was a reception that he didn't want to go to, and I remember he was staying at the residence, and I was in the guest house. We had dinner with I am not sure what he was then, with H. Freeman Mathews' son, and we were just at dinner and Bunker was just reminiscing about his time as a businessperson in Central America locked in his hotel room while the revolution was going on. Because I guess a source of his wealth was with the Holly Sugar Company, which was very active in Central America.

Q: Now in Vietnam there are a number of consulates. Can you describe the Embassy's relationship with the consulates?

SALMON: When I was there the one consulate was up in Hue. I don't remember any other consulate then. I guess maybe they came later after that cease fire or whatever. We had of course a very significant foreign service presence within each of the CORDS areas. For example, we had someone in Da Nang, someone in Cantoh in the south. Someone in the third corps in Bien Hoa, which is quite close to Saigon. But I think the only real consulate and maybe one that I remember was Hue. That was where younger officer Tony Lake began his Vietnamese career. John Helble was up there. Not at my time but a little earlier. The reporting had come from the consulates; it came from younger officers attached to the CORDS operation. That was something the ambassador looked at and everyone looked at it but there were certain people in the field reporting who felt the war was going the wrong way, but not to a point where it had become an insurgency. They just respectfully disagreed with the policy. They would make that known and then come back to the embassy and talk to the political section. Which was extraordinarily large. I think there were 22 people in the section with both a political counselor and a minister counselor of the same grade. I remember I mentioned Herz and Galen Stone as our counselors. And then Lauren Askew. But to be honest they were extremely capable officers and I have to say but they were going on and doing things in writing about things which really were not relevant anymore because the front office had done things and said things and talked about all of the problems that the young people were writing about. It was a good place to recruit the staff aides for Bunker and Berger, and one of my jobs was to vet the various nominees for the job of staff aide and present them to Larry Pickering and he would present them to the ambassador. And generally, they were chosen and one who was extraordinarily capable and who came from I Corps actually, was Al Adams. He was later our Ambassador to Haiti, and I believe Peru. And he also maybe went to Djibouti too. When you read their various reports from the military who were their bosses you had a real eye into inflation of ratings. I remember Adams said the fellow who reported was a Major or a Lt.Colonel or something like that. He gave Adams the highest grades as the military used to do. I guess the foreign service kind of did so too. I remember he said, "this officer is going to be President of the United States." So, Al came on and was later an aide to Kissinger and went on to have a very distinguished career. We bought in John Forbes from the Delta, who worked for Ambassador Berger. John just passed away last year.

Q: Now you were mentioning a good group of people. The people in the field. People were courting a bit of skepticism. How did that go? Did that get included in Embassy reporting?

SALMON: No, not specifically. But I mean Bunker and Berger were smart enough to realize who these people were and did have their informal contacts with them. Bunker would have his party for the Yale graduates and Berger would see people and certain officers would make an effort to get to see somebody in the Embassy. Perhaps these meetings suffused some of the reporting. The reporting was not that we were in danger of losing our position if we don't do this in a few weeks. The time I was there was a very

confident period because we had come out of Tet. The interpretation was this has been a big loss for the North Vietnamese and the VC. As I say, not until the Easter offensive by which time I had left and gone on to Holland did the reality of the situation become as clear as it maybe should have been earlier. There were certain people obviously from the very beginning back in Vietnam. You may remember a reference to Paul Kattenburg. He basically said it was a losing game and we should get out as soon as possible. Secretary Rusk said that is an option we will never consider. Kattenburg was exiled to a DCMship somewhere in South America. I think that people were wise after the fact about Vietnam. People of a certain grade I mean. I was part of the team and the team view was we were doing better. We were going back on leave right after because I had no home leave after Vienna. I was staying at the Air Force Academy with friends of mine who were on the faculty. They asked me to speak to these young cadets who were all quite impressive, I must say, and the Air Force Academy had beautiful grounds. I was there in early fall with early frost on the ground. But what I remember telling these young people was "oh we are going to come up with a Korean Solution, and the South will and the North will go their own ways." Even some of the cadets were wondering if I was not being too optimistic about what was going on there. Well obviously, I was. I was optimistic. I think that is part of any time you are in a place where the policy is clear and if you subscribe to it, you support it, and if you don't subscribe to it, then you find some way of getting out without causing a great stir. That, I realized, isn't popular today. In the old days, in my day, who was it? Speaker Rayburn: if you want to get along, go along. That was what I meant, except for a very few dedicated individuals, who had deep ethical, maybe religious reservations about what our policy was there.

Q: You get a chance to see others like John Paul Vann.

SALMON: Right, I don't think I ever met him. I certainly knew about him. A friend of mine, the same Air Force friend of mine who I had talked to in his class at the Air Force Academy, came out on a lengthy TDY and he visited Van. I don't know whether it was in III corps or IV corps. But in my sense, he was a bit of a self-promoter. And a creator of his own legend. As opposed to other figures in CORDS, that just went about their business and he had been a Lt. Colonel, I suppose, but the other corps commanders as you know you would have other senior foreign service officers and military personnel in these corps. For example, I visited DaNang with my friend John Forbes who had worked for this fellow when he was in Paris. I think it was John Gunther Dean and we stayed at his place. I remember going up to Hue and the senior foreign service officer was a fellow who later became my political counselor in Manila and also senior assignments officer, Bob Wenzel. Who I thought was a model foreign service officer. So, I guess Vann was well known. So much was written about Vann and one course one was Brief Shining Lie. I remember meeting someone who worked for Vann. I thought it was maybe somebody you would know from, the political counselor in Bangkok at the end of the fall of Saigon.

Q: Are you thinking of Tom Barnes?

SALMON: Yes, I think I am. But only if he was the one that was with Vann when Vann had his accident. Vann died in a helicopter crash, right?

Q: He was the one who purged Vann's personal possessions of objectionable material. I would presume from time to time some of the junior officers and mid-level officers in Saigon would get together and share experiences.

SALMON: There was no shortage of junior or mid-grade officers getting together and talking and you know well here is a perfect example of one. You may remember there was an American journalist She featured in her book the so-called light at the end of the tunnel party. It was a residence that was shared by several foreign service officers over the years. It was 47 Phantignong. The light at the end of the tunnel party is the answer you get when you ask what is the light at the end of the tunnel. And the answer is a VC with a lantern. That would suggest to you a certain thing about what was going to finally happen. I got people and they got together. I never was part of it but there was a regular water polo game in the residence of the political counselor. And then lots of just getting together, and talking or complaining about various things. Then there was some resistance when I would come down from the third-floor executive suite with a little command or suggestion. To one or two of the political officers there. One of them always hit back and said Charlie, I don't work for you, I work for whoever the political counselor was. Which was true.

Q: Now give us a sense of what your living accommodation was like.

SALMON: When I arrived in Saigon I was met at the airport by Larry Pickering and John O'Brien who had been a Lt. Colonel who had been a West Point grad. The Embassy had a very involved system to try to get people into places. John said you are welcome to stay with me. If you want to stay and make it permanent that would be fine. I said well I want to have my own place. But then I was basically available, and it was very nice. We had a shared apartment, three bedrooms and I think only two baths. I had my own and he had his own. We had an operation with a very good cook and her family, Katherine, I still remember who had a sister in Senegal which shows the old French colonial influence. It was 135 Pasteur, very close to the embassy. You could drive there in about ten minutes if the traffic is OK. It was an apartment building with four floors. The top floor which apparently had a pool was the residence of the Italian ambassador to Vietnam. As I recall we had two or three cottages or small townhouses on the property which were occupied by the Canadians. They had huge Canadian flags on the property lest somebody thought they were Americans. These Canadians used to wear their flags on their backpacks so they wouldn't be mistaken for Americans. I didn't realize it was the Military Assistance Command Special Operations Group (MACSOG) which was the headquarters of the special forces people, who went in to bomb quietly. I always felt the first week I was there, I would hear something. I would have a vision of Viet Cong sappers coming to blow up the building next to ours and we would be collateral damage. But we also had a lot of Codels come. The one that gave the most trouble was Lester Wolfe who was then the chairman of the East Asian Subcommittee of Foreign Affairs in the House. Wolfe was from Long Island. He would inevitably be holding up a USAID flour bag or whatever it was in the Saigon Market to show there was this terrible black market. Well of course there was this terrible black market. I don't remember the other individual ones. They

came in large groups. I don't know if it was helpful or not. They obviously were traveling for their own political and personal reasons. I remember what's her name came through at the end. She had already been defeated. Bella Abzug of New York, a big feminist leader. She insisted on traveling around holidays, and she was not so easy. I encountered later in The Hague when we had Carless Sundays there when even the queen would take her bicycle and go. Abzug came for a short visit and insisted on being taken around in the Embassy car. Just a very difficult person; I would say on a general rule Codels are usually useful and in my view, they were particularly useful because they were people who came who would not normally come at any other time. Bunker would see the, I remember, Cardinal O'Connor from New York. Just a variety of individuals he felt he needed to see, and they needed to see him.

Q: Now let me ask when a codel comes, would the Embassy be in charge of their schedule? Or would MACV be in charge?

SALMON: I think in those days when they wanted to be out in the country MACV would be in charge, but the Embassy was always involved in some way, I mean if it were a Congressman. Obviously Bunker would see them without a doubt and maybe Berger for some of the staff delegations. But not because of the whole business about getting out to the country and the security thing played a bigger role on a Codel, I suppose, than the Embassy.

Q: In talking about staff dels. Did you ever run into Moose and Lowenstein?

SALMON: I didn't run into Lowenstein but I ran into Moose, who later was our Undersecretary of Management and in African Affairs. I ran into Moose who was traveling with my old friend who sadly passed away in a terrible accident with a commerce secretary aircraft, Chuck Meisner. So it was Moose, Meisner in those days, Lowenstein was not in the picture.

Q: In 1970 from May to June, U.S. forces conducted a Cambodian incursion. This had a lot of blowback in the States. We will get to that. But how did the embassy become aware and respond to this new circumstance?

SALMON: Well, on the personal level we realized that now with the fall of Sihanouk and the new government we could actually travel to Cambodia. You know the first charge there was Mike Reeves, and a friend of mine, who worked on the admin side of it. Bob Blackburn, who replaced me as a staff aide in FE. They were working out of one of the hotels. The only really good hotel in Phnom Penh. So, I went over with a group of about 12 people. We flew over and got cars and went up to Siem Reap. We were lucky to get there at a full moon time. That is one of my great memories of seeing Angkor Wat by a full moon when in those days hardly anybody was there. But in terms of the actual Cambodian thing, we got involved at least peripherally and the mission coordinated about getting back Lon Nol who of course took over. At least get him back. I think we were facilitating military air transport for him. I remember my thought was it was quite a way to go back and get installed by a U.S. military aircraft. I guess I was watching the reports

of many other people, that is what we thought of Cambodia. Cambodia of course was Ken Quinn when he was in the and was very much aware and I think has writing about what was going on in Cambodia. I think Charlie Twining, my friend who was later ambassador there and was our country director when I was in Laos for a while. These people knew it. I don't think anybody was quite aware of the horrific nature of what was going on. Of course, that was later when it came out. I can see how difficult it is getting your time periods right, but we were involved in Cambodia but just aware of it in name in the fall of Sihanouk and then of Lon Nol.

Q: Now the other U.S. military move was the South Vietnamese incursion into Laos. In February of '71. How aware was the embassy of that particular move.

SALMON: Well again it was February of '71. I am trying to remember when I left Saigon. I may have been gone by then I will have to check. I certainly followed the disaster in terms of PR, the Vietnamese. Clinging to the skids of the helicopters. Of course generally the same way back in Washington with the people who I guess actually resigned over Cambodia like Tony Lake when he was with Kissinger. When you say the Embassy, I think obviously these things were not surprising at the highest level because basically the personal relationship between the MACV commander and the Ambassador was an extremely good one. I don't think the Embassy when you are talking about everything would be surprised about anything. Maybe the junior level could appreciate once it started that it could go on like that, but I have to look about when I actually left because I have a recollection of leaving there and coming back and studying Dutch in early '71.

Q: Well, is there anything else about Vietnam we need to cover? There you were in the cockpit and the front office where you had already been in the SE front office in an earlier career. Did the atmospheres of these two assignments seem the same?

SALMON: I mean the atmosphere here is simpler in the sense that as a junior officer when I was in FE and as a middle grade officer in the Embassy in Saigon, and I must say Larry Pickering was a tremendous boss who frankly got me promoted I thought relatively early to FSO four. It is a little different because you just have a sense you just know what is going on on a cosmic level rather than familiarity with the everyday mundane working level. I guess you can, if you are not careful you can estrange yourself or be estranged from people you have to work with your colleagues or whatever. One of the things I tried to do no matter what position I had was to get along with people, and if that meant going down to somebody's office rather than coming up to my office, that would be a small price to pay it seems to me for good relationships if that person that you were caring about was in a position to use this or that for you or for what the particular project was. And I don't think, and I guess the criticism of all these places was somehow the ambassador was somehow so unaware of what was going on that clouded their judgement. In my case with Bunker and Berger, they believed in what we were doing but there was no way they were not aware of heterodox views. They went out of their way to read the reporting. One of my jobs was that we had this enormous amount of reporting from CORDS, and I would often be asked to summarize what the reporting was. You

would see in the daily take. I mean there was so much reporting it was hard to keep up with it all. If you see certain people in certain areas saying things are not going so well I would always bring that to the attention of the Ambassador in things that I wrote for him and Larry was very good about letting me do things. I mean one of his responsibilities was preparing Mission council notes. These were basically talking points for the ambassador to use in the council meeting or country team meeting. Then he increasingly turned that job over to me which was a pain because it required work on Sunday, because the meetings were on Monday. Bunker was a business person and you just had to meet his schedule. The secret I felt was that I used to use a lot of usual NODIS reporting that would be shared very sparingly about the embassy. The people who were all senior counselors, he would be sharing things, usually diplomatic stuff, that we would get about thinking about what was going on in Russia or China or something. And a little bit of EXDIS and NODIS in these notes for people who weren't in on the big picture. Most meetings were pretty much for them to hear from the ambassador and for the ambassador to hear from them. Just like all those kinds of meetings. Relatively useful but I always had the suspicion that things were more complicated.

Q: In addition to EXDIS and NODIS, there were special channels for the Ambassador only?

SALMON: I do not know to be honest. I am sure he had his own, like any other place. It is hard to be unaware when somebody comes with a big letter or folder it is a person with an intercept. I saw that in FE. Because there were these people who had the intercepts. And yet we had the same thing there, but I didn't see them, and I am sure the ambassadors saw everything, and I don't think anybody would try to keep him in the dark about things. No, I worked from my notes mainly from NODIS messages that the others had.

Q: So, if Kissinger wanted to send Ambassador Bunker a message it would just be...

SALMON: No, you are right. It would be a back-channel thing and Kissinger would be most likely to use them because of, you know, Kissinger's allergy to openness and transparency. But what we had in those days you remember, we had official informals. I used to communicate with office directors, and everybody had them. When Chas Freeman was in China everybody would send those official informals in Chinese so nobody would read them. When I used them in EAP, in FE and then later in EAP the deputy assistant secretary would see everything, all the official informals included. So it was really the same old story. If you really wanted to talk to somebody, talking to them on the phone has its own problems because there were people listening on the other side to what we were saying on the phone no matter how much you try to talk obscurely you never can. But again going back to Kissinger, Bunker and if you go into the files I guess maybe having some reason to go to the Ambassador's files and discovering how he had arranged through his contacts with CINCPAC Admiral McCain. Bunker had come back from somewhere and was taken to another plane and then to a medical appointment in California. We always wondered why he did this when he got off from a long trip. Ambassador Berger met him at the airport and there was another plane on the tarmac. He

escorted him over and only later on did we realize why Ambassador Sullivan wrote Bunker if you were able to arrange this trip quietly, more power to you. So those are my recollections of that.

Q: Ok, let's take a break now and look forward to next week.

SALMON: OK, just before we stop, I wanted to mention that even though I was a prisoner of the office I did get out into the countryside on my own. Once I went out to the delta with Bill Hitchcock to give out land reform certificates. Then I remember going up with John Forbes to Da Nang. We saw John Gunther and Dean and later Bob Wenzel in Hue. But I do remember one trip, a private trip, with two of my colleagues, Jan De Wilde and Jim Nach. We used our embassy cars and the wrong side of the road, and they were delivered to some place like Bangladesh where they drove on the other side of the road. We went up and we went through these tea plantations in the central highlands. We stayed overnight in Dalat and then took the Bellevue pass down to Nha Trang and then eventually came back and got in trouble for that because one of the senior advisors said how did they get here? I want to see them in the morning. We left before we had to see him and there was an angry note to Ambassador Berger saying who is this person from the Embassy. Berger called me into his office and showed me the letter, "Just so you will be aware of it." So that was my little foray into the country on my own. In retrospect it was stupid, but it won me a bit of credibility with my colleagues who had a vision of me up in this office unaware of what is going on in the countryside. So that was my little adventure. What is the famous line that everybody gives from *Pride and Prejudice* to Lizzy who was giving a piano recital "You have delighted us long enough."

SALMON: We were very involved in our office with very high-level people, one of whom was Sir Robert Thompson. He came out there frequently and had been the author of the strategy in Malaya. Another one who came out a lot was Robert Shaplen, who did these so-called magisterial pieces in the New Yorker. He and Bunker got along very well and he would come out once or twice a year. He got super VIP treatment. Joe Alsop who of course was a big supporter of the war in Vietnam came out with his wife, Susan Mary Patton. Again he got VIP treatment. The other thing related to those press guys although Thompson was not press, is the opportunity in Saigon itself to meet many of the reporters. There were old faithfuls like Gorge MacArthur who had covered the Korean War. And Keyes Beech, I think he had a Chicago paper in the same vintage as George. And then the young reporters like Bob Kaiser whose father was ambassador somewhere in Africa, and then DCM in London. Kaiser later on became deputy editor of the Washington Post. Dan Sutherland of the Christian Science Monitor who later on was head of Radio Free Asia. So it was interesting to interact with all of those journalists. I must say I was never really a source, and they never really pushed me about it but several of my friends were.

Q: You are talking about the time when you were in the front office.

SALMON: Right.

Q: Saigon, but weren't the USIA types supposed to handle...

SALMON: Right the USIA was there, and we liaised with them. It was called the Joint U.S. Public Affairs Office or JUSPAO. I forget if it was they or MACV press that had the so called 5 o'clock follies. But JUSPAO was never as crucial in terms of overall the whole mission. They actually got a special minister counselor for public affairs. I forget the first one but then it was George Newman. He was an old FE hand and had been DCM in Korea and also became DCM in Bangkok. But he had access to Bunker all the time so he was certainly more important in my view than the head of JUSPAO who was a very senior officer and so that is the press side.

Q: Now in this case your association is because you are in Bunker's office.

SALMON: Oh no, all of these associations were usually social. Dinners and meetings for drinks. Bunker determined his own receiving of the press. There were people like Kaiser of course whose father was in the foreign service. I think it was Phillip Kaiser. He had gone to Yale so Bunker had always had a soft spot in his heart for his fellow Yalies.

Q: Now was this incidental; it wasn't part of your portfolio.

SALMON: Oh, it was incidental just to give you a whole full flavor of what I did. The other thing I did, I was also the Protocol Office. That was not all that arduous but it was interesting because I was learning on the job and it was really the only job that gave me direct access to the Vietnamese government. I used to deal with the Vietnamese Chief of Protocol. That was fairly unusual because in my whole time in Saigon, more than two years, I was basically in an American bureaucracy. I had very little contact with Vietnamese people. There were some like the President's nephew Nga, who was always around on the circuit. I would see him a bit but not too many others. I just wanted to mention that and I regretted that but on the other hand I was working so hard on our bureaucratic machine that it was just not possible.

Let me give you my segue if it is alright with you to The Hague. We had Pickering in the mission coordinating office. We were part of what they called the EAC, the Emergency Action Console. It was basically like a White House switch in a way. You could pick up a phone and they would put you in touch with anyone in the world. It was supposedly to be used by the big cheeses in the embassy to converse with each other too but I don't think they used it for that too much. When my time for leaving Vietnam was coming up, I didn't have an assignment. Yet I used the EAC to call my friend Dave Wilson who had been in my A-100 class and whom I had visited in Rome en route to Vienna and visited him many other times. Later, he passed away too soon. But David was getting a call directly from the Embassy in Saigon. He was quite impressed that I was on the other end of the phone and after a time I asked him what he had available in EUR assignments. He said, "Well, we have Lisbon and The Hague. I can get you either one." This is a really old boy network at work. I had been in Lisbon when I was in the army on a trip and I rather

liked it. Of course it was the Salazar period and it was very neat and clean and so on. But The Hague made more sense in terms of a central location in Europe and opportunity to travel. I wasn't smart enough to think that if I had gone to Portugal I would have spent a lot of my time in maybe Brazil if I was lucky but if I was not so lucky in places like Lusophone Africa. So this is one of those famous inflection points, so I chose The Hague. I was assigned to Dutch language training and it was an incredible assignment. It was a tremendous learning experience for me as a political assignment. I had very good supervisors.

Q: Now let me ask if you have had some EA experience going back to EUR. What was the EUR attraction? Why didn't you want to go to Japan or Thailand?

SALMON: I guess I didn't know any better. I liked Europe and I loved my time in Vienna. I loved traveling in Europe and it was just something I thought of rather than East Asia. I think it was probably about three or four months. I had a very good Dutch teacher. She actually was from Asia. She was Indonesian Dutch, her family had emigrated to Holland I forget after what period. When the Chinese were getting a lot of grief. So she had been my teacher. She was married to a foreign service communicator. Anyhow she was a good teacher and I had another older teacher. At FSI my experience there both with German and with the Dutch and also with early morning French which was every bit as much as I should have, was very positive. I became a good friend of the linguist. His name was Van Buskirk. Anyhow, that is when I did my Dutch training.

Q: Now were you the only person in the course?

SALMON: Yes. Later on we may have had someone to come in briefly but it was one on one tutoring.

Q: What a way to escape.

SALMON: Yes. And of course I had German so it made it a little easier but somewhat confusing frankly but I managed to get my 3+ 3+ and so was happy.

Q: Now give us a description of The Hague when you arrived. What was the Embassy like, what was your housing?

SALMON: Yes I remember it very well because I elected to come in a long route. I visited friends in Stockholm for a while and then I took the train, and I still remember getting off in Amsterdam and then getting on to the train that took me to The Hague. My predecessor Harlan Moen was there to greet me. Which was very kind. Then I went to a hotel kind of close to the Embassy, kind of a commercial hotel but quite good. This was the first post I had to look for my own housing. I had my apartment in Vienna in the building where Freud once lived. Then I had an apartment in Saigon. But here I had to find my own place. I looked about and finally found the first floor of a very nice building in a nice area not too far from the ambassador's house. It was owned by the widow of the very famous Dutch author Bordewijk. The second floor was occupied by the second

secretary of the Italian embassy and his wife and kids. I had the first floor. It could have had more bathrooms. It only had one but I was only one person. It had nice grounds and my Italian neighbors were hopeless about keeping up the property so I just decided I would do it myself. I got a gardener and resuscitated the fish pond with goldfish. Unfortunately I had to give that up when I saw a cat prowling in the neighborhood, and I realized the fish were disappearing when I saw the cat grabbing the fish. It was a nice house and I did a little entertaining there. I had a fairly big dining room and I had a lady who worked for me as the cleaning lady who was not a bad cook so she could support these dinners I had periodically. It handled my farewell reception. I think I had 100 people. They were packed right in. It reminded me of the New Yorker. The problem with these parties is they are too loud and then the krill runs out.

Q: That was the last issue I think. What was the Embassy like? Was it an older WWII building?

SALMON: No and I am glad you asked. I believe the architect was Mies Van Der Rohe. And I think it was the building that replaced the one bombed in WWII. In The Hague it was in a very nice area downtown. There were several other embassies in older townhouses, smaller embassies. One of the queen's palaces was in the block before we were, something called the Lange Vorhaut. I could get there from home easily. Sometimes I would take my bike like a Dutchman. But usually I took a car, and we had very strict rules about if you had any fines you had to pay right away. Occasionally I would take the bus or the tram. It was very well situated in terms of where my house was and my house was not that far from the beach. Schevingen, the famous name you asked people that you suspected were German spies and if they could not pronounce it properly you reported them to the authorities. But quite a beach, it was a very agreeable place to live.

Q: Now you were in the Political Section.

SALMON: I was in the Political Section. My first boss was Tom Dunigan who worked with many Foreign Service people in Germany right after the war as a political or civil officer, whatever they called it during the occupation period. He later on went to be DCM in Copenhagen and DCM in Tel Aviv and DCM for his former Ambassador then J. William Middendorf, who was the Ambassador when I arrived. Dunigan was there. I also worked closely with John Bovey. Bovey was a really wonderful person. He taught writing at Harvard and one of his undergraduate students was Bill Middendorf who was then the Ambassador. Bovey had been DCM in Norway and he had also been political counselor in Paris. We were talking once and he just volunteered that he had several calls to take an embassy in Africa. He was always asking the person who was calling him who usually he knew, he said now tell me honestly what number am I on your call list. They would say two or three. He would say thank you, I am not interested. Then after he came to The Hague I must say the DCM residence was quite grand on the Sophia Plein. He was a very nice fellow and took an interest, not that I was a junior officer but a younger officer.

Q: That raises the question: in this circumstance a lot of junior officers show up as consular officers. Did the front office pay attention to the younger junior officers?

SALMON: I think to the extent that the Ambassador was a political appointee with many interests of his own not all involved in state issues. He was an art collector, a composer, a painter. But actually I was in The Hague as you know. We had a large consulate general in Amsterdam and another in Rotterdam. I had a consular commission and the only thing I did was diplomatic visas. I just had a stamp and I would sign my name. There weren't that many and there was no protection work or anything. But as I say the foreign service leadership of the post. Bovey and Dunigan took a very I think genuine interest. My colleague there was a pol-mil officer, a little more senior than I, Jerry Christiansen who later went on to be the staff director of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee. This was under Senator Clayborn Pell, but Jerry was a nice fellow. He and his wife were very good friends. They were very much more senior in getting an embassy house which was designed by the great Dutch Architect Rietveld. His house was built on the model of a ship's cabin and I thought it was a little small. They would always be awakened on the weekend by people who wanted to come and see the great architectural creation and they were next door neighbors to the foreign minister, so it was a good location.

Q: Now what was your portfolio in The Hague?

SALMON: This is why I say it was a very formative experience for me. I was also the labor attaché and of course was the expert on the opposition. So the labor thing gave me an invitation to labor union meetings. And then I got to know the head of the largest labor union, a fellow named Harry Terheide and his deputy Wim Kok, with whom I became fairly good friends, and he became prime minister for about six or seven years. And then the opposition, the people's working party I guess, a typical continental labor party. They weren't in power when I arrived but they later did get power. With the prime ministership of Joop den Uyl, my first prime minister was a coalition government, Barend Biesheuvel. It was a coalition of the religious parties. You may or may not know Dutch politics is very Confessional. There was the Catholic People's Party, there was the Anti Revolutionary Party which was really a protestant party, Christian Historical Union. Eventually they began coalescing into the Christian democratic appeal. That happened when I was there and I knew Professor Steenkemp, who was responsible for putting that together. I never spoke Dutch very much because all of my interlocutors spoke far more terrific English. It just wasted time for me to try to do it in Dutch although they were willing to wait a little. But I could read the papers very well. I remember I subscribed to Volkskrant, which was a Catholic People's Party paper. Then I could also go to the Parliament and listen to the debates in person. They had some interesting very high profile debates I attended. It was a good way of understanding what was going on in the country.

Q: Now let me ask about the labor movement. Was it European Socialist? How did they define themselves?

SALMON: I think it was basically European Socialist. It was very moderate. I don't remember many strikes while I was there. There may have been some. The Netherlands is a very moderate country. The politics even though they were quite fierce but the people it seemed to me had respect for one another. They had, I thought, very healthy politics. It was good to be and that was again heading on to the Formation period (organizing the government) when I had my time to prepare as a political officer. First of all the Second Chamber during my time only had about 92 people, so it was very easy to call a member and say I am from the Embassy and I would like to take you to lunch. Generally they were agreeable to that. So I got to know personally many of the members of the parliament. Obviously my boss Tom Dunigan honed in on the more senior people. Bovey never did much with the Parliament, as he was the key person on contacts with people in the Foreign Ministry, the Secretary General and the Director General for Political Affairs.

Q: Now in your role as labor attaché did American labor leaders come over to talk to the Dutch?

SALMON: Not that I recall. I went to I believe two labor attaché conferences and of course their presence in both conferences was very marked. You had to remember the fellow who did the international part for labor, I think it was before the combination of AFL and CIO. I think his name was Irving Brown. He was a communist at one time and then a very conservative labor person. He always came to these labor conferences to make his pitch. I don't think there were many actual labor union members coming over. Maybe they did but I didn't see them. And they didn't try to see me.

Q: Well actually wasn't the Labor Attaché in Paris a player in hooking up American labor unions and European labor unions.

SALMON: Who was that?

Q: I am under the impression that the Labor Attaché in Paris.

SALMON: Oh OK, I knew the Labor Attaché in Brussels. And any of these meetings I think one as I recall was in Tunisia. You met the people and they were quite nice. It was an interesting meeting. The labor thing was obviously a big deal in Europe right after the war particularly, where the communists had such an influence in these unions and tried to subvert Marshall plan works. Italy was a good example of that where we had to bring in the American crime bosses to help us negate the communist influence. You know, the Mafia meets the communists. I enjoyed it very much and I was successful sometimes. Ambassador Gould who succeeded Middendorf, I got him to come to labor meetings and big conventions. He was a good sport about it. I don't think he particularly enjoyed it but it was a good advertisement for the embassy and our interests in what the labor people were doing.

Q: Now how were labor unions in Europe organized? By trade or...?

SALMON: Now you are asking me questions that I don't know much about. Specifically, how many people live there. I don't think quite the German model would say what they were doing. I kind of think the largest, we had some good companies like Siemens. Siemens is German. Phillips, which as you know is an electronics company, and I think they were pretty much organized. I don't want to call it craft unions because that is something different. But they were organized along the lines of whatever particular manufacturing activity they were involved in. I guess there were agricultural counterparts but they never seemed to come into my ken. Again they were very conservative as one would say of trade unions although the Dutch were very conservative people even if they did have very liberal social welfare.

Q: Now you were saying you also covered the opposition. What were some of the major issues between the ruling party in the Parliament and the opposition party?

SALMON: Well again, because they had basically patched together coalitions to rule. The issues were not as well defined as I thought. Now one issue that was very dominant during my period there was the whole issue of relations with the U.S. because of the Vietnam war. That was a very tough issue for me because sometimes I had to be persuasive but do more than a little work to go to a luncheon or a meeting in an office because they were so angry about our policy in Vietnam. I remember one ambassadorial reception where not one Labor parliamentarian came. They were just basically boycotting it. We also had differences. The Dutch had differences on what you would call colonial issues, human rights issues in Africa. There were certain members of the Parliament who were very interested in seeing the Portuguese out of Africa as quickly as they could go. So there were issues along those sorts of things. But basically things like the European community. I think there were so many differences but within the party about this issue or that issue.

The other thing I wanted to mention here were the rather tremendous tools that the political officer has in a country like the Netherlands or any other country too. We used to call it the IV program, the International Visitors Program. I think I have often said that was one of the most valuable - if not *the* most valuable outreach program - that the United States Government had, and I was sorry to see when Secretary Albright surrendered USIA to Jesse Helms in return for 'God knows what.' But that program was really terrific. I saw it in New Zealand and to a certain extent in Vienna. Of course, The Hague was absolutely critical. First of all our targets were a small legislature. So you didn't need to be the most astute analyst to know which parliamentarians looked like they had a future. I mentioned Wim Kok previously, he became the prime minister. I sent somebody who became the defense minister. I would say they all came back satisfied, particularly as one who had been an anti-American type. There was doubt in the embassy about whether it would be good and he went and actually came back very favorably impressed by the United States. He wouldn't say so in public. Then we had another one. He became a secretary for I forget. He was a baker from Amsterdam. He said the Americans don't know how to do anything. If they tear down a building they don't build housing they must make it a parking lot. Ambassador Gould directly heard or read that in the paper because Ambassador Gould of course owned major parking interests in

Washington DC. And they would always compare the sharpest with the not so sharp. We went on this trip to East Germany. As you can imagine they were watched like hawks everywhere they went. And our programs were and the whole country was open to them. So that is why I am so impressed by that program and proud of the people I managed to get into the program. It was very competitive in terms of the people in the Embassy, Public Affairs people wanted it for key press people. We always got a good share of the appointees sent. Now one observation on that thing, Ambassador Middendorf was very big in the party and Treasurer of the Republican party. He went on to be Deputy Secretary and then I think he was Secretary of the Navy, I believe the Ambassador to USEC and then to the OAS for a while. And Middendorf had a young art advisor, who was about 25 years old. And he decided that he should be sent to the U.S. under the Leadership Program. I just felt that was outrageous as did my colleagues on the Committee. Unfortunately the DCM felt otherwise and said he deserved the appointment. So that was a little footnote. Generally things worked out pretty well and we worked together pretty much in a unified way that OK political gets the parliamentarian and USIA gets a press person or an econ person for the econ section.

Q: Do you remember how many IVs The Hague had per year?

SALMON: I think I would be hard pressed to recall. I think it was at least 20 or maybe a little more. And of course we would always be able to go to a fall out position so other countries wouldn't use them and you know the thing. Then they would say OK you could have another one or two. I think one year we may have gotten 16 people. I would have to go back to wherever you go to look at it.

Q: You were saying the Dutch were very critical of Vietnam. Now 30 years earlier they had done the same thing in Indonesia.

SALMON: That is exactly right. It is unfair to characterize but there was a certain amount of preachiness that goes with confessional politics about some of the politicians. They were very quick to overlook their own shortcomings and go after ours. I think that is probably because we are more prepared to argue our positions then they may have been to argue theirs.

Q: Now on the labor side of things did the Dutch labor unions work with the Germans or the French or anybody else or were they pretty much on their own.

SALMON: Wim Kok who later became Prime Minister, I met him because he was the International Secretary of the Labor Union. His portfolio was basically to interact with other international labor unions but that didn't have any particular impact on what I was doing. Some people in Bonn Report about what is going on there. Frankly, I was a Labor Attaché but it was more of a labor reporting type of officer. That was ancillary to what I was doing with the parliamentarians.

Q: Now were external events in the United States coming to the fore of your Dutch colleagues. For example, Kissinger goes to Beijing. No, the UN voted for Beijing in '71

and Kissinger was in Beijing at that time. Were they watching our relationship with China?

SALMON: I guess so. Remember I was watching when Kissinger made that trip and I was staying with a very close friend of mine, David Passage, who was the deputy spokesperson and I knew from Vietnam. I remember he surprised me and said "do you know what has happened?" I said "no I have no idea." He told me with great relish that Kissinger has made a trip to China. It was really jarring I must say but in the end from my vantage point in The Hague I was interested only in the sense that impacted directly on particular interests that we had at that particular time. As I said, my principal interest was just the whole Vietnam issue. I don't know when the Dutch recognized this. China, I am sure, they were interested but I don't recall any questions directed to me on that trip itself.

Q: Now you were saying the Dutch were critical of our Vietnam policy in '72 there was a sneak incursion in Laos.

SALMON: Right.

Q: That must have come to people's attention.

SALMON: Well, sure when you have people trying to escape by trying to hang on to the skids of a helicopter that is a pretty arresting scene. Linebacker One was the massive bombing exercise. That really went down very badly with the Dutch or with the parliamentarians. Of course it was always a matter of age. The younger people obviously had very little or no memory of WWII and were inevitably as young people are generally very critical of authority. While the older Dutch who remembered the war were willing to cut us some slack. In fact one of the things I noticed was that our worst enemies in some places are our strongest supporters. That wasn't true with the Dutch but it is true in some places.

Q: Well in '72 you had an American presidential election between Nixon and McGovern.

SALMON: Sure I think in the sense that it was the handwriting was so much on the wall that Nixon would win which he did. An interesting thing from that particular point of view as Nixon's position at home deteriorated and he turned. I am getting ahead of this pretty good time line to travel. You remember when he went to Egypt with a case of phlebitis. And there was some indication that he was hoping that he might succumb to phlebitis and some attack and go out on a high note rather than just continuing just a decline in public opinion. By the way, I just noted a little side note. I remember one of my first Codels in Vienna was Codel Rodino. Peter Rodino who had been of course the chair of the Rodino committee that eventually forced the Republican party to tell Nixon that his time was up.

Q: Speaking of things that might have drawn a little attention. As the United States opened the liaison office in Beijing in mid '73, that must have shaken somebody up.

SALMON: David, you are the China expert. The Liaison Office in '73 was that year — did we not have something a year prior to that?

Q: That was the first footprint. In '73 with David Bruce.

SALMON: OK, but David Bruce had at one time come through Saigon and I was involved in meeting him at the airport with others properly. I was helping over solicitously with his attaché case or briefcase. There was a picture of me in the New York Times. One of my friends said “Oh, I didn't know you had joined the foreign service to be a Skycap or bellhop or what have you.” I remember Bruce saying be careful with that briefcase, it has all of my money in it.

Q: Now opening the Liaison Office might have been causing quite a big stir in your labor context.

SALMON: Yes, honestly I don't remember any particular discussion of it. I am sure there may have been but I don't personally remember any long discussions of it. The interesting thing in China when you are in a place like The Hague was always our interests. We were very interested. That seemed to open an interesting way for interaction with Chinese diplomats. At least informally. I remember we had in The Hague the very good Le Club De Judi. It was a diplomat's club and we had monthly meetings and we had ministers talk. They take ski trips up to Crans in Switzerland. But the first time that the Chinese showed up at one of these events I remember they were all in their Mao suits. I tried to engage one of them who spoke English about the anti-Beethoven campaign. He didn't seem to want to be engaged on that, but what really got me was wouldn't have that big a station at The Hague, but all of our political officers from the other floors showed up and they just were attracted like iron filings to magnets running up to the Chinese and beginning wherever their procedures are for trying to make contact with these kinds of people. These were kind of the direct things we did in The Hague. We never did develop any long term kinds of contact with anybody from the Chinese Embassy at The Hague. There was no reason they should. We were impressed by their English facility and I said maybe the anti-Beethoven had been put on the shelf but I always found it a truly interesting one.

Q: Now there are two consulates in the Netherlands, Amsterdam and Rotterdam. Did you get an opportunity?

SALMON: Eldon Ericsson was the Consul General in Rotterdam. He was a very nice fellow. I think he had been in EAP personnel at once. I knew him a bit but nothing in terms of work related stuff. In Amsterdam the consul general was Gene Braderman who I think had been a Deputy Assistant Secretary of State or maybe Commerce. I knew him a bit. In fact I knew him well because I had borrowed some Embassy furniture that I was slow in returning. Mrs. Braderman learned it was in my house and soon it was no longer in my house because they had a much bigger house to furnish. They had a beautiful residence to furnish.

Q: Did you personally have an opportunity to get around the Netherlands?

SALMON: Yes, I did a lot of travel in the Netherlands. I took several boat trips on the canals. Two or three with other diplomats. The weather there is so chaotic you get on the ship and you see nothing but fog or rain for three days. The ships were overcrowded and there weren't enough bathrooms for my taste. I became quite a good friend of one of the VVD members. The VVD was the liberal party, a classic European liberal party. He later became State Secretary for Finance. Actually he visited me and my family up at Lake George when he was in America and invited me because he had a place in the province of Drenthe, which is a beautiful location right up on the German border. His father had been a doctor during the difficult times after WWII, the "hunger winters." His father did his medical rounds in a car using charcoal, which I thought was quite interesting. I got to see a lot of the places which were quite interesting, and one of the things you raised earlier. I got to be friendly with someone I sent to the United States on the leader grant, a columnist for the Amsterdam paper, Het Parool, Harry van Wijmen. He was a good friend of the then Prime Minister Den Uyl. I remember him inviting me and a friend of mine from the British Embassy with whom I still have a friendship, Juliet Collings, to his house in Leiden. He invited me for like 10 o'clock at night. So I went of course. It was just loaded with members of Parliament. Of course the Prime Minister came in at about 2 or 3 in the morning. The party went on until about 4 or 5am, when I got in my car and drove back to The Hague. I remember making not only some new contacts but also driving home in the dawn and seeing that beautiful early morning Dutch light, which is captured in some of their greatest paintings.

Q: Now you were remarking about members of other embassies. That you worked with. Was there a group that frequently got together?

SALMON: It wasn't too much like other places where there was a dearth of information. The Dutch situation was pretty transparent and fairly predictable when we got together. It was interesting, my friend from the British Embassy, she was I guess you would call her the DCM, Juliet Collings. Their big issue was entry into the European community which General De Gaulle was still preventing. So I still have a lot of discussions with her about the situation. Oh and I had many Canadian friends and we had similar interests. But my Swiss friends were fewer, but quite well informed. Then of course the contacts I had with the Foreign Ministry because in addition to my Opposition stuff and Labor stuff I took on particular tasks the DCM would give me. So I had an opportunity to meet a lot of Dutch foreign service officers who were really you know like so many of their counterparts in other countries were with perfect English, perfect French. And Dutch and Spanish. It was intimidating but it was a very easy thing to do. I remember one of the things we would do: we made a joint demarche with the British Embassy I am pretty sure on Diego Garcia. Remember when we started our operation which was supposed to be very modest and limited and you go to Diego Garcia now. I mean it was not what it was but it was still pretty busy. I went with a British fellow and we made our joint pitch about Diego Garcia. It was a very agreeable diplomatic corps. They were also very agreeable, the Dutch diplomats you had to deal with. So I hate to sound so self content but it was really quite a good place to work.

Q: You were saying there was a change in government from time to time. Were the changes so significant?

SALMON: They take so long in the process of putting together a coalition, in fact you can see it now. With this right winger who despite his victory in the elections, he will be in government but he certainly is not going to be under prime minister Biesheuvel. But they have a very involved process where the crown appoints an informateur and he steps things up for the appointment of a formateur who then organizes to get the coalition organized. I am trying to remember when I got there the new government was under the prime minister. It was a Confessional party coalition which was very difficult. But then it fell apart and they always fall apart for what seemed the most minuscule reasons for those of us on the outside. Then it took them a very long time for labor to get back in. Joop den Uyl came in. I remember he had one or two coalition partners. A new party called D66 and I forgot the other one. I realized early on that we had to be careful of the new government. We got attacked by the new government over things for another four or five months. I also realized frankly the value of internal political reporting. It is not the most cherished in the department unless someone who had a post before has a special interest. But I enjoyed it. I did a lot of reporting in a lot of mem cons, and had a lot of support from Tom Dunigan and John Bovey and the people I worked for.

Q: I would say all this reporting you were doing, was it pretty focused?

SALMON: I am trying to recall the years they brought in the summary for cables. It was reasonably focused. I am trying to think that the one issue that everybody in the Embassy was seized with was a new fighter plane purchase by the Dutch. They could not get F-16s or we didn't want to sell them the F-16. I forget what the company that came up with the F-20 was. Which they never bought. You can see where interests are in an embassy. That was even before this tremendous emphasis on earning your keep by helping countries sign contracts .

Q: Now you were saying that the politics were Confessional (religious) based. They must have looked to you as very strange as an American. There should be a separation between Church and State.

SALMON: Well nowadays you don't know but you are right. It is something that you get to accept fairly quickly and in point of fact the differences between the Catholics and the Protestants, and there were varieties of Protestant beliefs. In those days it seemed to me informed politics quite as much as they had done in previous years. Because I think a lot of it was just people doing things the way their fathers had done and I say only later did the protestant and the Catholic groups get together in the Christian Democratic Union. I think that still may be there, but I am not sure. It is strange in a certain way but when you get to a new country, and you are trying to get to know and be an authority on it. You pretty much submerge yourself in those politics and don't try to put them into some American perspective.

Q: Now when you are dealing with the labor parties that had political parties. Are they outside this Confessional?

SALMON: Oh yes, they always were the exception, the Labor Party pretty much at last at one time totally reflective of the organization of the Labor movement. As I say Confessional politics I use that because it was so much a part of the Netherlands for so long. The Labor Party was a secular party but I guess like any other place you would find Catholics in it. I know you found some of the Jewish population pretty much part of the Labor Party.

Q: We are getting ready to break off here. You keep bouncing between Europe and Asia.

SALMON: Well here is another segue or prelude to a segue. What motivated me most was I did not want to come back to Washington. I had a fairly decent run in The Hague. My friend in EUR assignments wasn't there anymore. But I pretty much thought I had lined up a job in the Political Affairs section in Brussels. I used to go to Brussels fairly frequently. I had friends at the Embassy and it was a nice place to visit although it too had bad weather. I kept getting calls from Washington that it was time for me to come back. We have a very good job for you in RPE. RPE was in EUR. It was the Economic part. I don't know whether these names are still of any currency. RPM was NATO. RPE did the economics things. I was not an economic officer although at that time they established the special economics course. Do you remember that? Train or own economists. I knew if I went back to that I would have eventually gone there. But I didn't really want to be an economic officer. And I didn't go to RPE but they kept telling me that you have to come back, this is the job. It is essential for your career development. An essential for a career development pitch. Well when I really was thinking I may just have to come back to Washington. I got a call from EAP assignments saying there is a job for you in Manila. It is a great job. I had been to Manila during the Johnson trip in '66. My reaction was not all positive. It was run down and had a sleazy atmosphere to it. I wanted to go because I didn't want to go home. Then I get a cable from or literally a Western Union cable from a good friend of mine within the Embassy in Manila. It is fairly short as cables were in those days. I don't think there were any stops in it but 'Job zero, do not come.' Again it was a very good friend but inclined to be a bit overdramatic. I said well despite that I accepted the assignment in Manila. My friend still remembers meeting me. It was a late arrival because I don't like layovers in places. If it is a long trip, so be it. I don't like spending some time in Narita or Kimpo in Korea. I arrived about 1:00 in the morning and I was put up in a housing outfit called Seafront which you may be familiar with. He was a good friend. He had found a place on the water in Paranaque. The upper floor of the house had a huge terrace that overlooked Manila Bay with a little garden in the back. It was an apartment with two baths and two bedrooms. It was perfect. It was with Manila traffic hardly like the thing it is now. I had a good place to live there but maybe this is getting ahead of your timeline on Manila but that is the way I came there and was very happy that I did accept the assignment because Manila was - I have to be honest with you - while I enjoyed all of my assignments, Manila was a particularly rewarding one because I did the Human Rights portfolio and the Opposition portfolio, which is how I got to meet President Corazon Aquino. The widow of the former Senator, Ninoy Aquino,

and mother of former President Noynoy Aquino. I did some good work with religious organizations that were big in Human Rights. And got to know the new Head of the Senate and this and that. I will save this for our next session.

Q: Let me end this by saying OK how did you get from The Hague to Manila. I assume you took R&R.

SALMON: No, I think I made the transfer directly. I am not sure. Maybe I did R&R back home. I was never much for home leave. I would be more interested if I had time to go to another place in Europe. Or what have you I had my family at home, mother, father and brother and in those days my mother and father were in much better health than later, although my father lived to be 93. So, I probably took a break but I am not sure.

Q: Ok let's stop the tape.

Q: We are returning to our...

SALMON: I was just summarizing. It was an excellent learning platform, so to say. I had good Foreign Service bosses and the two political ambassadors we had. They were OK by political standards. Then I was going to say in terms of segue I did go home for home leave after The Hague. Because I remember going up to Lake George where my parents were for the summer. Then I also think I was at my friend Jan DeWilde's wedding that year. And before I went out as part of my consultation I did see an old friend from Saigon John Forbes who sadly just passed away. He had just come from Manila. He had been really quite successful in getting to know people and I had a good session with him. John Maisto had been there before who was another expert on the Philippines. It was a good way to talk to him. And then to get a feel for martial law which was in your crib sheet, which had just been instituted relatively soon before that. I think I already covered how I arrived in Manila and met in the airport early in the morning by my friend Tom Timberman. Who also had arranged for this apartment on the water that I moved to. Then I guess my first formal engagement Manila, Frazier Mead was our political counselor and his wife invited me to lunch. I think I got there on a Friday. I had lunch on Sunday at the Army-Navy Club where I would spend a lot of my time over my three years there. I made the mistake of showing up in a suit and a tie and everybody looked at me curiously, but it was a way to learn.

Q: Now before you got to Manila what was your impression of the duties you were going to pick up?

SALMON: Well, as I told you my friend that sent me the cable "Job is a zero do not come." I forged ahead. I was going to be in the political section, I think it was a fairly standard political section. There was a Counselor, Frazier Mead, and my old friend Mike Connors was the Pol Mil officer. He had worked for Sullivan in Laos. Then my section

Frazier moved me up to give me supervisory responsibility. I had two officers, one still an old friend Bob Pringle a very distinguished writer and foreign service officer and Greg Talcott who was a labor officer and then Ralph Braibanti So, we had I thought a very agreeable small section, Bob's portfolio was of course the Muslim insurgency down south. He did some fantastic reporting on that. We all took on various demarches at the Foreign Ministry which was then in Padre Faura.

Q: Now let me ask, is this political section so big that there is an internal part and an external part?

SALMON: It was just called internal external. So, I guess that would give me a little more sense of supervising. So, as I said some of us did some external stuff but others and we all pitched in to do the internal stuff which of course was connected with martial law. And the development of the opposition. Over time I became the person who specialized in the opposition. The Filipinos were former congressmen and senators, and they were quite approachable because they wanted their story told. I used to bring the Codels of which we had a number including Lester Wolfe when he was chair of the Far East Committee in the House. They were always formulaic, kind of lined up for them so they could talk to them and show they were looking at both sides of the picture. Not only Marcos but also the opposition. Marcos and company were very adept in I would say coopting is too strong a word. But confusing things. Visiting Codels - except for one or two - and basically, they had got wrong on arrival. I remember Wolfe had a special optometrist and special eyeglasses made and that kind of thing. That was the way it worked. One congressman who was the real critic of the administration was Congressman Don Frazier, who is well known for his Human Rights work. I was with Frazier and his assistant John Salzburg, only once did we go and visit Benigno Aquino, who was interned and imprisoned at Fort Bonifacio. So, Marcos let the congressman visit and I went with him. And when John came back as a Staffdel I saw Aquino again.

Q: Now was Steve Solarz in Congress?

SALMON: Solarz was there but at the time he was not yet the chair. He took over Wolfe's job when Wolfe was defeated. Somewhat surprisingly by a fellow named LeBoutillier. He was quite a right wing republican which was quite unusual to be elected in Wolfe's district. Wolfe suffered domestically from someone digging into how many trips he had made. He was always on the road as a Codel. I guess it was the Long Island paper that had a pretty extensive job of researching and showed how long he was away and how he was usually in a very salubrious climate during the East Coast winter. I think this contributed to his losing that seat.

Q: Now you were saying you only had a couple of opportunities to see Aquino. Now he is arrested and tried by Marcos in 1977. How did the Embassy report on that circumstance?

SALMON: By the time they did that official thing in 1977 I had already left. The Embassy had very good reporting on pre-martial law. Benigno Aquino was the primary opposition figure. There was a lot of reporting of possible coups. I think it was a bit

unfair, but it was surprising who would move first. Marcos and Aquino were both cut from the same cloth, and both had authoritarian streaks with the instrument of the presidency at his disposal and Aquino was just a very charismatic opposition leader. But once we had accepted martial law in the country and as an Embassy, although the first Ambassador was in fact the only one because we had a long charg ship with Lee Stull. Sullivan, never in my view, had a very warm relationship with Marcos. He had an even chillier relationship with Mrs. Marcos. She didn't like him, and he didn't like her. Unfortunately, Mrs. Marcos during the time I was there became even stronger in terms of political support and the role she played in the Administration. Including being made Governor of Metropolitan Manila. She had her family in positions of power, for example, the first Philippine Ambassador to China was her brother.

Q: I get the impression that all politics are centered in Manila. Did you get outside of Manila?

SALMON: There was a very robust politics at the provincial level. Most especially in Cebu where we had a Consulate. I went to Cebu relatively frequently; in fact, I filled in there once I think for three weeks while the principal officer was on leave. I traveled everywhere in the Philippines, from Tawi Tawi and up to Ilocos Norte. I traveled sometimes with my boss who was our charg , Lee Stull. He liked to do a lot of traveling. And went down south with the Embassy C-12. And then drove up north I would make special trips maybe with another officer, and one time with my colleague at the British Embassy, we would go to provincial capitals and call on the governor and meet politicians together. Filipino politics was very family oriented. You meet the Governor and the Governor's nephew was doing this or the Governor's brother was in the Congress. It is a very small group of people, I think it still is, who were in the political process. Cebu had been very important when there were free elections. There were a lot of voters there. They were Visayan. One of the things about Aquino was he did speak Visayan as well as Ilocano and Tagalog. Where Marcos spoke Tagalog obviously and Ilocano, but I don't think he spoke Visayan. Then going down south that was mainly connected with the insurgency and the Muslim Insurrection whatever you want to call it, So I did a lot of provincial travel while I was in Manila.

Q: Did the provinces give you a different feel? Or did they have the same atmosphere as Manila, who are supporters of Marcos?

SALMON: Yes, it was clear in the Cebu area where the Osmena clan had been opponents of Marcos in the National Party for years but they were very circumspect. Obviously in their comments on the way he was leading the country I should say in those first years after martial law, there was a certain amount of widespread support because they confiscated all of the firearms. There was a momentary lapse in all of violence that you saw throughout the country but clearly within about two years the corruption that characterizes the whole Marcos regime became more and more evident. There were some young reporters with whom I spent some time, especially the Far Eastern Economic Review, who did some fairly intensive and well-sourced reporting on some of the things that were going on including this nuclear power plant project which of course never came

to fruition. Now the ones who were obviously most critical of Marcos were his former colleagues in the Congress, and who were now in the opposition, some of whom had been jailed for a short period of time some up to a year after martial law was declared. Some of those people became my good friends. Most of all Senator Jovito Salonga, who was a Yale law graduate but interestingly a Protestant in an overwhelmingly Catholic county. Salonga was one of the most popular people in the Philippines and could have been elected President. But unfortunately, he was the victim of a plot that people attributed to Marcos and company. A bomb went off in Plaza Miranda. He sustained really serious shrapnel damage. I remember he had a place in Los Banos, the hot springs down there and his pool had hot springs, and he would invite diplomats down for the weekend. I remember in his pool his whole chest was just utterly riddled with the remnants of shrapnel. In any event he was one opposition figure I would say I knew the best and liked the best. He later became President of the new Senate when Marcos was overthrown and I remember going out on a codel with Steve Solarz who was by then the Chairman of the Committee. The President designated him the representative at the opening of the new Congress.

Q: Now you mentioned there had been some elections during the time you were there.

SALMON: There had been some local elections. I am sure that there may have been but I just don't have a recollection of them actually being contested. If there was any election it would have been almost pro forma and to use the popular word, a charade. No, it was pretty clear Marcos had complete power. He had some decent people in the Cabinet though. His Defense Minister Johnny Enrile. I remember visiting him when I was Director of Philippine Affairs. He was then in the opposition. And there were a few other Cabinet members who were quite capable. But as I say the inclination of the Administration was frankly toward corruption. Family participation in Government is something that happens in the Philippines. But Marcos and company brought it to a totally new level.

Q: Now you talk about going down to Cebu in the south where the consulate is the window on the insurgency. Was that a real problem at the time you were there?

SALMON: Yes, the problem was that it is supposed to be a window on the south. During martial law it was advertised in the papers as a topical island in the Pacific. So, they get the Japanese to come and play golf without having to come to grips with the fact they were in a martial law society. But the real place to look at the insurgency was in cities like Davao. Later on it was the home of the Mayor and President Duterte. Other towns like Marawi, which I recall visiting a few years ago, were occupied by the insurgents for I think two or three months. Bob Pringle and I went to everybody, tried to pitch in and get a better feel of how the insurgency was doing. It has changed so often it is confusing to me. MNLF, Moro National Liberation Front. But then the language got fractured and it became the new invigorated front. That was there throughout the country as you recall but mostly in the north. We also had the NPA, the New People's Army, which was a communist operation allegedly supported at least in the beginning by the Chinese in

solidarity with revolutionaries. That support stopped as I recall when the Philippines finally normalized with China.

Q: Now in the insurgency section were there islands that were off limits?

SALMON: Yes, I don't think where we went were the islands off limits. The islands were mostly the ones in the deep south. Basilan, Tawi Tawi, and I forget what the third one was. People were advised not to go there. We periodically had Americans sunbathing on the beach there. They would be staying in Zamboanga and then they would take a little boat over to the unspoiled beaches of I believe Basilan and then they would be kidnapped and held for ransom. That was going on even a few years ago. But I would say again as I mentioned in my discussion of Saigon when I was there in the capital. There was never a situation that was vaguely akin to the situation of our embassies in places like Iraq and Afghanistan where people could not go out without five cars and security. So, I would say we were advised not to go to these places, so we did not. That was mainly in the deep south of the country. And also, in places like Marawi, where there was a big Muslim university.

Q: Now at the Embassy what was your feeling about the atmosphere of the DCM? I think it was Lew Purnell when you first got there.

SALMON: Yes, Skip Purnell, his wife Til just passed away fairly recently. She was I think 102. He was fine, he was one of those no-nonsense foreign service officers. I got along very well with him. My immediate boss, Frazier Mead, the political counselor, certainly got along well with him. I think Sullivan thought of him fairly highly. But Purnell had to retire. He was a very senior one, an MC. He was replaced by Lee Stull who had mainly been in South Asia. He was the political counselor in Delhi and had run afoul of Ambassador Keating on whom he had sent a dissent message. He came out and did, I think, an excellent job. In the time he was there I helped one of the things we had a presidential visit. Just the way he managed things was I thought very admirable. His wife Betsy was very nice, and he was good to travel with. He had been in WWII and had been a glider pilot and had been captured. I guess it was in Crete, and he was a POW. I thought he was a very thoughtful man and a very nice man. So was Purnell.

Q: Now you mentioned December 1975, President Ford came out for a visit. I am sure the political section was thoroughly consumed.

SALMON: Well certainly Stull made me the assistant control officer, so I did a lot of work with him on the visit. That is where you know from your own experience when the White House advance teams descend on an Embassy it can be harrowing. I remember they were coming and suddenly at the last minute they changed plans. They were going to get there a day later or a day earlier, I forget which. Everything had been planned, including meetings. So, we had to scramble, and I learned something from that experience. Stull had just sent a cable saying changes proposed are manageable. That was it. The foreign visits turned out pretty well. You did not expect it. Henry Kissinger did not stay at the Presidential Palace where President Ford was going to stay. It was not big

enough. He was vocal about that but then he was shown the super Presidential Suite at I think it was at the Hyatt Hotel which later burned down. He was mollified. The trip went fairly well. Inevitably Marcos as we watched everything unfold and was on schedule. They went to Corregidor for that required trip. Then that is where things went a bit awry. Marcos insisted that the President travel with him for a while on the presidential yacht. Sure enough I guess Ford was very accommodating and Ford got on the yacht and the timetable was thrown off. Basically the trip was very successful. There were a lot of people. It was before my later boss Patt Derian was doing human rights under Carter and was going tooth and nail. She probably would have lost an effort to stop the trip, just like she did on the Mondale trip. In any event both trips went through.

Q: Now the Secret Service was pretty strict with Presidential visits. Did they approve of the yacht trip?

SALMON: Well, they approved it on the spot. The President wanted to do it. And maybe they had done some sub rosa site checking but I don't think so. You are right about the secret service. I encountered them when Vice President Bush visited New Zealand when I was DCM. They are very tough people to work with although if you manage them the right way, they can be very agreeable.

Q: Actually, this President Ford trip was part of an actual swing through Asia. I think he went to China, Indonesia, The Philippines and ended up in Japan. What was the basic purpose of the trip as you understood it?

SALMON: Of the Ford Trip. I believe he went on in the schedule he went on most notably to Indonesia. Where allegedly Kissinger gave Suharto the signal that we would not object to them going to go into Timor. That is the thing I remember the most from that Indonesian stopover. But I mean the general trip for us in the Philippines was support for Marcos. I haven't mentioned of course, and it hangs over the entire U.S. Filipino relationship; the Martial law after and before is the base issue. Our enormous presence at Subic and at Clark Air Force base. That was always going to be the Philippines trump card. Eventually Clark became less important. In fact, Sullivan had a grand scheme of ordering the relationship and maybe looking at Clark and basically getting out of Clark. But Subic was of course major. We saw all the problems of Clark solved in a two-hour eruption in Pinatubo, which covered Clark in lahar. But Subic was really very key and so that was something the Filipinos were always mindful of.

Q: Now you were saying the pol mil officer was part of the political section.

SALMON: The pol mil officer was a very good friend of mine. And I have lost contact with him in the last decade or so. He was a very able fellow, named Mike Connors. I had known him when he was the staff aid in IO and I was the staff aide in EAP. Sorry FE. Mike was up there. His office was next to Frazier's. He was a very able officer. He had known Sullivan in Laos and later on because of his interaction with the military he got appointed to the Polad job in CINCPAC although he was junior for it.

Q: Were there ongoing negotiations?

SALMON: Yes, the ongoing negotiations would always be people would get into trouble and the Filipinos always wanted to exercise jurisdiction, and we would fight that off. We had an Embassy lawyer who was an Air Force Lt. Colonel. All he did was basically argue with Philippine authorities about people who would really misbehave. In terms of ongoing negotiations, I remember when I was country director, we had an interim access agreement that we negotiated. I do not believe we had any active negotiations although we were doing studies. I remember for example if we had to leave the Philippines where we would go and there was a fairly big study on Tinian. But that is only what I remember there.

Q: Now you had interaction with Ambassador Sullivan. What did you think of his approach to Embassy issues?

SALMON: Well, he is a very smart man, a very experienced man. He knew how to handle people very well. He was good. I will just give you one example. At one time Bob Pringle and I were determined. I don't want to put the onus on Bob, but we decided we would have lunch with the Libyan charge who had just arrived in Manila. Mrs. Marcos had gone to Libya and hit it off with Qaddafi of all people. Sullivan had given us explicit instructions. No one was to deal with the Libyans. We had just violated that. I remember going to lunch with him. In the middle of the table course was a big arrangement of flowers which I should have known from 1930's movies where they put the microphone. The morning after our luncheon Bob, and I were called into Sullivan's office. He said I guess you know the Filipinos were recording your lunch. He gave us a transcript. He said, "Don't let that ever happen again. I thought I was petrified that this would be the end of my career. But I think Sullivan had a history in his own experience. I think when he was in The Hague as a political officer. I think he had some issues and the father of the DCM there, who was a good friend of mine supported him and he went on to be Averell Harriman's Special Assistant and then had the great career he enjoyed. Especially in the first Ambassadorship in Laos. I told that story when Bob Pringle was out to have his book launched at the University of the Philippines. His book they published his Islam in Asia book which was mainly on Indonesia. Bob had zero recollection and for me it was quite traumatic. My basic point is I think Sullivan was willing to give people their head. I think in a way he enjoyed the playing off of the political officers in the agency and our smallish political section. I thought we did much better and we didn't pay for our information. And now another, I was trying to think of something else. It was very pleasant to me and that one really frightening experience with flouting the chief of mission's directive. But he was. It was clear Sullivan wasn't, I don't think, as happy in Manila as he had been in Laos where he was really the famous field marshal avatar he adopted. I know he was not happy about going to Iran because I think he really wanted to go to Mexico, where his wife had been born. That didn't happen. When I look at the arc of his career, I am reminded of the eulogy Churchill had for Lord Curzon, "The morning was golden and the mid time was silver, but the evening was lead and each was polished after its fashion." Sullivan was very good at being with people. He was a master of singing Danny Boy at the right moment. And I remember when my parents came to visit

me, and we were at a reception. My father was enormously impressed about how Sullivan came up to him and my mother, and introduced himself. I think he was a good professional, and he ran a good Embassy. But he didn't have that kind of result that he thought he might have had in the Philippines.

Q: Now you remind me how there was much interaction between the American Embassy and other diplomatic missions?

SALMON: Oh yes. As I mentioned before I had very good contacts at the British Embassy and in fact we travelled together and when you get into your questions about the fall of Saigon that will begin my comments on that. Then very close relations with the Japanese Embassy. We always had monthly luncheons where the Japanese ordered Calrose Rice about which I knew very little. I had a good relationship with the Israeli Embassy, the number two there. At the French Embassy, we had the typical interaction with the various embassies including the Australian and Singaporean Embassy. I had a very close friend at the Singaporean Embassy. Who later was their Ambassador at the UN. And the Australian, many of the Australians which just reinforced my opinion which I had in Vietnam about if you are going to know what is going on in a country you are going to need to talk to other people you go the Singaporeans and the Australians. That was about it. The French were quite good on certain things.

Q: Now how big was the American Embassy?

SALMON: Oh, it was huge. I think we used to say it was the largest in the world. The mission until I think Egypt eclipsed it. It had an incredible number of people. The Veteran's Affairs section was a huge part. It had its own building. IRS all of the things you would associate with frankly supporting American citizens of whom many of the Filipinos had gone to the United States, become citizens and then had come back to the Philippines to enjoy their Social Security. So, it was a very big mission, and it also had I think a large station but my connection was just with people who were in the political section. I don't want to offer numbers, but it fell into I would say three or four hundred.

Q: Now did you have much interaction with the AID people?

SALMON: Yes, we did. Sometimes when we went down on our trips, we would go with an AID officer who would be looking at some of the AID projects in the area. One of the big ones was electrification in Mindanao and sadly we had a real tragedy at the Embassy. We had a plane crash in an afternoon storm, and we lost our economic counselor, our AID director, the counselor at the German Embassy and several other people. AID was one I knew very well, and I knew several of their officers and thought very highly of them.

Q: Now at the time you were in Manila, Saigon falls.

SALMON: Right.

Q: On April 30. Now you have already had a tour in Vietnam. How did this sudden change?

SALMON: We were having Codel that were coming to Manila and then going on to Saigon practically at the bitter end. I remember one with Senator Strom Thurmond and he was asking the Ambassador what was going on there Sullivan said he had just talked to Graham Martin and Graham Martin assured him that they should come ahead. Which is hardly surprising given the controversy over whether Martin was delusional in his assessment of the situation. That weekend I happened to be on a trip to Cagayan which was the home province of the Secretary of Defense Enrile. A British friend was driving his high-end Range Rover. And we were up there in the most dreadful hotel I have ever stayed in in my entire life. I think it was 40 people on a floor and all the Filipino workmen sharing rooms and one bathroom. It was just a nightmare. We came back and by that time of course I want to say you always imagine things but there bobbing off Manila Bay was the Blue Ridge. The Blue Ridge was the flagship of the seventh fleet. It had evacuated Ambassador Martin and the DCM. When I went in, I guess on the weekend or maybe in the week, our Embassy ballroom which was a big meeting place was in the typical American way setup with tables and people getting counseled about getting this and doing that. I ran into Graham Martin in an office up near the political section. I think he was with the DCM who was Wolfe Lehman. Martin looked just like a ghost. He was just traumatized. It seemed to me. Maybe I was overly imaginative, but I doubt it. Then of course old friends from Saigon began showing up. It was a "who's who" of the Army Navy Club. It was someone I had last seen swimming laps in Saigon in 1971. A businessman. Actually, I still see him here. And then my really good friend Eva Kim, I don't know if she has been recorded for this project but certainly somebody should. She was the long-time secretary to all the ambassadors in Vietnam and later Dick Holbrooke's secretary and then Mike Armacost's secretary when he was undersecretary for political affairs. Anyhow, she was there and some other people I know and one of the first things when we were there, I had a dinner at my house for some of my old Saigon group. But in terms of the assessment of the Philippines some of the sharper ones felt this was just a matter of time and the time was up. No other traumatic reaction I recall by the government.

Q: Now there was a tremendous inflow of Vietnamese picked up at sea and whether they were brought to the Philippines. How did the Embassy respond to that situation?

SALMON: I am not sure. I mean we had created a Reception Center up in Subic. I think it was called Grande Island. Some of my friends who were never fans of our involvement in Vietnam had a picture of Grande Island and it said this: where the light at the end of the tunnel ends or something nasty like that. I wasn't personally involved. That was our consular section and the people I guess they brought in. Of course, the Philippines was only one because we had a big center in Malaysia and in Hong Kong. I most remember the boat people from my time as Thai director because they were victims sadly of these Thai pirates whose behavior was just beyond imagination. It seemed to me out of character for the Thai that I knew fairly well.

Q: Your impression in handling and processing the refugees didn't particularly impact on the political section but it did impact on the consular section. Maybe AID?

SALMON: I know maybe some of my friends at the Embassy in organizations like Rotary, which was big in the Philippines. May have gone up there to try to volunteer. But I personally don't have any recollection of that. What I do have a recollection of, that was a little later and more connected to Cambodia, people calling me and trying desperately to get me to intervene with countries in Europe for visas for their family.

Q: I would suspect the French would be high on that list.

SALMON: Yes, I was in touch with some of the refugees and all, and they would send cables. But at that time everybody and his brother were trying to help people get out of Cambodia, and also out of Vietnam as you well know from people you have done with interviews like Parker Borg and Lionel Rosenblatt.

Q: I know Rosenblatt. When you were in The Hague we had the Hungarian Spring. People from the Embassy donated clothing and what you have in the Vietnamese situation. Throughout the mission did anybody get a spare coat or spare clothes?

SALMON: No, I do not remember that.

Q: Well, we were talking about Ford's visit in December '75. 1976 was the American bicentennial.

SALMON: I remember that well because Lee Stull was the Chargé, and we decided to have the big celebration in one of the new hotels. That had been built for the IMF meeting. Which later on was criticized with a lot of corruption involved. But it was of the big new hotels in the grand ballroom and Stull succeeded in persuading Mrs. Marcos to come. And so, she was there. It was just a very nice affair. Stull sent a cable, he was a good writer and had a good sense of humor. He began the cable with: "Danced with a lady last night," because he was dancing with Mrs. Marcos. I don't think that report went over so well in Washington. Our celebration was very successful. We had lots of Americans in the Philippines and practically everybody at the Embassy attended. It was just very nice. I took a lady from the Asian Development Bank who came from a very good family in Negros. Anyhow it was a very enjoyable evening.

Q: Do you remember anything special that the USIA did for the Bicentennial?

SALMON: We had a very good USIA group there. It was a big place. We had an 01 that ran it and another 01 was his deputy. I guess they did a lot of advertisement not that they would have needed to because the Filipinos were keen on it too. I don't remember exactly what they might have done, but it was a good, professional operation. I am sure they did a lot.

Q: Now in '78 you probably began thinking of your next assignment.

SALMON: Yes, in early '77 and maybe as early as '76 I began thinking of next assignments. My disposition is always not to be as proactive as some of my colleagues over the years. And accusing the department of Micawber-like tactics. Something will turn up. And then I had my own default position. I guess they would say something will happen. Well nothing really happened. I wasn't negotiating like I had done when I was in Saigon or what I was trying to do in The Hague. But I wanted to go to senior training. The area I thought most of was the National War College. I mentioned the National War College because when I was in the military myself, I would go to Fort McNair to go to the PX. I would see these people walking around with little badges and I wondered who they were. Somebody told me they are the students at the National War College with their badge ID. I didn't do anything specifically. I don't remember anyone talking to me about it. Suddenly about two or three weeks before I left the post I got the assignment for the National War College. I think it was one of those things where you have to be realistic about these things. They probably had some people drop out. And they had some spots, and I was there. And indicated that I wouldn't be averse to going to it. So that is how I got to the National War College. It was the old war college that was more relaxed in its approach to things. Not everybody had to write long papers.

Q: When did you start the War College?

SALMON: I would start in '77, toward the summer, and I graduated in the class of 1978. My war college trip was to West Africa visiting Nigeria, Senegal, Ivory Coast, and the Gambia. It was quite interesting because in Senegal we met the President Leopold Senghor, who of course is one the great authors, a part of the Negritude movement. He gave us a copy of his book and I think he was a member of the French Academy. In Ivory Coast I remember the very nice DCM Goodwin Cooke. He was married to Ambassador Riddleburger's daughter who was quite charming. Now Nigeria, in my recollection, ships in the harbor lined up for months to unload cargo because Nigeria was doing very well. But it was an interesting trip. The lectures in the War College were very good. Some are a little more controversial than others for some of the military. I am trying to remember his name, it was Paul Warnke. He was Assistant Secretary for ISA in DOD. It was during our big issue with Somalia and Russia. Which way would Somalia turn? Then he talked about how the Navy people needed more ships. What are we going to do there, have a regatta? My colleagues thought it was funny. I remember Paul Nitze spoke to us, a very distinguished voice from the past. A lot of admirals and generals. I remember it was a good lesson in dynamics because one of the admirals didn't like a question from one of my colleagues who was a very able Marine Corps officer, Lt. Colonel Hank Stackpole. And gave him a hard time and it was interesting to see how this whole class turned against this admiral in a very short time because he had gone after one of our colleagues. What else? I had good friends. My friend Dick Teare who succeeded me at both New Zealand and PACOM. There was Paul Taylor who went up to the Naval War College after he was Ambassador in Jamaica. I remember Bob Gray, he became Ambassador to Geneva. He had been in SS when I was in FE. No, we had some very good people. On the military side we had one fellow who became a four-star general, an Army man and in a way some of my most important friends there on the military side was this Marine Lt.

Colonel Hank Stackpole. Later when I went to PACOM he was a MARFORPAC, Marine Forces Pacific Commander. A three-star. Then I was a big supporter of his becoming the first Head of the Asia Pacific Center for Security Studies where I taught, from my retirement in '96 from the foreign service until my retirement in 2014 from APCSS. But a generally very impressive group. A lot of them had Vietnam experience and in those days I was fairly relaxed about the Soviet threat and so on, and nothing gets you back on track than arguing with someone who had been a submarine commander in the Aegean when Soviet submarines were trying to bump into his ship or he is trying to bump into theirs. It was a good group, and I am glad to have had that experience. Now in retrospect, if I had been more as we say in Hawaii "Akamai," - clever, I would have really tried for the Royal College of Defense Studies. Because as much as I like Washington, I would have preferred London.

Q: Now how was the Vietnam War handled in the War College in the '77 - '78 period.

SALMON: Well, you didn't hear too much questioning about it. It was close enough a lot of them, particularly air force people, had been in fights with North Vietnamese aircraft, allegedly some had been flown by Russians. I didn't hear any major negative criticism. The military were obviously not happy about the way things ended. They were realistic enough, no crying over spilt milk or whatever that is. They were very responsible in their comments on the war. There were a few of them who had a fairly high opinion of the State Department. And we were lucky we had a very good State Department group on the course as well as some good people from other agencies. We had a CIA rep in the course who was Tom Ahearn. Who later would be the station chief in Tehran and be captured during the take over of the Embassy. And be very badly treated by his Iranian captors. I think I just saw something about Ahearn in an interview in the Washington Post a few years ago. He lives out in suburban Virginia. He was a very nice fellow. Then we had some good people from AID and good people from DOD. It was a very gratifying year.

Q: Sounds like a good way to create a collegiate atmosphere for all

SALMON: Yes, it was. Although of course the most important thing in anybody's war college years is who wins the softball game with the Army War College. And in my year fortunately the National War College won the softball game. So everybody was very happy about that. The faculty were very interesting people. Some of them are still active. Do you know Harlan Ulman? He periodically has pieces in the paper. He was a Naval Officer. Had a house in Georgetown and married to a very nice British lady. He was a good friend of Admiral Mullen. He was one of our teachers. And then someone who knew a lot about the Chinese Navy, he was one of our teachers. It was a good, interesting faculty, and good people. So I really enjoyed it. For a lot of them coming from the Vietnam situation active military it was a little bit of a respite from which only could have been a harrowing period. But it was good.

Q: Now you mentioned international travel. Was there some internal travel within the U.S.?

SALMON: Yes, there was. We went down to the Naval Base down in Norfolk. We went down to Fort Bragg. I had been there for ROTC training in 1958. And so that was just about 20 years later and where I ran into an army officer, a Lt. Colonel, who I had gone to high school with. And so, it was each of the services you were visiting the army tried everything it could to make sure their class would be incredibly well treated by the hosts and so on. There was a typical military competitiveness, and it wasn't a lot of travel but enough to make it interesting. But as I say that is when they were cutting back on overseas travel. So I count myself very lucky to have gotten onto the African trip. You know in the old days of the war college I guess they had more money and more aircraft. Each class would go off to wherever their trip was in a military plane. And unfortunately, those days were over. But again, I think it was a good experience.

Q: So did that mean the trip to Africa was by commercial.

SALMON: Yes, we went commercial. I still remember I got into an argument with a stewardess over some minor matter and didn't react as well as I should have. Everybody was appalled. It was really uncharacteristic of me I must say. So, I must have been under enormous pressure. I remember another time I shared a room with David Newton who later became Ambassador to Yemen. He became very ill, a very nice fellow married to a German lady.

Q: This is great. Why don't we break off here because your next job is back in the department.

SALMON: The next job has its own little tale of interviewing. I did a lot of running around trying to meet people and get assignments and then finally the human rights assignment came, which turned out in every way to be very successful. Not at least at the end, where it got me my DCM-ship in New Zealand—much to the irritation of 22 people in front of me on the list.

Q: Well, let's get into that in our next session.

Q: Ok, back to our work. Today is April 25, and we are returning to our conversation with Ambassador Salmon. Now after Manila you got this assignment to the National War College. How did you get the assignment to the Bureau of Human Rights?

SALMON: You know this was in a way the first job I really had to try for because when I was getting ready to graduate from the War College I didn't have any specific assignment. To be honest, what appealed to me was an opportunity for supervision; it was a director's title. I knew it was a new bureau and as you recall from your time in NEA it was a Bureau that wasn't welcomed by too many others in their department. But anyhow it got down to jobs and I had one offer in EUR for a desk officer job which would have been quite good and set me up for a future assignment, maybe as a political counselor. But I didn't go after that. Then I was interviewed by some people in public affairs. I think

it may have been Frank Wisner and Chas Freeman but I am not completely sure. It was an office director's job in public affairs. Then I was interviewed by Patt Derrian, and as you may recall. She and Hodding Carter, the Assistant Secretary for Public Affairs, were very close, indeed they eventually got married. She made a big pitch for me to come to Human Rights and people were needed there. She was a very charismatic woman and very persuasive. So, I accepted the Office of Director of Human Rights.

Q: Just to put some background on this, this is the Carter Administration. Human Rights was to be one of their big pushes. They had seen it as a way to really draw a line against the Soviets. But being a new bureau they had to establish themselves, so you were one of the first catches.

SALMON: We had some very good officers I felt who did some of the regional work. We had a regional specialist for ARA and EUR for NEA and for EA. Of course, the human rights report which was already part of the system was the meat, in a way of the bureau's work early on. But of course most of that work was done with drafts overseas and then edited back in Washington and sometimes with HA and other bureaus about what should be in the report. Patt herself was a political appointee with a great deal of influence in some parts of the Democratic Party for her work on Human Rights when she was the wife of a doctor in Mississippi. Civil Rights I should say. And so of course the Carter administration had a whole theology of Human Rights. But it became clear early on when the human rights issue clashed with what could be called classical political issues, Human Rights went out the window. We had experience with this with Patt when she fought the Mondale trip to the Philippines and lost out. So it was a difficult time. I thought that my job was to rally the career people in the bureau. To try to get along with my old colleagues in various parts of the building. That was frankly not the view of some of my bosses, politically appointed deputy assistant secretaries, who frankly pined for arguments that they had a particular interest in. The whole issue, as it so often is, was personnel. Patt Derian was extraordinarily charismatic. She had political support throughout Washington. She brought into the bureau as her principal deputy, Mark Schneider, who came from Senator Ted Kennedy's staff. Schneider was extremely able. He later became Director of the Peace Corps, but he had a tremendous interest in Central and South America. Patt herself had a great interest in Argentina. We had a very good human rights officer there and the embassy, Tex Harris who was very active. Then she had access in the building to Frank Sieverts, who for years had been the expert on the International Red Cross. Then we had Steve Cohen who had been on the Clinton campaign. He was very interested in connecting with journalists in Washington. He had some good friends. He always seemed to be on the phone with them about issues. Then they were very good, the political people. At the NSC, the Human Rights person was Jessica Mathews. Jessica was the daughter of the very famous historian Barbara Tuchman. In any event, it was a mix of all of these people and issues coming down to a human rights report. You remember you were in NEA and probably had some contact with the DCM at the Israeli embassy, Benjamin Netanyahu. Young then, I guess in his 30's, and I remember him coming over with his Ambassador trying to convince Patt to water down the Israel Human Rights Report. This was because of a lot of the good reporting we were getting from our Consul General in Jerusalem about the human rights

violations. Then looking over everything in a way was the inter agency which was chaired by the deputy secretary. Warren Christopher who was as you might guess a very nice man and very judicious. And had very much of a lawyer's instinct in every case of a human rights violation. Issues had to be judged on a case by case basis. We won some of the issues in his committee but lost a lot of them. Again in terms of the personnel I think it is so important to understand the beginning of that bureau, Patt had excellent relations personally with many of her assistant secretary counterparts, except with a notable exception, Richard Holbrooke, the Assistant Secretary for East Asia. Human Rights was a cause that gave us energy. I was personally involved in the task of preaching the policy at these public affairs meetings they conducted in various parts of the country and visits to university campuses with a team of people. I remember going on one trip to Washington state with Mike Armacost, who was then the Deputy Assistant Secretary in EAP, and some other people. I did some personal travel to Europe with an interdepartmental group headed by Jim Goodby. And you mentioned again about Europe and that was an important part and of course with the CSCE basket 3 as I recall being so important we did use Eastern Europe. It was a convenient place to beat up on the Human Rights issue. I remember once going to the old GDR in East Berlin and talking to the apparatchiks there with this group.

Q: You have described the deputy assistant secretary lineup. Which deputy assistant secretary did your office of human rights report to?

SALMON: To Mark Schneider who was the principal deputy. Later on when Mark left when Senator Kennedy decided he would challenge Carter in the primaries, Mark left to join the Kennedy campaign. He was replaced by a really outstanding career officer you may remember from NEA, Steve Palmer. Palmer became our Deputy Assistant Secretary and in his way at the higher levels he was trying to do what I was doing and that is get our relationships with other parts of the building more regularized and more civil if you will. There was another lady in the bureau. She became a Deputy Assistant Secretary. She came from a human rights NGO in New York. Roberta Cohen who was absolutely terrific. Terrifically bright and was a fighter for human rights. She was very active after I had left. She would describe her relationships with people in EUR. She felt that some of them were - I don't think she said - prejudiced, but that was the inference. Instead of Roberta they would call her Rachel. That mistake got her. Roberta eventually married a very traditional and successful foreign service officer David Korn. She accompanied him when he was chargé in Ethiopia and then in an Embassy in West Africa. I wanted to emphasize the personnel aspect was so important in what was going on in the bureau. Patt herself. I am sorry I am talking too much.

Q: Well I am going to ask, there you are the director of the office of human rights. Give us a feel for how many were under you and their connection.

SALMON: Yes, as I remember there were at least eight officers and we had staff assistants too. I guess we had at least one or two. But we had career officers as I mentioned before. We had some doing Latin America. I remember we had Patt Flood who was a very good officer and very committed to the issues we had for NEA when I

first took over. His name was Ollie Wright. He had been there for a while and clearly resented my coming in as director. We had Bob Maxim who did Africa and did indeed accompany Patt on a trip to South Africa where unfortunately she became ill and had to go back. We had an EUR later on we had John Glassman who had come I believe from the EUR and took a very EUR view of human rights. But he was very original and began to peddle the notion of Human Rights confidence building measures. HR, CBM and then we had Bob Jacobs. There was another fellow who came from the EA bureau. A very nice fellow. And a few others who were very much interested in the issue. We had also in connection with the White House we had the public affairs person, Mary Hanley. She had been very active in the campaign and had been a supporter of Morris Udall in the internecine wars of the Democratic Party and was excellent and had great contacts. When Deng Xiaoping visited Texas, remember the hat that covered his eyes. She went down to cover that. So those were some of the officers. They were all committed in their own way. Some were quite ideologically committed. Those were the people I dealt with. Barbara Bowie I remember came in from the NSC staff and handled economic affairs. It was a very talented group of people but it was not easy for them to get along with people in the other bureaus who frankly resented HA and I think some of them probably resented the policy it was supposed to represent.

Q: Along those lines was there any one particular bureau that gave a lot of push back?

SALMON: Yes and you would imagine it was the EA bureaus on issues certainly the Philippines. But also in Indonesia, Holbrooke was certainly energetic and able, but he was adept at switching his own views. He just didn't seem to get along with Patt at all. The EUR bureau was very civilized and temperate; its assistant secretary was then George Vest. I don't recall but in any event Patt's personal relations with the assistant secretaries were very good. But I think they used personal relationships with the Secretary to defang HA.

Q: Now, in this time frame, you started in 1978. 1979 starts off with recognizing China. Is that in fact on HA?

SALMON: Not really, because, as I recall, we didn't have the expertise and because it was obviously a priority of the administration. I don't think anybody wanted to go after China. It had been terra incognita for most of the department for a long time except for the China experts in EAP and INR. You were probably in NEA at the time. The Iran hostage taking impacted everything. So with everybody in the department at warp speed to make any progress they could on this issue And I remember Patt Derien using her human rights contacts and international contacts to see whatever one could gather on the hostage crisis.

Q: Now also one of the big items at this time is the Vietnamese boat people and that whole Southeast Asia thing. Did your office get deeply involved in refugee issues?

SALMON: Yes, well actually part of and it wasn't one I was involved with personally. One of the beginnings of HA was the refugee issue. That was an issue. I mentioned Frank

Seiverts who had been in the department a long time, and was very good. He had an enormous effect on the people he dealt with. They were obviously very involved in the refugee issue. We had again I would have to go back to where the book says something. There was a special ambassador for refugees that I think was a political appointee at the time. But my experience with the boat people or what became the boat people was later on when I was in the Thailand office, as the director of Thai Affairs, where we had the terrible issue of the Thai pirates attacking the poor people trying to get out. No, but refugees were a big part of the Bureau but not I think as an issue that Patt herself was engaged in as she was engaged in more of the political issues like mothers of the Plaza de Mayo in Argentina. And the issues relating to apartheid in South Africa and the Marcos martial law regime.

Q: Now, you were mentioning this is a new office. So, you are building a relationship with the rest of the building. We were talking about some pushback. Do you have at the top of your mind an illustration of pushing back on HA issues. With one or another bureau?

SALMON: Oh yes, as I mentioned I think Holbrooke being the bureaucratic dynamo that he was. We had a lot of pushback from EA. The other issue that obviously was there was Korea. There was a lot of concern about the human rights situation in Korea. One of those things that seemed to me that no one wanted at least outside of HA wanted to rock the boat. But that was one of the things that Patt did, and did very well. She had so many contacts in the Human rights community and beyond. They were constantly appearing in the bureau. I remember sitting in one meeting at the bureau with Joan Baez, hearing her take on various issues. Patt took all the meetings very seriously and just added to her general feeling of what were the problems. And Patt also had a bureaucratic instinct. She insisted that she have an office on the sixth floor like most of the other assistant secretaries. And finally they carved out a space at the end of the building that fronted on 123rd St. I had a smallish office but a great view of the mall. And one of the things only assistant secretaries had was a private bathroom. Patt insisted that she have one too and they somehow carved it out of the building. Then she decorated her office in a modern style unlike the pedestrian styles you see in the long established bureaus. So she did have a good bureaucratic instinct and she used her connections and her personal charm to get things running more quickly than someone without her ability.

Q: You know you were saying earlier that this job also gave you some opportunity to do some traveling. Was most of that overseas or was it in the U.S.

SALMON: A lot was in the U.S. and a lot was promoted by that office in public affairs that answers requests for speakers. In those days as later as when I was on the Philippines desk it was a popular subject. We had many invitations for speakers, I guess the department did. So I was sent out to Purdue University to speak on a Sunday and somewhere in the South to speak as I mentioned before I went on a trip with Armacost to the West Coast to talk to groups about human rights. Human rights was my specialty on this panel. So there was that, and the foreign travel as I mentioned before too was with this team led by Jim Goodby with John Kornblum, later our Ambassador to Germany, and a few other people. I went on a stand alone trip to Berlin to participate in some

conference. So there was opportunity. Oh, and I went to Chicago to be on a radio show. And then to give a backgrounder for the editorial board of the Chicago Tribune. I did the same thing - I went to the University of Michigan to talk there and have an editorial board meeting with the Detroit Free Press. So there was travel and that made it interesting.

Q: Human rights being so new, what did your domestic audiences think?

SALMON: Well, the young people were very amenable to the message or the gospel. Older people had questions about "is this really practical, can we really change behavior?" We learned a lot and obviously the script was speeches by President Carter. Speeches by various other people I guess in the department. The Secretary when there was a speech he would have a paragraph on human rights. And then, of course, we did a lot which was actually enormously broadening in my own experience about analyzing the UN, UN provisions on human rights so there were writings we could draw on to push our point. I mean the point was always on the hustings was how can the United States impose its values. And then the answer would always be the various people who had signed the UN charter had signed on to these human rights provisions and then later adopted these various covenants, civil and political rights. I have to say I never encountered hostility or incidents that could become unpleasant in our public addresses and interactions with the public and the students in particular.

Q: Talking about your travel I would say this one of Patt Derian's coups because normally a bureau didn't have that much travel money. So she obviously...

SALMON: Well our money came there was that program in public affairs, outreach or whatever they called it also for bureaucratic reasons Patt's later husband Hodding Carter who was there until he resigned with Vance. He was very supportive of the bureau and clearly the funds under public affairs to pay for these various expeditions to the heartland. They were always very accommodating and helpful. Now, this sometimes on the bad side they took on too many requests and they didn't vet some of them. I remember being dispatched one evening to Wilmington, to the University of Delaware where I was assured to have an audience of 100 or 200 people, students. When I showed up there was one person there to meet me and so we did a little shuffling up and down and finally when I went to the place I was supposed to speak there were eight people there. And I thought I was being ingenious and basically told them to bring up these little student desks in a circle, and we had a seminar instead of a major student address. Coming up on the train and coming back on the train was fun although I don't know how president Biden when he was a Senator was able to commute every day to Wilmington.

Q: On April 24 the U.S. tried a rescue mission with the hostages that didn't come out and Vance resigned. Did any of that impact on...

SALMON: Well it impacted Patt personally because her soon to be husband Hodding Carter resigned with Vance - as a sign of solidarity. He was the Spokesperson and Assistant Secretary for Public Affairs. But interestingly his successor, you recall, was

Senator Ed Muskie. He brought a lot of his own senatorial staff or at least some of them. Patt I think rolled with that particular punch. I can't say what her relationship with Vance was. Personally as I say Christopher I think she worked more with him bureaucratically. But anyhow we seemed to make the adjustments but by that time I was getting ready to leave. I think I told you and I don't want to jump ahead but the whole point of the human rights job, I wanted the supervisory experience and the excitement of being in a bureau that had been carved out from various parts of the department. And trying to use my own bureaucratic abilities such as they were to give us a little better footing within the building. But in a certain sense the most important part of my human rights job was that Patt was a wonderful person and always asking if she could do something for you. I remember when she went to Pakistan she called back and I asked her to pick me up a rug. She did it. She was a wonderful person. The new Ambassador designate to New Zealand was a lady named Ann Martindell. She had been head of the office of disaster relief. She came out of the Jersey Senate and was a very wealthy woman; she had supported Carter early on and was later the ambassador to New Zealand. Patt knew I was getting ready for a new transfer and asked if I would be interested in meeting Ann Martindell who was going to be Ambassador to New Zealand. I said well of course. The rest of the story was that there were 23 people on the DCM list. And they were all at grade which was FSO-2 in the old nomenclature. So I went and interviewed with Ambassador Martindell. And we hit it off. So I got the job in New Zealand as DCM. Which was one of my happiest assignments. I owe it all to Patt Derian and her political connections with Ann Martindell. So that was whatever frustrations I had during the job, everything worked out in the end.

Q: That brings us to the fact that a DCM goes through the extra training that FSI provides. In the DCM course. Were you able to take that course?

SALMON: Oh yes. I took the DCM course. It was a very good one. We had some off site thing, I believe it was West Virginia. We had a speaker, Roz Ridgway. I forget what her position was but she just gave a terrific talk. She is an extraordinary diplomat. So it was a good course. One of my colleagues in the course I recall was Peter Burleigh, who was later director general of the foreign service or deputy. He was going off to Nepal where he had been a Peace Corps volunteer, there was Bob Houdek, who was going to Africa as DCM in Kenya. There was Ted McNamara who was going to be DCM in Kinshasa. And a variety of other talented people, many who were more talented than I. But it was a very good, well-organized course. We went down to the Farm to get a little propaganda from our pals in the agency. It was a great course.

Q: Was it all classwork?

SALMON: Oh no, I mean it was this interactive stuff where you were presented with scenarios and you negotiated something. They are always, of course, recorded on video I guess somewhat primitively when you think back to those days. Now it really kept your interest throughout the whole thing. I guess so many courses that begin with that traditional mandatory Myers Briggs test where you get your profile. The amazing news is foreign service officers have an extremely high aesthetic sense according to this test,

which I would not have thought was the case. It was a well designed course and I am sure it got better all the time. FSI was, I think, a great institution in the department.

Q: My understanding was there was some role playing and whatnot in the sense that you are the DCM with a new Ambassador. You work together. That new Ambassador comes even when you have been in charge. The issue is how do you handle the new ambassador?

SALMON: Well that was exactly what ambassador Ridgway in her talk to the group mentioned. Her first DCMship was somewhere in the Caribbean. She knew the Ambassador. He chose her and they would work together. But she was saying how careful one had to be and I think she came up with it and other people used it too. You had an unwritten contract with the Ambassador that this is what you are expected to do and you will do it. Then you develop that basic personal relationship as you go on. And if you do it the right way you continue to go on and if you don't do it the right way you get out. Must say I found this very useful. Jumping ahead I had a career officer as my Ambassador in Burma but I had political ambassadors when I was DCM in New Zealand.

Q: Well that finishes off the DCM course. You want to break off now?

SALMON: Yes I think we have set it up for the next session in the sense you should be very honest and this is a perfect example of personal interactions and connections helping to get you a job that you might not have gotten because you weren't at grade and not considered. As I understand, I think there are about 22 people on the DCM list who are all senior to me. Needless to say, a lot of them were quite unhappy about my securing the job. Yes, I think this would be a fine time to stop the clock and then move on to my New Zealand time. With two ambassadors. First with Martindell the lady who chose me a liberal Democrat and then with her successor Monroe Brown who came in with the Reagan Administration and was a protégé of Attorney General Meese from California and was very conservative. And the whole issue of negotiating the transfer from one political ambassador to another.

Q: OK let's stop the clock as you say.

Q: Good afternoon, everybody. It is the 29th of April and we are returning to our conversation with Charlie Salmon. You were saying you had the advantage of the DCM course but weren't you saying that Martindell actually interviewed you?

SALMON: She interviewed me and despite the fact that she had 20 other people on the list she chose me and then she got me. Of course, Holbrooke always had to have his fingers on it. Holbrooke approved her choice. So that was it. I arrived in New Zealand, and she was there and I was there for about two weeks and then she left. Which I guess shows her confidence in me or her ignorance of how things worked. The week she left we had a visit of the warship Truxtun, and that was beginning to be a big issue in our

relationship with New Zealand. Whether we would accept the visits of Naval ships without certification that they were not carrying nuclear weapons. That began creeping in there in the parliament during the Conservative prime ministership of Robert Muldoon who was there all the time I was there. Anyhow it became a major issue when the labor government came in. My successor as DCM, Dick Teare, would have to cope with it. The day the Truxtun came we would not give any statement about whether it was nuclear armed. That resulted in a nationwide strike. The unions were quite strong, very left wing. To be honest I think some of them were quite anti-American. And so the Unions struck and the first victim was the inter-island ferry service, between the North and the South island. And that went out for a while. I always remember the NZ military had some great name for the exercise you take when something like that happens. That was called Operation Neptune. It had the military involved in the restoration of the ferry service. For a modest demonstration, the first one I had at my home in Karori where the DCM lives. They had a low red brick fence around the property. The demonstrators came while I was away and wrote the letters "Truck Off Fuxtun." In any event, that was the beginning of my time in New Zealand. I had fallen into a bit of a baptism of fire. But all went well. The Embassy had very good relations with the New Zealand government at all levels. And that had been the case really since the war and the ANZUS alliance.

Q: It sounds like your public affairs officer was probably pretty busy too,

SALMON: Yes, we had a public affairs officer. Yes, he was busy as well as our Consul General up in Auckland. I would say that the majority of informed public opinion was basically pro-U.S. and considered this strike a momentary inconvenience.

Q: Just to set up the situation, the Embassy is in Wellington. And you have a consulate in Auckland. Both of those are in the north island.

SALMON: But we have a consular agent in Christchurch. We had a very good consular agent who has been there forever. With great contacts. So that is how we covered the south island.

Q: Now you were saying your own residence was pretty good. What did the Embassy look like?

SALMON: The Embassy was a newish building in a new area with not the most imaginative architecture in the world, but it was very nice and had lots of rooms and a considerable amount of parking right downtown. You could walk right downtown. I did often walk to the parliament or walk to the Foreign Ministry or walk to the Wellington Club where I did a lot of entertaining. No, it was a good embassy. The theory I was told was that the DCM's house was in an area called Karori which was about a ten-minute drive to the embassy where the Ambassador's house was in an area called Lower Hutt, which was about 15 minutes from the Embassy. The idea was there would be two places because Wellington was in an earthquake fault zone and they were very worried about a possible earthquake. Indeed, when visiting the Truxtun they showed whatever the sonar device is, you could see the actual fault line that went through Wellington.

Q: Interesting because they had had some pretty strong earthquakes.

SALMON: Oh, they have had terrible earthquakes in the south island, the Christchurch earthquake. They had a very bad earthquake in the late 20's in the last century in a town called Napier in the north island, about 150-200 miles from Wellington. It was completely destroyed.

Q: Now you were saying you arrived at post and the Ambassador left very shortly thereafter. You're Charge; how well plugged in are the econ and political officers?

SALMON: They were an admirable country team. I think there was a little resistance to me personally because I was younger and not what they had expected, a more senior person. We had a very good political counsellor, Dick Dols. He had a lot of African experience, and was an Air Force veteran. He flew a C-130. We had Dick Imus; he was our econ counselor. They were very good. We had a good group of military attaches. The secret to their success and mine derivatively was we had these excellent relationships with the New Zealand Foreign Ministry, Defense Ministry, bureaucracy whatever you want to call it. And we had instant access, a spirit of cooperation, you don't often see. I have served in enough places but I think that is somewhat uncommon. We had a larger relationship, we had several disagreements generally over trade issues. Then as I said the nuclear ship became a really big issue, the entire issue which led to New Zealand's withdrawal from ANZUS. In any event the thing about New Zealand was that it was a small country. I think the population was about 3,000,000 while I was there. But their foreign service and their defense force were so small, their bureaucracy were all outstanding talents. They could have been competitive anywhere. You know given the relationships to Britain you had an appropriate number of Rhodes scholars or people who had studied in England. I shouldn't be surprised about this. My first contact with New Zealand was the DCM in Saigon in 1969. Hugo Judd who later went on to be Ambassador to Russia and then staff Secretary to the Governor General. In Manila my good friend was Roy Ferguson. The New Zealanders had just opened an Embassy in Manila. Roy had just married an American wife, Dawn, who was there. Roy and I became fast friends. In New Zealand he was Special Assistant to the Foreign Minister and facilitated some of the more difficult things I had to deal with.

Q: Yes, ANZUS.

SALMON: Frankly some genius said that Japan should be included and make it JANZUS. But indeed before I went out to Wellington we had an ANZUS meeting in Washington. Washington was the host. My old friend Hugo Judd from Vietnam was then the Deputy Chief of Mission at the Embassy in Washington and his then wife Catherine who was the founder of a New Zealand political party, a conservative one, was very active in the media and I remember her covering this ANZUS meeting. That was the first example of an agreement we eventually had where American dependents in those days—we were speaking of dependent wives—could get jobs in the local economy. They were

very well qualified, and we did the same thing for the New Zealanders in Washington. I guess those agreements are pretty standard now in any embassy.

Q: Actually, that was quite a thing at the time because wives were really very secondary to the whole—

SALMON: That is right. Yet there was so much talent especially in a place like New Zealand where there was no language barrier. Or anything like that. They began working in teaching and working in other full-time jobs.

Q: Now you are watching the Parliament as well as the Foreign Ministry. Did you have contacts with the Parliamentary leaders?

SALMON: This is when I was thankful for my experience in a place like The Hague where I covered the parliament. I tried to avoid the great temptation of DCMs to be political counselors. If they aren't political officers, but I did attend parliament meetings when there was some big issue and I made a point of trying to meet most of the Parliamentarians. I guess I gravitated to the labor side because the national party was pretty safe in terms of their attitudes to the U.S. Well, some of the labor people were really sound, there were some of the younger labor members I would characterize as really quite a bit extreme. Now in New Zealand extremes are relatively moderate. Then there were some what I would call trade unionists members of parliament who were really very agreeable even though they had to be sometimes critical of U.S. policy. No, so I got to know the Parliament very well. It was a small one. I think when I was there, there were only about 90 members of the lower house and so it was again as I said within walking distance from the Embassy. I would go down there and then I would meet some of the parliamentarians and take them to lunch, usually at the Wellington Club. Which was one of those old fashioned men's clubs, it excluded women, but it was a good place for your representation money to go further. The parliamentarians, especially the labor people, loved to go to the Wellington Club. And truth be told because it doesn't reflect well on me because Martindell could not be a member. She also couldn't play golf at the big golf club except on Tuesdays with the Canadian high commissioner. But the minute the Ambassador left I roared over there and applied for membership. And as I said it was a nice place and your representational dollar went much further than it did in the local restaurants.

Q: Now what was the international community like, the other embassies, and whatnot.

SALMON: Oh, yes. I remember the Japanese DCM. I interacted a lot with him. The European embassies I interacted with. Because I was chargé relatively frequently, and I got to know the ambassadors chiefs of mission better than I guess one would expect. And the British high commissioner was a good friend, Sir Richard Stratton. He had been in Zaire with a colleague, Walt Cutler, with whom I had served in Vietnam. The one aspect of it that was tiresome if you let it be, but I never did. The foreign chiefs of mission had a tendency to entertain one another non-stop. But I thought there were some pretty good people. From the ASEANS I became a very good friend of a Singaporean and a

Malaysian. The Malaysian went on to become a representative to the first green conference in Rio many years ago and I got to know a good friend at the Philippine Embassy. Then also we had a dining group or a lunch group to be more direct. It had various names, but you had New Zealand press people and then people from the various embassies and Foreign Ministry. I should have mentioned the Australian DCM, Geoff Bentley, was one of my closest contacts. He was later Australian Ambassador to Russia.

Q: Now you were there right after the United States recognized China. How did the diplomatic community accept that?

SALMON: Well, some of them were very pleased and a lot of them had long relationships with China. We got the Embassy opened up and also there was a sub rosa language program which the Chinese were participating in New Zealand. They just came on the scene and you treated them like others, I think I told you when we talked about The Hague when the Chinese finally got out on the circuit and in our diplomatic lunch group, all of them showing up at the same time in their Mao suits and all of our people at the agency who had never had any interest in these luncheons at all came out in waves. We had to cut back, because and, like iron filings to magnets, the various agency people would gravitate to this or that Chinese person. It was pretty much the same I guess in New Zealand, being a very common-sense people they wondered why we didn't have normalization a long time ago. But they were glad it was done.

Q: Now a bane of any embassy is high Ranking American visitors. I suspect that New Zealand is not quite on the primary visitor's circuit. Did you have much in the way of codels?

SALMON: We did. Our biggest visit of course that was under Monroe Brown was Vice President Bush and that was a huge visit for a small Embassy like New Zealand. We did get the Secretary of State obviously when he came out for ANZUS. That was early on in Haig's tenure. On the Codel side—and the New Zealanders were extremely hospitable—we had speaker O'Neil and a very large delegation that came, if you can believe it, over Easter Weekend. And the poor New Zealanders had to scramble to give them a parliamentary lunch on Good Friday. Not that I suspect they were all that religious but I really thought it was outrageous that O'Neil and company would be asking for that. The New Zealander were just great hosts and individual members got along. Although I remember and I think it is a very good comment on our managing Codels and visits to practically every embassy, one of the wives of one of the codel members said, "Oh these people do so much for us, and when they come to Washington, we hardly do anything." I think that is very true. I noted that I felt that in terms of our codel in countries where English is not the main language and they are not Anglo Saxon. It was always interesting for me to see how little empathy the American codel members demonstrated for their hosts in the host country. I think our people lost a lot by not cultivating that kind of relationship. I suspect with the advent of new people in Congress, and younger people that is no longer the issue it was. But in my day it was quite noticeable even in a place like New Zealand.

Q: You arrived at post and then Ambassador Martindell departed. Was that your basic interaction with her? She would come and go.

SALMON: She was a hard worker when she was there. And she was popular in a way if I may say so with the more cultivated members of the New Zealand government; they really liked her and she went out of the way to have them for dinner. But also she had a bit of a hard row to hoe because she made some facetious comment about Prime Minister Muldoon, who frankly I suspect didn't like the idea of a woman ambassador especially a democratic left wing especially when he had dealt when he had dealt so effectively, that is to say getting him to do what we wanted with Armistead Selden who was Ambassador there for six years prior to Martindell. He was a member of Congress from I believe it was Alabama who lost his seat so he was rewarded with the Embassy there and parlayed it into six years. He has a whole group of partisans who never really took to Martindell nor she to them, that is for sure. They found a group listed on the Embassy guest list for years, basically out in the cold and a new group coming in. That was a bit of an issue and it was still an issue for me when Monroe Brown took over.

Q: Now the interesting part of this is that your time as DCM in New Zealand overlaps with an American election. November, 1980. Now in China and other places the public affairs people put on a big show of following the election returns.

SALMON: Yes, we did the same thing. In the embassy in the meeting room, such as it was in those days, there was a big election watch party. But it was of course set to be a blowout for President Reagan. You could tell it was not a happy place for Martindell to be because she knew this was the end of her diplomatic career, at least for the time in New Zealand. But she handled it well. Then this is also you may recall, David, during that time when Reagan came in a lot of people, the political appointees especially but also some career people were just given like 16 days to vacate and move on. That was going to be the case. Her former husband had somehow been a supporter in the primary of Secretary Haig. She went to her former husband and I remember I did the draft of the letter she said he should send to his good friend Al Haig. He did that and then she also had a niece who was working for Senator Percy on the foreign relations committee. I think he was chair at the time. So she got him to weigh in on her behalf and basically she wanted to be sure that she could stay on until I believe it was the end of June. Which is a significant amount of time in a new administration, There was an economic delegation coming through of business people headed by her son. She wanted to be there for that. The point was that it worked and she was able to stay. As I mentioned to you, New Zealanders are really world class. I would say the permanent head of foreign affairs, permanent head of defense, permanent head of the Prime Minister's department. A lot of the big cultural figures really gave her a great send off. Great farewell. So, she could take satisfaction in spite of the fact that the administration had changed.

Q: She left, Charlie you are breaking up.

SALMON: At that time I remember, we had a Deputy Assistant Secretary you may remember;; she was very young, one of Holbrooke's appointees, Ginger Liu.

Q: Yes.

SALMON: Ginger Liu when she came out on an official visit and she basically said, "Now don't worry if Brown gets rid of you, we will get you another job." Well, that is about as useful as I don't know what. Fortunately he came out and we made the transition very well. It was not without some drama. When I learned of his appointment on the program called Morning Report. It was a political program and I used to listen to it at breakfast because Prime Minister Muldoon should begin their morning with a morning report. Suddenly who is on the radio but Ambassador Monroe Brown being interviewed by this very sharp New Zealand news correspondent, Connie Long, about his appointment to New Zealand which of course we didn't even have agreement for. There it is on the news. I had to call my friend Roy Ferguson at the Foreign Minister's office. I said I really have to talk to the minister, and I went right ahead, and I said, "Mr. Minister, I am so sorry but we jumped the gun and Ambassador Brown was on the radio this morning" and anyhow that was the beginning. Then jumping up a little we had an ANZUS meeting in New Zealand later that year and it was clear that Brown would not be confirmed. He would not be there for the meeting and he would miss out because the next one would be in Canberra in Australia and the next one in the U.S. and the next one would be back in Wellington. I made the decision that he really should have the opportunity to participate in ANZUS, even though of course this might have been my great moment. I went to him and suggested that this would be a good idea and I talked to the Foreign Minister. I said he could come out incognito. The minister thought it was a good idea, which it was. It broke some of our rules. I recall, Deputy Foreign Secretary Whitehead was amazed that we didn't have any turnover time between the new ambassador and the old ambassador. So Brown came out for that ANZUS meeting. I think it was a good decision on my part and a good decision on the New Zealanders' part, to get him out there early. The ANZUS meeting went very well although it was interesting to see Secretary Haig's immediate entourage. I was allowed to sit in their morning staff meeting. I frankly was appalled with the infighting. Especially when they are away from Washington when some of their colleagues are back in the U.S. That is an aside.

Q: Well trying to get a window on Washington. What were some of the issues that were swirling around this group?

SALMON: Oh, it was why Assistant Secretary Lane was doing this. And was not doing that and so the assistant said he wanted to travel here. One of them was that it was not a good idea. Haig who had been agnostic about the whole thing and to see clearly pushed in the direction of that is not a good idea. It was frankly quite petty but it was interesting not to mention one of his party lost his top secret briefing book. The New Zealanders gave it back. They were great friends and great allies. I can't believe the whole thing wasn't copied quickly and then returned to us.

Q: Now Martindell leaves post in May of '81. And you are chargé again and Brown comes in August which means you were in charge of the July 4th party again. How did you set up that festive event?

SALMON: Well, we had two events like many embassies. We had an event in the embassy reception room. It was where you have champagne, and you have a toast. The senior government officials took precedence. You have the host give the toast and then you let the chiefs of mission and then you have other people. Then we had an outfit called the New Zealand American Association. They were always complaining that the Americans weren't as interested as they should be in this association. It was frankly these people, the demographic was I would say in the 70's and so. They all remembered the war and the friendship. They were resentful that the Americans weren't as supportive as they should be. I think they had a point, and I remember the commercial distances that were represented there. There were frankly so many national days. I thought we did a good job for the U.S. It was a much smaller celebration than I remember at other embassies in a place like Manila where you have or even when I was in Laos when I was there. Again that was always one of the problems with these national days. Even in a smaller place there are enough of them that the Ambassador can't go to all of them. There is always some silent resentment why they have to put up with it. In my case that was when I was chargé there was no one else. That was one aspect of the social issues there. We also had, as you will remember on all of our posts, we always had a Marine ball. That was always a big event and a very nice event I must say. The Marines always went out of their way to make sure this was the biggest and the best. Usually they were very good and very nice.

Q: Now you were picked by Martindell to be her DCM. Now you have a new non-career ambassador chosen by the other political party. How did you begin your relationship with him?

SALMON: As I mentioned I got him brought out for the ANZUS meeting and everybody deferred to him as the Ambassador in waiting. As I said the New Zealanders were happy I did this and the foreign minister was very flexible in terms of having him around there. He could be a difficult person to be honest and could be fiercely pro Reagan. He got the job, his friend Ed Meese at that time I think he was chief of staff or counsellor whatever it was became the attorney general. Brown got the job and was a big fan of Reagan. I started out remembering what you are supposed to do from the DCM course, establishing some contract with the Ambassador. This was totally terra incognita for him just as it was for Martindell. But a little more for him because he spent most of his time in California as a business person. Anyhow, I said my job was to, as I told him, my job for Ambassador Martindell, my job was to make him a hero. He loved hearing that. Basically, I did try to do that. Occasionally because of this presence for what I would call the old guard from Ambassador Selden's time they had come up with a dossier if you will of all the comments Martindell had made that they thought were at variance or somehow critical of Reagan. So, we had some disagreement over one thing or another and he presented that to me. I said, Well I did all I could to moderate the Ambassador's comments just as I will do for you, but if you do not believe in me or trust me, I didn't say I will go. He said, "No.

He didn't read the cables." I read the cables and basically suggested, I remember when Shirley Temple Black came out, she was out at the time, when the deputy secretary Stoesel, the poor fellow who was Ambassador to Moscow died of cancer from the Soviet listening devices. When Haig was dumped he took over. Shirley Temple was out and was eclipsing his visit. She was there at the same time. She said to Brown Monroe, I hope you are reading the cables. I guess she had been Ambassador to Czechoslovakia. He had a very portentous way of speaking. I let Charlie do that. She said Monroe you are making a mistake; you have to read them yourself. The problem was when he would read the cables, he would forget what he had read that was classified and what he could talk about which was unclassified. It was not a good thing. Eventually he realized how onerous reading all these cables even in a little place like Wellington so I did that. He had his own interest. He raised horses and that is a great aspect to New Zealand society. I remember going to the races with him. And had a big group of friends as one would expect a fairly well-to-do business person to raise horses too. He was respected by the government. They respected him because he was supposedly close to the President. In point of fact, he may have known the president vaguely but the one who was really close to the president was his colleague in Australian Bob Nesen. I remember one of the President's aides told me that when Nesen and his wife came back on leave they were immediately invited to lunch by the president and Mrs. Reagan, while Monroe and his wife were not. His wife by the way, Mary Frances, was a lovely lady, and I think a little bit intimidated by her husband over the years, certainly intimidated by what life was like as the ambassadress. But I was very supportive of her and she was grateful for that and he was grateful to me for being supportive of her. So from that perspective of interpersonal relationships it worked out very well.

Q: Now the mission to New Zealand actually includes one other post, Western Samoa. Did you travel?

SALMON: We had western Samoa. I had visited it on my way out to post and I had visited two other associated territories of New Zealand, Niue, which is a coral atoll and the other one was the Cook Islands, an island paradise with reefs and lagoons. I visited both of those places. Then Samoa I also visited. I went out there for I believe it was their 20th anniversary when I was DCM. It was interesting but it was only tangential to what we were doing. Having said that, we did a treaty with another New Zealand associated state which is called Tokelau. Ambassador Martindell went out to sign the treaty. Our political counselor Dick Dols was involved and the New Zealanders allowed her as an exception to go out on one of their frigates and the captain gave her his stateroom. They got there and of course there was a big storm impending. This is a great story that she tells about having to make the move from the big boat to a smaller boat and then coming in for her landing. She was in her 60's so it was not an easy thing to do. And then she signed the treaty and then she had to leave early in order to outrace the storm. But that was my exposure to the islands which now are interestingly as you know from our emphasis on the Pacific. We opened an Embassy in Tonga which has been covered by Suva and we have long had an embassy in Samoa.

Q: Now a great part of your time you were chargé. But other than duties around the embassies, did you get a chance to tour New Zealand? The South Island and what not.

SALMON: Yes, I did. The foreign minister Brian Tallboys, who was a wonderful man and nearly supplanted Muldoon when Muldoon was out of the country, but he was too nice to stab him in the back. He invited me to his place he has down in Winton which is on the South Island. I visited Christchurch of course and that was in connection with not only being there but that was where I left when I visited the Antarctic. Because the Antarctic support station is down in Christchurch. Then I visited the University in Dunedin, so I saw a lot of the South Island. Then on the north Island I would go up to Auckland. Peter Higgins was our consul general, and he was always a very affable host. I stayed with somebody who was head of the New Zealand Brewing Company in his country house in Coromandel. I got to see a lot of the country. And then on weekends I would go with some of my friends from other embassies. We would go out to what they would call country races outside Wellington. They had horse races. I don't know if it ever got very much more than that but it was very nice.

Q: Nowadays New Zealand is known for its wine imported into the States. Mostly it comes from the northern part of the South Island.

SALMON: The Marlborough sounds area of the northern part of the South Island. Martindell was a very good friend of a couple, the Glazebrooks, Gary and Judy Glazebrook who lived in Hastings on the North Island. He converted part of what had been a sheep station into a vineyard. And brought out an expert from the University of California, not Santa Cruz but another very good agricultural program. So he specialized first in a white wine which was very good. So, I remember I went up there to talk to the Rotary at his request. And I stayed with them. Then down south I knew some people who were involved in the wine business. So, I got to know it a little. It was at the time there was a New Zealand white wine called Cloudy Bay. That won some award and now it is actually quite expensive. I think it goes for \$40 a bottle. One of the New Zealand movie stars used it at his wedding. I saw the beginnings of the international aspect of New Zealand wine although they had so many immigrants in the north from places like Croatia and Serbia and they were pretty big wine makers but certainly less than vin ordinaire.

Q: Now one of the major internal issues in New Zealand is the government's relations with the Māori.

SALMON: When I was there it wasn't as salient as it is. Or it was to become. We had a Māori member of Parliament who is still around, Winston Peters, now the Foreign Minister. He was then a very young man. Of course, the Ambassadors had to go, but I never had to, but Brown and Martindell did have to go up north to the celebration of the Treaty of Waitangi which unfortunately later on became the big rallying point for people who opposed New Zealand policy toward the Maoris. But it was an issue but not one that frankly preoccupied us and only later did it become more and more important until it played a pretty major role in New Zealand domestic politics.

Q: Now you were saying earlier that Ambassador Brown was very familiar with Secretary of State Alexander Haig. Haig leaves office in July '82. Did Ambassador Brown make any side comments about that.

SALMON: He knew Haig. But let me tell you just one story and he knew Haig from the campaign, I guess. He never went into any great detail. But when Haig came I remember we met him up at Ohakea because the government planes in those days were too big to land at Wellington. Then he was ferried down in a British New Zealand plane, the Andover. I remember it was really a very tricky flight going up and down. Haig, being an old soldier, took it very well. I must say I was a little nervous, and we barely landed safely. Then Brown was at the airport as I recall. You know he greeted Haig, I guess he worked the campaign, "Good to see you Al." You could tell Haig bristled at not being called Mr. Secretary. I thought clearly Brown had made a grievous error. It kind of reminds me of Walter Stoessel. Stoessel took over when Haig left and he was the deputy secretary. Stoessel happened to have been traveling in New Zealand and from there he got this message: you are now in charge.

Q: Just as a side comment, the State Department newsletter publishes a list of people who are commended for their writing employee reviews, you were so commended for '82-'83. By that time what was your approach for writing up the personal evaluations?

SALMON: Well, I will tell a terrible truth which I am sure is not uncommon. I was big on letting the officer being evaluated do a draft of what he thought I should emphasize. Generally, they were good officers and they came up with some very, to be honest I don't have this immediate recollection of the thing. Generally, I would use what they had done and then give my own opinions. It was lucky that I had good people working for me. I think that basically encourages you to do all that you can to advance their careers. That was my philosophy. Basically, the whole bureaucratic process was so opaque and everything. It was good to get a commendation like that. At least I was doing something for the troops. In terms of my own evaluations that had to be done by both Brown and Martindell, and the terrible truth is I did a lot of drafting; that as you know is one of the worst things you can do it to do our own efficiency report because it just doesn't come out the way it should. At least mine never did, so I would always try to elicit some special comment from either of the ambassadors and try to incorporate that into what happened. When I went there I was an FSO-3. No I guess I had been promoted to an FSO-2 after a long time as a 3 to be honest. I think about six years. Then my next promotion was after Rangoon or while I was in Rangoon, the old FSO-1. So that was greatly dependent on the Rangoon bombing and the management of its fallout. But that is for another time.

Q: Now Rangoon yes is your next assignment. How did that come available to you?

SALMON: Again you will get the right motif in my career. I was a friend of the DCM, Mark Dion. He was working through Pat Byrne. I interviewed in several places. I tried to get a job in Malaysia and in Singapore. In fact I tried interviews with Ron Palmer and whoever was in Singapore. I think it was Harry Thayer. As they say they did not prosper. But I told Mark Dion who I had met at conferences that I was really interested in in

Burma. I was interested in any DCM job I could get. He talked to Patt Byrne and in fact she had already chosen somebody. I forget what his name was. But he for some reason at the last minute was not able to come. I don't know whether it was a health issue or not. So Byrne chose me sight unseen. I went out there and was there for about three weeks and then she went back to Washington, and I was in place for the major event of the Burmese embassy for many years, the Bombing.

Q: Right.

SALMON: David, could I just go back to New Zealand a bit because one of the things I learned there. I mentioned the importance of agriculture to New Zealand. How we had differences on certain things I had never heard of the word casein before I went out there. That is some milk or whey product they used in pizza making. I still remember they had a meeting at the justice department one of these grand justice conference rooms. They had a large number of people and they talked about casein. In any event when I was in New Zealand the one event that just transfixed everybody and just paralyzed the nation was a suspected case of hoof and mouth disease allegedly discovered in the South Island. The whole country went to general quarters. They got the sample but unfortunately, they could not do it on the island or in house. They had to send the sample to London for analysis, fortunately it was not hoof and mouth disease. Some poor cow had eaten overly heated mash and had gotten blisters on the tongue; the point is for three days until they had this final determination by the British science people the country was just transfixed by this issue. I did a little short cable. Where I said we could be jumping up and down about nuclear ships and about this and that but when push came to shove the real overpowering issue for New Zealand was the safety and productivity of its agriculture. I think there is an analogue for that in many other countries where we are talking without really understanding what the basic interest of a country may be.

Q: So moving on to Rangoon you were actually interviewed by Ambassador Byrne.

SALMON: No, I was hired sight unseen. I was hired on the recommendation of her then DCM Mark Dion who later became a deputy assistant secretary of state for narcotics affairs.

Q: According to my notes here you arrive in Rangoon in late '82 and Byrne leaves September 14, making you charge again. You have probably been chargé more in the last three years than anybody else.

SALMON: I don't really remember. I would have to look at my pay stubs but yes. I have an appointment I changed to a quarter of ten. If we stop the discussion at this stage and then get back to it in our next session.

Q: Certainly, easy enough to do.

Q: Good afternoon, it is May 2. We are returning to our conversation with Ambassador Salmon. Now we were talking earlier about being a DCM for two non-political ambassadors. Was there anything particularly unique about that? I guess non-career guys go to New Zealand.

SALMON: I guess that was not the case, as usually New Zealand was a plum assignment for political appointees. I guess if you look back, most of our ambassadors were indeed political appointees. So, it was interesting to negotiate between a very liberal left-wing democrat and a very conservative right-wing Republican. As I told you it presented challenges but at some points but fortunately not any were insurmountable. As I remember telling you I got the job in Burma primarily through my friend Mark Dion who was the DCM and because of luck again. The person Ambassador Byrne chose was not able to come so I was happy to set up in Rangoon. Rangoon I remember my second ambassador there, Dan O'Donohue, used to say it had the reputation of being an exotic backwater. But he was determined to dispel that view. And then the other great line about Burma in those days was when Ambassador Osborn was there, and we were trying to open that allegedly austere communications facility on Diego Garcia. I remember having to go and talk about it with the Dutch. They asked everybody what they would think about Diego Garcia. Osborn had a great sense of humor. He said, "The Burmese think that Diego Garcia is a Cuban cigar." The seriousness with which it was taken in those days because it really was a hermit kingdom under Ne Winn and very few tourists and visas. Anyhow it turned out like most of my assignments to be really quite rewarding. There were certain issues there. The narcotics issue was a very big one and we cooperated with the Burmese government to stem the growth of and distribution of opium. The insurgency was an issue because of the activities like the Karen National Union. The kind of ethnic national problems that Burma has been plagued with since it became independent. And then we had some peculiar administrative problems connected with currency conversion during my time there under Ambassador O'Donohue. The embassy was in an old bank building downtown. It was a security nightmare although security was not the problem now that it was then. We were planning to build a new embassy using Indian Rupees which we had accumulated under the PL 480 program in Burma. But the biggest event during my time there and for a long time thankfully thereafter was of course the Rangoon bombing. That took place just a few weeks after Ambassador Byrne had left. I had a period with Ambassador Byrne for about three weeks or so. Pretty short. I vaguely remember her. She was in charge of EA personnel a few years before. She had a great reputation and was a remarkably nice person, much loved by the diplomatic community. She for example would go in on weekends and read cables from other embassies and edit them, which suggests that she should be doing maybe something else. She could be a stickler. She would tell me to come over to meet a few people and our residences were just across the way. She said casual or something and I just wore a long-sleeved shirt open at the collar which I thought was casual enough. I was upbraided because I wasn't wearing a short-sleeved shirt. She was a very nice person, and I owed my chance to be in Rangoon to her. I don't want to just run off. I could go into the main events of the Rangoon bombing. I could go into that now if you want.

Q: No, let's get a sense of the total environment you are walking into. You are saying the embassy was outdated?

SALMON: Oh yes, the embassy was down in the old commercial district in Rangoon. It was an old bank building. And literally from the DCM's office I could put out my arm and shake hands with the person in the building next to us. Inside it was amazing, the bathrooms were on the top floor. I guess the executive bathroom for the ambassador's office had an incredibly steep flight of stairs. It was just not a great environment. We also had a huge GSO compound there. Which you need in a place like Burma. We also owned quite a bit of property. The ambassador's residence and the DCM's residence had been built by the McGregor Timber Company in the 1930s and had at least 12 or so acres on a lake, very nice. Actually, when the Karen insurgency looked to be taking over Rangoon right after the war, '46 or so. The timber company had sold the place at really rock bottom prices and for once our General Services people saw a bargain and took a chance and we had that. Then we had a large compound on a lake with a lot of older houses. Then we had a compound where we had a recreation center with a pool, which we let other embassies use. So, it was quite a lot of real estate to manage.

Q: So, was the embassy itself the building that was started within '46-'47?

SALMON: It was a bank building downtown. It was very convenient I have to say for going out to lunch and those kinds of things. From a work standpoint it wasn't ideal. People were crammed in. The public affairs section was almost on, I remember, a mezzanine type of arrangement. The other offices were too big or too small. It was just not satisfactory. O'Donohue was going to make that his project. So, one of them was getting us started on a new embassy and the first one was identifying property. In the event that I haven't been back since; we built it on the property we owned by the lake. Which of course was the lake Aung San Suu Kyi lived on, and also Ne Winn. That required tearing down some wonderful old houses and also some wonderful old trees. I guess we had to forge ahead.

Q: How about your living facility?

SALMON: Oh, that was a terrific house. I mean it probably was the best house. Well, the residence in Laos was fine, it was new and big and worked. It was quite functional. But the DCM house as you can imagine being owned by a timber company was teak everywhere. There was marble everywhere on the floors, black and white marble. The second floor had at least four ensuite bedrooms I recall. It had a huge terrace which was screened in so that you could entertain. It had a roof that you could climb up and have a beautiful view of the lake. It was an ideal place to live. It always helped at having our differential kept at 25%. We had a snake person on the property whose only job was to catch snakes. We were sure to pile up a lot of snakes before the next IG visitation.

Q: Now Ambassador Byrne departs in mid-September. As you say you had just been there a couple of weeks. Why did she depart?

SALMON: She was at the end of her tour. I think she finished three years. She may have had four years. I mean that was probably close to her retirement too.

Q: And then Ambassador O'Donahue arrives three months later right after Christmas.

SALMON: It was either after Christmas or a little before. I think maybe after you are right. He certainly would have been there because I went back to Washington very briefly and that had to be when he was there. I think that was for a deferred leave or something. But unfortunately, the ambassador was involved in an auto accident. A bus plowed into the car, and he was evacuated to Bangkok. Even though we had a very able charge in David Halstead, who was our political counselor, I of course thought I was indispensable and rushed back. The thing was the bombing came right after Patt left and right before O'Donohue came, and I think both of them thought this was going to put us on the map for a short period of time but they were not there. Fortunately, nothing of that magnitude happened afterwards.

Q: Let's talk about that for a minute. On October 9 '83 the North Koreans put a bomb in a place where the President of South Korea was supposed to visit. And killed 21 people and injured 46,

SALMON: Right.

Q: Did we have a presence at that ceremony?

SALMON: We did. Not that particular one but a one off for the South Korean president. He was visiting the national monument that was dedicated to General Aung San, the Burmese leader who was the father of Aung San Suu Kyi. As I understand it the North Koreans put explosive devices in a false ceiling of the memorial and that is what did all the damage. Although we didn't advertise it, we had some CIA people maybe from Seoul or other places who came over to help the Burmese or advise the Burmese, but they were not easily advisable. So, I don't know really what good it would have done so maybe it was an embarrassment for them. And not to mention the Korean security people that this tragedy occurred.

Q: Were there members of other diplomatic missions?

SALMON: I don't think there were any there, but my recollection is somewhat clouded because I was not even in town. I had chosen that weekend to travel to Mandalay by train accompanied by the embassy's local political expert, John Tin Ong. We went up there and then we went up to Maymeo, which I guess is still the training place for the Burmese military. But it was still very popular under the British because it was a hill station. It was from Mandalay that we got word by telephone from Hugh McDougal who was then the ranking person—he was a political counselor—about this happening. So I determined that although it was not easy. We had a car at the consulate that we still maintain in Mandalay as a residence, That was where I was staying. We had a driver too. I told the driver and John I said, "We had to leave immediately for Rangoon. This was as I recall late in the

afternoon, and I can tell you the Burmese roads were among the worst you would ever want to negotiate. We drove all night to get back to Rangoon. We did and went in and had meetings. The embassy had, and I don't blame them. They originally reported that it was probably the Karen National Union—the KNU—which had been responsible. O'Donohue was already appointed and knew he was coming and knew very quickly because of his own expertise on Korea: North and the ROK that it most probably had been the North Koreans. And he was right. So then it was a matter of just following up. It was a very busy period and you quickly realized the department is voracious for reporting. So, I started reporting almost immediately and had visits from the Australian ambassador and other diplomats. And reporting to Washington. I also followed every night or morning with phone calls with our country director, Frazier Meade. So that reporting went reasonably well. I think the department was satisfied. You couldn't give them enough. I mean I had a lot of experience in New Zealand but nothing of this type of thing happening. I reported everything duly and overclassified things you know making it Top Secret NODIS . And then the department came back very quickly and said we are reclassifying everything you have done to Roger channel. We use the intel channel. And that is of course what I did. I only had one issue that the department didn't like. The Burmese had asked for help. They had captured of course the agents, at least one or two of them. One was killed and they wanted to question the other. Then they asked me about Burmese intelligence. I think it was Colonel Ang Ko. They asked me to provide them with what they called truth serum. I guess they were talking about sodium Pentothal. I cleared the cable especially with our station chief and no one seemed to have any objection to what I was asking for so I sent the cable and quickly got one of these frosty "It is not department policy to provide truth serum or whatever words they used. So I realized that had been a mistake and I was frankly quite annoyed with the Station Chief who had a much longer career than I had. He didn't know of this policy, and if he knew he didn't tell me. The South Koreans were very quick to announce that their ambassador had just been killed. I had just met him at a reception and their DCM who was a very nice fellow and I got to know a bit in a very short time. He basically had a nervous breakdown and they removed him. The South Koreans sent in a retired KCIA agent who I think had been their representative in Libya, and then his deputy Yoon who later went on to be the vice minister of foreign affairs and Blue House political advisor. We kept in very close touch, and we kept observing North Koreans burning the papers in the classic scene in the yard at the embassy and so on. It was a very sad event but it was very instructive about our own ability to help. We sent in a C9, the Nightingale aircraft, which evacuated out of Clark. Some of the members of the party who had been very badly wounded. I think I recall one was the assistant chairman of the joint chiefs. Anyhow it was good to see later how responsive we were. Later on I was talking to a colleague, an air force general who recalled as a younger officer he had been stationed in Korea and when the Korean plane bringing the president and the party returned, he was sent out to provide fighter coverage for the plane in case the North Koreans wanted to do any further damage. I thought that was pretty unlikely but he remembered that. So that was the Rangoon bombing. It is interesting. Not many people had done any work on it. Maybe they have, but I was never approached by anybody about my experiences there. This is the first time I talked about any of it.

Q: Let me ask about the aircraft that came in from Clark. Was that something you had asked for?

SALMON: Yes, I think it was something I had asked for. It was a natural thing for the military to do or maybe in Seoul. Anyhow it just appeared, and we were all out there to see it off. That was not the first time I must say; the air force is so good about that. We had the spouse of one of our embassy employees who came down with this terrible cancer and she was one of these people who didn't like to go to doctors. Anyhow when it happened it was pretty late. Remember we had asked for a C-9 to come in and take her out. They did it again at the embassy where we had two doctors. We had a regional medical officer, and we also had a medical officer assigned to AID so we had pretty good medical care. Although one day when I broke my elbow playing tennis at 6:00 in the morning, neither of our doctors were there and I had to go to the Rangoon general hospital for the X-Ray. That was truly a nightmare and I ended up being evacuated that evening to Bangkok.

Q: Now the characterization of U. S. Burmese relations for many years was described as frosty. Did anything improve with our response to the bombing?

SALMON: Yes, and when they say frosty, they were frosty to everyone. I mean it is not only categories of government. No, the leadership obviously was very uninterested in having much to do with you. It was pretty chaotic there; these were the days when they were pretty close to China. The Russians had a big place, and we always thought the Russian embassy thing was just a kindergarten for some of their agents in training. But the rest of the government, the people we had to deal with on a regular basis, like the Director General for political affairs in the foreign ministry who was a very capable woman. But she had hit the glass ceiling because Ne Winn did not believe in women ambassadors. And in the military we still had quite a number of officers who had been trained by the British and who were professional in every sense of the word and who were easy enough to deal with. And then we even had people in the so-called opposition. This was not a real opposition, but these were people who crossed Ne Win over the years even though they were part of the original revolutionary group. They still made good contacts with us. In the embassy we kept up good contacts with them. Then there was a whole class of what I would call the Burmese elite who had gone to the Inns of Court for law school and in England and one or two of the really distinguished older people by that time had been the first Burmese members of the British Imperial civil service. So, I mean it was an easy place to get around. They had a golf tournament once a year at the military golf course. So everybody came rushing out thinking they were going to meet all the generals. They never did. I saw Ne Win on national day. The national day as I recall it was January 4. He was there and it was after he had given over to San Yu as president, but there was really no change. He didn't mingle very much. The whole question of the day was that he was wearing the Burmese hat, the gangban or whatever it is. He was wearing one that was retro, one that was worn by emperors in the old days. That was an indication that Ne Win thought of himself as a royal person. In any event when you say frosty. Sure they were frosty to everybody, but if you worked hard at your job and talked

to the right people, I could make some progress. I wanted to get into the narcotics issue because that was a big one there. Should I do that now?

Q: Yes, I was just going to ask you how big was your narcotics program on your side.

SALMON: On my side we had a DEA officer, we had a narcotics control officer, that was a state position. We had obviously the CIA and the DAO all working on this issue. We were lucky in the sense that personal relationships between the DEA officer and the agency chief of station were very good. That was good and also the DEA men were very good with the defense attaché. The thing was that the Burmese police were very professional. They were the ones that the DEA people worked with and they had much more than a handful of information on what was going on in the narcotics front than either the intelligence people or the military. I had my first exposure to the DEA when they came to the Hague when I was there. They were given an office nearby, and frankly I found it very off-putting. They were always on the phone to headquarters or on the phone to Beirut in the typical habit of a snotty foreign service officer; they were wearing gold chains. It was the 70's. Their first officer in Burma was really excellent. He went on to be head of the operation in Bangkok and head of the operation in Houston, Texas, which was a big operation. His successor went on to be the deputy head of the DEA, the highest career officer. Again, he was an extraordinary professional. It was good dealing with them, and our own narcotics officer was very good and had a lot of contacts with the Burmese police. At a very high level we had weekly breakfasts.

Q: My understanding is the narcotics problem was also connected to the minority issue in the north.

SALMON: Yes you are completely right. The biggest problem of course was the actual cultivation of opium. That is what I thought and how do we get the Burmese to stop that and how do we do it. And of course the narcotics traffickers were connected with these various insurgency groups in the north, most particularly with a group of former and you would know better than I with your Chinese expertise. People who got out of China and were in Taiwan briefly and there was a large group of them in Burma and Thailand. And they were very much involved in the trafficking of drugs. Our main issue at least when I was there was trying to get the Burmese to go after the actual cultivation. Now this had its own critics because I became a great fan of aerial eradication. Even some of my colleagues thought this was not a good thing—that we were depriving people of livelihood. I very much believed we had to do it and we got the Burmese to accept a program of training in the United States which was down near Glynco, Georgia, the police training station or whatever it is. And we got them into qualifying on an aircraft called Thrush. I don't know who manufactured it. It was capable of quick low level spraying of narcotics. That program started and we had one training death. But that went pretty well. Like getting anything like that happening in Burma was a challenge, not unlike a challenge in Washington.

Q: How would you rate the public affairs program out of the embassy?

SALMON: Well to be honest, not very highly. The individual in charge of the program had been there for like five or six years. Frankly it was a cushy assignment. They did what they needed to do in terms of the embassy show for the election and stuff. And of course, they were also handicapped by the Burmese not being very cooperative on not wanting this kind of thing. That changed later because I knew some of the PAOs who got put in charge in Burma and they got much more aggressive and active. Now one thing I didn't mention when you mentioned public affairs and I didn't mention in my other talks. We still had some good visitors. I still remember the Codel headed by Congressman Charles Rangel of New York. Very big, I think we got 15 members of congress and they came and did the usual touring and we got the Minister of Home Affairs to meet with them. I was quite impressed. I was impressed by Rangel himself. He was a very likable person. Then there were some other members of the delegation. I remember one in particular, congresswoman Pat Schroeder of Colorado and she was a big champion of the military families. I remember the spouses of our attachés wanting to meet with her privately, which she did. We had a visit from LTG Vernon Walters, who came equipped with this huge old fashioned movie or TV camera going all round. Fortunately the Burmese let him do what he wanted to do. I think O'Donohue let him do what he wanted to do. I remember it was a good visit, and he had come in on a regular scheduled Thai airplane and was scheduled to go out on that. Suddenly he discovered something important, and he had to have the attaché plane from Bangkok bring him back. That put us jumping through hoops. I don't think it was all that necessary but then we had another close friend of Ambassador O'Donohue, Phillip Habib. He stayed at the residence. Habib was there basically as a door opener for some business person. For being such a distinguished foreign service officer it is not always good for people to have to do that at some stage in their life. Who else, we had Admiral Crowe the chairman of the joint chiefs who was another friend of O'Donohue and stayed with him. The Burmese let him come in but as I recall they did not let him wear his uniform. When you have these visitors, they can advance your interests because you can get them appointments that you might not ordinarily have obtained.

SALMON: I remember when Congressman Rangel came, he met with the Burmese Minister of the Interior, General Minh Gong. We sat across from him and a few other people. The Burmese always wear these flop flops so we are looking at this group of people with the longhis, the Burmese sarongs, and flip flops. General Minh Gong had a particularly inscrutable visage and didn't say anything or a good minute or minute and a half. And the Americans waited. Rangel said to me, "Aren't they going to say anything?" I said, "Why don't you ask them a question or something." Rangel asked him how things are going, General Minh Gong?" General Minh Dong said, "Everything is in equilibrium."

Q: That is a pretty hasty response.

SALMON: Rangel looked at me and the other members of the delegation. Anyhow it went well. I remember looking for things for them to do. We had a luncheon on a riverboat. Unfortunately, it was just steaming hot. It was not one of my best ideas. But anyhow they got to see some of the harbor.

Q: Now what about some of the other members of the diplomatic community? Who was there?

SALMON: Oh well I think my closest collaborator and friend was Frank Milne. He was the Australian ambassador. As you can imagine the Australians always have very good people in that part of the world. I think all over the world. The Italian ambassador was a lady, Yolande Brunetti. She was extremely well plugged in. She was very charming and vivacious. By the way, it was at her tennis court that I broke my elbow. Her remedy was a glass of cognac at 6:00 in the morning. The new South Korean ambassador came and his DCM, very close to him and then we had a large number of eastern Europeans that I played tennis with on Sunday mornings at the Australian embassy. There was the Yugoslav ambassador, the Czech ambassador, on the German side, not the GDR but the federal Republic there was an old-fashioned ambassador. I think he had lost his leg during the war. It was a good group of people. There were some people at the Indian embassy that I got to know quite well. They always had U Nu at their receptions. He never moved out of his chair or said anything, but he was there. It was like all diplomatic communities. I found it quite agreeable.

Q: Who would you say was well plugged in?

SALMON: Well I think the best plugged in when I look back on it now was the new Singaporean charge. Who came out to open up the embassy but was basically a businessman and was opening up a timber purchasing operation for the Singaporeans.

Q: Now you made mention that there was a presidential election in 1984. The public affairs office put on their normal election day event.

SALMON: Yes.

Q: And Reagan won that election. Did that impact on staffing in Rangoon?

SALMON: Not that I recall. In that election year, an election that you celebrate overseas, you forget about the ones in the middle except that Martindell lost her job. But this one no, I guess we got new leadership. I am trying to remember who took over as the assistant secretary for EAP. No, there isn't going to be any breakthroughs on policy at least for a place like Rangoon. Now David, before I forget the one issue I want to bring up and this is an administrative issue, but it was a very important one in the embassy. When I arrived there, I had a note from my predecessor Mark Dion saying he had left something in the safe for me which was very important. Basically, what he was telling me which you could have guessed. Because of this incredibly artificial exchange rate people were refusing to change cash at the window at the exchange office because of the unfavorable rate of exchange. So, people were taking to the black market either in the main market there in Rangoon or people were bringing in Kyat which were the Burmese currency from Bangkok. He said this was a terrible problem, and indeed it was. We later had a very senior admin lady who came out and took over when our admin officer was on

leave. I asked her to look into it and she said yes, there is a problem, but it is nothing compared to what I have seen when I have inspected posts in Africa and so on. The question is always the reverse conversion. People who have not converted their money, and they are basically flaunting the law. They want them to come in by the time they are leaving and give you a huge amount of currency and want the artificial exchange rate. So, my predecessor was moving in that direction and I just generally made a rule that there would be no reverse accommodation which did not equal what people had converted at the window. We had people who had been in the embassy for quite a number of years and had not one transaction at the window. So that was an issue. People did not like the fact that they could not reverse accommodate, but they accepted it. That is always a problem in places like that. She was just terrific. She was saying she was in one post in Africa where I think it was the DCM or somebody who wanted to reverse accommodate a car sale and wanted \$50,000 in green. She told me she did not approve that. In any event that was just one minor issue. In general the housing was good. The school left a little to be desired. Then we got in a new principal and that was coming along fairly well. We also had good people who liked Rangoon because you had an opportunity to send the kids to school outside the country and to places they maybe couldn't have afforded if you were back in the U.S.--the fancy prep schools and boarding schools.

Q: Now this is after the Carter administration so human rights is now an issue for the Americans. How did human rights seem to fit with Burma?

SALMON: To be frank it was not a big issue. The Burmese record was pretty grim, the way they went and had taken over, and had sole control of the country. And of course, their own treatment of ethnic minorities the Karen and the Chin and the Mo . We elected but it was not a priority among the human rights people back in Washington. Burma itself was not an enormous priority; they had bigger fish to fry they thought which they did despite their personal involvement in the policy at the outset under President Carter. And Pat Derien. I don't remember it being a big issue in my time in Burma.

Q: Now you were in Burma for two years. And in 1985 you moved on.

SALMON: Right. This is where again I give a great deal of credit to Dan O'Donohue. You have certain bosses who are really prepared to do a lot for you if you have done a lot for them. I was looking for a job and I had to go back to Washington. So, Dan O'Donohue said, "Well you could stay another year but I don't think that makes much sense." He was right. He very forcefully intervened on my behalf to ask Paul Wolfowitz to take me on as Thailand country director. And I remember going back when I was in Washington having an interview with Wolfowitz. If you remember he used to have his desk piled up every place you looked with papers and partly to be honest looked up from his paper when asking, "why do you want the job?" I had met Wolfowitz when he came to New Zealand, and in any event I got that Thailand job so I was very pleased. I was going back to be the country director for Thailand and Burma. I was in the job for a relatively short time because almost immediately when I got there, my boss who was the deputy assistant secretary, John Monjo, said "how would you like to change to the Philippines as country director." I said, "Well if that is what you want I will go." They had

some other candidate that they really didn't like and wanted to keep out of the job. So I lasted on the desk for about a year or so, and then I moved over to the Philippine job which turned out to be just a terrific opportunity—a very busy center of attention for a while. In Thailand we had some good issues. We had the Thai pirates. We had an effort to try to get the Thais to accept the pre-positioned supply ships that could either move to a contingency in Australia or move to contingencies in the region. We spent a lot of time getting them to accept it, and in the event it was turned down. The Thai ambassador who was later on foreign minister. His deputy was ambassador to Cambodia and later on the royal household agency had a really big job in Thailand. They were very agreeable. The economic counsellor was the grandson of Field Marshall Pibul Songkran, one of the big authoritarian leaders of Thailand. I remember travelling out to Colorado in a little delegation to talk about Thai policy. So I enjoyed the work with the Thais. I found them very engaging people. But as I said, they wanted me to move to the Philippines, which I did.

Q: The way EAP organized itself is sometimes you have a country desk that is a single country and then sometimes have a country desk that houses multiple countries. So, you were on the Thai Burma desk, How many people did you have on that desk?

SALMON: Oh, I think maybe about four or five. They were good people, that is where I first met my friend Dee Robinson. She was a consular officer and had been head of the consular section in Bangkok. I remember I backed her very strongly for a DCM job in the Dominican Republic, where she worked for Paul Taylor, who was in my War College class. And then I am trying to remember some of the other names. They were just very good people, hard working, your typical State Department desk officers, in early, staying late, doing anything you ask them to do and are generally very agreeable.

Q: Now Secretary of State Schultz went to Thailand in July of '85. Were you on the desk at that time?

SALMON: I think I was. But my experience with Schultz in Thailand was with the UNGA. Prime Minister Prem, the long-time head of Thailand, was in New York and staying at the Plaza. I went there for Schultz's meeting with Prem. Schultz called on him. Who else was there, Bill Brown, who was I guess getting ready to go out to Thailand as ambassador. My memory is a bit shaky here, but Schultz was I remember I went on a trip he made to the Philippines later on. Going back to our discussion on New Zealand. He got the job when of course Haig quit and Walt Stoessel was briefly acting and then they brought in Schultz. He then had enormous success as secretary and a great fan base within the foreign service. I mean there are many people who will tell you that George Schultz was the best Secretary of State we had for the foreign service.

Q: Now one of the problems you had was the Vietnamese refugees still coming out or Vietnam heading for the Thai peninsula. How did you view that issue?

SALMON: Well, it was a terrible issue because it was a real human rights issue. I mean these poor people, they had not suffered enough, they were beset by Thai pirates. In

contradistinction with the view that the Thai are wonderful, always smiling and happy and nice, and the land of smiles. The treatment these refugees would receive when the Thai pirates would capture their boats was horrific beyond imagination. I mean just rape of women, murder of young men, it was just horrible. So it was something that we tried but it was one of these things you could ask the Thai to do this and do that but their own ability to control their pirates is somewhat limited. Also, before I get beyond that particular issue is how well the NGO community was informed on issues like this. You would get calls from an NGO organization like Refugees International or something about this or that incident and it hadn't even been reported to the embassy. Also, the interest of the Hill. That was very useful to have that kind of connection with Hill staffers. Generally, they were quite cooperative, and we were cooperative with them. But aside from this terrible tragedy— this pirate issue—for these individuals it could be quite instructive.

Q: The Thai have always been sensitive to these refugee issues. You had camps for Lao in the north. You had camps for Khmer in the south. What was the U.S. policy towards Thailand taking care of these refugee issues.

SALMON: Well, we were grateful frankly that as I remember the Khmer camp was Kow e Dong. I remember visiting that with some of the people at the embassy when I was going back as Thai director. It was just remarkable the privations and the good work of Medecins sans Frontieres. Working the whole camp these doctors dealt with people who had multiple lost limbs. Of course, I was up near Nong Khai, the big Lao refugee camp there. I went with the consul who was in Udon at the time. I think it was Jim Bruno and it was just amazing how organized that place was. You could buy baguettes of Paris quality that the Lao were baking there. Then you had also had all of the intrigues, the agents in the camp and people being careful. People who had been friendly with the Americans in places like Laos who were desperate to get out. It was very sad. I think on balance I didn't do a bad job in assisting their efforts to get out of the camps.

Q: Over time a program was developed to interview Vietnamese in Saigon. I forgot the name of it. Was that when you were on the desk?

SALMON: I remember visiting the consular section in Thailand and there were huge numbers of officers there. Otherwise I think the interview program in Saigon came along a little bit later, the huge number of programs pushed by the west. It was the Catholic Relief agency to the point where they had gotten one of their people embedded in the consular section to monitor what we were doing. In terms of these interviews. I am trying to remember who was there. By then he had retired from the foreign service. I think it was Jim Nach who had been I think the DCM in Bangladesh. He was there and spoke perfect Vietnamese. He was involved in that particular program, as well as a very interesting program identifying all of the American properties in Saigon where people have lived including the ambassador's house and the DCM. I don't remember that particular program in great detail. But I would just say it was very responsive to the interests of NGO groups and religious groups in terms of wanting to keep them happy. Which was good because keeping them happy was pretty much doing the right thing.

Q: In the short time you were in the Thai desk it wasn't a year was it. What would you characterize the main issues you dealt with?

SALMON: Well, I think the piracy problem was the big one because of the refugee aspect of that. The other one more strategic issue was the one of pre-positioning ships in Thai waters which they eventually turned down because they thought it may seem unfriendly to the Chinese. We had of course in Thailand like everywhere else the narcotics issue, the so-called golden triangle, the narcotic trafficking up there. I don't recall any other big ones. Basically, we had a very good relationship with Thailand. We had visits from Marshall Sitt, who was then the foreign minister, who had been very big in the free Thai movement. Of course, I still remember going to the airport to meet him with Wolfowitz and we met him briefly and he was whisked away by the agency people to arrange his schedule with CIA Director Casey as I recall, and at the time of his medical checkup. As you know the agency played a major medical role over the years and Marshall Sitt was part and a beneficiary of their interests. So they were pretty good at taking care of people in medical appointments and fancy dinners. The restaurant that was near me which I am trying to remember. A wonderful old building which is now the headquarters of that religious group in California. John Travolta is a member of the Church of Scientology.

Q: Could you provide some more details about these military supply ships. What were they to do?

SALMON: They were just to be in the ocean filled with materials supplies and everything. I believe it was Holbrooke from his time and not just he, but they talked about the swing strategy that we can move from Asia and China to contingencies in the South Pacific. And these ships would be there and basically be sent there if they were needed. In the event it never happened. The final turndown came when I was working as Polad in the Pacific Command, when I went there with Admiral Macke and he made an appeal. The Foreign Minister didn't say much. And the Prime Minister basically said that is not going to happen. It was a good example—fast forward to my good friend John Finney who was the Polad at PACOM and who was my deputy when I was Philippine country director. Somehow, I got it in my head that when the Thai prime minister would meet the president that this should be in the talking points. It was very bad judgement on my part that you could put something in those talking points and then use it later. It was a good example of when you try to go to the top you can make a big mistake. I remember that when I got Ambassador Brown to send a message to Bill Clark. He was then the deputy secretary and from California. It was about some particular minor issue for them and was going to be brought to the attention of the deputy secretary of state. I remember Brown calling him, and Brown knowing nothing about the issue. It was some obscure agricultural issue. So anyhow, that is always a mistake. I learned to jump the queue and try to get a diktat from on high that would just get bureaucracy to do what you want. That never happens.

Q: I appreciate the time you have given us this afternoon.

SALMON: I am always appreciative of my time with you.

Q: I would like to break it off here because the next section is the Philippines.

SALMON: OK that is a good segue. When do you want to do that David. I can be governed by your schedule.

Q: Today is May 6, and we are returning to our conversation with Ambassador Salmon. You previously in 1985-1986 were the director of the Thai desk. By then things had quieted down in Southeast Asia but you had this opportunity to move to the Philippine desk. How did this arise?

SALMON: Well, the Deputy Assistant Secretary John Monjo came to me fairly soon after I had come aboard and asked if I would be willing to move over to the Philippines. I was a bit startled but he had a bureaucratic reason for wanting me to move and so I said, Sure. Also to be honest because I had served in the Philippines and knew the players and thought it would be more interesting. Obviously it had heated up later on with the people's power revolution and President Aquino taking over the elections. I thought it was a good decision on my part. All that was, was a very tough time in terms of demands on our office time. I had a good office, inherited from John Maisto. John went on to be ambassador to Venezuela and to the OAS. I inherited a very good team. The deputy was John Finney, who later became POLAD out at Pacific Command with Ravic Huso who later became DCM in Thailand and Ambassador to Laos. And later on, a very talented capable economic officer Geraldine Chester, Geri Chester. There were other good people. Jim Zumwalt came in later from the EAP front office. He later went on to be DCM in Tokyo and ambassador to Senegal. So anyhow it was a good team and obviously there was enormous interest in the Philippines in the Department. Secretary Schultz was very supportive of President Aquino and the democracy movement in the Philippines, whereas to be frank, the Reagan administration particularly at the very top were dubious about President Aquino, because Reagan had forged such a good relationship with President Marcos.

Q: One of the interesting things to state here is that the Philippine desk only covers the Philippines. In the Asia Pacific bureau you often get all the Southeast Asian countries in one desk. How long had the Philippines been a single country desk?

SALMON: I think for a long time. It had larger issues. The number of people reflected our interests there. Most specifically because of our bases at Clark Air Force Base and the naval base at Subic. Those bases had been very important during the Vietnam War. B-52 flights were staged out of Cebu. So, it was very important and a lot of people had Philippine experience.

Q: Now which deputy assistant secretary did you report to?

SALMON: I first reported to John Monjo who later became our ambassador to Malaysia, Indonesia, and later Pakistan. John was replaced by David Lambertson, who had been brought in by Gaston Sigur who had moved over from the NSC East Asia position to take the place of Paul Wolfowicz when he went to take the place of ambassador to Indonesia. Dave had been DCM in Korea and Australia and was really a terrific boss and a great individual. He exuded quiet confidence. He was from Kansas. His grandfather had been a Republican member of Congress and his family owned a newspaper, which he and his wife Sacie continued to run as a little bi weekly. So they're still going strong with their newspaper. I visited them last May.

Q: Now as you came on the desk what did you understand were going to be his main U.S. interests in the Philippines?

SALMON: Well I think the main interest was as we anticipated a change in administration to a democratic administration. How would Mrs. Aquino and her team act? How would their actions impact our positions in Clark and Subic? Generally the Filipinos had been strong supporters of the U.S. and probably anticipated that it would continue. There was a little nervousness, and as I said, it had taken President Reagan quite a bit of time to frankly appreciate the dire situation Marcos was in. As you remember he sent out his good friend the Senator from Arizona, Paul Laxalt, to basically give Marcos the bad news. I guess the phrase was "It is time to cut and to cut cleanly." Marcos really had to do that. In the event he left he left in a rather hurry and in a disorganized manner. Which was very capably handled by our ambassador there, Steve Bosworth. And then also by our military authorities there who evacuated Marcos to Honolulu.

Q: Now as the Philippines situation unfolded from Marcos who actually was an unsteady time. The bases are the big issue for us.

SALMON: Yes.

Q: And therefore, you must have been working with the NSC and the DOD your DOD colleagues all at the same time.

SALMON: I have to say that because of Wolfowicz's previous position in DOD he had also created something that worked well, the so-called EAP informal. Where the assistant secretary of EAP would meet weekly with the DAS from DOD and that was Rich Armitage who was later to become deputy secretary of state and also from the NSC Gaston Sigger and Jim Kelly who had been a Deputy assistant secretary in DOD and who was an old friend of Armitage from their service in Iran many years ago. Then a representative from the agency. It was a model everyone said, and I think it was true bureaucratic cooperation. There were disagreements at the time that were not so serious. It was good to work for that kind of integrated operation. They all believed that the Philippines should be supported. I guess there were doubters within DOD too but never I recall reflected any personal doubts about Mrs. Aquino. Of course, when they were drafting the new Philippine constitution there were sections on nuclear weapons which

we didn't like. But generally, things worked out really quite well. I am getting ahead of the story. Against the background of President Aquino it felt like the background of a serial film from the 20's, the Perils of Pauline. She had various coup attempts and non support by not only the military but the old Marcos group. Anyhow, it was a fascinating time, and John Finney and I spent many evenings up to midnight monitoring the political health and precariousness of Mrs. Aquino's situation. It all worked out. It was also another dimension that I did not have, well a little bit in the Thai desk, enormous interest in the Philippines in the Congress. Most particularly the House subcommittee on East Asia which was chaired by a tremendously active Steve Solarz who was a strong supporter of Mrs. Aquino and his assistant the very talented Stanley Roth who later became assistant secretary for EAP. He was on NSC staff briefly and then he became Assistant secretary of East Asia.

Q: Now you were mentioning the period of instability with various coups. It strikes me you probably had the embassy on the telephone with you all the time rather than sending cables.

SALMON: Yes, there were a lot of telephone calls, and the best time was fortunately early in our morning. I learned from my experience in Burma that it is important to keep the department informed as to what the embassy was doing. And sometimes when I succeeded in calling the embassy you would get a reply from the DCM what are you up to now? Isn't it 3:00 in the morning there? Yes it is, so yes it was very gratifying because there was so much interest in the Philippines. You remember from your time in the department there are certain flavors of the month and the Philippines for a considerable period of time was the flavor of the month. Then it was supplanted, well not completely but diluted a bit when Cambodia became the major issue, and we had the peace talks in Paris. My colleague in EAP, Charley Twining, was Cambodia country director. Later he was ambassador in Cambodia. He was also my county director in Laos.

Q: The ambassador to the Philippines when you arrived at the desk was Bosworth.

SALMON: Yes, Steve Bosworth and he was replaced. He had of course enormous cachet because of the way he had handled Marcos and his evacuation. Bosworth, who later was to become dean of the Fletcher School, came back for reassignment. He took a post as the vice president of a Chicago bank because he was a very attractive hire I suppose. But then he went to Fletcher and then came back to the government as ambassador to Korea later.

Q: Now with all these frustrated coups and such, Bosworth leaves in April '87. His replacement Nick Platt doesn't come until August. That is almost six months. Was there a problem getting Nick in place?

SALMON: It was a minor problem in terms of Jesse Helms who was then the chair of foreign relations committee. For some reason I think it was not so much the Senator himself but usually the staff, who had some issues with Platt. I remember when we had the hearing and he was the executive secretary of the department. He had a previous

embassy in Zambia. He was extraordinarily able. He was a little bit on the tough side as you have to be when you are running the secretariat and being responsible to the secretary 24 hours a day. He also was very much part of the old foreign service establishment because of his education and connections. Everything seemed to be going well for the hearing. We went into the hearing and Helms wasn't there at first. Then he came out like a fairy tale like the evil spirit showing up at a wedding. He of course had some graphics or something. As everyone knew Nick, when he was in Beijing early on, had a traffic accident. Unfortunately, someone lost their life. They did everything and got the fellow to a hospital. Anyhow people at the embassy thought it was better if he was transferred and he was sent to Japan, where he did extremely well as one might expect. Helms brought up that issue and left it there without going into it, suggesting that maybe he was doing something wrong. It was held up for a little. but not very long. and he held out. He brought out Ken Quinn as his eventual DCM who had worked with him in the secretariat and also later was our ambassador to Cambodia.

Q: Now during this interregnum did you continue to be in touch with the embassy and were able to watch everything closely.

SALMON: Yes, even when there was this interregnum and even when Kaplan was chargé because I think he had been brought out there by Bosworth. So, things went on fairly well. There was always an interest at the highest level in the department by Secretary Schultz. And then this EAP informal group that I just talked about and then you also had on the congressional side Steve Solarz and also important the speaker of the house I think it was Jim Wright. There was a keen interest in it. Some differences on this or that but basically the policy moved on. Frankly to me I think it turned out very well the way President Aquino managed in the early days of her presidency and of course was succeeded by General Ramos, General Fidel Ramos.

Q: Now you were saying that on the Washington side people were concerned if she were up to the game. How long did it take that stereotype to erode a little bit.

SALMON: I think that in some people it never disappeared. But with most of the people who were honest and fair after about a year in office and succeeding and weathering a variety of coups, the last one was the only one I was away from Washington. I was on a European vacation in Toledo, Spain. I learned this business of having to fly air support for the Philippines when I got into the train station in Madrid. At the same time my deputy Scott Butcher handled it extremely well, as everybody. I think eventually I think people got to appreciate that Aquino was the best person we could have gotten. It was true. President Aquino was the only one that prevented a real revolution by the New People's Army, which would have been enormously strengthened by somebody taking over from Marcos, who was believed to be a reactionary. So, she was an important person not only in the development of Philippine democracy but in terms of our national interest.

Q: Now you were saying the bases Clark and Subic were very important to us. That was the core of the policy towards the Philippines. But Shultz in his book talks about getting

involved in base negotiations very early in the game. From your perspective on the desk, how did supporting Shultz work out?

SALMON: Well, I thought it worked out very well. In terms of the bases there were always ongoing discussions and there were studies done by DOD about what the alternative to say Subic or Clark, like Tinian. I think it was clear to the military; it was like Ambassador Sullivan always said the really key place was Subic Bay and Clark Air Force Base. Basically the functions that took place could have been handled from other places. I think he was right. Again, I don't want to get ahead of myself. Eventually the build up when I was there turned into an interim bases agreement, which we negotiated with Foreign Minister Manglopus and the team in Washington at the Philippine embassy. It was a big signing ceremony and later a celebration at my office. But let's go back in terms of Washington's perspective on things. The very first thing that I really was involved with the big-ticket item was President Aquino's visit to the United States. And I accompanied her as did John Monjo on her trip which included Washington, New York, Boston, and San Francisco. It had been capped by her address to the Congress which was extraordinarily successful. Interestingly some of the people in the Reagan administration were going into business lobbyists and they would be her managers. They managed her trip on a pro bono basis. So, we had WACA, the Washington Communications Agency, providing support because of the old boy network. For example, they provided teleprompters. She came with a huge delegation of government ministers. Various people said she should do this or do that. It got to the point where I remember some of her staff fooling around with the teleprompter not too long before she was to give her speech. But it was a good insight into what she had to deal with. There was no state dinner for her. She had lunch with President Reagan. I think the no state dinner was indicative of the doubt of the Reagan People about President Aquino. Secretary Shultz decided to get her a quasi-state dinner in the Benjamin Franklin Room at the State Department. I think there were three or four hundred people. It was a huge group. That was her first visit to Washington as president. I think she also saw Vice President Bush at his residence at the Naval Observatory. She was not so keen on that because Bush had made a trip to the Philippines where he praised Marcos which is what one would do if you were going on a trip. In any event she did get to see the Vice President too. Then we had the election. It was very gratifying to me personally because a lot of my contacts in the Philippines who were in the opposition when I was in the embassy were elected to important posts. My closest contact in a way Senator Salonga became president of the Senate. A fellow named Ramon Mitra became speaker of the house. A lot of people I know from some way or form were brought into president Aquino's administration. She also was important because she, when I was in the Philippines from '74 to '77, Marcos was using a PR firm in the U.S. called Stone Manafort. And of course, Manafort later got into trouble in connection with the Trump administration. Mrs. Aquino was advised by her family in many ways and she had one brother Pete, who hardly anybody knew about. He was very close to her. And she took a lot of political advice from him. And I know Bosworth knew him and Platt. The administration used an American lobbying firm, Sawyer Miller, which was up in New York City. They were very effective. The manager of her account, if you will, was a Brit named Mark Maloch-Brown. And Brown was very involved in the refugee operations in Southwest Asia. He was close to the Aga Khan and was later head

of communications for the United Nations under Kofi Annan. He eventually became a British minister and went to the House of Lords as a Peer. So that was a conduit to Mrs. Aquino or to her brother Pete, so that was very important. And now the minority alluded to another important factor in the whole business. It was the interest of Congressman Solarz and Stanley Roth. So, we stayed in very close contact with Stanley and frankly there were other parts of the government and DOD that wanted to do this or do that. We would do what was called an end run but we would call Roth and say would you look into this. Actually when I went out after the election the president sent a special envoy and that was Steve Solarz. I went out with him on his plane and participated in the opening of the new government.

Q: Talking about transportation, when Mrs. Aquino visited Washington because she had a large delegation with her, did she travel commercially?

SALMON: Oh no, the travel was a U.S. government aircraft. And it was managed very well. All they managed to do was lose my bag in San Francisco. I was quite irritated but I was given a room in the Fairmont, a suite. I was there but without a change of clothes. She got an honorary degree at my University, Fordham. I was there for the first time since I had graduated in 1959. We went up to Boston and she saw Cardinal Law, who later left under a cloud. He basically took refuge in Rome. In San Francisco she gave a great speech at that impressive City Hall they have there. It was a very memorable trip, and I think she handled it very well. I have to give credit to the Presidential alumni who set it up in terms of enhancing all the things you do for a presidential trip, but they were basically volunteering their time.

Q: So they set up their own schedule.

SALMON: Well no, the scheduler worked it out. I know when she was in Boston she was invited to the Kennedy Library. Senator Kennedy was there. Everybody on the team said she spent too much time there and threw the rest of the schedule off. They were completely right. Senator Kennedy buttonholed her and instead of staying there for half an hour she stayed there for two hours or something, upsetting the schedule rather significantly.

Q: Now at this time you must have been working with the Philippine embassy. Who were the main contacts over there?

SALMON: Well, the ambassador was Emanuel Palaez, their former vice president whom I had known in the Philippines. But my main contact was the DCM, Raul Rabe, I think. I worked with him very closely. The name eludes me now. But I will remember it in a minute. He was terrific and when we did the actual bases review, he was the man from the Philippines to get through to my office. There was a rather controversial foreign minister at the time. Then we had a terrific group; Jamie Selby and occasionally Liz Verville got involved. She was the deputy legal advisor and then we had a military advisor, who had been the commandeer of Clark Air Force Base. That was General Dick Meyers, who later of course became USFJ commander and then PACAF commander and

then deputy chairperson of the joint chiefs and finally he became Chairman of the Joint Chiefs and then retired and went on from there to be president of Kansas State University.

Q: Now in the negotiation of the base agreement were the Philippine side very intense on these core issues?

SALMON: Well, they were most intent on the final cost of the package. They wanted to say they had produced this new agreement, and frankly there were some changes but not all that many. But they wanted the compensation package to be as large as possible. Therefore, they introduced things like debt relief which was anathema to the treasury department. I remember the U.S. Treasury Department and caused us many evening and Sunday morning meetings between Gaston and the Secretary of the Treasury. Also this is where my assistant Jerry Chester who had been very involved in the Panama Canal negotiations came up with imaginative recommendations—things like HIGs, Housing Investment Guarantees. And if you give them that it enhances the package considerably. Generally that was their main interest.

FM Manglapus had fled the Philippines when I was on the desk. That was earlier he had come in to see me about how he could get the rest of his family out the back door. And it is to say they went down to Mindanao and crossed over to Java and then to Malaysia but he was one of these very impressive orators. The Filipinos loved good oratory. And had come to the attention of President Quezon when he was a young man. But this was very much his way to show that he could get the Americans to do what the Filipinos wanted. He had a tendency to put things in overly vivid terms. He said the Philippines objective was to slay the father figure with a very Freudian connotation, that was my view of his bottom line. They wanted as big a compensation package as possible and we tried to facilitate that with to be honest a lot of smoke and mirrors. Eventually we had a good signing ceremony with Secretary Schutz in the State Department in the diplomatic reception room. It turned out OK.

Before I forget David, let me go back a little bit. Another sticky initiative was the so-called multilateral assistance initiative for the Philippines, MAI. There was a pledging conference in Tokyo. And the first head of MAI was the very well-known finance person, Hank Greenberg, who had this huge insurance outfit, AIG, but was not the easiest person in the world to deal with and Gaston was a little dubious about him and he was right. He was not to say the least a team player. But later MAI got taken over by Eliot Richardson and some other good people. And it worked out fairly well. Another thing, and it was good that you reminded us in the chronology. Shultz went over to the ASEAN meeting in Manila, and I was part of that group. It turned out to be a good session. Although it was clear when I didn't make the cut for the final dinner a lot of us were entertained by the DCM at his place. I still remember sitting next to Mrs. Aquino's new appointments secretary, Ching Escaler. When the DCM gave a toast saluting democracy she whispered to me, "This is ridiculous. Whenever I came here before, all you saw were blue ladies." Blue ladies were Mrs. Marcos' important women. So, we were always enthusiastic in supporting Marcos no less than others and so when you try to suggest we were always in favor of democracy And everything it can look a little bit foolish. You reminded me it

was the same trip which was really the notable one where Schultz met Prime Minister Lange of New Zealand. That is when we parted with New Zealand, because of their views on nuclear warship visits and their refusal to show any flexibility. I remember that I was there, and I was somehow separated from the entourage of Schultz and everybody was in the lobby before the elevator. There was one elevator reserved for Prime Minister Lange and his group and he said, "Oh Charlie you can ride with us if your people won't let you ride with them." So, I rode up with the Lange delegation.

Q: This was the '86 Schultz for the ASEAN meeting. One other part of our relationship with the Philippines was our AID program, the impact on that of the government change and us trying to adjust our relationship.

SALMON: Well, I thought about our AID program there, I remember particularly when I was stationed there, I got to know it fairly well and I got to visit some of the projects when I was traveling with the charge or just travelling by myself. We had some really major projects like rural electrification down in Mindanao. Which had all of the advantages they will tell you down to the birth rate because you had electric lights now. I have always been an admirer of AID. Sometimes it gets a bad rap for having wasted this and did that. The projects that went to Burma were really quite good. And the same way in the Philippines. Those kinds of things just went on. I never remember any particular objection to projects. I remember very much the Philippine mentality they always wanted more. And there is a great nationalist called Clara Recto who was dead by the time I went to work there but I remember the time and working with some of his disciples. Recto was a very ultra nationalist. I always admired him. If they had done more of that maybe we would have had better relations. He wrote a famous essay, Our Mendicant Foreign Policy. I think that is very much how I would characterize the Philippines. They were always asking for things and wanting more things. It was at the price of not introducing the reforms that were necessary to get the country on a really much more even and just keel. Even in the Aquino administration we had the prospect of land reform and President Aquino, who was very much the landowner, really opposed that, so we got some watered down land reform programs. It never did the trick in places that you would remember in Taiwan and places in Central America for a while.

Q: Now here you have all this political instability. Talking bases. And in November 1987 a big typhoon went through the Philippines and shook things up. Would this be an opportunity for AID to show a positive profile to the Philippines?

SALMON: Yes there were so many typhoons in the Philippines and so many floods, and so many this and that. It is hard to remember things. Whenever we had an egregious weather event, we would always do whatever we could to help the military particularly because they had the resources. And our AID operation too. I think generally the Philippines was quite grateful for the help during those events. As I say, they were not uncommon at all. Each one sometimes seemed to be worse than the others.

Q: In all of this, what do you think was the most challenging issue or the most challenging week you had as country director?

SALMON: Well, I think the most challenging issue was the doubt within the so called influential circles in Washington. That Mrs. Aquino just didn't have what it took to make it and basically be a good partner for us. I felt that was not the case at all. That we had to do everything we could to make her succeed and in any event that is what happened. She was able to pass on the presidency that was still a democratic presidency. She didn't make the kinds of economic reforms I would have liked. Basically, I think we talked about even keel. She got the country back on a path after these years of Marcos kleptocracy and undermining of democracy.

Q: Toward the end of your assignment there, the Americans have another Presidential election. And Bush wins and the new Secretary of State is Baker during that process, well in the transition period you on the desk would have had to prepare all of these position papers and whatnot.

SALMON: Again it is one of the things I know the very fact that Bush had become the president and he had this experience where Aquino brought him in but not wanting to see him at his residence for breakfast the way other visiting presidents did. I remember Gaston was quite upset about this and tried to put the best face on it. We talked about her schedule and everything. I don't know whether we used the Sawyer Miller channel or maybe the back channel with Solarz. For whatever reason she decided to have breakfast with the VP at the residence. So, when I review my experience, and this was very self-referential, because of the performance of the Philippine desk, I think during the interim bases and the negotiations and also just in general the way we worked, my reward for my next assignment was to be the next ambassador to Brunei. Now Brunei is not the most important country in the world but at least it was there and it had a title. I went through all the paperwork and then at the 11th hour I was told 'Sorry, one of the President's friends who had worked with him when the president was the UN ambassador had wanted the job, and this person thought he was perfectly suited to be ambassador to China.' That was what the president thought he was suited for. I guess he needed money for his pension. So, my brief period as ambassador designate for Brunei. That was over so then I had to scramble as I had in previous situations for a new job and it turned out OK. But it was a few months or weeks on my part.

Q: Now one note about the Philippines is that in April 1989 Colonel Rowe was assassinated.

SALMON: Right, sadly I remember that very well. Because I was visiting the Philippines at the time and had a breakfast meeting with Gene Martin who you may know from your experience in China. Gene was the pol mil officer. Gene had a call, and he had to go to the embassy right away and I went with him. We got the word, and Nick was having a meeting. The old stories about the first reports in a situation are generally never right. First, we heard he had survived the attack but unfortunately, he did not. Actually, it was typically very good preparation on the part of the NPA, the communist group. They realized that his car had been retrofitted for hardening to make it more of a secure vehicle. They knew exactly where it had been welded here and welded there and that is

where they piled all their firepower. Unfortunately, Rowe was killed. I remember back in the time when I went and that was the time we were having a lot of terrorist incidents, people trying to crash planes. When I was going back to Washington, they had a warning that maybe somebody was trying to take out American Airlines. We had to travel on United. I got back to Washington and there was a major ceremony scheduled for Colonel Rowe in Arlington. I had to push for Secretary Baker to attend along with his counterpart from defense. In fact Baker did go to the funeral at the Fort Myer Chapel. It was interesting Rowe himself, his own background, had once been out of the military briefly to run for office. I had met him when I made my calls when I would go to the embassy. I think he was stationed at JUSMAG. He was typically a very aggressive and bright officer who had a lot of experience in special operations. That gave the NPA the impression that the Americans are going to be much more involved, and I don't know, eliminate us. I don't know whether that was what animated their desire to assassinate Rowe. But it was a tragic incident and I think Nick and his team handled it very well. I was glad in Washington he got the recognition he deserved with Secretary Baker attending.

Q: Now this underscores the fact that there had been a bubbling insurgency in the Philippines for some time. How did Washington view that insurgency?

SALMON: Well I guess it was the old line but that they used to say about communist insurgency, the situation is dire or something but not really critical. It was just part of the background music in terms of insurgency. Marcos had gone out of his way to placate some of the rebel groups and there were many rebel groups. The main one I recall from my time was MNLF, Moro National Liberation Front. Then that split into the MILF the Filipinos have a penchant for you know you can establish one friendly society and then three others will rise up with it. For example, they have societies from various provinces in the United States. You would have a Pangasinan friendship society and then you would have a new Pangasinan friendship society. And then you would have the reformed new. So that was pretty much the situation down in Mindanao. Also, a few local politicians have Muslim contacts. They were also easily convinced by money. So, there was an awful lot of that down there. So, as I say, it became background noise. I mean periodically you would have surrender ceremonies by this or that group in the jungle. Then of course anyone who had any common sense could tell the Garden of Malacanyang Palace where they would take these pictures. So I want to say just background information. It is never good when people are getting killed. But it did not reach the severity that it did later with the kidnapping of American missionaries. The other and in a way more serious insurgency was of course the New People's Army which was of course a purely Marxist-Leninist group. A lot of the leadership, some of them had gone to Europe and were still there, and of course, it had lost a lot of its steam when the Chinese made the decision not to support them after normalization of relations with the Philippines. But that was something we worried about too mainly in terms of Rowe and murder was the perfect example of what happens when it gets out of control. But I think they were fairly careful not to target Americans, But the NPA was strong in the countryside in certain areas, especially in Northern Luzon and also in the Vissays and certain areas, for example Samar, which was a big insurgency area during the American occupation early on in the 20th century. We did some good reporting. In my time I

remember the insurgency in the south, Bob Pringle who was our political officer specializing in this did some really great reporting.

Q: How did the Philippine government respond to Colonel Rowe's assassination.

SALMON: Well as you can imagine they were horrified and sorry. So, in terms of what they might have done practically I don't recall but no there were very few people who were prepared to justify it, that is for sure.

Q: 1989 is a good year for news. June 4, that was Tiananmen Square in Beijing. Is that coming to everybody's attention in Manila?

SALMON: This is what, June 4, 1989?

Q: Yes.

SALMON: I think that was the period when I had lost the Brunei assignment and was shopping around for jobs in the department, so I don't remember. I mean I remember it obviously. It was a major event and a sad event in the final analysis. I don't know what the Filipino attitude was. I don't think I was working the desk anymore.

Q: One of the interesting things about our coverage of the Philippines is that you have this large embassy in Manila and then a branch consulate in Cebu. Normally in a country as large as the Philippines you would see more consulates.

SALMON: Yes, I guess. Cebu was a big operation. When I was the country director, I got Pancho Huddle interested in the Cebu job. In Thailand he was consul in Song Khal. He did an outstanding job as he did in all jobs. He really energized reporting from Cebu and did a lot of travel. The Cebu thing was a bit of a heritage post if you would use that post because there was a more vibrant democracy before Marcos. The activities of political groups in the Visayas were more important to national elections or could be. So I think that is why we focused so much on Cebu, because it really covered everything. I guess if you were looking for a place to put a consulate in terms of Mindanao it would go to Davao. That is of course where Duterte came to the presidency from first being mayor of Davao. Similarly, his daughter came to the vice presidency from the same place. Then the political and economic issues come out. But I don't think we missed anything by not having more than one consulate in Cebu.

Q: Let me touch one last thing. You are talking about your next assignment. You were hoping for Brunei.

SALMON: And I filled out all the papers and it looked like a slam dunk until one of President Bush's old friends wanted the job and he got it.

Q: Now when did you start looking for your next assignment?

SALMON: The minute I heard about it. I remember I called Dave Lambertson. He was in Paris for the Cambodian peace conference. I didn't expect him to do anything. But anyhow he was very supportive I guess is the right word. So that is when we started looking around and this is an example again where somebody in the department has a concern about another foreign service officer trying to do his best by them. We had then our deputy assistant secretary in the department, Bill Clark, who was the godfather of the chrysanthemum group after Bill Sherman. He got very involved in assignments. He was very helpful as I recall. He also was helpful to me later with the POLAD assignment in Hawaii. He asked if I would be interested in Laos. Well of course I would be interested in Laos. The idea was we were on the verge of upgrading our relationship with Laos to full ambassadorship because we had never ended our presence in Vientiane. As we did obviously in Saigon. It was becoming available. There were several other possible candidates but not very many. I had a bit of French but not very much and of course French was still important for Laos. But in any event, I got the job and went to Laos and had a terrific four-year period there. I was really grateful for the interest of Bill Clark and others in the department to take care of me after my enormous disappointment in Brunei.

Q: Well, let's pick up Laos in our next session.

SALMON: Thursday, you bet. I will be ready to go at the same time on Thursday.

Q: Ok this is May 9, and we are returning to our conversation with Ambassador Salmon. You were director of Philippines affairs at the start of 1989. But you started looking for your next assignment. How did that work out?

SALMON: You remember briefly that I had been promised a post to Brunei as the ambassador. That was my reward for working so hard with my team on the Philippine issue which culminated in my time there with the interim bases agreement. Gaston Sigur was very enthusiastic about the work we had done. So I was nominated for Brunei, and I got all the papers from presidential appointments and all this stuff. I heard there was a possibility Paul Wolfowitz, then ambassador to Indonesia, was pushing an old friend of mine, Mike Connors, for the same job. I called Armacost who was very helpful. He had been deeply involved in the Philippines. So, it was all for naught because the job went to an old friend of President Bush, who had served with him at the UN. So, then I scrambled around and due to the good efforts of Bill Clark and some of the other people in the bureau. I got the Laos offer. So I took it with the expectation that it was going to be restored to full ambassadorial status fairly quickly. What we had there since the end of the war, we kept our presence in Laos but went to a permanent Chargé representation. So not a Chargé ad interim, but a Chargés d'affaires en pied. A Chargé in place. I got the Laos job. You know a lot goes into it even though it was a small place. Because of our experience during the war, it was an interesting place. I was glad to get the job

Q: As you were saying coming out of the Vietnam War, Laos was the only capital we weren't kicked out of.

SALMON: I think we managed it fairly well. One of my friends who later succeeded me in New Zealand and also at the Pacific Command job, Dick Teare. I don't know if he was a Chargé or at least a political counselor. He very capably managed the downsizing of our embassy. Which of course in its heyday comprised 3,000 people until we went to a very small number of people. I think it was a post of 20 or so. That is the way it was when I arrived.

Q: What did you understand about your primary American interest in Laos?

SALMON: Well, it was very easy to understand that in fact I drafted my own mission statement, which was also a letter that I was able to present to the Lao foreign ministry and the acting foreign minister. When I got there it was fairly straight forward. Our interests were the POW-MIA issue, the narcotics issue and to a lesser extent although that changed later on, the refugee issue. So those were our big points and areas of interest. I give tribute to my predecessor Harriet Isom and her predecessor Terri Tull, whom I had known in Vietnam for advancing the relationship. As things evolved, the Lao wanted a better relationship with the U.S. I think they felt they were much too dependent on Vietnam and of course that dependency would later be continued by their growing dependency on Beijing. But in any event it was a good time to get there and also they had some very capable diplomats who were Chargés in Washington. Bounkert who later became their ambassador to Thailand and deputy foreign minister. And Doan, who later became their ambassador to Nordic countries and Mrs. Kanica who was another director and her husband. He became my equivalent. He became an ambassador about the time I was in Laos. I remember having lunch or dinner for him before he went off to Washington. His English was not very good to say the least, but it got much better.

Q: Did you have any opportunity to talk to the Lao diplomats in Washington before you went out?

SALMON: Oh yes. I talked to them quite a bit. One of them wanted me to bring a pump in with my household goods. I said I could not do that. I made it up to him later by bringing something else from the U.S.

Q: Now what was the essence of the POW-MIA issue?

SALMON: The issue was the fullest accounting of people lost during the Vietnam War. That was very much complicated by the fact that many of the people lost over Laos, many of them were CIA people. Or they were flying in aircraft which were provided by Air America, which was a CIA proprietary. Then of course there was the fear that some were being held someplace against their will. That issue came up again in my incumbency. But in that fullest possible accounting required that over the years we visit sites where the crashes occurred and take evidence from the villagers. That morphed into permission to excavate these sites for remains. Basically, the progress we made was very clear. They say the Lao were trying to slow roll us trying to attach the issue to everything else. We would argue of course the POW-MIA thing was sui generis. While it could

affect our relationship, it did not determine its scope and pace. It was a very interesting issue in Washington. We had a very active association. A League of families of those lost in the war was headed by a very able friend of mine, Ann Mills Griffiths. Her brother had been a pilot, and he was lost off the coast of Vietnam. Eventually his remains were located many years later, and I was at his funeral, in Arlington. But in any event Ann was part of the whole apparatus working on these things. She was very much in favor with the Reagan administration. So that was that and during my time there. We made progress enough to open a detachment supervised by a Lt. Colonel to supervise and manage all of our activities on this issue. The first Lt. Colonel was a very able fellow who became the J3 or maybe J5 at U.S Forces Japan. His name was Edward Spohn.

Q: So, the expanded office that you had was for the joint casualty preservation center.

SALMON: Well that itself the JCRC morphed into this arrangement where we had detachments in Vietnam, Laos, and Cambodia. It was part of a new command structure which Pacific Command Admiral Larson as I recall put in place. That is when it was announced and when the person was appointed, I remember General Christmas, who was a Marine Lt. General I think came out. No, he was a major general then. He was the PACOM J3 and he brought with him Major General Tom Needham who was in charge of all of the detachments. A very able energetic fellow. They used to call him Nukem Needham. It was a tough job, but he got along well with the Lao and the Vietnamese too I understand. But the people who were involved with it like Lt. Colonel Joe Harvey were actually involved with that issue for a very long time.

Q: So you have a small staff and then these detachments come for a short period of time or are they

SALMON: What?

Q: This detachment you are talking about. Do they come for just a short period of time?

SALMON: No, it was a permanent establishment. I think when I was there, I went through two Lt. Colonels who were in charge. No, I think they had maybe about six people and their main job was to facilitate and organize the visits of these survey groups and then later the people who did the actual excavation. The content of these groups varied from various parts of the military.

Q: Now obviously to look at these sights they have to move a lot around the country. Did you have a helicopter or anything?

SALMON: We eventually got a charter arrangement with a civilian helicopter company. And also, the Lao made available their own assets to transfer the people. A lot of the activity was in southern Laos in the area of the old Ho Chi Minh trail and so we tried to get our people in with U.S. C130 assets as close to where they were going to do their work as we could, and then they would go in. They would go in by car and truck. But then there were some places where we absolutely needed the helicopters so we would

charter them and then travel on them. The Lao helicopters were old Russian models and in various states of repair I think. In any case we didn't have many accidents, at least in Laos.

Q: Now the POW-MIA issue is something the American side wants. The narcotics issue has a different priority. Did those two issues clash?

SALMON: No not really. The narcotics issue had also something in it for the Lao and they were always quick to accept. Basically, what we wanted the people to do was to get out of the opium production business and that was centered in the northern part of Laos in the province called Houaphanh, which is up near Sam Nua which is where the Lao leadership lived during the war. It was very close to the Vietnamese border. To make the program palatable we pushed crop substitution and therefore if these people were deprived of their livelihood cultivating opium, what could they do? So, we had a project which offered coffee as a substitute crop. We built roads. They used to say from point a to point b was six hours of walking. We built not big roads but small enough roads that cut down the travel time. So there were advantages for the farmers who were being told to give up opium. On the other hand, there was also a price to pay because as the farmers moved a little further south or down the mountain, they began to be more susceptible to things like malaria, which they had not really had to cope with very much at higher levels. I know too from my experience in Burma with an eradication effort it is a very difficult issue and very difficult on people who are caught in the middle.

Q: You talk about building roads and what not, does that mean you had an AID officer at the embassy.

SALMON: No, we did not; that was basically done by the military. We were also in communication with POW-MIA efforts in the area where we were concentrating our excavations and recovery operations. Laos asked us to build some schools. We did build some schools basically using an engineering unit here in Hawaii which was up at Fort Shafter. They would put together teams which would come in and build these schools. The young captains who headed these teams, each one was determined to bring in the product you know in many fewer days than their predecessors. That in my view was not always the wisest thing to do because the quality of construction suffered. But in any event, we didn't have any AID people.

Q: Now the mission in Vientiane never really goes down. What were your facilities like? Were they 10 to 15-year-old buildings?

SALMON: No, it was an old building but very well-placed downtown. We had an adjacent compound which we called the GSO compound. It had a lot of space and a lot of room. The residence dated from probably the early 50s was not the greatest architecture, but it was big and comfortable. With four ensuite bedrooms. That kind of stuff. And a very good swimming pool which it said had been created under the subterfuge that it was an emergency water storage place, I think that was always an urban legend, but no it was

really the people didn't really complain, and the housing was good for our staff. They could rent their own housing. So, I think from a physical point of view it was quite good.

Q: Now were your tours accompanied or unaccompanied?

SALMON: No, they were accompanied. We had several spouses and dependents. One of the issues that came early on as the place got bigger was, we needed a better international school. So, we worked with the other diplomatic missions and also the UN mission. It was a big operation with UNDP and UNICEF and FAO and a lot of organizations to Laos for what they liked. And were not threatening them, more or less dealing with the Americans or western embassies.

Q: What was the diplomatic community at that time? Who else was there?

SALMON: Well, we had of course our friends from Russia. In my time they built a whole new embassy which was incredibly energy dependent, and they built it exactly at the time the oil crash came, and the Lao were no longer going to foot the bill for their electricity. And a big Chinese embassy and quite a large Vietnamese embassy. Then in a way exotic embassies you wouldn't see everywhere but more as a sign of solidarity, Mongolian, Bulgarian, Czech, and a few others. Then on our side we had a very good Australian embassy as they usually were, And then a very good Thai embassy and Indian embassy. You know it was enough of a national base to keep us busy throughout the year.

Q: How would you rate the morale of the people on the American mission?

SALMON: I thought the morale was quite good. That was manifested in the fact that people were hardly there for a few months and then were immediately asking to extend their tour. I think that is a phenomenon you find in a few places like I was in Rangoon or people in South Asia who have been to places like Bangladesh. Where it seems from the outside that it would be very demanding, and it is very demanding. When you get to things like medical care. But basically, the places are agreeable, and the housing is good. Sometimes people can send their kids away to expensive prep schools and boarding schools that they wouldn't normally be able to afford if they were back in the U.S. So I would say and of course we had a sizable differential, 25%. And so, I would say the morale was quite good.

Q: Now over the years the embassy is interacting with the Laotian foreign ministry, government. What was the quality of the Laotian interaction that you had?

SALMON: Well, I think the quality I mean they believed we were the American enemy in the war, but basically the reaction was very positive. When we had interaction with the ministry of agriculture on our projects or ministry of health on others, and of course the foreign ministry. The defense ministry was a much tougher nut to crack. Our DCM, Karl Wycoff, had a reasonably decent relationship with a certain part of the military. But they were very nervous, I guess you would say, about contact with Americans. But we got in terms of getting our planes in and overflight clearances and all the normal stuff we had I

thought was good cooperation. They didn't really, if they couldn't do it, they would tell us. If they could, they would go ahead and do it. I think on the foreign ministry side I think we had a number of people who were pro-revolution or pro-liberation types who had been educated in Paris and were just very good international diplomats. Now that changed over time that clearly is an uncommon phenomenon: a one-party system. You would suddenly get the children of the leadership popping up in the foreign service because they wanted to live overseas. Again, I thought they could be maddening sometimes because we would always be pushing to do things quickly and not everything we have to do has to be done step by step. That is not what Americans generally like to hear, but in terms of arranging important things for us like visits for high level CODELS. They were very good. If we had high level visitors, I guess my first visitor was Ivan Selin, who was undersecretary for management. If you invited the Lao for dinner they would understand its importance and hopefully trot out an English speaking vice minister or what have you. Even when we had members from our justice department, we were able to see the minister of the interior not for a long time but that was really quite unprecedented. Then when we had another example. We had Senators McCain and Graham come in on an attaché plane from Bangkok. It was a Sunday. I got them a meeting with Mr. Nouak. He was vice president, and later he became president. He saw them on a Sunday. I mean they knew what was important to us and they knew it was important for them too. So, they were helpful so it wasn't just total frustration.

Q: In the early days when the war was ending the Lao government had pretty strict restrictions on the mission's travel. Were those restrictions...

SALMON: Yes, those travel restrictions were gradually let up over the years I was there. You know we were able to go up to the dams about an hour and a half or two hour drive from Vientiane. There were boats on the water where you could have lunch and everything. Like that. Luang Prabang, the overall capital that took special permission. Indeed, even travel outside of Vientiane was supposedly monitored although eventually they gave up on that. And we in turn, took up some of the restrictions we had on the Lao mission in Washington. I remember my first visit to the Lao embassy when I was director of the human rights office. That was, I remember, put together by Paul Cleveland when he was in the EAP bureau. The Lao were so thrilled that we were now allowing him to go to Burke Lake on the weekend because they loved to go fishing, and I didn't know you could fish in Burke Lake. The Lao had a lovely residence but it was in disrepair. They had stocked their swimming pool with fish so they could catch their lunch or dinner there when they wanted to.

Q: How would you characterize your relations with the desk back in Washington?

SALMON: I think it was really excellent. We were really lucky when I was there, Charley Twining who was later ambassador to Cambodia and also POLAD at PACOM, which also was my job, he was country director, and he did a lot of the official and informal things that only we were supposed to see. You know the deputy assistant secretary Dave Lambertson always saw them. I gathered that people saw Chas Freeman's Chinese writing when he was communicating from Beijing as DCM. That is what I was told. But

they were very supportive. We had a terrific desk officer, Scot Marciel. Marciel went on to be our ambassador to Indonesia and to Burma and was deputy assistant secretary and has just written, I haven't read it, a very good book about U.S. policy in southeast Asia. So, we had a very supportive group, and when they came out I always tried to put them up in the house, because that was the best way of maximizing our contact time. I had very strong favorable feelings toward our support. The deputy assistant secretary when Dave Lambertson came in, he was a very solid individual, very supportive. He was later ambassador to Thailand. So, on that score I was very happy.

Q: Now on that score the mission itself is thin if not skeletal. Your political officer, Lisa Taylor, what was she able to do?

SALMON: She was gone by the time I got there. Lisa was a political officer with quotation marks around it. It was an effort by our friends in the agency to have a spot in the embassy. You know again before my time they felt they weren't supported in what they wanted Lisa Taylor to do. And that the embassy, my predecessors to be frank, were too cautious about letting her do this or that. So eventually they pulled her out.

Q: Now looking at the key officer list for the time you were there. I don't see any USIA.

SALMON: No, that came later. They brought in a USIA lady, Mary Robinson, I believe it was. Before that we had interacted with the PAO in Bangkok, and they were very helpful. And for example, they let us piggyback on some of their efforts, so we had during my time the first USIA presentation since the embassy was closed and put on short rations. In '75 we had of all things a hula dance troupe of Lao from Hawaii, which was very successful. We had a big show, and the leadership was just thrilled to have us. I mean about 400-500 people. That was one and I remember having dinner for all the Hula Halau people. One of whom is an ethnomusicologist at the University of Hawaii for a long time and I knew him well. I remember having dinner for them. They were all very earnest people and very religious, and I was amazed to find no one wanted any alcohol. Then the next one we had was an Indian dance troupe. I was able to put that on. The residence had a huge terrace, and we were able to get about 150-200 people onto the terrace. The Indian people did their dance routine, Native American. To be very frank they were impressive, but in an area dominated by Chinese acrobatics it was a pretty tame show compared to what they were used to from the Chinese. That was my own effort to reach out in things. I let the international women's group use the residence twice to present shows that were fundraisers for their efforts. We had a number of unfortunate incidents. Some of the spouses not in the embassy but in some of the UN organizations had real psychological issues, which led to suicide, so this international women's group was an effort to help those people in distress. It was founded by a very close friend of mine, an Australian lady who was married to one of the UNDP experts.

Q: Now in these crash site investigations, What was the step-by-step procedure? Did we know the locations?

SALMON: Yes, the military had obviously terrific records about when this plane was going down in flames and so on. Then we were able to talk to villagers in the area who remembered the incidents. So, it was getting for our military the sites that had the most potential to yield remains that could be verified by DNA testing. We would propose a list of activities. This became much more standardized after we opened our detachment. And we got approval from the Lao we want to work here or there or so forth, and they would say yes or no. Then they would give permission for the survey people to come in and they would do the survey. Once that was finished, they would recommend whatever the excavation operation was. It usually took about two weeks or so. It was a good system. I think the issue was a sad issue with so many people could not be persuaded that they should have had closure. On the loss of loved ones from the war. I still remember this one lady asking someone who had actually seen the plane go down in flames and they eventually found the DNA and the person's mother could just not accept that. Just as later on we had a situation there was a brief upsurge in the idea there were imprisoned Americans in Laos. We sent a team down to the place where this individual was and determined he was part Lao and part French actually. His brother came in to fly down and affirm that reality. Then the brother reported this to his father, and the father just cut him off. He would just not believe it. It was an incredibly fraught issue in terms of individual families and people who had been affected by losses during the war.

Q: Did you yourself ever go on these trips?

SALMON: Oh yes, on my first trip into the countryside I went down to near Savannakhet with the director of American affairs. And a young officer who later became deputy secretary general of ASEAN. Everything had to be done in cash with his huge trunk of Lao currency. No, it was a very professional people like anything else the locals would come rushing out when the people would throw away plastic water bottles. They would just love to pick them up. Well that was later on when we did the helicopter survey of Vietnam. Then toward the end of the process when we had some remains there was sending in an aircraft to take the remains back to Washington and later on to the central identification laboratory here in Hawaii. That was always an impressive ceremony. It impressed the Lao with the seriousness that we took to issue this huge C-141 would come into the airport and you know, then there would be a ceremony where they would put the remains on the plane and of course did not take that much room into the aircraft.

Q: Now you were saying the search priority was refugees. Thailand had Cambodians coming in and Laotians coming in. What was the nature of the refugees in Laos?

SALMON: The refugee issue was I say the Lao eventually realized they had to offer return to people that wanted to come back. As you point out there was a huge Lao refugee camp in northern Thailand. But the fact was that the refugees were not enthused about coming back to Laos. They felt they would be persecuted, and it took some time to get people to at least be willing to take the chance. We worked very closely with UNHCR and IOM to see what we could do to make the return process a little more satisfactory to the people who were the objects of the process.

Q: Who in the U.S. mission followed the refugee issue?

SALMON: Our consular officer followed it most closely. Then occasionally if we had high level visits from Geneva, we would shamelessly lobby them to rent out a helicopter and travel to areas so we would go up there with them and also with representatives of the Lao foreign ministry.

Q: Now you arrived in the summer of '89. I suspect 1990 was more of the same except the Berlin Wall fell in '89. That influenced the Russian view of the outside world.

SALMON: It had a very salutary impact on the Lao, because basically we had as I mentioned before, a large communist bloc representation who did certain things. There was something like the Mongolian hospital in the middle of the country. The GDR, German Democratic Republic, would offer spa treatments and hospital treatments and everything for the Lao leadership. You could see there was no question who was going to substitute for this. I knew. I still remember having a farewell lunch for the East German ambassador. I remember how he was grateful to have lunch and have so many people there. He gave a little talk and how he was sad to say that the German Democratic Republic was no more and was going away. So there was a lot of regret obviously on the part of diplomats who had worked for their country for a long period of time and found it disappearing.

Q: The Lao themselves began to look around in a different way. I understand in 1991 you had a new constitution in Laos and the government signed a security and cooperation pact with China.

SALMON: Yes, we took those new documents and the Lao elections without great degree of seriousness. It was always going to be more of the same and more of the same people. But I think they began to realize they needed more exposure, and I am trying to remember when the Philippine embassy decided to open an embassy in Laos. So, the ASEAN connection that is when they became members of ASEAN, became much more important.

Q: And how did that proceed, the ASEAN connection?

SALMON: Well, it took a long time to get used to the ways of ASEAN, but eventually they did over time. It was slow, like everything in Laos, frankly very slow. The ASEAN relationship presented other issues. The Lao had few enough diplomats as it was and so how are you going to ramp up the ministries to take on these new responsibilities. You know from your time in Thailand every time you turn around ASEAN is having another meeting of this and that. So not so easy. Again, the changes in eastern Europe were very upsetting to the old timers in the Lao leadership. There were many old timers who had fought really during the war and just were taken aback by the revolutionary change. One of my big projects there and I confess great disappointment in having it fail was getting the Lao to accept the Peace Corps. Coverdel, who was later Senator Coverdel, as Peace corps director came out and we got him a meeting with the president. This is where the

Lao could have gotten that. They knew he was an important fellow. They had a meeting with the president, Pumi Vongvichit who was an old revolutionary. His son-in-law is head of the Lao communist party and is now president. His name is Thongloun/ I first met him when he was deputy foreign minister. In any event we brought in a Lao language instructor who would do the textbooks and everything. I thought it looked very good. I guess I deluded myself because you had people in that government who the last thing in the world they wanted was Peace Corps volunteers, even though we said most of them would be stationed in Vientiane and basically teaching English to the foreign ministry and others that they wanted taught. That lack of English proficiency was an enormous issue for them, especially with ASEAN. After ASEAN, the Peace Corps did not come to fruition. So in a tour of Laos for four years where I was generally very happy about the way things had developed, that was a real point of disappointment for me. Especially because others like the Chinese had accepted the Peace Corps. I am trying to remember I think the Vietnamese did too, before now, being rigorously loyal to some ideology that deprived themselves of a considerable advantage had they accepted the Peace Corps and the language teachers.

Q: Now throughout the Vietnam War Laos used to be some place where young tourists would go just for the adventure. Did you have any American tourists get into trouble?

SALMON: Not any major trouble. In those days it was very hard to come in. You somehow had travelers who would come into the country. They had to have visas. But the Lao were not very enthusiastic about it. That obviously changed near the end of my tour where tourism became more of an accepted way of making money and opened a few hotels. Not many but now I mean a friend of mine sent me an article about a hotel in Luang Prabang and I was amazed to see hundreds in the hotel and a big railway station the Chinese had built. Now it is a big tourist destination. In fact, like Hawaii, too much of a tourist destination. In fact, Luang Prabang is so developed that it is in danger of losing its UNESCO world heritage status.

Q: Did your consular officer have any major adventures?

SALMON: No. I went on a few trips where we had visitors on the refugee issue. He was a good consular officer. He was one example of the people who I mentioned earlier who were hardly there a few months and wanted to extend, and I let him extend. But no, I mean nothing too exciting that I remember, which is, I guess, the way one wants it. By the way, one of our high-level IOM visitors was my old friend and colleague from Vietnam, Jan Dewilde. He picked up fairly heavy helicopter rental charges. We got to see places we had always wanted to visit but didn't have the resources to support that.

Q: Now you came to Vientiane in '89. By '92 what did you see had changed?

SALMON: Well I thought what had changed was just the commercial activity. I mean even in a place like Vientiane which was pretty sleepy. When I arrived in '89 the main street had vacant lots. By the time I left it was a thriving commercial street. Individual mom and pop markets had blossomed into almost department stores. One of the great

deals you could get was on Russian caviar, which of course, the Russians brought in on the one Aeroflot plane a week. The plane carried a lot of dogs, pedigreed Russian canines. Then there were some new buildings dedicated. There was a banker who had a connection with Prime Minister Kaysone. He was allowed to build a new building in Vientiane. It was slow. I think there were still no traffic lights in Vientiane. But it was building up. One of the other advantages of being there was because of these issues, most importantly the POW-MIA, it was a bit of a magnet for congressional delegations that we would not have had. We had a very major delegation headed by Senator Kerry and Senator Smith and the Lao went all out to facilitate that and we went up to the north by helicopter. We had, as I mentioned, Senator McCain and Senator Graham of Texas came out. We had Senator Tom Dashell who was later majority leader. I think we had another Rangel delegation which I had encountered in Burma. I think they came to Laos too when we had individual congress people like Dana Rohrbacher who was a conservative congressman from California and worked in the Reagan administration as a speech writer. I still remember I invited him to stay at the house. I got up and she was no longer there. I asked where the congressman was and he came back from a run and made the great pronunciation, "This place isn't communist. What makes you say that? The people are too happy. I saw them in the marketplace." So that is the level of congressional analysis. Then we had other members of congress that were good to have them too and on balance they reacted fairly well with the Lao.

Q: And when they were there, you of course got them interviewed with the leadership.

SALMON: Yes of course, McCain and Graham interview Nouhak and then see the foreign minister as deputy foreign minister. Then you talked about some of the people I worked with. The overall generalissimo of relations with the U.S. was a vice foreign minister named Souban, who during the war had been a Colonel with the Pathet Lao I guess it was, and a great French speaker and kept pretty close tabs on the relationship. Eventually I was able, and I felt very happy about this, to get him to go to the United States and set him up with meetings at State and obviously with DOD. I think the ISA at the time was Jim Lilly, later our ambassador to China and Korea. Lilly had been in Laos as a young officer and so Souban was amazed to be in the Pentagon, and then it had to be an Asia Society address to be a successful visit and Souban gave his talk, which was pretty pedestrian. I remember the place was filled with old Lao hands and the first question was of course, what happened to the king? The king in Laos was eventually held and allegedly starved to death. That can be verified or not; he didn't get the greatest treatment and passed away. I remember Soubanh being taken aback by saying in a very Lao way well he was an old man and old men die. Who else? Perry Cully may have been in that audience. Perry Cully was an old Lao hand who married Princess Moun who was the daughter of Prince Souvanna Phouma. She was supposed to be writing a biography of her father and had all the documents, but it never got written. In any event that was a little more normalcy to the relationship.

Q: Now actually in '92 the Americans raised the profile of the mission and created an embassy and designated you as ambassador. What were the steps necessary to get all that to happen?

SALMON: Well, it took a long time. Because when I went out there in '89, I won't say I was promised, but I was assured that they were going to raise it to an ambassadorship within a year. I think there was a bureaucratic reason. I think the national security advisor general Scowcroft, who was an air force officer, had balked. At least that was the explanation given to me; He had lost many friends flying over Laos. He just wasn't very keen on normalization and Secretary Baker was not of a mind to push the issue. Then later on you may remember that connected with Cambodia we changed our policy towards Cambodia which I think was announced by Secretary Baker after a meeting with foreign minister Shevardnadze. Then later on and I would have to look at the timeline, Baker was speaking to I believe it was the Asia Society in New York. Whoever was managing the thing wanted a bit of a headline. Baker then announced maybe it had been in that one that we were going to raise the mission in Vientiane to an ambassadorship. The charge in Vientiane was authorized to begin discussion with the Cambodians about Cambodian relations. So, I think I had about two or three meetings with the Cambodian Charge and also with the vice foreign minister who came from Phnom Penh. So that was the background of that particular decision and doing something that we had intended for quite a while.

Q: So, there isn't one particular circumstance that was created.

SALMON: I guess you could argue they were looking for something a little bit of a headline form major speeches in the Asia Society in New York. This announcement about Laos and the discussions about Cambodian representation in Vientiane were a bit of a hook for the press people.

Q: Now you have been there so long, you have been through a couple three DCMs. I think you were saying Carl Wykoff.

SALMON: While I was there, he was terrific. Then he was replaced by Fred Vogel. Vogel had been pushed by an old friend, Matt Daley who I had very high regards for. So, Vogel came out to be the DCM.

Q: To become ambassador don't you have to be approved by the Senate?

SALMON: Oh yes, I went back and did the normal committee hearings, three years ended up as four years. I was really an ambassador only for about a year. I was going to stay for another year, but the department wasn't really so thrilled about that. So I give them credit. They could have just transferred me and sent out a new ambassador, but they didn't. They followed up on their commitment when I first took the job. So, when I went back and did the usual things. I had the ambassadorial course. The trip down to Fort Bragg to see what the military could do for us in handling crises. Then I had the swearing in upstairs on the eighth floor. It was presided over by I guess it was an undersecretary. It was a nice ceremony, and I had a lot of friends there. So that was the happy finish to my time in Laos.

Q: Did your appearance before the Senate...

SALMON: Oh, the Senate. That was an interesting one because one of the people I had worked with on the Philippine desk on the Marcos issue was in the White House and was a good friend. He said, "You know, I can get you put ahead on the list." I said, "That would be great." Of course it wasn't great for the department. They didn't want to change things the way they had. So, I just waited with the others. I remember I had a hearing with someone I respected a great deal, Senator Leahy. The other on the hearing was Bob Barry, who was going to Indonesia. I forget there may have been one other person. Senator Leahy's personal assistant had visited us about a year or year and a half before. I was told who she was. So, I invited her to lunch, and we had a nice lunch. I remember the senator beckoning me to come up to the dais and he said thank you for being so nice to her, and I forgot the lady's name, when she visited. That always points out the importance of codels and staffdels and all those with Congressional connections can be helpful.

Q: Now you had a presidential election in November, 1992. Did the mission do anything special for that?

SALMON: Yes, I think Mary Johnson was there and we had the traditional election watch thing and so the Lao very few of them understand how important those elections are to us so you have to drum up an audience with lots of food and drinks to get people to show up.

Q: And of course, with a change in administration from Bush to Clinton if you are an ambassador you assume the new administration is going to...

SALMON: And you do what you are supposed to do and that is sent in your letter of resignation, which I did forthwith. And of course, because I had been there for four years I then had to cast around for another new job. I had met President Bush when he visited New Zealand, and I had brought the Philippine ambassador over to see him when I was on the Philippine desk. I met him at a Chiefs-of-Mission meeting in Honolulu. I am a great fan of President Bush. I mean when I got appointed, he probably had no idea who I was. But anyhow I was glad to have been appointed by someone who I had a great deal of respect for and who I think on balance did a pretty good job as president. I am sure you have read it. There is a wonderful biography of President Bush by John Meacham. He gave a Eulogy at the National Cathedral when President Bush had his service there. It was really a connection with the greatest generation which unfortunately, we haven't had since then.

Q: Who followed you as ambassador to Laos?

SALMON: Victor Tomseth. Victor I had known because he followed me as Thai country director. He was DCM in Sri Lanka, I remember him calling me when he got the Thai job. He was obviously extraordinarily qualified for it. He started his career as a junior officer in Thailand. He married a Thai and spoke perfect Thai and went on to be DCM in

Bangkok. He wanted to go on, so he went to Laos. Like all of those jobs there is always a little drama about who would succeed me because there were other people who very much wanted to succeed me and brought in their heavy artillery to push for them. But Victor had good contacts within the bureau. One of the deputy assistant secretaries had been in a peace corps in Nepal. I was succeeded by Victor and I was very happy. He had been a hostage in Tehran and was held within the foreign ministry, He was able to communicate with the Canadian Embassy staff. I believe it was the Canadian butler in Tehran communicating with him in Thai.

Q: This is great, why don't we...

SALMON: I thought I could give you a bit of a segue. One of the important visitors I had was CINCPAC, Admiral Charles Larson. The Lao were nervous and said he can't wear his uniform. Give him credit he said, I am wearing my uniform, and the visit went on. We went down to a recovery site near Savannakhet. I had a little lunch for them. I had met Larson years ago. I don't think he remembered it when he was a naval aide to president Nixon and came out as the advance man to President Nixon's visit to Vietnam. I met Larson and thought we got along reasonably well, Then when I was looking for a new job again Clark again came to the rescue and proposed a POLAD job in Pacific Command. Which has a good history in terms of the bureau. There are several books. One I remember is CINCPAC for POLAD. They had changed the name to foreign policy sponsor because one admiral felt it was too communist. In any event I did get the job at CINCPAC and Larson told me he remembered me from his visit there and all. And that I had been very good, he understood, to the military detachment that was stationed there. So once again I made the transition.

Q: Very comfortably from the rigors of Vientiane to the challenges of Honolulu.

SALMON: That is true, although I suggested in our discussion the rigors were real. I earned my differential. I was glad to collect it. So, David, what do you want to do for the next one? I have got. I am going away and will be back on the 31st of May. I don't know when you will get back from your train trip.

Q: Hello everybody, this is June 24. We are returning to our conversation with Ambassador Salmon. Ambassador, you have had a stunning East Asia career. You have been on the desk, a couple of desks, ambassador to Vientiane, New Zealand DCM, Burma. This must be your next job as political advisor to PACOM. So, they must see you as the Asia expert.

SALMON: Let me just correct the nomenclature. I was advisor to the commander in chief of the Pacific command. These commanders in chief were fairly liberally used for geographical commands like Northcom, Centcom . But Secretary Rumsfeld eventually changed the name because he said there was only one commander in chief and that was the President. Also in the Pacific command we had changed from POLAD, Political

advisor which was a wonderful old name and people had written books. I remember there was one 40 years ago, called "CINCPAC for POLAD," which was just identifying who should get the cable. One of our commanders in chief thought it sounded too Russian so he changed it to foreign policy advisor. So instead of being the POLAD I was the FPA. But it was exactly the same thing. Actually, you make a good point, David. After all my EAP experience, it was good to be in a place where you could see where that experience was being used by the military command. They were keen consumers of embassy reporting, and they were keen to get the state department view on every issue. So aside from being in Hawaii and having a great opportunity for travel on the CINC's aircraft which is a very comfortable way to go. The CINCPAC assignment I remember I got through Bill Clark who was known as the dean of the Japan group, the Chrysanthemum Club. But he had the interest of all FSOs at heart. When I didn't get a second ambassadorship, he thought this would be a good place to land, and I agreed with him. I was very grateful to him for arranging it. It was somewhat facilitated by the fact that I had met the commander I first started with, Admiral Charles Larson. He had visited Laos and I had taken him on a trip with one of these POW-MIA investigations and recovery points. Although I don't think he remembered it, I first met him when he was an advance person for President Nixon's visit to Vietnam. He was then the naval aide to the president, a Commander, quite unusual. Nowadays there are huge advance parties coming out. Larson did it all himself. He was an extremely able officer.

Q: Now could you give us a sample of perhaps an average day.

SALMON: I certainly can. We began our day, fortunately they began the staff meetings, which were so important, early at 8:30. So that was manageable. Later on, I remember they moved it back to 7:00 and that was a real pain. But you sat with the admiral and all of his staff in, not all of them but it seemed to be a lot of them in a fairly small group and you just got the commander's agenda for the day which was very much informed by what was in the morning traffic. Perhaps people visiting the Pacific came in because we had a lot of people coming in to visit from overseas. And I would always be asked to sit in on all the meetings. That was time consuming to say the least. But in interacting with military staff I thought it was very good. Some people have a philosophy, some pol ads who and I remember talking to them believe very strongly that their only client was the commander in chief, the commander. They would want to deal with only him or her now. But in those days there was only him. I took a more expansive view of it. I felt it was analogous to the country team, I think; it was important to me to interact with people who were doing specific things that the admiral was most interested in and I was interested in them too. Given the nature of that staff you interact most closely with the ones called J5 the flag officers who were in charge of basically plans and policy and then you interact with the deputy CINC. We had a three star general and then you interact with the admiral's executive assistant. I can't over emphasize how important those executive assistants are in terms of substantive work they do for the admiral in addition to making the trains and the paper flow on time. In my day we had very effective J5s who became close friends, Admiral Mike McDivitt, who later became the head of the national war college. Then General Marty Steele a major general who later became a Lt. General in the Marine Corps. I think he had been their operations deputy. Then as I said the deputy I

interacted most with was General David Bramlett. It was Bramlett who later became a four-star commander and commanded the U.S. Army Forces Command. In a way, most importantly in the Navy Captain Gary Roughead, who later became the Chief of Naval Operations, I was working with him. He was a tremendous officer, and he was a great picker of help. I remember him recruiting various aides for the admiral generally at the Lt. Commander level. The one I remember he recruited was Todd Walters who later went on to become the Supreme Allied Commander Europe. Which is just as prestigious a title as the CINCPAC Hawaii arguably to some, more important. So I interacted very closely with them. I had a small staff, an assistant and they interacted, and I did too when I needed to with an action officer who worked on various issues. As you know the military is not only a very hierarchical, but very bureaucratic operation. I remember one time one of my assistants who was a pioneer or so it seemed to me because I knew nothing about the internet was hooked to scanning the internet every day to pick up things on the internet that had to do with various countries in the region. I would use them in the morning meeting as a bit of one-upmanship. Finally, we had a request from the J5 please warn us of anything you might be bringing up. They were in there working until 4:00 in the morning preparing these various submissions for the morning meeting. We did it in a very short time. The people were very friendly and collegial, and I had a very high regard for the military.

Q: You didn't see them regard you as an interference.

SALMON: No. My aim was to have them see me as a help. One of the things I learned from my predecessor, he basically told me if there is really an issue if you check with the department right away and be able to tell the admiral I checked this with State and their view was this and that. Ambassador Jim Wilkinson, who had been at the UN, was my predecessor and in any event so that was a way we kept things going in the staff meetings. As I mentioned, meeting people was very important; everybody wanted to call on the Admiral. Overseas military and civilian. Then the other big component of the job was traveling with him. We would go away and be away for three weeks. I think that was the length of their longest trip. We did that on a really constant basis. And I was able to cover most of the EAP countries once or in my case several times, because I worked for not only Admiral Larson but his successor Admiral Macke, and his successor Admiral Prueher, who you recall later became our ambassador to China.

Q: Now you were mentioning this travel. Were there swift decisions that have to travel now or some of these long planned?

SALMON: I think most of them were long planned. Because it was a very involved process and frankly, I didn't know how involved it was in terms of we all took the aircraft because it was assigned to the Commander. But in terms of getting clearances for various countries and getting a schedule locked in, usually the Admiral always saw the military leadership. But quite often we called on the foreign ministry and foreign minister, and certainly the defense minister. Sometimes we also called on the prime minister or the head of government. These trips are involved in getting the schedules all cleared away. I have to say they did a pretty good job of doing that. The admirals were quite amenable no

matter how difficult the schedule might be in terms of time, they always embraced what they had to do.

Q: Now would those be with ranking embassy officers?

SALMON: The first thing the general or admiral would do is consult with the ambassador and the country team. Very occasionally the ambassador would in some places try to get in on the call of the admiral if it were at the highest level of government. Not always. They realize that this is his meeting, and it would be totally reported because my colleagues the J5 and myself and the executive were just assiduous in getting the report of the meeting out right away and actually submitting it as a cable to the secretary of defense and the people in Washington. But no, there was never any one at least in my time coordinating among and between PACOM and the embassy I remember, and I was into that myself. I was retired and was scheduled to go on a trip to Indonesia for the international visitor program that the USIA and embassy used to have. At the last minute somebody in Washington complained about going to Indonesia at the particular time and wanted me to call off the trip. The ambassador who was then a very active individual, Bob Gelbard, said no I should come ahead, so I did go ahead. There were disagreements obviously. I remember particularly in terms of some of the people we had to deal with in Indonesia between the embassy and the commander or CINC. I think you get into that in Robin Wright's book Proconsul, which is a history of the commanders in chief and their relations with various countries and individuals in countries.

Q: What was the long trip you said 13 days?

SALMON: Oh, we would go to Korea, I think there was a meeting that Korea and the U.S. had each year, and the representatives were the Secretary of Defense and sometimes the Secretary of State and a substitute. Those took several days and similar meetings of that type with consultations between the Japanese and ourselves. They could either be in Tokyo or in Washington. It took a few days, and we would tack on to various countries that seemed well a lot of times. It was geographical. We visited those countries where we had treaty relationships, Thailand obviously, Korea and Japan. Often with Thailand and the Philippines, they had annual, I think with the Philippines it was semi-annual consultations, and they were either in Manila or in Honolulu too. The other important countries like Indonesia always wanted to talk to the commander and then countries that were important regionally. The first one is Malaysia and then we went to Mongolia, I think maybe three times, because there was a great interest in Mongolia at that time. So, there was never any want for places to be visited. The question was how could you arrange things. There were certain issues. I won't say every visit had a particular issue involved with it but one I remember because I was first involved in it was Thailand, and of course the Thais were close allies and friends. And you may recall I think earlier Dick Holbrooke there was talking about a so-called swing strategy where we would have assets in southeast Asia that could move off to the South Pacific, Australia. That is another one I forgot. Australia is a very important place. We had joint exercises. and we had a lot of visits to Australia. And much to my pleasure, I must say visits to New Zealand. Although the relationship when I remember Admiral Larson went out there was

really at the nadir in terms of their unwillingness to give anything on the confirmation of the nuclear weapons on ships. Because I had served there, I had a certain fondness for New Zealanders. They were tremendous in terms of their hospitality but in terms of their individual capabilities they had such a small operation. The military you met were really first-class people as indeed were the New Zealand diplomats. Basically, the travel program was very good. We had once or twice the plane break down and we had to stay. I remember we stayed in Surabaya once. One day more than we needed to. It was a good operation and as for regional travel with a group so it spurred the cooperation and I always looked for ways to make the state department better known to the military although the really sharp ones knew exactly how important the department was in the grand scheme of things.

Q: Now there are a number of things that arose. How did they affect the Commander of the Pacific? The first thing I am thinking about is North Korea. Went through a series of manipulating its membership in IAEA and former President Carter goes to North Korea. How would CINCPAC be following those kinds of issues?

SALMON: Well very closely with a former President involved. And of course the whole problem of North Korea. I remember I went out with Admiral Larson and Larson the relationship between Admiral Larson, and this is where you get into these issues and the relations between the commanders of all of our forces in Korea is not easy. Then I remember I went out with Larson and we had a new commander out there, General Gary Luck. It was a much more satisfying relationship in terms of Locke's regard for the pacific command and the admiral. So, we were involved in that. And of course under Admiral Macke we sent out some patriot missiles to support Korea. So, we interacted very closely operationally in terms of the ups and downs of the North Korean chart. Similarly in terms of other things, for example the Japanese earthquake where CINCPAC really took the lead when the bureaucracy was slow to respond. Admiral Macke was bound and determined to get these water purification devices out there overnight. Later on, when we had these problems in Aceh, again the military was very, to use their favorite word, proactive about doing what we could do in terms of food delivery. There is where you get a little, just an example if you recall. We were sending out quite a bit of food. I remember one of the people in the department asked if it was Halal. The military was amazed about how we would be sensitive about such an issue, but it was a sensitive issue. It had to be taken into account. I think that was one example of how the military was a bit amazed about how scrupulous the department was on some religious issue like that.

Q: In addition to issues coming out of the Koreas—

SALMON: Yes, we had a major incident with China in connection where Taiwan elections began missile exercises on both sides of the island. That is when the decision was made to send out two, I believe they were aircraft carriers. Not to go through the straits but to be in the region. That was the decision, and I remember the admiral sent back our J5 back to Washington to be involved right from the beginning in the planning. The situation was managed well. That was another example of a major issue that could

have been much worse. And everybody is trying to carry out what the White House wanted. Some people felt that one carrier would have been enough and other people felt we really wanted to make a point and so we sent two. As I recall, that may have been the decision of Secretary Perry.

Q: Now that mental firing in July of '95 follows Lee Teng-hui going to Cornell.

SALMON: I remember going out to meet Lee Teng-hui's plane and he was very annoyed that he couldn't get permission to play golf at some resort on a neighboring island which the Taiwanese owned. We said no and there were a lot of people who were very dubious about Lee Teng-hui's veracity and strength of his promise. That he would not do anything political during the Cornell reunion. When of course he did exactly the opposite and was very political. Lee couldn't get out of his aircraft when it was refueling, an hour and a half or two hours. It was toward the VIP section of the airport but he was very unsatisfied with the visit. I felt very bad because one of my very good friends here was the Taiwan representative. He bore the brunt of the President's irritation. I can imagine it wasn't a very pleasant thing going up to see him on the plane. He was really a nice fellow, I am trying to remember his name. Mr. Eu I believe. His career came to pretty much an end after that, but fortunately for him after the change of government he came back when one of his friends became prime minister. I remember visiting him in Taiwan and he was very happy. A very able person. I didn't mention it but the other component of the job was you interacted very closely with the permanent consul, the honorary consuls general here in Hawaii or in the case of Mr. Eu. It always reminded me of ecru. But you dealt very closely with the Australians, the Japanese, the Koreans. And most of them were exceedingly able. Particularly the Australians. They always have sent their best people here, who then go on to more important jobs like Ambassador to Indonesia or Ambassador to Geneva or Rome. So that was another aspect of the diplomatic life you had here in Hawaii in connection with the Pacific Command.

Q: Now from time to time with the diplomatic community. Was the Admiral invited to receptions and what not?

SALMON: Oh, was he. That was the big ambition of every Consul General to get the Admiral out. There were certain things he always did like the ANZUS Day celebration up at the Punch Bowl which was always extremely well done. My Australian friends said it was the best ANZUS celebration outside of Australia itself. Similarly, if there were important national celebrations. The Japanese always set up the Emperor's birthday party at the Japanese consulate which was one of the first in Hawaii with a huge footprint downtown. Beautiful grounds and buildings. Usually, the admiral would be persuaded that appearance was very important. If there were others, the Filipinos would always have their national day. I remember the admiral went once or twice to that. There was just no want of opportunities. I guess it was just the job of his staff. Sometimes I was consulted. Does he really need to go there? What were the advantages or disadvantages? That was an important part of life here in Hawaii and of course all of these consuls were very much involved with a visit of their top people. For many of them they would go to Washington but often leave the chairman of the joint chiefs equivalent or secretary of defense or

secretary of foreign affairs. So, it was a busy post and a good way and they all wanted a connection with the Pacific Command. I have to say of the three admirals I worked for, they all were intent on doing that and interacting with these countries.

Q: Something new on your agenda probably focuses on Vietnam. On July 11, 1995, we recognized Vietnam.

SALMON: Well even before recognition we had visited Vietnam with Admiral Larson. That was one of the first visits to Vietnam. He went on by himself, but the staff joined him there in Hanoi at the guest house and we had a very good meeting. Then I went there with Admiral Macke. That was after we had the normalization, I believe. It was '95. No, Macke went there in '95 because I was there until '96 and I didn't go there with Preuher. Then because of your interest in China I should also note that Admiral Larson visited China. I remember it must have been because I had been to China myself as a tourist in, I believe, 1982. I was just amazed at the changes we saw there when we visited, which I think was about '94. He had a great reception visit to Chinese installations, one of them was a Nike missile site. It was out of the '50s. But he did have a meeting with the father of the Chinese navy Admiral Lu Wa Ching. In the great hall of the people. I remember one of the things in the meeting. I think the admiral was instructed to draw him aside and express our concern about what is going on in North Korea. I think it was a general concern. It was clear that even with the interpretation, Admiral Lu Wa Ching had no idea of what we thought was going on in North Korea. That was a very good visit. I am trying to remember that we stayed at the New World Hotel. It was very new then. It was very new then the top hotel in town. I remember seeing in the lobby former Secretary Haig. He was there doing his lobbying and salesmanship work for the I guess it must have been the aircraft company up in Connecticut. I forget the name of it. But, you could see the beginning for China. Even I, who had been there so many years ago without a China specialist appreciated the dynamism and the forces of change at work there. I was later supposed to get there with Admiral Macke. It was unfortunate, I remember we were in Washington for the Australian U.S. ministerials AUSMINs, but it was the day of the Oklahoma bombing. But more importantly for me, I had an acute appendicitis attack and I had to have my appendix removed at the GW hospital early in the morning. So as our British friends said, that "put paid" for my trip to China with Admiral Macke.

Q: The opening with Vietnam had been going on for some time.

SALMON: Oh yeah. I am trying to remember who was the chargé. We were there before Desai Anderson took over. I think when we were there the first time the chargé was Jim Hall, who was later a science counselor in Tokyo. He was there living in the embassy itself. It was a hotel, a six-star hotel, The Metropol, an older hotel but very nice.

Q: Now as you were saying you have three bosses, Larson, Macke, and Preuher at the end. How would you characterize—

SALMON: Well, most importantly I got along with all of them, and I think they felt I provided a certain value added. Larson was extremely impressive. He was a product of

the 60s and was very close to Senator McCain who was a classmate at the naval academy and indeed their friendship continued. Larson's grave at the naval academy is very close to Senator McCain's. Of course, you could tell from his early career as an aide of Nixon as a young officer. He had an interesting operational background. He started as an aviator. But then later on he became a submariner, and he became again much later commander of a ship, and they did remarkable surveillance work against the Soviet Union. Admiral Macke was a naval aviator. He came to the job as director of the joint staff. And actually, one of his successors, Admiral Blair came to Pacific command from the same type of job. Macke was clearly an operator. The first thing in the morning meetings would contain a very long, detailed report on what was going on in the Navy in the Pacific. He got to where he was a bit of a rough cobb, but he was a very decent person. Sadly, he came to an unfortunate end. As you recall he made an unguarded comment in Washington. We were in Washington for breakfast. I was not there. But an unguarded comment to a newspaper person about that recent shocking case of rape in Okinawa. He had a somewhat insensitive reaction, and it got into the press. Suddenly everyone dropped him. He tried to explain to ambassador Mondale, but Mondale wouldn't return the call. The rumor was Mrs. Clinton, then the first lady, was very upset by what he had said, so that was pretty much the end of admiral Macke's career. I was pretty sad. Then the third one Admiral Preuher had been the deputy chief of naval operations. He was a real southern gentleman. I think he had been brought up in Tennessee. His father had perished in the war early on flying planes, I believe it was, off the coast of Brazil. But, he had a distinguished career as a naval aviator and as assistant to the secretary of the Navy, so he came out to replace Macke. He had also been commander of the sixth fleet, the European command. He had good instincts, but he had picked up in Europe even better instincts in terms of entertainment and serving wine on the plane. He was a really terrific individual. He was chosen to be ambassador to China and was there at an incredibly important time; the incident between the F8 and the EP3, where the EP3, through the effort of the pilot, was able to land in Hainan. Then of course I discussed for a week or two about what to do in the event that they tore the plane apart for intelligence purposes. But Prueher managed the incident well. He had over a thousand carrier landings. This really added a tremendous amount of verisimilitude to his diplomacy. So, I thought he did a great job on it. I was lucky, I thought, with all of the three commanders. I learned from all of them. It was a very good experience.

Q: Now we don't often get a chance to interview people who were in this job. What would you say to a foreign service officer who was recruited to be a POLAD.

SALMON: Well, I would tell them it is a job where you can do some good for the department and also some good for yourself. And if you interact with the military in this way, I think you should learn a lot. I think you know one can be inspired by the things some of them have done in their military careers. The interesting thing you may know is that there has been over the last few years, and I haven't followed it closely enough, a proliferation of POLADS. When I was a POLAD or foreign policy advisor at CINCPAC, I was pretty much the only thing on the island. In any event we didn't have many more. Yet in the time since I retired, we have had, as I say, a proliferation. We had and I can only use this as an example. We have a POLAD for MARFORPAC, Marine Forces

Pacific. We have POLADS for USARPAC, U.S. Army Pacific. We have POLADS for Special Operations Command. There are just a lot of POLADS, and I think they generally want military commanders because they know its value added to their staff, but I think there is also a certain amount of “Well if he has a POLAD, why can’t I have one?” The only place immune to this is PACAF, Pacific Air Force. They have had an advisor but not out of the POLAD system. They have had someone who has been in that job for over 12 years I believe who is a retired foreign service officer with a big China experience. You may know him. Brian Woo. He has done a terrific job and that is why he has stayed where he is over all these years. So, but going back to your original question I would tell younger officers this is certainly something that you should try and depending on where you are with kind of getting into the other part of the recruitment. It is a place where you have the experience of being overseas, but you are not overseas but in Hawaii or other places. It is good for education for kids. It has all of those collateral advantages.

Q: Now you retired in 1996. What have you been doing since?

SALMON: Well, when I retired in '96 it came at a juncture. I think throughout our discussions I talked about the virtues of serendipity. Things just happened at the right time. We had started a regional studies center called the Asia Pacific Center for Security Studies. There was one in Garmisch, Germany called the Marshall Center. There would be others for Africa and South Asia. They were generally located in Washington. We had opened this Center, and Admiral Prueher said why don't you go down and think of competing to be the head of it. I wasn't really thrilled with the idea of staying in Hawaii either. Then they made me an offer I couldn't refuse. The fellow who was charged with standing up the organization asked if I would be on the faculty and a foreign policy advisor. I said yes but I had one stipulation. I wanted to be hired as a contractor so it would not impact my pension. He said that was fine. He came up with a decent contract which they plussed up later. So, I confined my role to that, teaching and advising. We were looking for a new first head of the organization. I recommended my old friend from the War College. He too had been the MARFORPAC Commander, Lt General Hank Stackpole, who was then working for a defense contractor. And when I told the Admiral, “here was the perfect person to start working on this thing and get it established.” Indeed, he accepted at first, but then he had second thoughts. His wife, an old friend of mine, wasn't too keen on coming back from Japan where they had lived. So, he turned it down. It went on under the leadership of the person who started it, Colonel Jim Lackey, who did a great job operationally. Eventually I told the Admiral, “Hank is the person you should get.” Indeed, as you may recall he was the general in the relief operation in Bangladesh when he was bringing his troops back from Iraq. He eventually accepted working in the job for seven or even eight years. He was the perfect person to head up the organization at its start. Then when his successor was chosen, somebody in Pacific Command asked me who I thought would be a good candidate. They had about three people on their list. I knew the one, but I didn't know the others. I said, “oh no you can't go wrong with this person.” I took some satisfaction in having an impact on the leadership of that organization. I stayed with that organization. I began in '96 even before I retired in a way. I stayed with them until 2014. It was a very rewarding experience with the interaction with the military and civilians that would come through for our courses. I did a lot of

traveling too because we set up joint collaborative efforts with the Indonesians and the Chinese and others. So it turned out to be a very satisfying post-retirement position. So in 2014, I thought it was probably time for something else. And that is when I moved up to the East-West Center as a senior adjunct fellow, the operative word being adjunct which means you don't get paid. But I had a very nice office up there, and the East-West Center does remarkable work as you remember from our own career visiting here. So Hawaii turned out to actually be a dream place for post-retirement employment and also just for the style of life you enjoy here.

Q: So, most of this time you are running classes?

SALMON: Yes. It was one of these things where you had lectures and then seminars on the lecture. So, at the beginning I just basically did a lot of lecturing. And then I said no, I want to do seminars too. And then I did those and also, we had an elective program. We had shamelessly copied a program we had at the National War College called Culture and Strategy. I made that my elective. It was a good one. I talked a lot about religion and culture, maybe too much sometimes. But I can remember I had students who later became very important. They were all very impressive. They didn't send people here who were not impressive. Among the most impressive were Pakistani students which wasn't always easy, because they were always arguing with the Indians. My Pakistani student was General Kayani. He was a Brigadier General. He later became head of the Pakistani army and effective leader of Pakistan for eight or nine years. I had another one. Maybe he was not a brigadier, maybe just a colonel. Garav Rana from Nepal. He later became head of the army. So, these were the caliber of people we had. Many it is hard to remember over the years. Many of my Vietnamese students went on to become ambassadors. Most of them went on to fairly good promotions. In our first class we had a navy captain from Thailand who became a vice admiral. That was not such a big challenge. But it was a very rewarding experience, especially when we went overseas to work with some of these Chinese think tanks or to work with the Indonesian school for the military, Lemhanas. The Vietnamese when they became non-permanent members of the security council for the first time, they wanted us to do a tutorial for them. It took about three days. I enlisted our former ambassador at the UN Peter Burleigh to come and lead the change for our side, and he had remarkable experience, because he had been chargé at the UN for a considerable period of time. So those were the kind of things that made the APCSS job very interesting and rewarding.

Q: Did you ever have any of them come through Honolulu and say hi.

SALMON: Not that many come through although one did come through. My first Indian student was an Air Force brigadier, Tyagi. I went out of my way to spend time with him, because we always seemed to be going through rough patches with the Indians. I wanted to help out in my own way to cultivate him and another Indian who became a spokesperson for the Indian Foreign Ministry. Tyagi came through and by that time he was chief of the defense force. He gave a lecture at our place and was kind enough to remember my own lectures and stipulations. I never told jokes. And I didn't use Powerpoint. Well later on I used Powerpoint. but I never told jokes. So those people

popped up. Actually, the Vietnamese student I had that came back was the Vietnamese ambassador in Washington. But I don't want to say I kept up intensively close contact with these people. If you learn what I learned from my own experience from school, the thing is we had a lot of students and it is hard to remember all of them. I always remember when I was stationed in Vienna, we went to Cortina in the Dolomites to go skiing. I was checking into this hotel, the Crystal Palace. I remember it so clearly. There was my medieval history teacher from Fordham, Dr. Gerhardt Ladner checking out. This was maybe ten years after I had graduated. I rushed up to him and said "Dr. Ladner." It was the days of terrorism. He looked at me with consternation. I introduced myself and he said, "Oh yes, I remember." It is funny how that is my take on teachers remembering their students.

Q: Now all the embassies in Asia would select candidates to do an international visitors program. Did that program stop in Honolulu?

SALMON: Oh yes. I saw a lot of them. I saw more of them when I was at the East-West Center. Actually one of the organizations I belonged to since I came here thirty years ago is the Pacific and Asia Affairs Council, which was part of that world affairs network. They had the contract for managing the international visitors program. I was always glad to help. It was an opportunity to meet a lot of the young leaders they sent through here. PAAC just gave it up. I thought that was a big mistake and made that very clear at a board meeting. But now it is operated by Pacific Forum, which is a local think tank which was established by Admiral Joe Vasey years ago and has done very well. Jim Kelly was one of its heads for a long time, and it is now headed by David Santoro, who is a proliferation expert. I have been on the board of that organization almost since I arrived. I still have some opportunity to look at what they are doing on the international visitors front.

Q: Well, I think we have come to the end

SALMON: Oh, David, like all good things it must come to an end. I appreciate it. I really have enjoyed our interchange over the past few weeks. I am sure I may have had a few things wrong—dates and things. Thanks again, David, for doing such a wonderful job as an interviewer.

End of interview