

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

ROBERT A. MOSHER

*Interviewed by: Charles Stuart Kennedy
Initial interview date: February 17, 2005
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Q: Tell me first, when and where were you born?

MOSHER: I was born in Battle Creek, Michigan on May 7, 1950.

Q: Tell me a little about on your father's side of the family.

MOSHER: Well, my father is Leroy Charles Mosher and the family had been in Michigan for some 40-50 years. From the genealogy it seems like the family moved, every generation moved on. Actually they go back to Newport, Rhode Island in the 1630s and every generation then seemed to move the next step west, from one colony and then one state to the next. My grandfather was born in Indiana and later moved to Michigan. My father was born in Michigan and he moved us to St. Louis shortly after I was born. There's been a lot of genealogical work done on the family by other branches and that is where I learned most of what I know about it. My father was just young enough not to serve in the Second World War, although I've got his papers for service at home while a college student. He was in the Michigan militia and apparently, my mother just told me, I had never heard this, was called up for the Detroit riots during the war so I had to track down what I could find out about that. I heard about those from my mother's side of the family because they continued to live in Michigan and had lived in that area.

Q: What were the Mosher's? Were they mainly farmers or business people?

MOSHER: Mainly farmers and some were tradesmen. My grandfather started out as a farm labourer and then moved into the auto industry. He was a machinist mate in the Navy during the First World War serving on the USS Connecticut which was, at least part of the time, the flagship for the Atlantic squadron, as I understand it. I saw pictures that he had taken when he served in France during the war. Some of these were of World War One submarines tied up next to the flag ship when they were anchored. My family having moved away I really don't know much beyond that outline since my Grandfather stayed in Michigan.

Q: Did you father go to college or not?

MOSHER: He went to college in Albion, Michigan but didn't complete the four years to graduate. He completed only a couple of years. He had a couple of labouring jobs, factory jobs, and during one summer apparently drove a large truck cross-country with one of his buddies – at least it was a large tractor trailer rig by the standards of those days. Later he became an accountant and was working on becoming a Certified Public Accountant when he died. When he came to St. Louis, his first job was

apparently on the assembly line in a factory that manufactured oven-ranges and suffered serious burns from the acid used to etch the sheet metal used to make the stoves. I was later told that this was when he contracted the epilepsy that would later lead to his death by suffocation when I was eight years old. One of his bookkeeping jobs was with the Laclede Brick works in St. Louis while I was growing up and for years we had a couple of their bricks around the house apparently as souvenirs.

Q: How about your mother? What was her family name?

MOSHER: Her family name was Ballentine and they were from Kalamazoo, Michigan. Her family had lived in that southern part of Michigan since the early days of proper settlement, two Ballentine cousins arriving there in the 1840s pretty directly from County Tyrone in Ulster or Northern Ireland. They were tradesmen, one as a cooper and the other as a wheelwright. Her dad, Edward Theron Ballentine, had been a number of things. He had been partners with a Japanese American in the 1930s in a shop that sold radios, electronic goods of the period but his partner scooted with the money and the store went bust during the Depression. Mom has talked about them all getting together and pushing those big, beautiful cabinet radios out of the second floor of the shop because they had to vacate and nobody would take the radios off their hands during the Depression. During the war he worked in the Willow Run plant building B-24 Liberator bombers. There he installed the bomb release control panels and other fittings for the secret Norden bomb sights. Mom told me how he remembered walking out to the planes escorted by two guys with drawn .45 automatic pistols and carrying the bomb sight in a bag and everything. They would then hook up all the connections and check them for proper installation. The story in the family is that on the first day the plant began work my Grandfather went in and started his job. But on the second day, he no sooner arrived at the plant when he was told to report to the works manager, with a loudspeaker message "Edward Ballentine report to the plant supervisor's office". He dutifully walked up to wherever it was in the plant and reported. The first thing they said was, "Okay, Ballentine can you tell us why your bomb release and control panels are the only ones in the entire factory that passed inspection yesterday?" And my Grandfather reportedly said, "Well, you gave us the wrong kind of solder which doesn't work for electrical connections. So I went out and bought my own to solder all the electrical connections with."

After the war they moved to Arizona and lived out there for a couple of years in a little place called Wickenburg where he ran one of those gas stations on the road to Nevada, with snake farms and everything for the tourists, including a couple of nickel slot machines. My mother was the youngest child and she went to school there and graduated from the high school in Wickenburg, Arizona before they all moved back to Michigan as it just wasn't working out. Back in Michigan, Mom started working in the local bank where her brother-in-law – her older sister's husband - was one of the officers. That was apparently where she and my Dad met. After they were married in Kalamazoo, he moved to St. Louis where her older brother was living, also named Ed Ballentine, and began looking for work. He found it in a factory that manufactured those big oven ranges so then she followed with me, by air, flying on a DC3 when I was six weeks old to St. Louis. We all stayed with my uncle for a while before moving into a series of flats in the downtown St. Louis area. All of these different neighbourhoods were pretty close to each other and to the old Sportsman's ballpark where the Cardinals and Browns baseball teams played (until the Browns moved to

Baltimore in the early 1950s). Dad was a bit baseball fan. In 1958 we moved out to the suburbs in St Louis County, although still pretty close in to the city. That's where we were living when my Dad died in his sleep. Reportedly, my Dad got a deal on the house because the real estate developers had skipped off to Cuba with all the money leaving the Bank and investors with only the houses and lots to recoup their investment or monies owed to them by the developers. I have always wondered what happened to those guys when Castro overthrew Batista.

Q: Did you grow up in St. Louis?

MOSHER: Yes. My childhood memories are all from there, especially downtown St. Louis where we were living a sort of the urban life; walking down to the bakery on Sunday morning before or after church to get your pastries and newspaper. I remember my Dad taking us a couple of times to Sportsman's Park, the old St. Louis stadium, to see the Cardinals play – the Browns had by then, I think, moved to Baltimore. My Dad was a big sports fan. He played sports in high school and a little bit in college – baseball, some basketball, and he ran track. He also played on the church softball team when I was growing up. I remember seeing him doing that a couple of times.

Q: What denomination was your family?

MOSHER: They moved around a bit because I remember going to both Methodist and sort of more liberal, not fundamentalist, Baptist churches. I think primarily though Methodist. Then you go through that other parts of the family, as you go back through it, Anglicans and all kinds of things. My Dad was very active in the one Methodist Church that we belonged to for a while in downtown St Louis, working on fund raising drives for them. I understand that he was mostly influenced by his mother in this.

Q: What was family like at home? Do you have brothers, sisters?

MOSHER: I had, let's see, I was born in 1950, we moved to St. Louis. My first brother – Ron - was born in 1952 in Children's Hospital in St. Louis and then my third brother – Tom - was born in 1958 shortly after we moved out of the city into the suburbs. I guess it was pretty typical for the fifties especially because we had half day kindergarten so I remember spending a fair amount of time at home either amusing myself or watching television. Then when my brother came along we would play to a little degree with each other especially in the city. The house had a pretty good size backyard. One of the houses we lived in had a machine shop on the other side of the alley and so we would go out into the alley and see what treasures you could get out of their scrap. The last place we lived in had a big open area in the middle of the block which had a roadway around it and then part of it was mown grass because there was a model airplane club that flew their models back there. We'd go out and watch that and we could play in the field or we could play when they weren't flying or we could use the other part which was all overgrown. For our age and size that was a jungle, that kind of stuff.

Q: At home, were current events, did you talk about things at the table, at dinner or something like that?

MOSHER: Not a lot that I can remember. If they did it didn't have much impact on me. The earliest discussions I can remember about anything about current events actually came later. I would have date it to the 1960 campaign which we watched the convention, we watched Kennedy, we watched Kennedy's inaugural and that was when I really started looking out beyond family and any immediate circle. We did read a lot and after my father died, I took a sort of refuge in reading anything and everything I could get my hands on. We used to get the news magazines. I grew up reading Time in particular I remember. My mom was an avid reader and I had a library card almost as soon as they would give you one. I read a lot of historical fiction, boys' biographies kind of stuff, and science fiction.

Q: A Carnegie Library there?

MOSHER: It was the St. Louis Public Library, whether that started as Carnegie, I have no idea. I remember going there regularly and devouring everything we could get. My mother would get things to read to us and eventually we'd get our own things to read. By the third grade I was reading a couple of grade levels above. So I was always interested in those kinds of things, more than I guess boys were supposed to be. A little bit of sports, bicycle riding and things like that.

Q: What about the kids around you? I take it this is a pretty much segregated community.

MOSHER: It was, but I obviously didn't perceive it at the time. The neighbourhood was all I knew, so I had little to go by. I think there may have been some trouble developing, though I don't remember any particular troubles. I did have one of my own neighbourhood acquaintances, white, show off by waving a knife in front of me while we played in that overgrown lot I mentioned. But I don't recall feeling particularly threatened by it. There were black families in the area and I remember going by their houses – they all lived pretty much on the same streets together - and I remember there being blacks at school although we didn't mix. I remember them and I remember not thinking anything of it. It wasn't anything at the time. Okay I'm white, they're black. At that age I already knew St. Louis had Italian neighbourhoods, Polish neighbourhoods, German neighbourhoods and all those things. We used to go over to the Italian neighbourhood on St. Augustine's Hill to eat in the Italian restaurants. My favourite was the Toasted ravioli, a St. Louis tradition, can't find almost anywhere else. We'd go down to Gravois Boulevard and the Bevo Mill area, the old German neighbourhood, things like that. So you knew there were things other than you own tradition but nobody made that big of deal out of it. We were fairly regular church going, Methodists. My dad was active in the church and helped them raise money for their building and things like that. We use to have one of their plates that were sold as a fund raising device. Fairly normal.

Q: TV, radios?

MOSHER: We did get a TV I think when I was about five, about 1955, 1956. I remember part of the routine was, especially at that age, there was only a half day kindergarten, whether it was morning or afternoon and they flipped it half way through the year. The other half of the day was often spent at home watching TV. I

was a big Hopalong Cassidy fan. I had the guns, the chair and everything I remember. I remember, as time passed, watching more of those kinds of shows that were aimed at kids. I became, and it probably dates back to those years, a big fan of the old Warner Brothers cartoons which when I got older I realized they were written for adults, not for kids. There was a kids program with one of the woman presenters, she was always talking about Mr. Do-Bee and Mr. Don't-Bee, all those little lessons on etiquette. You didn't get that from Howdy Doody. Basically she was doing a sort of kindergarten thing. I remember going to the school, it was maybe two, three blocks at the most walk and a bunch of us from the neighbourhood would all more or less walk together off to the school. There is a photograph from either my fifth or sixth birthday of me all dressed up in a cowboy suit on a pony. It must have been one of those photographers who came through the neighbourhood. I remember the street carts, with the vendors were still coming around with their horse drawn carts to sell whatever they were selling. That was still going on and even street cars in St. Louis. I have a vague recollection of all that sort of thing.

Q: How about movies, did this become part of your life or not?

MOSHER: Not yet. We didn't go to movies very often. The one movie I do remember that was a big treat, they took me to see Fantasia when it was released brand new, big screen. We went to the big Fox movie theatre downtown I think. They had to take me out about half way through because when the dinosaurs showed up I started screaming. I remember hanging over my father's shoulder as he carried me out of the movie theatre because I had had it, I reached my limit. But I watched a lot of the old western movies, John Wayne, Randolph Scott, and so on, on Saturday afternoons.

Q: How about in school, what sort of subjects did you, elementary school, do you remember any of the teachers or subjects?

MOSHER: From the school in the city I do not remember much. I have vague recollections of the classroom, kindergarten more than the others – First and Second grade - because the others sort of blend in. I remember learning to read, of course, as that was one thing I really jumped on as it was something I could do by myself. I also remember my mother's encouragement and going with her to the public library. Beyond that, nothing special. I was in the third grade when we moved out to the suburbs and that's when I really started remembering school, after my father died

Q: Is there a name of the place you moved out to?

MOSHER: Yes. St. Louis suffers from being in Missouri and the state legislature put limits on both St. Louis and Kansas City that said you will go no further than this. So St. Louis County remains independent and it has over 200 maybe 250 jurisdictions. We went to one called Overland which was in the first tier right outside the city, next to University City coming in that direction. University City was the area all around Washington University and it was fairly upscale. Next you came to Overland. Overland ranged in scale economically and even included a black neighbourhood that dated back to the freedman's villages of the Civil War. Of course, they had been there right along. The street we moved onto was in a brand new sub-division just built the year or two before. I heard, even growing up, that the guy who was the developer skipped out with whatever money he could get and moved to Cuba. As a result, a lot

of the families who lived on the street were actually the carpenters who helped build the houses. It was kind of a mixed neighborhood economically. We were somewhat middle class, I guess, with my dad doing white collar work. He was by then a bookkeeper or an accountant at the Laclede Brickworks in St. Louis. My mom had had white collar work when she was working. Then we had all these carpenters and other sorts of blue collar I guess. Didn't make any difference to me at the time, I didn't know any better.

It was also a neighbourhood that attracted a lot of the people coming to St. Louis after the war for work in the plants, during the war and after the war, coming from rural parts of Missouri so it was a mixed neighbourhood. The houses were 1950s wooden frame construction not much different than this ranch style house in terms of size or anything. We were also on a little bit of low lying land for that neighbourhood. There was a creek behind the house that in those years, especially, flooded every couple of years. We'd get water in the basement and there would be water out on the street a couple of feet deep. All the kids would go out and swim in it and the parents would drag them out.

The school by contrast was a fairly new, one of those low, long rambling elementary schools popular in the '50s and it made a lot more impression on me than my previous school in the city. How much of what I remember has to do with the fact that my father died very quickly, about six months after we moved there, and how much it may reflect the school and neighbourhood itself I don't know. It was otherwise a fairly typical neighbourhood. We all had bicycles. We'd go exploring the creek that ran behind my house. We'd go run down the street with each other deciding what to do and where to do it. There were lots of kids in the neighbourhood. There were so many kids in the neighbourhood that you had cliques, groups that wouldn't usually play with each other. We even had a row of families on one side of the street where all the kids went to the Catholic schools while the rest of us went to the public schools. Sometimes this was a divide and sometimes it was a unifier, even a bond in some ways. As I got older I realized that the Catholic high school, McClure High School, and my public high school – Ritenour, actually got a long rather like brothers. We might scrap and quarrel with each other, but if anybody else tried to join in, it was going to be both of us against you. It was kind of an interesting neighbourhood, very mixed. I remember having Jewish friends, Catholic friends, you name it.

Q: As you were getting up close to high school, what sort of courses did you find that you particularly liked and didn't like?

MOSHER: Well, I really enjoyed social studies and history and by that time was reading a lot of history and biographies and that sort of thing. English, I did not like as much although I did enjoy reading stories. My mother arranged for me to have a public library card at an early age. But I was already reading a lot of science fiction and that was often the main fiction that I would read working from Isaac Asimov up through whoever was writing in those days. I was doing much the same thing reading through the history shelves and mostly the military history.

Q: Do you recall any particular books that impressed you?

MOSHER: Science fiction, it's hard to pick out because I was just reading so many but I got to prefer authors. I liked anything by Asimov, who put a lot of science into his books, writing about computers, robots, etc. When I started reading Robert Heinlein, I liked just about all of it, though it was always evident that he had more political content in his work So I think to myself, 'Okay, this guy's got a slightly different world view from Asimov, this is interesting.' I remember reading Heinlein's Stranger in a Strange Land in high school and thinking I'm glad my mom doesn't know I'm reading this. But it struck me as very good. I read some Poul Anderson. I have always remembered James Blish, really another favourite. He wrote a series of novels called "The Cities in Flight" which impressed me with his handling of what was really a history of his imagined universe over a really extended arch of time. This was similar to Isaac Asimov's "Foundation" series, which introduced the idea of projecting history via socio-political analysis and the study of statistics. These were not the gee whiz, bang Flash Gordon kind of space operas. These authors were often creating a whole society of culture and then they would wind it up and let it go in advance, sometimes centuries and you could read this and follow it. Sometimes you'd go, "Wait a minute, no you blew that one, it couldn't possibly have developed that way." The history side, you know, focusing on military history. I was reading a lot of British authors, a lot of British military history, especially about the Duke of Wellington and the British army in the Peninsula fighting against the French.

Q: You have any, since you're now working on a PhD on military history, do you have any particular feel for what attracted you to military history?

MOSHER: I think it started out on maybe a couple of levels. I think one of the levels was the adolescent boy fascination because I started off reading all those boy biographies of figures like Andrew Jackson, Winfield Scott, all the American military heroes. Then I branched out to the British ones. They were the most accessible non-American figures to read about because English was the native language for them. Napoleon never fascinated me as much, but I would read histories of his campaigns and even I would think this is a little kooky, there's got to be more of an explanation for victory and defeat than this. Why was Wellington supposed to be such a good general? That's why I started reading the histories and reading about the armies; to try and learn how you actually went about getting troops from one place to the other, how did you actually get them to do the things you needed them to do. I read a little bit about the American Civil War, but oddly enough it didn't have the same fascination that the European wars did.

However, I do remember at that same time, at that age, the first Civil War centennial arrived. All the maps came out and even war games. Being boys at that age and in those days, we played at war in our neighbourhood, World War II, fighting Indians, and the Civil War. Oddly enough, in those days, I was the Confederate and my brother was the Yankee. We'd run around the neighbourhood being John Singleton Mosby and all of that stuff, or we'd do World War Two fighting from bush to bush and house to house. A friend of mine's father had an old 1903 Springfield and would let us play with it. So as a kid, aged 10, 11, 12, I got familiar with the workings of that beautiful piece of machinery. When we weren't doing that, we'd play baseball in the neighbourhood at different places or street football.

But my reading choices kept going beyond that. I wanted to go to the next level and I'd start reading about the technology and why is this gun better than that gun. I would read one author and he'd talk about the British Brown Bess musket. Well, why was it so good? I would go and find a book that would talk about that. Talk about the tanks of World War Two and you are talking about the Sherman, the Tiger and of course you soon start off just like the soldiers of World War Two. "The Sherman tank is the greatest thing in the world." Then you get into action (as you start reading the accounts), you go, "Damn, this thing is dangerous, what was this all about?" I remember even reading the white papers published on the US nuclear weapons programs, the Hiroshima atom bomb attack and its aftermath, and stuff like that all through high school. Yeah, I devoured stuff like that..

Q: I mean, it's interesting, it points out how much education really takes place by oneself.

MOSHER: As you mention that, the first year at the new school in the suburbs, I was in the third grade. Most of our work would be assignments worked on in class. Write a paper, do the math problems, whatever the subject of that class was. If you had free time after that, you could do whatever you wanted. Well, for some reason and I don't know why, at the beginning of the third grade, whenever I had free time, I went to the back of the class room and picked up a volume of the Encyclopaedia and I would read it. I read that entire encyclopaedia from cover to cover, A through Z. Fascinating education and all kinds of minutia, and the silly things that would stick in your mind, you know. At one point some years later, I felt like my knowledge of the world was skin deep but so broad because whatever would come up or whatever would happen would ring a bell and remind me of something that I had read doing that kind of reading. I guess it was just that the work level of the third grade was such that you had time to do that.

Q: In high school, where did you go to high school now?

MOSHER: The Ritenour system took you through a junior high school that included ninth grade and then the Ritenour Senior High School was the last three grades. The year I graduated we were the biggest high school graduating class in the entire state of Missouri.

Q: '68?

MOSHER: Yeah, 1968. Of course, by that time you had a little bit of differentiation in classes. One of my junior high math teachers had decide that I was adept and recommended that I take accelerated math courses. Bad mistake on my part. On everything else, I was on the normal track. My senior year included a special semester long course organized by one of the history teachers and open only by invitation. They apparently went around and picked out people from different classes and invited them to join this special class for the last semester. It was mostly guys and I knew most of them already. I don't remember there being any girls in that group, so either they were very quiet or there weren't any at all. Everybody was from the accelerated studies program, though I was only in that program for mathematics, with one exception. This one boy was apparently in the class because his mother went to the superintendent's office and demanded that he be put in the group, or at least that was

what he told us during the class. In any case, he really didn't fit in with the rest of the group. The teacher had obtained a copy of an early computer designed simulation for international affairs. Each of us had a country or countries and had to make all of the decisions about incoming resources and how to allocate them to different programs. For example, did we want to build up the economy, did we want to build industry or agriculture or develop this part of it. How much would we allocate for defence? All those kinds of decisions. Well, some one group of us had been war gaming for about eight years by then so we took to this like ducks to water. Unfortunately, the program was sabotaged because he fell ill and was hospitalized for most of that semester. The school had one of the other teachers take over, but he apparently had no concept of what was going on. Basically, I think his role was just simply to keep us from rioting and we just continued with the game for the rest of the semester. We did do some research and we would write and present papers on different subjects relating to international relations. I remember being in the library one time in particular as we were all researching our papers. We started comparing notes, "what are you going to do?" "What's your topic?" "What are you researching?" The one kid whose mother had gotten him into the group said, "I'm doing my paper on Charles de Gaulle." And we all say, "Well, that's interesting." After all it was 1968 and de Gaulle was facing a student uprising. So, our fellow student goes on to say, "Charles de Gaulle is a communist." That's when we got thrown out of the library because we all went, "Charles de Gaulle, a communist! Are you out of your ever loving frigging mind?" The librarian went, "Out!" There was some value out of that kind of research and debate, but most of the time we spent playing the game.

Q: You mentioned war games, what sort of war games were you playing?

MOSHER: Well I got my first war game in 1962. There was a discount department store going out of business near us and they were having a closing sale. My grandmother, my mother, and I went over to the store and I'm walking around looking at what they were offering and there it was, the game on the Battle of Gettysburg by the Avalon Hill company out of Baltimore, Maryland. I think it was like four bucks. This was still a fair amount of money in those days but my grandmother went good for it, bought me the game, and I started playing it at home by myself. For a while I'd get my brother to play but after a couple of games he got bored since I'd usually win because I was more interested in it than he was. I remember once my stepfather tried to play it and decided he wasn't interested in this, but then I found some neighbourhood guys were also playing these games and we got a little circle of our friends together. This was like the first couple of years after I got it, so about '62, '63. And soon we were watching and waiting, since Avalon Hill would come out with one new game a year. We'd get together and ask, "Okay, who's going to buy it?" We'd all play the new game, whoever bought it, and this went on until the guys in New York, SPI and Jim Dunnigan and crew, started coming out with their games, a veritable flood of games. By that time we had also advanced to playing miniatures wargames. We became acquainted with a guy at our high school who was using plastic figures to fight the Civil War and figures and models to fight World War Two battles. We bought the tank models from a company in Austria, which years later got in trouble for using prison labor when a convict slipped a message into one of the models. One of this group was a guy named Ron Wall who is still in business painting figures. We'd have his collection and he'd come out and play with us sometimes and we would bring our figures. And of course we also had these new games out of New

York. We even tried our hand at designing our own games and our own set of rules for wargaming tank battles. We went to the Washington University library in St Louis and found a German volume that included all of the specification details of everybody's tanks. We couldn't read German, but we found that you could decipher the tables. We were working out the math for angle of armour and penetration and all kinds of silly things.

Q: I bought every Avalon Hill product that came out. I was in the Foreign Service by that time and started doing wargaming. We use to find people within the Foreign Service to play. One of my steady war gamers was Larry Eagleburger. We used to play quite a bit.

MOSHER: How good was he?

Q: Good, but not wonderful. I used to beat him more than he would beat me.

MOSHER: I played an Army Reserve guy, an officer, about this time period when I was a senior in high school, in the old Avalon Hill Tactics-II game, and whipped him, bad. Even then I realized that the problem was that he couldn't translate his training into the knowledge of what to do in a wargame. It was just different kind of knowledge.

Q: How much did, you mentioned the Kennedy phenomenon, the 1960 campaign. Did you get emotionally involved in that?

MOSHER: Well, I did get into it, there was some kind of response even at the age of 10. He made that speech, that inaugural address and there was a response, I started becoming more aware of a larger world. I was also a lot more on my own by this time in a number of ways and a new young President had a big impact. My father had died unexpectedly in 1958. So my mother is left with three children, all boys under the age of ten, and she has to find a job. This means that she's out going to work every day and we either had a housekeeper or someone during the summer to keep an eye on us or we were at school all day. She remarried late in 1960 to John Young, who was the Chief Deputy Sheriff for St. Louis County. John was our introduction to politics because the sheriff's job is an elected office and St. Louis County at least in those days was pretty much Democratic, almost a Democratic machine kind of politics. As a result, a couple of years later, the whole family is actually out posting signs, stuffing envelopes, and doing everything else for the sheriff's re-election. We began to learn a little about local politics and I started reading more about more contemporary issues, more modern conflicts such as the war in Korea, and looking at what was going on in the world. It was a pretty steady diet of Time magazine, the St. Louis Post-Dispatch newspaper, and the television evening news – Walter Cronkite and others. I was also starting to talk about these kinds of things with the other guys over our war games. This was a circle of bright people and they had a lot of different interests that were all new to me. One of them played the cello, for example. His family was a good bit better off economically than we were although I didn't see that big of a distinction at the time. His father owned the largest funeral home in our area. My best friend in this group, Brian Cooper, was my first Jewish friend and this introduced me to the story of Jewish immigration to the United States. He told the story of how his grandfather came from the Ukraine, arrived at Ellis Island, and the immigration officers took one

look at his name and said, “The hell with that, your name is Cooper.” My friend Brian said that he had seen the originally Ukrainian family name written out and said that even he didn’t know how to pronounce it. I was getting around St. Louis more, even without driving a car, but I rode my bicycle everywhere and knew how to use the city bus system. .

Q: Did international events intrude much? I’m thinking you’re about 13 or 12 when the Cuban missile crisis came, and then there was the Cold War?

MOSHER: We were very aware of all of that, especially Cuba. The Cold War was a little bit more distant. I’ve always been interested in social studies and history, and each year we would go through the social studies curriculum and each year you would get more history. Even at this age, I recognized that every year that we progressed through the school program they would add another level of complication and more detail to the history courses. I could start detecting the propaganda in the old fashion meaning of propaganda that, okay we’re getting this dose of U.S. government and constitution just in case we didn’t understand before why it’s better than what the Soviets have. You could hear it. I used to say even in the ‘60s when I was in college when we’d talk about the student movements, the protests, and I would say, “It’s their own fault,” Because they spent all that money and effort in the 1950s to educate us about how better the U.S. system was than the other side. Then we got into our teens and they started saying, “Well, it doesn’t really work that way, kid.” “What do you mean it doesn’t work that way? What have you been spending all these years telling me that this is how it worked and now you’re telling me it doesn’t work that way?” I remember the emergence of the civil rights movement, demonstrations, and the beginning of the marches. The Cuban missile crisis though had a big impact. I remember growing up in St. Louis that we were real close to the McDonnell Douglas aircraft plant. I remember through my high school years being fascinated by the technology and watching them launch the aircraft. They were building F-4 Phantoms then and every Wednesday afternoon you would see four F-4 Phantoms take off, one by one, and the aircraft would circle until all four of them were together and then they would fly west. I remember watching that for a couple of years and I was hooked on that because in addition to all this other stuff going on I’m building scale plastic models. By the time I graduated from high school in 1968, I’ve got over 200 plastic model aircraft hanging from the ceiling of the basement, bumping into people’s heads, plus five or six ships, three or four tanks, and all the little armies for my war games – mostly World War Two tanks, infantry, and such things. But during the Cuban Missile crisis, because of the McDonnell Douglas plant there and the munitions works which was next to the highway that went from downtown St. Louis to where we lived – (we’d drive by and say, “There’s the munitions plant, making ammunition for Vietnam”). So we were aware of all that and when all the newspapers and the TV started talking about the crisis and the missiles in Cuba and saying that we may go to war, they drew those lines on the maps on television and St. Louis was in range of the missiles. At school, we would go out into the hallway and we’d practice ducking and covering. Even then I was familiar with that poster that said, “Put your head between your knees and kiss your ass goodbye,” and I knew that this was ridiculous. What is being in this hallway going to do for me this close to a probable bomb hit? But we had to do all that. So that was what it was like becoming more aware of things in the larger world. The Cold War was a little bit more of a background to it. I remember the pictures of Khrushchev pounding his shoe at the UN and I vaguely remember Castro

coming to New York. The biggest impact then would have been the assassination of President Kennedy in 1963. I remember that I was at school, which would have been junior high school by then, and in the middle of the day walking in the hallway I hear some kids were talking about the assassination. I'm thinking, bullshit, I'm not going to believe this based on some rumor, I want a source other than some kid in the hallway. I wanted somebody who I could trust telling me that, yes this is what happened. I think that that in some ways the experience was an education and part of the change in attitude on my part.

Q: I think it did really seize everybody. Everybody from that knows where they were at the time. In '68 you're graduating from high school. What were you planning on doing?

MOSHER: I decided to teach history. I loved history. I was really into the subject. I knew it and teaching, you know, seemed to be a good steady job and something I would really enjoy doing. I loved sharing anecdotes and ideas with my whole circle of wargamers, we were always teaching each other something new. We followed the '67 Arab-Israeli War in great detail and compared notes. We'd look for different articles and talk about the tactics, the equipment, and everything. For a year it seemed like everyone wanted to be an Israeli soldier. Then, 1968 comes along and now we're doing Vietnam. I did a paper in my history class my senior year on the war. I found Douglas Pike's book on the Viet Cong in the library, some Look magazine articles, and some other books and media coverage. So I actually did a paper on how we could win the Vietnam War drawing out a lot of the tactics described in these sources.

Q: The Tet Offensive was in the winter of your senior year, '68.

MOSHER: I've talked to so many people about 1968 and when I went to Vietnam later I met some of the people who had been there, so I can't tell any more what I know now that I didn't know then. But, I was watching the news every night to follow the war news. I was reading the war news in Time magazine and the St. Louis Post-Dispatch, looking for military and operational details. I'm reading Pike's book, I read Giap's book People's War. I read Bernard Falls' books about Vietnam and especially about Dien Bien Phu and the French experience. And I was always looking for the tactical, military details. I wanted to get beyond the headlines. Of course, there was "Uncle" Walter every evening, Walter Cronkite, telling you, "That's the way it is."

When I graduated from high school I still thought the war was a good thing that we could still pull this off if we followed the right tactics and the right plan, got people committed to it, and I was still more or less in favour of it. So as noted I decided to go to college and become a teacher. My stepfather, John Young had died in 1966, and I was able to use VA (Veterans Administration) benefits from him to cover my tuition and other costs, but it wasn't a lot of money so I went to Southeast Missouri State which had been previously a state normal school for educating teachers. That was a draw because, as I learned at college, school districts from across the country came there to hire teachers. The school was also about a three hour drive from home, about 150-160 miles which was a good distance - not too close and not too far.

I got half way through the first semester and said, "This is nuts, there is no way in hell I'm ever going to stand in front of a classroom filled with a bunch of kids who have

nowhere near the love for the subject that I do. I'll be frustrated as hell. I don't need this so I'm going to have to do something else." So I changed over to liberal arts degree, from a Bachelor of Science to a Bachelor of Arts degree program. And I changed my major to history and just started taking every history course in sight. At the same time, I am now trying to figure out what am I going to do after college. I do know that I'm going to get all the courses and the degree and four years of college beats four years in rice paddies, but while I do this for now I also need to start thinking about what I want to do afterwards. I had toyed with the idea of a military career, given my longstanding interest in things military, but by this time I have realized that I don't like pain. I also know that by temperament, I don't always deal well with authority figures. So, I'm no longer sure I want a military career but I would like to do something by the way of service and that began the evolution towards the Foreign Service.

I remember reading stories about British political officers in India and I thought that's neat. To be the guy on the ground, learning the country and the language, really knowing what's on and reporting that further up the chain, this is something interesting to do. So I started looking into what might be like that and trying to figure out how do I pull this off, how do I get there from where I am right now.

Q: What was your college like?

MOSHER: I attended Southeast Missouri State, which was then a college. It became a university by the time I graduated. In September it would have some 7500 students and by Thanksgiving it would have 6500. By law they were required to take anybody who graduated in the top 75% of their high school class in Missouri, which meant you had a pretty broad range, intellectually, culturally, socially. It was still fairly rural in its makeup. It was dominated by farm kids from that part of Missouri or kids like me from St. Louis, some urban, some suburban. It was kind of a quiet campus for the most part. The president had been a student there back in the 1930s and I think that affected a lot of his ideas on the way the college should be run. He had been a high school superintendent for a while before that. Cape Girardeau, the town itself, also affected the atmosphere of the college. Cape was a small Missouri town, 40,000 people in the whole area. A lot of the businesses focused on agriculture, serving the farm communities in the surrounding area and was still fairly southern. I remember in the fall of 1968 when I got down there were still Colored signs on the drinking fountains. They were gone by the end of my first year, but they were still there when I arrived. The black community was pretty much pushed to the south side of town, just below where the flood wall stopped. When it flooded they got wet. Downtown more or less stayed dried. That was the kind of community you were living in. But the college itself was still big enough so that you didn't necessarily have to mix with that although you were aware of it.

Q: This is the time of many of the Vietnamese protests. Was that hitting your area?

MOSHER: In very small ways. There had actually been briefly an SDS chapter on the campus the year before, Students for a Democratic Society. It might have been a one member chapter. I found no record of it in the archives, collections of memory or anything else. When the guy graduated I was told, the rumor was, that he had been

told by the administration, “Here is your transcript, don’t ever ask for another one.” So that was gone, but there were alternatives. There was a coffee house and there were people you could meet there who were more politically aware than the majority. There would be an occasional protest echoing what was going on on the national level. Very much home grown sort of campus focused and so polite that we would even go back and forth to classes and then come back for the demonstration when we had the day one sit-in on the lawn.

Q: How did your interest when you were in college and this ferment was going on and your interest in military things because there seems to have been a divide. An awful lot of people who were protesting really had no interest in military matters.

MOSHER: No and it was one of the things that you had to wrestle with and I still have to deal with today. I always thought the explanation was simple. How can you be against something and want to stop something like war if you don’t know the first damn thing about it? So many of them didn’t have a clue. I briefly toyed, by this time I’ve got a draft registration card and I’ve got a student deferment, and I even toyed briefly, for about six months -- I sent them a letter, that said, “I’m a pacifist, I’m sorry I’m not going to have anything to do with this, this is the wrong war. I’m not having any of it.” Six months later I sent them another saying just forget it because I realized that this was not a real option for me personally. I concluded that it wasn’t realistic. It wasn’t me, because if somebody took a swing at me I was damn well going to take a swing back, and if somebody took a shot at me I was going to shoot back. This is not a pacifist, so my focus became more of, like I said I’d written a paper in high school in which I said “this is how you can win the war.” But by this time, Westmoreland is in Vietnam and he’s taking us down a different path and I’m going, “this is stupid.” I said, “If you want to win this war, this is not the way to do it and I don’t see why I should go out there or anybody else should go out there and risk getting shot when you’re screwing around and doing it wrong and there is no way we are going to pull this off.” So I was pretty much convinced that it was the wrong war, in the wrong place, at the wrong time. My God, maybe we should have even been fighting for the other side. So I was the one who used to talk to people at the demonstrations and the protests about the history of Ho Chi Minh and the OSS and his first Vietnamese declaration of independence and some of his original ideas about the Vietnamese constitution. He knew about Roosevelt and the fact that we needed France for NATO (North Atlantic Treaty Organization) so maybe we better just sort of let the French go ahead. Then Korea comes along and all of a sudden we decide that, well it’s all part of the same struggle – Korea and Indochina. So I knew how peoples’ attitudes about these things would change over time. But when you look at the fundamentals, just as a practical matter, if you’re going to win this war, then find a way to do it but you keep turning your back on the ways to do it, going off on these tangents. But nobody else at these demonstrations knew any of that stuff so either they would go, “Wow, is that true?” or they would go “That’s not important.”

Q: What about not only Vietnam but international affairs. Was it something while you were in college, things like American Diplomacy or relations with other countries intrude at all in your studies?

MOSHER: In some ways. I remember in 1968, not so much the diplomacy but I was aware of what was going on internationally. The student riots in France, Prague

Spring and the Soviets going into Czechoslovakia. I remember I had a summer job at a drive-in movie theatre. We were sitting in the movie theatre watching the news on the TV monitor from Czechoslovakia and I'm thinking, you know, it's like Spain in the '30s, here we go and wondering where to go and volunteer. But the Czechs were smarter than I was, they chose not to fight. So I was aware of things like that. I was aware of things that were going on in Africa. I knew about the struggles in the Congo in a general way. Diplomacy I followed sort of at the headline level. Got into it more in college because I took every history course I could find that looked relevant. This included a very good course on history and diplomacy taught by one of the professors who when I got into the Foreign Service came to me and said, "Could you help me lay out what you studied and how you got in." He wanted to be able to tell anyone else who came along who wanted to join the Foreign Service what their study program should include. This was very flattering and didn't help my head come back down to normal proportions. There were some very good academics there. There was a good Russian studies professor. Outside of the classes, I was mostly watching, I remember following NATO, I remember following Israel a little bit but mostly it was Vietnam and the lack of manoeuvres around Vietnam to try and get out.

Q: Did you ever come in contact with anybody in the American Foreign Service?

MOSHER: No, but I did have two faculty members who had been diplomats. One was from Taiwan and had been a Nationalist Chinese Diplomat. He taught the Latin America Area Studies course in the political science department. He had served in their diplomatic corps as a Latin American specialist and he was good. He knew his stuff. The word around the campus was that he was retired now and living in the United States as a professor because he had been one their first diplomats who said, "We've got to change the way we're dealing with the mainland." This being an unpopular viewpoint, he was now an academic in southeast Missouri. We had another visiting professor who was there for a year from Germany. I think he was more of an academic but he was an international relations specialist. We had a South Korean professor in international relations who I'm afraid I didn't get along with. I had dared to disagree with a point he raised during a lecture. He flatly rejected the point and then continued to seed his lecture with mocking references to the exchange. There was also an Argentine professor who I had a lesser disagreements with. He disagreed with a suggestion I raised in question I asked about the military capabilities of the US at the end of the Civil War. When he justified his rejection of my premise on the grounds that he had been in ROTC and was therefore expert in military analysis, I almost cracked up laughing. But it was an interesting international faculty and we had a fairly visible group of foreign students. There were a lot of Arab students there as well in those years. There was a good language program. I was taking French. The instructor was an American but we got introduced to the French culture a little bit through two years of that. I was a dismal student, the one hour a day schedule just didn't work and I didn't really learn French until I was at FSI.

Q: By the time you were going to graduate in '72? What were you planning on doing then?

MOSHER: Well, I figured out over the preceding couple of years in university, finally, that okay, the Foreign Service is what I'm looking for and I know that you get in via an examination process. They actually offered the exam in Cape Girardeau, at

the Post Office, in November of 1971, my senior year. So I signed up, went down to the examination place on the day. I recognized one other guy out of the dozen or so, but I didn't know who any of the others were. The one fellow I did know was the president of the university student government. We knew each other well because we'd been the trouble makers in the student government that last year. As far as I know, I was the only one out of the group that passed the written exam. Later I went up to Chicago to take the oral in February or March of 1972. I hadn't graduated yet, but I had gotten that far through the examination process. This was when the oral exam was still a two hour interview, nothing more and none of the stuff that they've added since then. I remember being surprised at who was on the panel. Outside the interview room, where we were waiting, they had the bios of the people on the panel and one of the panellists was George Moose. And I thought, my God, George Moose was born in Battle Creek Michigan just like me. I knew I wouldn't mention it, but it was kind of reassuring. Then I got in the room and met George Moose and was even more intrigued, but still didn't mention it. The oral interview, I thought – I remember half way through thinking, hell, this is fun. This reminded me of bull sessions in the dormitory with a bunch of us from the history, political science departments arguing world affairs and this or that crisis. There was one question that had me worried because I'd been through the test exams. They send you all this information material, the sample test, and everything else. My mother actually did better on the sample test than I did, which was rather embarrassing, so. I knew I had to bone up on the arts part. For example, she knew who Calder was I didn't have a clue, so I was a little worried about that one. God help me if they ask me about American culture, how are you going to explain that in a way that will be effective – what would be an effective answer? I had a strategy and basically it seemed to work. All my favourite reading had been science fiction so I had very little interest in, I'm sorry, Faulkner, Hemingway, Fitzgerald, etc. All the great American 20th century novelists bored me to tears. Give me a good science fiction novel, meaning a well written one instead. So I avoided them as much as possible and now asked myself, "How am I going to do this?" Well, the one thing I had done in college, actually starting in my senior year in high school and carried over into college, was theatre. So that's the one question they always threw at you and it was the only one I was worried about through the entire session. So, okay, how do I defend American culture? Well I mentioned jazz, the American musical art form that I liked and I knew enough about. I could talk intelligently about since I grew up on Dave Brubeck and all that stuff because my mother had the records. Then there was Theatre, the American theatre, and the American movies. I could talk about that having worked on a number of plays and I knew all the playwrights and all that. And, of course, there are some American novelists I could talk about. Then we'd talk about the science fiction novelists. But I talked about all of those things - I went with what I knew. I thought, "I know about this stuff. This ought to show that there is an American culture, there is an American heritage." Later on, I got to peek at my test results because one of my first jobs was at the Board of Examiners. I was the assistant registrar and one of my jobs was to pull all the files on each candidate. I had to pull the medical file, pull the security background check file, pull the examination file, put it all together and send it in to the board for them to place people on the register. Well, I discover that my files were still there, so I peeked. I got the examination report and I read it. The one part I remember in particular was the opening of my review written by the examiners was, "Mr. Mosher had at first glance looked like yet another in a long line of failing political candidates." In those days you took it by specific cone – your specialization

instead of choosing your field after joining the Department. I read the thing through and the only conclusion I could draw was that I had talked my way into the Foreign Service on the basis of that oral exam. Okay, the head starts growing again – I'm getting a swelled head. But I had walked away from the exam quite content with my performance, thinking, okay that was fun, that was interesting, it was good and if they never call me fine. I can go back to being a teacher or something else. It never occurred to me to ever take the exam again. It was a one shot deal. I might have changed my mind if it had worked out differently but it never occurred to me that it wouldn't. I was either going to get hired or I wasn't going to get hired. If I didn't get hired I'd go back to trying to be a teacher again. But after the exam, I finished my final academic year and graduated. I did get my notification that I had been put on the waiting list. You didn't know your exact place on the list in those days but shortly after that I had to tell them to put me on hold for a year because of the end of my student deferment and I had to do something about my military status. The other thing that happened that year was the first lottery for the draft and my number was 35. That was pretty close. The odds were pretty good that I was going to get called up so I had to decide what am I going to do when that happens. I was dating a girl at that time and I was pretty serious about her. So we had a conversation and we went down the list. She said, "No I won't go to Canada," and "No I won't be an officer's wife." I started looking for a Guard or reserve unit and I finally went down to Jefferson Barracks in St. Louis where there was an engineer unit based and go in to sign up. They had me fill out the forms so I knew I was going to have to report for training that summer and I told the State Department to put me on hold while I do this. The Guard unit enlistment, though, was funny because one of the things they gave you was the "Attorney General's list" of organizations considered subversive, which was over two pages long, both sides of the page. There were things like the Sacco and Vanzetti Committee, The Black Hands, and all these old, old organizations. I thought, "God bless me, who do you think is signing up for the military here these days?" But one of the names on the list was The Peace Information Center. The Peace Information Center had an office in St. Louis. When President Nixon came to St. Louis for the National Junior Chamber of Commerce convention during the summer before, 1970 there was a demonstration. There was a small independent radio station in Gaslight Square in St. Louis, the city's Bohemian district, that played all the long rock and roll and heavy album cuts that nobody else would play such as "In-A-Gadda-Da-Vida" and Country Joe and the Fish songs including the introduction to their anti-war song and I listened to this station a lot. They put the word out that a big demonstration was planned for when Nixon came to town, and they called for everyone to "Come on down. Come on down looking as straight as you can." I thought to myself, "I can look pretty straight." I had already gotten my hair cut short that summer because I was playing a lot of informal ball. That was the summer my brothers and friends and I were working at the drive-in movie theatre. We'd work from 10 PM to 2:00 in the morning, then go to somebody's house and play cards, finally go to bed by 6:00, and then get up at noon and play ball for three or four hours before going to work. It was a great summer that way. So I got my hair cut short because I didn't want the hassle of long hair while playing ball. When the day of the demonstration rolled around, I put on a sports jacket and a tie and a white shirt. My younger brother and his buddies were going downtown, too, because they're all attending the St. Louis Police Academy, and they dropped me off to go to the demonstration, saying, "We'll see you later," meaning when the demonstration was broken up by the police. I walked up to where there were some people obviously in charge, you know, arm bands, clip boards,

whatever else and say, "Okay, what are we doing?" They looked at me and asked, "Do you want to be a marshal?" and I said, "Okay." They wrote my name down, gave me one of the marshals arm bands, and they give me a quick briefing on the job and the rules. The most important thing they told me was that they had made an agreement with the security people that when the time came, we would limit our demonstration to this one side of the street. If we were over on the other side of the street on the main block with the auditorium building where the convention was taking place, the police could arrest us and there wouldn't be much for the protest organizers to do for them. I told myself, "Okay, I can do this." The day started with leafleting and I'm standing over on the block where we're not supposed to be later because we can be there for this first part of the day, and I'm handing out leaflets protesting the war. At one point, I find the Texas delegation on one side of me, some members of some other southern delegation, and the Missouri delegation all around me. I'm handing out the leaflets when one of these guys looks at me and reaches out his hand and he lays it on top of my stack of leaflets. He then takes just the top one, crumples it up into a wad, and then drops it on the ground. So I just say, "Okay you're a litter bug." There were clearly all these kinds of people trying to start something but I tell myself let's just keep going merrily along handing out leaflets as they go by. Then the organizers sent runners out to tell us to have everybody pull back across the street because we're setting up the picket line now. Now, we've got a picket line going and carrying whatever signs we've got, flags and banners, etc., and we're walking in little our loop up and down the sidewalk. All of sudden, we realize that now we've got some GI in his Greens behind us in this small park. We watch him as he takes a little American flag and sticks it in the ground, and then he goes to Parade Rest behind it as if to say, "Come over here and kick this down," and we're all laughing among ourselves and wondering, "Do we look stupid?" We just keep the picket line going. But then this whole thing sponsored by the Peace Information Center, for whom I'm now a "marshal," escalates. I see at one end of our picket line that about a half dozen people are breaking away from our picket line and going back across the street to the auditorium. I don't know what they're thinking, but as far as I can tell I'm the nearest person to them who has any kind of authority or responsibility so I decide that I'd better get over there and see what's going on. I dog trot down to the corner and then across the street and work my way through the crowd. As I'm doing this I realize that there's one of the most well-known local TV anchor-men and his crew are in the crowd. I walk on through the crowd up to where I find the "suits" with their little lapel pins, just little colored stick pins but even then I knew that that's somebody in authority though I have no way of knowing whether he's FBI (Federal Bureau of Investigation), Secret Service or local plain clothes police. I get in front of them and I turn around to face the protesters and others in the crowd and I find my little break-away group of demonstrators. As I look at them I realize, "Oh Christ, these are the women from the Welfare Mothers League - Black women from the worse part of the city of St. Louis and here I am, little white suburban college kid. I got about as much chance of convincing these people of anything as I do of convincing Nixon to end the war." But, okay here it goes, and I give them the spiel, basically what I was told: "People, if you're over here, it's your own free choice. You do what you think you ought to do but you ought to understand this, that we've sat down some agreements with the authorities on who is going to do what, who can do what and who can't do what. If you are arrested while you are over here we can't help you. If you are back across the street where we are then we can help you. That's cool." The whole time I've got this anchor-man in front of me, with his mike and a "please, somebody hit

somebody” look on his face, and at first I’m thinking that perhaps I should make this tape unusable for him – and then decide that that’s probably not constructive. I probably shouldn’t do that. So I kept it clean in my little speech and they actually used it - I was on the evening news that night, my whole little speech. And even more amazing, after everybody listened to my little speech they turned around, went back across the street to re-join our picket line and everything was cool. I have always wondered if the FBI ever figured out who that guy was who apparently had such influence and such authority within the organization. So, I find the Peace Information Center on the Attorney General’s list and I remember my 15 minutes of fame and think, I guess I’d better mark the box. When they look over my enlistment form, the National Guard guy says, “, Oh, we can’t take you.” I said, “What?” And they say it again, “We can’t take you because you checked this box.” Now I’m thinking, “What the fuck is this all about? You think I’m going to tell somebody how many M-1 rifles you’ve got?” This is the National Guard for crying out loud – not the CIA.” So I ask, “What do we do now?” It turned out that I had to write this two page statement explaining my association with the Peace Information Center, how I had only done it once, and I promised I would never, ever, ever do it again. That apparently made it all okay again and now they could take me. So I joined the National Guard and was scheduled for training at Fort Knox in July, 1972, and the State Department was on hold until I finished that obligation. Of course, by the time I got to Fort Knox, my girlfriend and I had broken up and from time to time I’m thinking “Why am I doing all this?”.

Q: Did you come into the Foreign Service shortly thereafter or not?

MOSHER: The following year, in 1973.

Q: What were you doing during that interim period?

MOSHER: Having successfully enlisted in the National Guard unit in St. Louis, I was ordered to Fort Knox on July 6 for six months training. This included eight weeks of basic training and eight weeks of Advanced Individual Training as an Armored Scout/Observer. When I completed that training, I went back to Cape Girardeau to return to college and enrolled for the spring semester. I needed about 15 credits to get certified as a teacher in Missouri and this was my back-up plan in case the Foreign Service did not offer me a job. I was very glad that about half way through the semester the State Department offered me a place in the class in March, which by the numbering system at that time was the 106th.

Q: This is March ‘73?

MOSHER: March ‘73.

Q: Well I think this is probably a good place to stop here and I put at the end of the tape so we know where to pick it up. So we’ll pick this up in March of ‘73 and we’ll talk about coming into the Foreign Service.

Q: Okay, today is the 9th of March 2005. You came into the Foreign Service when and let’s talk about your A100 class.

MOSHER: March 1973. The Department called me in early March, maybe late February while I was back at college half way through the spring semester. I've always compared it to BD in the Doonesbury strip going to Vietnam to avoid a term paper. I joined the State Department and avoided finishing a paper for my Comparative Religions class. I piled everything into my Rambler American, drove up to St. Louis to say goodbye to my parents, and then went up to Michigan to see my grandparents. I drove into Washington the night of the Oscars and stayed in a hotel over near I-95 in Arlington, Not knowing my way around much better than that and in the dark I figured I'd better quit wandering. The next day I reported in. In those days FSI was over in Rosslyn, way down next to the river. I spent several days checking in, going through paperwork, finding a more current place to stay and meeting other people in the class as they straggled in over several days.

Q: At this point you weren't married?

MOSHER: No.

Q: Can you tell me a little about some of the members of the class? How you perceived them at that time.

MOSHER: Well, I was the youngest and coming right out of college. Just about everybody else had some kind of real world experience or graduate work and that kind of showed. I think it's fair to say so what they saw was this little mouthy mid-westerner. I found a bunch of people who were pretty impressive for the most part. I had the class photo in here, there they are, the usual suspects. Judy Kaufman was in this group.

Q: I'm working with her right now.

MOSHER: The irony being that she eventually married George Moose who was on my examining panel.

Q: And on hers too.

MOSHER: That seems likely, yeah, I hadn't thought about the fact that we probably were interviewed by the same panel. Then Marsha Barnes was one of the group and Bob Bradtke. They married after their first assignment out of the A-100 class which was hilarious to us because they were always arguing with each other during our course.

Q: I know some people were saying, you know having a selective process and putting men and women together at that age, great for the gene pool.

MOSHER: This was in 1973, the first year that women didn't have to leave the service if they got married, and we understood that ours was the first entering class hired under that changed rule. I don't know how quickly that was reflected in the entering numbers, but we had a small group of four women candidates in our class of over 30. We got some really strong individuals and didn't lose them in the next couple of years which was great.

Let me see, there was Doug McElhaney who I always thought very highly of as a good solid officer. Robyn Facinelli who became Robyn Bishop and is still around the last I looked. Laura Clerici, Sally Gober were another couple of them. Sally and I got to be friendly, kind of allies. Oh, and Douglas H. Jones who was last in Germany and made a speech as he left that post and retired that got him some newspaper headlines because he was so critical of the policy at the time. Jerry Whitman did pretty well. A fair number fell by the wayside too, looking at the photos. A couple of hard luck stories. Don Ellison who, with John Burns, were the Course Chairman and Assistant Chairman who ran the A-100 course at the time.

Q: How did you find the course ran? How did it work?

MOSHER: Well, the way it worked then, we would report usually to FSI, which was in Rosslyn then, roughly according to the working hours of 9-5 or 9-6. We would go there for lectures from various people they would bring over from the department, from other agencies, basically giving you the government and a Department of State Operations 101 Entry Level course, introducing you to the other agencies and to the inner workings of the department. It did get to real practical matters once or twice. We actually had one guy in our class, Damon LaBrie, who was a Mustang as I recall, coming to the officer ranks having been a State Department communicator. He gave us a lecture on how to write a cable which was probably the most useful course we got during the entire course and was also probably the one we paid the least attention to. I think he may have suffered a bit from, I guess you would call it prejudice from the class – even then I just mentioned his background. He was a bit older than a lot of the class and had already had what many people would call a career in the staff side of the Department. By contrast, I was the youngest in the class at the age of 22.

Q: What was with this group the attitude toward Vietnam? This is sort of at the end.

MOSHER: Well, of course we didn't know that it was near the end at that time. It was March 1973 and the Department was still sending officers and staff though we weren't sending troops anymore. We'd had the transition and the Paris Peace Accords, but now we were now staffing consulates in each of the four military districts as well as the Saigon embassy and beefing those up to provide more information, the kind that we use to get from the military deployed there. It wasn't discussed as a political issue for the most part but it was discussed as a matter of professional interest and personal interest. Professional interest in the sense of "well, what do we do now, where are we and where are we going," and comparing notes on that. Different people, of course, brought their different insights. The other topic was, "would you go there?" The general feeling was that basically the Department was picking people and saying you are going to go. If you turned it down you were quite likely to be asked to leave, was the attitude at least among our class members.

Especially towards the latter half of that year's A-100 course we really began to focus on that question of the first assignment. The Department's personnel people explained how important the first assignment is. To those of us who had to get off language probation, they discussed how important it was to get good a language position so that we could get that hurdle out of the way. People were paying a good deal of attention to it then. Personally, I was telling them "don't come anywhere near me with Vietnam, I don't want it." I had spent most of my college years protesting the war. I'd

seen what it had done on the campuses in terms of the protest and the arguments and the divisions. I also didn't really want to serve south of the Rio Grande because I thought our policy on Latin America was generally a mess and didn't like the prospect of having to apologize for that and Vietnam. Otherwise, I was pretty much interested in going anywhere. I thought Africa was a place of great potential, compared to Latin America which had had 150 years of independence and pretty much wasted it. I thought it might be more interesting and exciting to be in Africa. In the 1970s we were still waiting for the African countries to sort themselves out and decide how they were going to form themselves and how they were going to operate. This sounded a lot more interesting to me. By the time the Department actually started giving assignments there were several entry level classes around so it wasn't just our own A-100 class waiting for assignments. There was the one that came after us and some of the people from the class before us were still hanging around for different training assignments and we were all comparing notes.

Q: Were you already coned at this point?

MOSHER: At this time, you took the exam by cone, with apparently a different exam for each cone group. So we already knew when we came into the course what cone we were in. Our A-100 class (the 106th) had eight political officers and there we are, always one of my favourite photos. You see Judy Kaufman in the middle? I don't know if she kept her copy of this. The gentleman on the end was more interested in Judy than he was with the photographer. That's Bob Bradtke. I'm the guy in the middle next to Judy (on her left) with the big grin

Q: Oh yes. Hair was fairly long, sideburns and the whole thing.

MOSHER: So there were eight political officers and, I think, about as many consular officers. I think consular was the biggest group and then the admin and econ officers. We still had econ, or as you know they were called then, economic-commercial officers.

Q: Where did you go?

MOSHER: You mean my assignment? At the end of the A-100 course, when they handed out our assignments, I was to be posted to Kinshasa as the ambassador's assistant, after French language training which was supposed to run over the summer and into September. I was told that the previous guy in the position was actually still filling the billet but physically he was TDY in Vietnam. The Department was trying to back fill the slot in order to get the ambassador an aide given the way things were going in Zaire, the new name given the country in 1971 by Mobutu. But as I recall it, I was told at the time that the aide was one of the fellows who wrote a dissent message from Vietnam criticizing U.S. policy in that war and ended up back in Kinshasa sooner than anyone expected. As a result, in June the Department pulled me out of language training and put me to work for a couple of months at the Board of Examiners in the Registrar's office working for Hawthorne "Hawk" Q. Mills, sort of in between registrars over the summer as there was a gap due to the assignment cycle. So for a couple of weeks at least, I was the acting registrar, making the phone calls to render invitations to candidates and handling the related paperwork for bringing new officers on board.

Q: What was your experience doing that? How did you feel things were going at that time?

MOSHER: You mean personally or in that office?

Q: In that office. In other words it's part of the recruitment process. Were you finding people were, were you having to push them or were they pushing you or what?

MOSHER: It was very much an individual basis, case by case, but there was a bit more pushing on our part than pulling on the other. The candidate register was divided according to the four cones. The Department's personnel office would decide that there would be a new entry class, figure out when it would meet, and then would tell us in the Registrar's office that we (the Department) needed six political officers, eight econ officers, four admin or whatever for this new class. We would go to the Register and start at the top because the way candidates were rank ordered on that list. Once you were approved for entry, having passed the exams and medical and background checks, your name was placed on the Register or the waiting list, based upon the decision of the panel of Examiners - the people who were best ranked were listed at the top. When we wanted to fill a new entering class, we would work our way down the list until we filled the quota set by the Department. My first lesson about how this worked was, as I mentioned, when I actually peeked at my own file while I was there. Normally, you would never get to see this file from the application and exam process because it was quickly shipped off to storage after you were hired. My TDY assignment, however, brought me into the office much sooner than was the normal case and my file was still there. Looking at the file, I found that I had actually been ranked probably mid-way down the list for political officers, maybe a little lower, so the only way I got called was because a lot of people placed on that waiting list above me had declined to accept appointment to that entry class. They usually had a lot of good reasons. Often there was a contract commitment. For example, we were dealing with people who were teachers or had some other contract position and they couldn't break the contract at the point at which we called. There was also one guy who was already legendary within the Registrar's Office who was in one of the Ivy League college graduate programs. He was a very strong candidate and I made calls to him twice during my short time at the Registrar's office, but the other staff members had told me what to expect and it happened exactly that way both of the times that I called him. We would call him up to say that we wanted to offer him a place in the new class beginning whenever and he would say, "Okay, let me think about it and I'll call you back tomorrow." The story in the Register's office was that what this candidate did in the intervening period was go to his faculty advisor who would tell him, "You don't want to work for the State Department. What a waste of time and talent. It's a dead end job." Then the candidate would call us back the next day and say, "No, I don't want to come yet." I was flabbergasted because when the Department called me up they didn't have to ask twice. I couldn't imagine what was the matter with people who didn't jump at this job after all the effort one had to go through to get it. This was also when I learned about people taking the exam more than once, something that had never occurred to me, though it was actually quite common. I actually recruited a couple of the classes.

Q: Were you getting much from Hawk Mills about Vietnam at all?

MOSHER: Actually, no. It never came up. I knew a little about his background and I found Hawk was an impressive officer to work alongside and I found that he also had a loose supervisory hand. I was looking over the old efficiency reports and apparently I satisfied his requirements fairly quickly, and he noted that it was enough to give me the list of what needed to be done and I would go do it and then report back, noting that “I [Hawk] don’t need to be on his heels all day long.” So apparently we both felt that we had a good relationship. We did talk a little bit about the department, but most often we talked about the job that we were trying to do right then. One of the other things they had me do was collect the information we had on the previous year’s intake of officers and do an analysis. I broke them out and counted them by geographic region, gender, age, academic background, anything that we had information on that was consistent across the board. The staff in the Examiners and Registrar’s offices told me that it was one of the first efforts that had ever been made to analyze who was being hired. The other interesting thing that I heard about more than participated in, was the ongoing discussion about the whole examination process. All the examiners were working in the same area and I’m preparing files on each candidate, passing the files to the examiners and getting files back from them and putting them away. The files include all the security examinations and medical reports, and when everything arrives you hand over the case to the examiners panel for the decision on where to place each individual applicant on the register. One of the things I learned was about a then on-going dialog about the examination process. I think it was Educational Testing Service (ETS) in those days that prepared and processed the computer exam and the written exam while the State Department had full responsibility for the oral exam, which was essentially a two hour interview. It seemed that they were going at each other hammer and tongs over whose exam was at fault because both ETS and the Department agreed that the Department was not getting in as many people as it wanted and was not getting in the top talent that it wanted. People at each organization would pull out an application file and then wave them at each other, arguing that here was a person who should have been in the Foreign Service but the computer exam screened them out, or another file would be presented to show someone who based upon their written exam results was a great potential Foreign Service officer who was screened out by the Department’s oral exam. The discussions went back and forth about how they were going to fix this.

Q: Oh yeah, it’s one of those things, you know it’s always been a matter of debate and can also be a legal matter too.

MOSHER: Yeah, and I came to understand this even more, having had this introduction it was always something I kept my finger on over the years was how it was working. As the exam process changed I was always curious to see how that was working and who was coming in. I think later there were actually lawsuits by people who felt that the exam process had unfairly barred them.

Q: After you finished this hiatus, where did you go?

MOSHER: Well, you might say that I got another hiatus. The Office of NATO Affairs in the European Bureau was authorized to pick up a spare position, essentially off the normal personnel chart. From September to the following June, I worked there for Woody Romine and Ed Streator on a bundle of different chores. I dealt with exercise

clearances in the European theatre, for example. I was also working on efforts to get Spain engaged with the NATO allies. We knew, of course, that as long as Franco was in power, especially the more left wing or liberal European governments weren't going to have anything to do with Spain in a more formal basis. But as an example, we spent a lot of time on getting Spain invited to such things as the NATO Air Forces Tiger Squadron get together where all the Air Force squadrons from NATO and other countries that have either a Flying Tigers theme or a Tigers scheme would be invited to bring aircraft and air crews together to a big sort of fly off air show and military exercise. We worked hard to try and get the Spanish included in that. They gave me the job of reorganizing their files which were in pretty desperate shape but this gave me my introduction to the State Department's filing system and how it worked and making all the paper work fit. It also gave me a chance, just going through the files, to get educated on what the office is doing and the issues they handled.

Q: It's a good introduction to what makes and so few officers get a chance early on to understand some of the concerns and currents that run throughout the department, how things get done.

MOSHER: It was great for exactly that and I found myself, often in future assignments, one of the first things I ever did was to look at the files and either go okay, good I can work with this or I go oh, my God, take this person out and shoot them for what they've done to these records.

Q: Well then you're into September of '74 I guess?

MOSHER: Pretty close. One of the other things about the NATO job that set a pattern was some of the chores I took over from John Dobrin, who was one of the regular officers there at that time. I took over changing all the lock and safe combinations as a security officer. Another example was taking on the chore of going over to the INR (Intelligence and Research) reading room. The NATO office had one officer read through all the intelligence traffic and material and then come back to the office and spread the word to others that "you need to see this" or "you need to read that." So John Dobrin put me in for a long list of clearances that I needed in order to do this, which put me in a position to have a closer relationship with INR than a lot of people would have had in their career.

Q: Well then so what happened after this sort of interjection doing a variety of aspects of State Department?

MOSHER: Oh, in terms of assignments? Well in the interim those of us from the entering classes that year were still in Washington and kept in touch. I was getting acquainted with a whole new circle of people, a lot of people who'd gone to Georgetown together, to the School of Foreign Service there. Of course, I was also meeting people from different offices and even retirees. I got to know Jacques Reinstein in my NATO job because he was at the Atlantic Council in those days and I was control officer for the visit of the NATO Defence College class. By now I was also dating another new FSO, whose files I had in fact handled when I was in the Registrar's office. She was a Georgetown School of Foreign Service graduate, originally from New Jersey, named Mary Lee Garrison. As I was pulling together all

her paperwork, making sure that it was complete, I came across her contact information, one of the most important pieces of an application, and I realized when I looked at the address and phone number that we lived in the same apartment complex. I called out to the Registrar who hadn't left for the end of the day even though it was late, and I said, "Hey, here's somebody who lives in my apartment building." I thought, here's an interesting way to meet somebody. Mary Lee was actually was hired during the following couple of weeks though I didn't make the phone call, the Registrar did. But we did meet through other friends from FSI who all knew each other. I was at a party one evening hosted by one of the guys getting ready to leave for his overseas assignment, Greg Suchan. Mary Lee is there and introduces herself and I go, "Oh, you're Mary Lee Garrison" which was a harbinger for the future because having read all these peoples' files, I had all the names of all these people in my head but I often had no idea who they were if I just saw them in the corridors or on the street. So having met, Mary Lee and I chatted and then started dating. I mentioned Jacques Reinstein before who it turned out was also a School of Foreign Service graduate so when we meet at the NATO Defence College reception and I have Mary Lee on my arm and discover that here's 30 years of School of Foreign Service experience standing here together and we all became friends. At that point, I still had no onward assignment, but Mary Lee had hers. She was sent to Vietnam to work in the Saigon embassy's consular section. After Mary Lee left on her assignment, I found myself thinking I had just goofed and decided that I had to do something about this. So I wrote her a letter and proposed. When she received my letter she apparently immediately phoned me and accepted. The next day I went to personnel and said, "I want an assignment to Vietnam" after having spent the previous year beating them up saying I don't want to go anywhere Vietnam. However, the way that I saw the situation, it was going to be a lot easier for me to get there than to bring her out and then find someplace for the two of us as a tandem. Tandem assignments were new, brand new idea in the Department which didn't know anything about any of the problems this would create. I also thought to myself, "okay you've been arguing about this country of Vietnam for all these years and here's a chance where you don't have to carry a rifle but you could still go see it first-hand. See it for yourself and be fully informed and decide how right or wrong you were." So I signed up for an assignment to Vietnam and I flew out to Vietnam that September

Q: So you were in Vietnam from when to when?

MOSHER: October 1, 1974 to April 29, 1975.

Q: What was your job?

MOSHER: I was assigned to the Consulate General in Can Tho, in the Mekong Delta, working for McNamara, Terry McNamara. He had four first tour officers working for him and I ended up doing the consular work, what there was of it, and internal political reporting.

Q: What was the situation in the Delta when you arrived?

MOSHER: It was for the most part fairly calm. Before I left Washington everybody that I had spoken with in the department and elsewhere around Washington all agreed that "you're going to finish your tour there, spending two years in Vietnam, but the

people after you are going to be in trouble and they may have to bug out.” So I packed up all 600 pounds of my worldly belongings and took them to Vietnam. It didn’t seem worth trying to store them anywhere. At the four Consulates General in Vietnam, we were working in what had been the four corps headquarters buildings and living in what used to be the BOQ (Bachelor Officers Quarters). In Can Tho, we had another housing compound with a café/restaurant along the river, just a little piece down the road in the town. The old U.S. military airfield there had been turned over to the Vietnamese, but those of us at the Consulate still had access to it and hardly even had to show documentation. You just showed up with your Anglo face and they would really just wave you through. So the routine was just that, pretty routine. We went into the office for a 9-5 workday. We’re in the tropics and we’re not in the capital so most of the time we’re not even wearing a coat and tie. The day’s work would be to read the cable traffic and take care of any actions that had come in. We also did a little bit of travelling. One of the jobs that McNamara gave me was Liaison for the ICCS, the International Commission for Control and Supervision of the cease-fire. But I actually spent almost eight weeks in Saigon before I went down to the Delta because Mary Lee and I had to arrange the wedding. This also gave the embassy officers a chance to brief me. Dave Adamson had come out on his first overseas assignment as well and he had badgered the department into giving him Vietnamese language training in Saigon before he went to his actual job. As I understood it, the Department decided that since it was going to hire a teacher it would go ahead and run several of us through the course and they offered it to me, too. So for several weeks we attended language classes when we weren’t meeting with the political section, the defence attaché office, and so on. We also worked with the consular section. One of the Vietnamese Consular Assistants took us out to a prison visit, a number of other things like that.

As to the wedding, Mary Lee and I made arrangements for a civil ceremony. It turned out that the Roman Catholic Church in Vietnam wouldn’t marry us. Mary Lee was Catholic and I was Protestant, and the Church was apparently very conservative and their attitude was almost “Out with you heathens.” Mary Lee actually got angrier than I did. We also tried to get my brother in country for a quick visit so that he could be at the wedding as best man. Unfortunately, he was on active duty in the Navy at the time on a Polaris missile submarine operating out of Pearl Harbor. Under the Paris Peace Accords there was a ceiling on the number of U.S. military personnel who could be in Vietnam at any one time. There was just no way that our military were going to give up a single billet even for 24 hours so that some tourist could come in so that idea didn’t work out either. So in the end, we had the civil ceremony followed by a small reception in Mary Lee’s apartment. To our utter amazement, Ambassador Graham Martin attended the reception. This was my first real serious meeting with him after that rather quick “here is another body” call after first arriving at post. It was an interesting meeting. I’d heard a lot about him before I went out there, and there was a lot to be said about Graham Martin, about why he was in this job based upon his service as Ambassador in Thailand and other aspects of his service. He also epitomized, in many ways, what I thought the Foreign Service was, with these old Ivy League, New England kinds of minds, long time career service people. He came to the apartment for our wedding reception and my Consul General, Terry McNamara, was there along with some of the other officers in country that we knew, most of them our age group, twenty-somethings. So we cut him a piece of wedding cake we were having champagne. Ambassador Martin looks at me and says, “Bob, I want to ask you

a question. Why is it that people of your generation seem to show so little interest in history?"

It was a deer in the headlights moment, because I'm thinking, "good question, boy do I want to jump all over this. This is really my meat, this kind of conversation." But at the same time, another side of me is thinking, "I'd love to see this guy trout fishing, because he's just placed a real beautiful lure in the water right in front of me, he is playing it perfectly, and I'm going for the hook even knowing that it is there and he's going to have me landed and on the stringer before I even realize it." So my mind is working on these two levels as our conversation continues. I talked to him about my impressions, based upon studying history in college, drawing on some of the reasons why I chose not to teach history, one of those being a lack of respect for the field as I perceived it. For a moment we were on the same wave length and I was impressed with his ability to find and push my buttons. I told myself that he's obviously been briefed on me enough to know what kind of conversational gambits he might want to use. I have no way of knowing whether there is any ulterior motive here or not, but I really found myself thinking what an artist he was at manipulating people.

Q: Where you at that point, this is when October or so of '74. Where you picking up any unease about the situation there?

MOSHER: Well, when I got off the plane on October 1 and my soon-to-be wife and another of our friends, John Scott, met me on the tarmac. Now, I thought that was really cool as it was my first introduction to this aspect of Foreign Service life, walking through all the minor officials while waving a diplomatic passport magically in front of you. But, as we were having a conversation that day, I said that "This is all going to be over the first time we have North Vietnamese aircraft over head, because then the ARVN (South Vietnamese Army) will fold. They will know then that it is over." In saying this, I was drawing on my own long study of the war, warfare, and military history, but I was also drawing on the memory of my training at Fort Knox the year before, during which we were taught virtually nothing about what to do if somebody else's airplanes flew up overhead. The clearly expressed assumption was that if there is an airplane up there it is yours. Of course, that used to be the case in Vietnam, but the U.S. Air Force had gone home and it was now possible for the North Vietnamese at some point of their own choosing to bring their aircraft to the battlefield and fight a conventional war - and we had not prepared either our own forces or the South Vietnamese for that. That was why I was sure that it would be over then. The general consensus among Washington experts, especially in October, was that in two years those of us beginning our tours there would go peacefully home, but the folks who came after us were going to have to worry. The attitude appeared to be, "Isn't it a beautiful country and aren't the people friendly and nice job, we're in a nice embassy, all these good things about living in Vietnam. So fine, we're okay."

Q: I knew Terry a couple of times. We were in Personnel together back in the '60s and then at one point he was the consul in Da Nang before it was a separate, it was an extension of the Consulate General of Saigon and I was Consul General in Saigon so I knew Terry then. I've seen Terry and I've since had long interviews with him. You were saying what you were doing was a rather regular consular work on the consular side?

MOSHER: The consular work at Can Tho was pretty limited. In a sense it had to be, because the Department hadn't even given me the consular course, but I had the FAM, the Foreign Affairs Manual. As a result of this experience, I developed very high opinions of the FAM because I found that if you could read it and think about what you were reading you could do your job from the FAM, which was exactly what I did in Can Tho. For example, we had to do reports of death, because we had American civilians, contractors and others who had left the military at some point and settled down in Vietnam with Vietnamese families. If you spent any time in Vietnam you probably know the kind of guys most of them were. They were living fairly normal lives there, but if something happened to them we had to take care of it. I didn't have any arrest cases while I was there, thank goodness, though I did do a prison visit in Saigon, to the central prison with one of their Vietnamese consular assistants.

Q: Tu Do prison?

MOSHER: That's right, Tu Do Prison. I met the National Police colonel who was commandant or warden of the prison with the FSN, a Vietnamese employee who was doing the regular prison visit. I thought it an amusing commentary on the Foreign Service because we had David Adamson along with us. We went on the visit because we were going to be doing consular work and he would be at one of the northern consulates, Da Nang or Nha Trang I forget which one. As we're walking through the prison, Dave is horrified. But what he was looking at was a third world prison and there is, perhaps, a lot to be horrified by. The Colonel briefed us on the conditions in which the prisoners were held and the American prisoners basically had the run of the prison during daylight hours and the commandment had apparently concluded that there was no way they were going to escape - "Oh, I know who you are, you're the Yankee prisoner, get back over there." They were also given double the rations, they were allowed to have gardens to grow extra vegetables for themselves, and they were allowed to get money to buy additional supplies. Now, I'm from the Midwest with a stepfather who was then Chief Deputy Sheriff of St. Louis County and I had seen the St. Louis County jail. I walked through this prison and thought, "okay tropical climate here so temperature ranges generally pretty comfortable, you've got a roof over your head so you're dry, they are giving you double rations, and you've got all these other privileges including the virtual run of the prison; this could have been a hell of a lot worse for the prisoners." One guy we interviewed was one of the fellows convicted over the brass scrap scandal.

Q: What was that?

MOSHER: During the heyday of U.S. military involvement our forces were turning out tons of scrap brass metal because all of the artillery rounds used brass shell casings and every time they fired an artillery round there was a big piece of scrap metal, brass, left over. In the third world especially, that's almost as good as gold. You could make money selling this scrap metal or doing something with it. The U.S. demand for munitions was such that you could probably resell that scrap to the U.S. government to be made into another artillery round. It turned out that a group of American NCOs, the non-commissioned officers, sergeants, in the military, had gotten together with some Vietnamese buddies and other contacts, started collecting all the brass, selling it off in the black market, and pocketing the proceeds. There was

a bit more to it than that, I understand, and their motives I think may have varied a good deal individually. Some of them may have been doing this to buy things for themselves and their buddies. There's all kind of things that probably went into it. But whatever their motives, they were caught, arrested, convicted, sentenced, and essentially made an example of by the U.S. military. So here this guy was serving out his sentence in a Vietnamese prison, convinced that he had been sold down the river by the entire U.S. government. Whoever visited him would have to listen to this long harangue on how he was going to sue everybody all the way up to the President of the United States for wrongful conviction and everything else he could think of. Well this was okay, was the reply from the Consulate which would still ask if he needed any paper, any stationery, or whatever it might be able to get for him. Fortunately, in Can Tho, I didn't have any of Americans held in jail or in prison, thank goodness, though I did have one death. Did they have a Mission Warden office when you were there?

Q: Yeah, it was already at work there but why don't you describe it.

MOSHER: The Mission Warden's Office was a Vietnamese-staff employed and supervised by Americans that supported embassy security. They basically functioned as our own little police force. So in the case of this one death that occurred while I was there, the head of the Mission Warden office in Can Tho called me up and tells me that they've got a dead American and asking if I want to go on the call with them. I said, "Well, yeah I'd better." First, a quick brush up by looking in the FAM to confirm what I need to do when I arrive at the scene and we were off. This fellow clearly died of natural causes, apparently in his sleep, and had been found in the morning by his Vietnamese family. I had already checked the registration documents we had on file on him. These gave us no information on next of kin or anything back in the States, so as far as I could tell the Vietnamese widow was the next of kin. Our Mission Warden office wrote up the death report and I asked them to send me a copy so that I could file a report through the consular channels, collected his U.S. passport and I was done with a situation that might have been a heck of a lot of work under other circumstances.

Q: What about reporting? What were you getting from the area?

MOSHER: The way we were divided up in the Consulate General, as I said, I was doing political-internal work, so I followed Vietnamese press reports, such as there were, and we still had Provincial Representatives or Prov Reps were still scattered across most of the country, I believe all working for AID which had taken them over from the CORDS program.

Q: This is a successor to CORDS?

MOSHER: Yes. The Prov Reps had their contacts with all the officials. We could also look at what the CIA was collecting and reporting. There was also monitored radio traffic that we received transcripts of so we could follow, to the degree that it was available, military communications traffic from different sources. I remember that later, towards the end in early 1975, we were getting the radio traffic from the convoys trying to get to Phnom Penh [the capitol of Cambodia] going up the Mekong River. I read this traffic very closely because I was fascinated. I thought, my God, here's the American Civil War with ironclads going up and down the river all over

again. These convoys faced some real intense fighting. So we were reading that kind of stuff. We were reading all of the ARVN, or South Vietnamese military reporting that we got. Among the four officers, the junior officers, at Can Tho, we'd all arrived within six months of each other. There was Dave Sciacchitano and Dave Whitten, who had both served in the military in Vietnam. Sciacchitano had served up north in I Corps, as I recall, and Dave Whitten had been a Navy officer who served in the riverine forces, the brown water navy, right in the Mekong Delta region. Dave Whitten got the job of handling any military reporting that our little political section would do. He would write up an events report every day reflecting big military actions, and this frustrated the heck out of me because it was one thing I would have loved to have done and I think I could have done a reasonably good job at it even then, but I can't say that I would have done it better than Dave Whitten could. Jay Dehmlow was the other junior officer and a friend of mine from FSI. He had been in Mary Lee's A-100 class, in fact, and he and I divided up the other political portfolios between us. It was the normal run of political portfolios. I was charged with reporting on the religious sects such as the Cao Dai and the Hoa Hao Buddhists. The main thing I did other than that was to monitor the reporting that was coming in. The Consul General, Terry McNamara, asked me to write up an almost anthropological study on the Hoa Hao, which, I have to be frank, I thought was the biggest frigging waste of time I could imagine. You know, studies on the Hoa Hao had been done by real anthropologists, so here I was apparently tasked with reinventing the wheel. I was a lot more interested in watching the Hoa Hao Buddhist actions and in their take on where the situation in Vietnam and especially in IV Corps was going. This was one of the ways in which we began to get indications that things were going badly, at least from what I saw, and the indications were bad. The Hoa Hao soon started arguing with Saigon again, with the central government, about what was to happen to their draftees – the draftees from the Hoa Hao Buddhist areas. The Hoa Hao wanted anyone from their community who was drafted to serve in their own local units and stay on the Hoa Hao territory in the Delta region. There were even clashes over this because the national police, sometimes backed up by the army, would raid Hoa Hao monasteries looking for draft age men pretending to be monks or acting as monks in order to avoid military service. We were seeing a lot of this kind of behaviour across the country. Frankly, I think we saw a lot of indications from both sides that they were getting pretty fatigued with the war - it had gone on apparently too long. For example, we had reports of large NVA or VC formations, maybe battalion sized, that had been spotted from the air while travelling in the open in daylight. I concluded that these guys were either complete idiots, which meant they were scraping the bottom of the barrel, or they were so confident that they didn't worry about being attacked from the air. They weren't afraid of the South Vietnamese Air Force (VNAF) and the U.S. Air Force wasn't there anymore, so it was not an issue for them. They could go anywhere they wanted, whenever they wanted. I remember reading a report about the 22nd ARVN (Army of South Vietnam) division, which had not had a great track record in the past, engaging a regional militia or VC unit and going into the defended position in their tracks. The ARVN were driving the M113 armored personnel carriers that we had given them and were reportedly even doing neutral steers on top of the Vietnamese communist positions to collapse them on top of any communists still in the bunkers or trenches. It seemed as if they were really trying to rub it in that they had finally won a battle against the NVA/VC. But even while I read reports like this you had to wonder how much of this was for our consumption and how much of it was really true. You always had that kind of caution, you had to take a grain of salt

with everything you read. Through the end of 1974 the situation in country still seemed pretty much under control. It seemed that the two year timeline was the way it would play out, but after that there would be real trouble.

We travelled up to An Giang province, which was Hoa Hao territory, northwest of Can Tho along the river up towards Cambodia which was impressive because it seemed so much more secure than everywhere else I travelled in the Delta. I usually travelled either with the AID people, though one time I went out with the Casualty Resolution people. There was a Special Forces sergeant heading the Joint Casualty Recovery Command team in Can Tho, which was a joint or inter-service team looking into reports of American casualties or prisoners in country. We got up into the territory controlled by the Hoa Hao Buddhists and unlike everywhere else when you came up to a river crossing where you would see three bridges - the ruins of the first bridge, the ruins of the second bridge, and the bailey that you were crossing on - in this area you saw only the original bridge. At the first river we crossed, there was a 1930s French colonial masonry and steel bridge with the dedication plaque on the side bearing the date of 1933 and we just rolled on across. Clearly, the Hoa Hao were very much in control of their territory. Their movement's history made them vehement enemies who opposed the Viet Cong because of bad blood going back to the Viet Minh period. The Viet Minh had assassinated the Hoa Hao founder and leader in an ambush on the pretext of meeting with him to discuss a resolution of their differences. As a result, the Hoa Hao were dead set against the Viet Cong coming to power. They were determined to hold on and were already having a contest with the government in Saigon about their draftees. The Hoa Hao wanted their young men to stay there and serve in their militia units wearing their uniforms, carrying Hoa Hao guns, and guarding Hoa Hao territory and homes. To me this suggested that the Hoa Hao expected things to get worse soon. On a different trip, I rode along with the Casualty Resolution team as they went the other way down towards the coast. I was basically just along as observer to sit in on the meeting which the Special Forces guy who ran the team in Can Tho met the local South Vietnamese official about reports that he had in his area that the team might be able to follow up on to try to find and recover some remains. It was pretty routine trip, pretty routine travel, but it was interesting to get out of Can Tho and see the countryside. This was a day long trip, so as we're finally driving back it's beginning to get dark and we're beginning to worry about curfew. We were not so much worried about "violating" curfew, but we did not want to drive up on a South Vietnamese checkpoint after curfew as they could be very trigger happy. As an added incentive, we're all sort of crammed together in a sedan and it is not all that comfortable. It was a pretty good paved highway, Route 4 most of the way that we were on. We had a pretty easy trip going down. On our way back, we're having a conversation about the day, how are you going to follow this up, what's the next step, and so on, when all of a sudden we hit a bump. Everybody goes, "Oops," and the conversation stops. Everybody has the same thought, "That bump wasn't there this morning." It seemed that "somebody" during the day had arranged for something that had gone off and created the hole that gave us that bump. Amazingly enough, that car could go even faster. That was the closest thing to a real adventure we had in that period.

I was also doing the liaison work with the Commission for Control and Supervision of the Ceasefire, so I made another trip up to My Tho, in Dinh Tuong province. The Cease Fire Commission had divided Vietnam into eight regions. IV Corps or the

Mekong Delta region was the seventh and eighth regions. I would go to their two regional headquarters and meet their representatives. At that time, Indonesia and Iran were the western members and Poland and Hungary were the east block members who provided personnel for the Cease Fire Commission. I had very good relations with the Indonesians and got to be a regular conversation partner with their head in Can Tho, who expressed a lot of frustration about the inability of the commission as a group to actually move on anything. Both sides would bring complaints about violations of the cease fire under the peace accords and ask for the commission to investigate. Investigations would never go anywhere. It seemed like it would never be concluded. Nothing could be brought before the commission for resolution or a decision and you had sort of the automatic fall out of who voted which way. The Hungarians and the Poles always believed anything the North told them and the Indonesians tried to be a fair judge and the Iranians were useless. They were there because the Canadians had thrown up their hands and gone home and withdrawn from the commission so they brought the Iranians in. So I went to meet all of the teams. They briefed me at the consulate and at the embassy in Saigon on this before I went to meet the different country delegations and I was told that the Poles and the Hungarians when they rotated like every six months they would change personnel and they would also change roles. They were doing a good cop bad cop thing. One team would be the hard core ideologues and the other team would be charming and easy to deal with. At this point, the Hungarians were the hard guys and so you had to listen to all the dribble about Marx, Lenin, and Stalin, dreadful stuff. The Poles would be charming. I drove up to My Tho, to meet with each country's team in turn. The Hungarian has got to be as dull and stodgy a communist official as you're ever going to meet. The conversation proceeded along very predictable paths for like two or three exchanges as he gave the expected answer to one of my questions about what the commission could be doing to move faster and he gave me the party line. I said, "You know, that's a very interesting observation you've just made and frankly I think you know what my response is going to be and I know what your response to my response it going to be so I propose that we talk about something completely different and much more interesting. How do you like the weather?" He wasn't amused, but I don't think anything could have amused this guy. The Pole, by contrast, proved to be every bit as charming and as affable and friendly and witty as any European you've ever imagined could be, all of those things. Sits down, we have little vodka glasses, we toast and we start the conversation. It proceeds almost identically but he's doing it with a twinkle in his eye and a smile and charm and it was all of a sudden a much more pleasurable experience. It was like, okay, I'm now playing tennis at the level of Andre Agassi and were both volleying to see how well we can play the game. It was a lot more fun, a lot more interesting. No more profitable than with the Hungarians because he gave us the same line, but still professionally more entertaining and even satisfying.

Q: What was your impression of the local Vietnamese officials, South Vietnamese officials?

MOSHER: I didn't have a lot of direct contact with them. Terry McNamara, as Consul General took upon himself all these top level contacts. I would be dealing with the more mid-level people and it was very quickly clear that for the most part they weren't going to tell me anything that their boss hadn't already told McNamara. That wasn't very much. They were a pretty closed lip bunch and my little bit of

Vietnamese meant that they either had to speak English or we were going to have to work with an interpreter. The eight weeks of Vietnamese language training I had in country was just enough to get into trouble. I could go to the market, I could understand when they told me how much something cost and I could buy things I wanted such as an elephant chess set.

Q: Were you getting any feel from local staff or others about the rule of Saigon? There was a lot of corruption, a lot of local control. What were you picking up?

MOSHER: I wasn't getting much of that directly myself but there was reporting on it. There was also some discussion in what little media there was for us to see. I mean, some of the arguments over the Hoa Hao Buddhists, for example, reflect the corruption in the military draft process which we knew was crooked. In terms of ordinary commerce and trade, Saigon had a huge Chinese business community, almost like a Chinese mafia and they tended to pull the strings in a lot of other parts of the country, too. I did have the impression in some ways though, that a lot of the Vietnamese people found that life in the Delta was better than it had been for a while. Their crops were bigger and better. They were actually getting a little bit more by way of services from the government and were also being left alone a little bit more by that government. And after all they didn't have the big American military units charging across the landscape the way we had been. You got the impression that basically the less contact they had with any kind of government official the happier they were. So, it wasn't clean of corruption but there wasn't any big scandal other than the argument about the draft.

Q: Was there any reflection of what was happening in Cambodia?

MOSHER: Yes, and not just because of its proximity but because there was also a Cambodian community in Vietnam's Mekong Delta. Because of this Cambodian population there were also business and trade links going all the way up the river. The area right across the border, actually along the Vietnamese side of the border and into Cambodia, was all bandit country which is what made the Cao Dai important in that area, since it was in that direction, so important in a lot of ways and so significant, the fact that they were able to keep control and to keep the communists out. Yet they were almost right there as a barrier, I guess, against the communists coming from that direction. But we also knew that there were several provinces that were pretty much communist controlled which would come back to haunt us later in '75. As I pointed out they felt pretty much free to move around different parts of the province in daylight. So they were there. We sort of had a golden path being Americans. My particular feeling was that as long as you didn't run into a fire fight nobody was going to waste their time on you, unless they came looking for you. The war casualties were horrible but for the rest of us, the last thing they wanted to do was to piss off the Americans so we weren't necessarily a target, but they also weren't going to pass up the opportunity if we stood up, hung a bull's eye around our neck, and said "Here I am! A lot of people at the embassy and consulates tended to be armed. You weren't supposed to be but they were. The further you were from places like Can Tho or Saigon, the more you were in the countryside, the more likely you were to be at risk. I understand some of the provincial reps (aka Prov Reps) had arsenals that would put my old National Guard unit to shame. Mortars and the whole set of different weapons that they might need.

Q: How about Terry McNamara?

MOSHER: McNamara, I gave [him] a pretty hard time in a lot of ways. Part of it because I got almost no supervision from him, and he admitted it later. He said, "They sent me four brand new junior officers, I can either do my job or I can jump them through the hoops doing theirs." Mac was also one of the "old believers" as I called him. I made no bones about it that I had protested the war and was generally opposed to it. I thought we should just get out. Mac was one of the believers; he committed a lot of his career to service in Vietnam. He had a lot of Vietnamese friends. He had a Vietnamese girlfriend who I think married Lacy Wright later but that's another story. There was a lot to like about the Vietnamese. I thought the Vietnamese were fascinating people. I thought if the Vietnamese women had been running the war it would have been over a lot sooner, but they were beautiful and friendly. I thought I had an understanding of how we got, in a sense, suckered in because there was a lot about the Vietnamese as a people that were things that we could identify with, things that made us think they were like us. But there were things that were so different that if you opened your eyes wide you'd realize that they were never going to be like us. We were just simply different. I made no bones to McNamara on what my views were. That I had opposed it, didn't consider that we were involved anymore and every once in a while we would have a conversation about it. Perhaps, we'd get a report and someone would say something like, "Oh, we really took a licking today from the NVA or we did something to the NVA," and I went, "What do you mean, we?" Somebody slipped in some GI's while I wasn't looking? I had a little bit more distance in that sense from the whole thing than these people who spent all these years doing it. I was perfectly willing to cheer if the South Vietnamese managed to pull it off but I didn't see the South Vietnamese government doing much to address what I considered the one major sin. They never gave the South Vietnamese anything to fight for. All they ever gave them was something to fight against and that was to not to be communist.

Q: We move into 1975, what happened and how did that reflect in what you were up to?

MOSHER: Well, as we begin '75, things at the beginning of the year make you think it's going to be no different, you know. We're half way through the first year of my assignment and then I've got a second year after that. But then you start seeing signs. You start seeing more and more North Vietnamese activity, Viet Cong activity, especially up north. They start squeezing the outposts and they start building towards what we later learned was in fact going to be a major offensive. They decided to try earlier than the two years we had been anticipating. Almost as important, there are clear signals from Washington that Saigon is not going to get anymore help. Congress, in the age of a beleaguered Nixon, is feeling its oats and laying out the markers, undercutting the deal Kissinger thought he had arranged for Saigon to fight the war on its own. There's a peace accord within which the US tried to come up with a final settlement and didn't, but if Saigon needs to call the cavalry the US is going to come a-running and do to the North Vietnamese what we did to them before, especially the air part, but now that's been undercut. At the same time we're beginning to hear that Saigon, the South Vietnamese government, is beginning to turn down the taps and supplies are not getting to the ARVN (South Vietnamese) troops in

the field at the levels and amounts that it had become used to and not at the level that was needed. They're not getting enough artillery rounds, they're not getting enough small arms and ammunition, they are not getting air support the way they were used to, nor in fact, at the level they would need to if they were going to stay on the same battlefield with the North Vietnamese. It seemed that Saigon had decided to sit on all the stuff in the warehouses that was coming from the U.S. in the form of military assistance. I can only speculate, though there has been a lot of discussion and Nguyen van Thieu has made comments, but my speculation would be that he was thinking that he couldn't count on the U.S. Cavalry coming again or at least there were enough straws in the wind that he can't count on the U.S. coming to rescue him. Basically what he's got on the table is what he has to play with, his stakes are what's in those warehouses and there is always the anxiety that if the North Vietnamese made a really big push, he would need this stuff in order to deal with it so he better not use it all up on all these little incidents and attacks that are going on now so Thieu decides that he is not going to release this stuff. The ARVN are going to have to fight it with what they've got on hand because I need to safe this stuff because I may not get any more. As a result, the North Vietnamese start nibbling off districts, areas, towns, and villages all across the country. Things are starting to head towards that equilibrium point where they might finally tip over beyond recovery.

Q: I'm not sure of the timing of which is which but when two redeployed units sort of giving up Nha Trang and Da Nang and all that and then the things in the Highlands went to hell.

MOSHER: We'd seen a couple of outlying fights sort of on the fringes of South Vietnamese territory and you're hearing names from history, Pleiku and Ban Me Thuot and places like that. Ban Me Thuot was especially significant to me when it fell because that's when the Indonesians called me up from their International Commission for Control and Supervision of the Cease Fire (ICCS) headquarters. Their regional head wanted to have a face to face meeting. So I go to his offices and he says, "I'm not supposed to be telling you this, so be very careful, but I want to tell you this. I'm being summoned to Saigon, all of us are. The Indonesian ICCS delegation is pulling in all of its people all over the country with the Cease Fire Commission teams in order to issue them weapons." Up until this time none of the Cease Fire Commission people from any of the delegations in the country were armed. The Indonesians apparently had a little stash in Saigon for just such a moment. When the North Vietnamese overran Ban Me Thuot they captured some of the ICCS personnel there and at this point we still didn't know what had happened to them. We didn't even know for sure that they had been captured alive and not just killed. We stopped hearing from, everybody stopped hearing from them and nobody knew what happened. So the Indonesians decided it's bad enough to warrant action. We want our people to be armed. I trotted into the consulate and wrote up my report and we sent it to Saigon because we were not allowed to report directly to Washington from the four consulates. Everything we wrote in the field had to go to Saigon and then the embassy decided what went on to Washington. McNamara was very sceptical. He didn't see any significance in the report and I have no idea if it was ever sent on to Washington. But when the Cease Fire people start carrying guns, I think that's significant. The Indonesians were on the ground and in the countryside a lot more than I was and they didn't feel safe anymore. I think that is significant. I sent it to Saigon, which was all I

could do. That was also when we began to really be concerned that things weren't going well.

Q: Were you getting from your colleagues from Can Tho, the other consulates and also your contacts up in Saigon feelings that this place is falling apart?

MOSHER: By late February definitely, that feeling was growing, and there were conversations within the community - the embassy community - and the different functional specialities, CIA, and political officers, and so on that things were not going well and that maybe we ought to start taking precautions. There was a prolonged argument about allowing people to send out their household effects, their personal effects, which was resisted by Ambassador Graham Martin for a long time. He never did allow the Marine Security Guards to send their personal effects out, which I think was unforgivable myself. His objective was to do nothing that would betray a lack of confidence in the outcome. He had his job, I had my concerns. My concerns were that I had 600 pounds of belongings in the entire world and I'd like to keep them, so let me get them out of here. This argument is already going on in February and even more into March and by the time Nguyen van Thieu gives that insane order to evacuate the Central Highlands, then it's very obvious it's done, it's over guys, it's finished. We were already by February I think, working over the evacuation plans from Can Tho. I happened to be talking to the, I think it was the Defence Liaison Officer was the first one I realized was working on the evacuation plans. I looked over them with him thinking, well, I could at least offer a second opinion even if I'm not responsible for writing a new plan.

The plan at that point consisted of a highway evacuation. We were all supposed to drive to Saigon and the DLO and I looked at each other and went "who is kidding who?" I said even then that this was ridiculous since we had a river right out here that goes right to the South China Sea. Personally, I figured that I would take the biggest stack of greenbacks we've got, stand on the river bank, and go, "Got a ride?" I was not going to drive to Saigon. We actually did have a guy, one of the Marines I recall, who drove from Saigon to Can Tho on the highway by himself in one of the embassy vehicles in February with a .45 calibre automatic pistol in his fist the entire way which must have made steering the vehicle interesting.

Q: You were saying you got to My Tho?

MOSHER: I had driven up to My Tho and back, all daytime but to drive from Saigon to Can Tho meant having to keep a pretty hard pace to be able to do it all in daylight. Even if the Vietnamese weren't shooting at you, you had to deal with their truck drivers and everything else on the road. It was a dangerous trip.

Q: After that point what were you doing about getting out of there?

MOSHER: Not a lot. McNamara didn't let on directly to us a lot. He kept a lot of the planning pretty close to his desk which was not surprising. But I knew the Marine Security Guards pretty well because, other than other JO's (junior officers) who came in with me, the Marines were the closest to my age and we were all in the BOQ. They were just upstairs and I'd spend time in the Marine bar. I got to know a couple of them pretty well. Their NCOIC - the sergeant in charge - had even asked me to help

them out as the M60 gunner, the machine gunner, because I'd spent more time in the National Guard service on an M60 gun than most of his Marines had. In the end actually, Dave Sciacchitano did that when they went down the river (Dave was prior service in Vietnam with the Air Force). There was discussion but no clear indication that we were going to go out by river but I think there was general consensus that going down the river made the most sense and that anything else was really kind of silly. We could get boats. All of our officers in our housing compound were on the river, almost without exception. It just made a lot more sense. We did of course have the Air America guys flying in, fixed wing and helicopters into the air base at Can Tho. That would have been a supplement, but we couldn't guarantee the assets from one of the local hops. It wasn't clear where we were going to go if you flew out anyway. The idea was, as the southernmost post in the country, if events got to the point where Can Tho had to evacuate, there was no reason to go north because everything else was going at the same time. The most sensible thing to do was head to the ocean. Taking boats meant you had a way to hang around out there for a while until somebody had time to come get you as well, which you couldn't guarantee if you tried to fly on the aircraft we had available. I think general consensus was that was the way it was going to happen.

Q: How close were relations with the CIA outfit there?

MOSHER: Within the consulate they were pretty close, at the working level. You had two things going on. It was clear that McNamara didn't get along well with all his senior management team. Like the nominal head of our sort of political section, Dick Scissors. I think they actually yelled at each other more than I yelled at McNamara. Partially because Dick Scissors came to Can Tho thinking he had a job running the reporting staff and the junior officers and basically running a small political section. McNamara never let him do it. I don't know what he did. I don't know how he spent his time, which is a bit like the issues a number of us had. I'm not quite sure how I spent all of my time. Dick had enough experience and background in the service while I just said, "Well I'm a junior officer, what do I know? I'll just keep coming to work and they'll keep paying me and I'll do whatever I can do that seems to be reasonably useful and write up reports and do whatever else I can do and I'll keep playing it writing his (McNamara's) Hoa Hao Buddhists report because it's an interesting topic even if I think it's a waste of time." I kept reading and I'd write a little bit from time to time, never got finished in the five months I was at Can Tho. I did several trips to meet with the International Cease Fire Commission teams, and I would write those up and whatever else I could find. I did do some incident reporting on particular events, especially the clashes between the military police and the Hoa Hao Buddhists and other community groups over their draftees because this was significant.

Scissors was even more frustrated. McNamara relied heavily on Hank Cushing. Hank was a nice guy. I spent time talking to him and he would actually sit and try and teach you some things where Mac didn't have time. He was very clearly the right hand man, the way Dick thought he was supposed to be. The DAO, our main defence attaché guy, was actually a civilian contractor, retired military and hired as a civilian to work in the DAO office. He is the guy who reportedly almost got left behind when everyone left by boat. There were a couple of people who were very upset about that.

He was one of the key figures in that. They were in the wrong compound. They were in the compound where nobody thought there was anybody in there.

I was shuttling back and forth to Saigon when I could to spend time with Mary Lee, especially around the New Year. She had a lot of Chinese contacts from her visa work. One of the incidents though did tell me that things were not going well. A Vietnamese employee who was the secretary receptionist for the consular section called my office number upstairs and said, "We have a colonel here who wants to talk to you about a visa matter. Are you busy?" Not doing anything that couldn't be done some other time, I went down to meet with him. He turned out to be a colonel in the national police, very presentable, seriously if we were talking national police military issues I would have taken him as a credible source. The conversation developed slowly, very Vietnamese style. The gist of it was that he had a son of college age whom he wanted to send to a university in the United States. We started from square one, but as I'm going through the conversation I found out bit by bit that they've already picked out the school, they've arranged the financing, and he's even applied for the student visa which I've just explained to him, he had to get it in Saigon. I said that all I could do was accept the paperwork, but the final decision and processing would be done in Saigon because they had centralized this function there in country. Personally, I thought that they had done this as a control for fraud but also because they weren't getting that many cases. In fact, it was my wife, Mary Lee Garrison, who was handling those cases. So, when the Colonel says, "Oh yes, I've already submitted the paperwork in Saigon." I said, "Well good then, I'm sorry I don't understand what possible further assistance I could provide?" The Colonel answered that he was hoping there might be something else he could do and that perhaps I would be able to advise him on that." I replied that "Really, I don't see how I can help. In fact the most I could do would be to telephone the officer who is handling the case." I did not admit to the relationship and it seemed likely that he already knew of it. I added that "I know the officer in question. In fact I'd be afraid that if I called her up and asked about your case I would actually cause you more trouble than I would help because they would feel that I was interfering. I wouldn't want to do that." Then he finally admits, "Well I understood that her husband worked here in the consulate." I said, "Yes, I understand that that's true."

I can almost literally see the wheels in his head going, "what does it take for me to get this guy to tell me how much it's going to cost?" I knew from the briefings in Saigon that this was the way the Vietnamese bureaucracy would work. If you had an application of some kind before a decision-maker in the ministry, you would go there several times and call on that official. During one of those visits, while you were in the hallway either before or after your meeting, some other person would come up to you and tell you how much it would cost and you would take care of the payment and the next time you called on the official your request would be approved. So I realize that this colonel is waiting for me to tell him how much it's going to cost for me to tell my wife to issue the visa. I'm afraid he left very frustrated because I never would admit to being the husband I just simply said, "I think I know her husband." We just finally ended the meeting and he went on his way. This guy really wanted to get his kid out of the country and keep him out of the military and it really made me wonder about how bad things must have been getting in Vietnam for that to happen.

Q: What happened? Were you there for the fall or what happened?

MOSHER: In early March the mission was beginning to draw down staff at a number of posts. McNamara had been asked to see who he could send out of Can Tho as non-essential. The USIA (information agency) guy from Can Tho left. He gave my buddy, Jay Dehmlow, one of the other political officers, an M-16, two M-2 carbines and several thousand rounds of ammunition. Jay took the M-16 for himself and asked me, "Are you interested in any of the other stuff?" I said, "Well I'll take an M-2." I'd trained with an M-16 and I really didn't want to fool with the thing again as they did still jam once in a while. So I took the M-2 carbine and about 400 rounds in magazines or in clips for speed loading. I broke the carbine down into two parts and put it in my old army duffel bag with a padlock on it and hung it up in my closet figuring that would be the best chance of keeping anyone from knowing I've got it. I certainly didn't want to carry it around anywhere, but I thought that if someone like the VC came knocking on my door in the night looking for me in particular, I could at least throw a couple of rounds through the door and they might go away, thinking "He's not supposed to have a gun, let's go find somebody easier."

McNamara said "Bob, why don't you go up to Saigon since your wife is there and then you can help out the consular section. We're not going to be doing much consular work down here." I was a little put out as it suggested that I was the least important or valuable person there so he was sending me out. On the other hand, he also wanted to get rid of someone he probably considered an obnoxious big mouth and a pain in the ass. I could understand that. He was also right, Mary Lee was in Saigon and I would be closer. In March I went up to Saigon with my household effects showing up from Can Tho a couple of days later. Mary Lee and I packed everything up. Without telling her I had it, I took the carbine out and hid it in a suitcase in the apartment so that her cleaning lady wouldn't see it.

In Saigon I joined the consular section. They were being inundated with welfare and whereabouts inquiries and all kinds of other insanity which at times got to be very abusive actually. My wife, Mary Lee, and I are in bed one night in the Tu Do street apartment in Saigon, within walking distance of the embassy, when at two o'clock in the morning, Saigon time, the phone rings. Mary Lee answers it and it's the watch officer in the Operation's Center at the State Department. It's not official business, what he wants is for us to help find his girlfriend and get her on an evacuation flight. Mary Lee was nicer about it than I would have been since as she said, "I have to deal with these people all the time." I would have ripped the guy a brand new one because I really think this was an abuse of power in an authority position, it's outrageous. But he wasn't unique as other USG people from all over the world were sending in similar messages. Even private citizens sending us cables and inquiries, "Please help find Kim. She's five foot tall, dark hair, dark eyes and she lived in a shack outside of Fire Base Smith." I was helping deal with such requests and they put me together with some of the Vietnamese employees of the Consular Section, sort of in my charge which I thought was hilarious because these guys know the language and the city a hell of a lot better than I do but I'm in charge of them because I'm an American and can at least read the telegrams when they can't all the time. The Consular Section would give me the stack of cables and I would sort through them looking for the ones that actually had a viable lead in Saigon. Then I would have one of the FSNs come in, we'd sit down and I'd say, "Okay, this is what we've got. These are the leads; this is who we're looking for; this is where to track them down; and this is the message, if

there is one, or if not, then the message is get your fanny in here and let's see if we can get you out." So in the morning I would send them out around the city. During the day they would come back in with their reports. These guys were very fluent in English so I would say "Alright, write it up for me, I'll turn it into a telegram and then we'll send it in." So I was even having them draft the telegrams responding to the inquiries. I thought it was pretty efficient because we were able to turn it over a lot faster. There wasn't any point in my going out and try to find anybody. I didn't know the city, didn't know the language, but could read the traffic and keep things moving.

So I did that for several weeks at the consulate and that's where we were when the Vietnamese Air Force pilot bombed the Independence Palace. We were in a small annex building in the back of the embassy compound, past the swimming pool. We could hear the rush of engine noise because the guy was flying at a real low level, maybe three stories high over the city. He flies right over our offices heading for the Independence Palace. Then we hear the explosions of the bombs he dropped in the area of the Palace and then we hear him fly away. At this point I'm thinking, okay, with his departure it's at least clear enough that I ought to be able to pop my head out of here and find out what is going on. I ran out through the gate and into the street to see what I could see, which was pretty much nothing except for all of the CIA (Central Intelligence Agency) staff whose offices were above ours, deployed in position with weapons ready and sometimes steel pots [helmets] and flak jackets and I'm thinking, okay, so you guys do have some secrets upstairs.

Q: When you're trying to get people out, were you beginning to get mobs?

MOSHER: Not yet, though we were getting queues. If you stepped out into that courtyard the queue of people for visas was now curly-que-ing several times back and forth filling out that courtyard area, but they were able to keep them from queuing up too much on the street. It was still a controlled process because they were also doing a lot of it on the basis of scheduling interviews. They were trying to keep it under control and they were still following the rules.

Q: Who was the chief of the consular section?

MOSHER: The chief of the visa operation was Pat Wazer. A whole bunch of the consular section officers went onward to assignments in Haiti afterwards, which I thought was an interesting award for the experience. Consul General Walter Burke gave me a short evaluation statement. It was a very good staff and I thought one of the best consular sections I've ever seen with Pat running visa operation, Peter Orr and Mary Lee Garrison among the visa officers. The training courses and everything else, they had this stuff. I was always able to call them up from Can Tho on anything that I needed, any kind of guidance on which most of the time just simply meant was making sure that the applications I was going to forward to them had everything they needed so they didn't have to go back and forth.

Q: So how did things wind down for you?

MOSHER: There was also an informal evacuation mechanism set up out at the DAO compound at Ton Son Nhut Airport. So some of us who were at loose ends ended up out there. Ken Moorefield was apparently one of the ring leaders if not the ring leader.

Ken got me and one other JO, Joe McBride, who I think may have been another officer who had been in Vietnam previously in the military. The three of us went out to the airport and were operating out of one of the old wooden barrack buildings that had been part of the DAO compound, screening people who could not be processed really through the legitimate system that was operating out of the Consular Section downtown. This became a sore point actually between the consulate staff and our operation because C-141 flights were already coming in to Saigon delivering military assistance and then flying out empty, so it was agreed to start putting people on these flights in order to get them out. These were our “people”, anybody who had held a sensitive Vietnamese government position. There were several little operations going on around the city, from different parts of the mission. Most of the people we processed or that we saw, we really couldn’t do much for, either because their documentation wasn’t complete or there just simply wasn’t any way to justify it. The Consulate, by comparison, was still going by the book and there was a little resentment on their part that there was a back door to which they could not refer people and yet these back doors were letting people through.

Peter Orr particularly suffered from this issue because he was given the job of going to the different ministries and cutting the deals that were necessary to allow us to process and get anybody out by any means, legal or even shady. In the end, Peter had no way of knowing whether or not he was even going to be able to keep all of the promises he was making, which were usually along the lines of “we’ll get you and your family out” if you help us now. Peter went to Haiti for his next post along with many other officers from Saigon and there he contracted equine encephalitis leading to a serious loss of memory. We heard second hand from the doctors treating him that they believed that the memory loss was that at least in part because he didn’t want to remember those last weeks in Saigon because he didn’t want to have to go through the list of who did and did not get out after all the promises he made.

So now we’re out at the airport screening people with, Joe McBride, who was our third guy. Ken Moorefield and Joe both had better Vietnamese than I did, meaning that they could speak it basically and I couldn’t speak any more than enough to get into trouble, but there were still more than enough people for us to process. Vietnamese paperwork is very systematized and since it uses the western alphabet, you could very quickly examine it, even if you don’t speak the language well, and you could determine whether or not the documentation was sufficient to justify further examination. One of my favourite applicants was a fellow who brought a long list of family members supported by several different levels of documentation for this extended family. As I go through all of the documents, and Vietnamese identification documents always include the name of both parents, full name, I’m making all the connections and I’m sort of drawing a mental picture of the family tree to make sure that what I got here is in fact immediate family and not 12th cousins. I soon realize that I’ve got one father for all of these children but I’ve got at least two mothers, both of whom are present. I dig around a little bit more and determine that I have one of those rather few and rare Vietnamese Muslims. I say to myself, “The hell with it, let the immigration service sort it out,” knowing that he certainly wouldn’t enjoy living in the new Vietnam. So I pushed them on their way through the review process.

Q: I sent some Iraqi Jews to the United States and told one of the wives, you’re the aunt. Just don’t say.

MOSHER: Later, we had a Vietnamese army doctor, a colonel, show up in uniform. I think Ken Moorefield saw him and just tossed him out on his ear, sending him back to his post. Separately, I had some private soldiers, complete with uniform with their field gear and weapons slung over their shoulder, show up in line with the paperwork. One of them spoke enough English to explain to me what they wanted which was just for one guy to get his family out. He wasn't worried about him, he wanted his family out. I said, "Go over there and sit down." I processed a few more people through the line and then I went over to where they were and I signed all the paperwork and I said, "You be there too." I decided that I wanted this guy to get out to the States - . Screw half of these assholes. This guy I wanted, this guy is worth keeping. This guy is a saver. Let's save this guy if we can. I had no idea whether or not they were able to take any advantage of the paperwork. By then we had people showing up in our line who had just flown into Vietnam in order to find anybody who would pay them to sponsor their evacuation. The word was that some of these guys were doing it on a commission basis; "Pay me a thousand bucks and I'll say you're whoever and I'll get you out."

I don't know if it was in fact one of these guys, but I had one American show up in my line and looking through his paperwork it seemed that the claimed relationship looked a little fishy. I ask how long he's been in the country and he said "three days." "So you flew in three days ago?" and he said, "Yeah." I said, "No, I'm not processing any of this. If I had my way we would throw you in jail and leave you behind." He said, "If I had my way I'd throw you out of the country right now." I said, "I wish you please would. I've been trying to get out of here for three weeks." Moorefield talks about this incident but he didn't know and what I never told any of them was that the next bit I staged because here I am listening to this guy and I'm a little pissed off, but I'm also tired and I'm thinking, that Coke can next to me is empty, so I threw a little hissy fit with, tossed the can on the floor near the son of a bitch and I storm out - which gave me a chance to get another coke, cool off, get some fresh air, and come back in a few minutes and drop right back in my seat. Moorefield told me later, "After you left they were so polite." Moorefield's version is perfectly reasonable from his point of view because I didn't say anything to him though I didn't realize that he saw this was evidence that some people shouldn't have been there, that we were cracking. Maybe I was cracking but the whole thing was done deliberately, staged. I was hoping that it made a point that we don't want to deal with any of you guys who are coming in here to make money.

Q: Well no, I mean in a perfectly peaceful context when I was in Saigon, I mean in Seoul, much later, not much later, but a little bit later, we had all sorts of Americans show up who met a girl, fell in love and he didn't speak Korean and she didn't speak English and they met at the airport just after he stepped off the plane. This type of thing. Was there a point where, were you there at the time when there was great unhappiness about Graham Martin who was not going to pull the plug?

MOSHER: Oh yeah, we were living and working right through that. It was one of the topics of conversation down in the political section and elsewhere for that matter. What we were hearing from on high was things like (Francis Terry) McNamara's belief that there was going to be a settlement between Hanoi and Saigon. Personally, I disagreed saying to people, "Bullshit, no North Vietnamese military commander

sitting at the gates of Saigon is going to allow some civilian politician or bureaucrat in Hanoi to tell him no, you are not going to be the first military commander to enter the enemy capital in victory since 1945.” He’s going to hang the phone up, step outside, and tell everybody, mount up. They were not going to be denied victory after paying such a high price for it. Any idea that there was going to be any other outcome was ridiculous. I gather from other sources I’ve read since then that the leadership needed a lot more input because there were people telling him this is what it was going to be. Our embassy shared a common wall with the French compound, so there was a good bit of back and forth contact as their ambassador and Martin compared notes. I don’t think he was telling Martin the same thing that the Hungarians were telling him. I think there were people telling Martin, it’s over. But I mean, even before I left Can Tho we were looking at evacuation plans and outcomes, in part trying to avoid what happened in Nha Trang and Da Nang. Consul General McNamara and I met each other at the Can Tho compound after he’d been to a meeting in Saigon, and he said, “We’re going to set up a defence line between Bien Hoa and Saigon.” I looked at him and said “Oh, we’re going to call it Festung Delta, right? What are we going to do about the four provinces behind us that they control?” I never heard him say it again; I think it was just a passing straw that he grasped at for just the moment. He knew better. He’d read the same reports that I’d read. He had even read stuff I hadn’t read. He knew how many provinces behind us were dominated or even controlled by the VC and you couldn’t maintain a country from what would be left. It wasn’t going to work. Besides which, after this proposed defence line was finally built there still wasn’t anybody to hold it. When President Thieu ordered the evacuation of the Central Highlands it cost him all of his Ranger groups, it cost him the Marines, and eventually it cost him the Airborne. Now all the South Vietnamese line infantry men and all the rest of the army divisions who have spent the last ten years looking over their shoulders and saying “Okay, if I get into real trouble somebody can come help me,” realized that the Marines, the Airborne, the Rangers, they’re all gone; and perhaps they soldiers are now thinking, “Shit, time to go home.” There was no Army of the Republic of Vietnam (ARVN); it was falling apart around our ears.

Q: So what happened at the end?

MOSHER: Well, we were still doing our vetting out at the airport. On, I think, Saturday, we were seeing more of the same kind of thing as over the past several days. More people were still coming in on the airline flights, though in fact the last of the airline flights were that same day. We were still seeing people coming into the country to try and get someone out and make a little money on the deal. We had one of the defence attachés helping us out, another Vietnamese linguist who wasn’t supposed to be there but in fact was supposed to be out of the country already.

He and I are out on the stairs of this two story wooden barracks building with the door to our back. We’re only sending through the people who have documents worth looking at more closely. If they haven’t got enough documents to be able to work with we were turning them away. I would look at the documents while he would speak to them and translate.

All of a sudden we hear airplane engine noises, several times, but we look up at the closest sound and there’s a C130 flying overhead at rooftop level. We started hearing explosions. I kicked the door in behind me with my heel, leaned over my shoulder and

yell, "Air raid." So they're scrambling to get everybody out of there and collect whatever they need which includes a couple of the official stamps and head for cover. We're also trying to get all these Vietnamese under cover with us. I was apparently the first one to realize that this was an air raid because everyone else apparently heard explosions and thought rocket attack. However, when I saw the C130 so low overhead, I knew immediately he was flying low because he's trying to avoid the aircraft and the anti-aircraft fire, and just get out of the way.

Then we saw the A37s flown by the attackers. I'm in the middle of a road between the barracks building and a concrete four story building that was part of the compound and we're sending everybody across the street into that concrete building. That's why I'm standing in the middle of the road, yelling, "di di mau, di di mau" while watching the airplanes, and trying to remember, whether the A37 carries machine guns or not and wondering if I want to get out of the middle of this road instead of standing here? We finally got everybody into the concrete building and I'm walking through it, getting everyone to hunker down, hunker down. As we're walking through rooms they have eight foot high glass windows and I'm thinking, Christ, this is a terrible place to put someone during an air raid but we weren't the target, we didn't have any place else to put them, and if we can get them all down we'll do the best we can. Finally, we got everybody settled down and the DAO guy and I cut through the DAO living quarters compound. In the bar, we each grab a six pack out from behind the bar and we go up to the roof. We sit on top of this cement building, drinking beer, and watch the air raid.

We've already seen the A37s flying around as they're easily identifiable, and I'm thinking, hats off to you, as here I sit, months to go still on my posting here and you're bringing airplanes down here and that should be the end of it. I had predicted this, but I thought that the NVA would bring its own airplanes down and instead they're doing it with "our" airplanes. When it seemed to be all over, I saw one plane come back down from the clouds and fly over the whole airfield, almost in slow motion. I think he was taking a survey of the damage. At one point, we can see the flak bursting behind him and I know immediately that the ARVN/VNAF gunners are not leading their targets. We never taught them how to fire at an airplane, how to lead the target aircraft and let him fly into the fire. I remember thinking that if I were anywhere near that gun crew, I be tempted to go and take the damn gun away from them and see if I could do better. I also realized that this probably would not be the best thing to do since I'm an American diplomat and not supposed to be involved in conflict, so I decide that maybe I'll just sit and keep drinking my beer.

Finally, though, they fly away and it's all over though there is still some gunfire and things going on. I slipped back across the street into the wooden building where we'd been and I call the consulate. Mary Lee answers and I ask her, "How is it there? What's going on? Is everything okay there?" She says, "They're meeting now, the country team is meeting to discuss the coup." I said, "It wasn't a damn coup. That's the North Vietnamese." Apparently, everybody saw A37s and assumed that the Vietnamese Air Force (VNAF) was starting a coup. I repeated, "No, that was the North Vietnamese in our airplanes announcing that it's over. It's time to start packing up and hitting the road." I said, "You go tell them that that's the North Vietnamese in our airplanes sending the word." There is no Goddamn coup. Who would waste time

staging a coup now?" I have no idea what she did with the information, whether anybody paid any attention. It was pretty moot anyway at that point.

We stayed out there until after midnight with everybody hunkered down, keeping our refugee applicants under cover. We walked around talking to them. Some of them also said it was coup and I told them the same thing, it was Viet Cong airplanes.

Sometime around midnight, Ken Moorefield and I decided to head back into the city. Everything was pretty quiet and we thought we could go get some sleep and then come back out the next day and see what we were going to do. We get to the area of our apartment building on Tu Do Street, I guess about one o'clock in the morning or a little afterwards, and go up to our apartments - mine on the fourth floor and his up on the sixth. I found Mary Lee already in bed and I'm trying to clean up a little bit before crashing myself when Moorefield comes back down and knocks on the door. I let him in as we hear the rockets have started hitting the city. It's almost two o'clock now. Ken and I go out on the balcony of the fourth floor apartment and just lie down there to watch the rockets coming in across the skyline, being generally aimed at the airport - a further indications that it is all over.

Mary Lee finally got up and came out to sit with us for a while. About six o'clock in the morning we rang the embassy, starting at the Mission Warden's Office, and asked what was going on. Nobody knew what was going on, nobody knew what was happening, so Ken and I decided to go on in to the embassy to see for ourselves. Mary Lee stayed at the apartment for a little bit longer. By this time, I had already showed her where the carbine was so in case we needed it. I remember, we also had one of those big old short wave radio receivers and my military reserve card was next to it where I put it down, not wanting it in my wallet where it might lead to confusion about whether or not I was a diplomat, not military. I thought for a while that the radio and the military ID card and the carbine were all going to be in the apartment for the VC to find. It didn't work out quite that way.

Ken and I went to the embassy and start with the Mission Warden's Office, where we learn that there's an insane argument about whether or not we're evacuating. We are told that the embassy security staff can't cut down the tree in the parking lot that would open it up for helicopter landings and they're still trying to find out if fixed wing planes can still come into Ton Son Nhut airport. Ken goes off to talk to his contacts and to other officers around the embassy. I wait in the Mission Warden's Office. About a half hour later he comes back and says, "Let's go. We're going to go out to the airport." It makes as much sense to me as anything else. So we're taking a school bus like vehicle out of the motor pool to the airport. Driving through the city at about seven o'clock in the morning, but it's obviously not at all like a normal morning. It's quiet, but there are individuals scurrying every which way, many on foot, some on mopeds, some on motorcycles, all kinds of vehicles. We could also already see bits of military uniform here and there on the street; evidently from South Vietnamese soldiers ditching their uniforms.

It was fairly easy to get around until we got to the vicinity of the airport. There we found a fire fight going on in the vicinity of the Air Force headquarters, apparently between Air Force personnel and some other unit based out there - apparently an intramural quarrel possibly over airplanes seen as escape vehicles. We waited for a

little while until that finished and then Moorefield talks us past the gate guards and into the base. . I go on from there on foot and Ken stayed with the bus and began his rounds collecting people from evacuation points. I went in the back way to the DAO compound along the way picking up some American and his Vietnamese wife. They were looking for the evacuation point out so I told them, "Okay, follow me." There is still enough firing going on that I didn't want to dawdle and so I pushed the pace just about to where they weren't collapsing, but he was complaining to me all the way. But I figured I'm not going to explain it to you, I'm not going to argue with you, but I'm your ticket so you'll stay with me. I'm not going to push this until you actually collapse, but I'm going to push you hard. So we are going to keep going. I didn't have an argument with him. I just kept going. They kept up with me. I thought it made the best sense.

We got to the DAO compound and they joined whoever else was gathered there waiting to be evacuated. I went to find the other embassy officers who had spent the night out there. I already knew from the phone call that morning before I left the apartment on Tu Do about the two Marines that had been killed during the night. I had seen them go to that post before we left the airport the night before. We had talked a little bit before they walked out to the impact crater that they occupied as a position at the gate to the part of the compound. That's where they were when the rockets hit later. Arriving the next morning I found out that one of my buddies, another junior officer, Jim Gagnon, spent the night with them after they were brought in from their crater after being wounded.

He was in one of the buildings in the compound area then, basically doing what he could for them, keeping them company through the night which included another rocket attack. Jim told me about having one of the rockets come through the ceiling and then hanging up and not going off. So there it was hanging in the ceiling panel over their heads. He and the Marines just moved to another location.

So, as I arrive I walk up to Don Hayes, the admin officer who had been running around for weeks trying to get everybody to leave, and one of the others, it might have been Jim Gagnon, and I said, "Hi." The two of them looked at me and asked "What the hell are you doing here? You haven't heard?" I said, "Heard what?" Don tells me that Ambassador Martin turned the helicopters around, told them to go back. I said, "What?" It's noon by now. He turned the helicopters around? Had he looked around? The Ambassador had already been out to the airport and gone back in to the Embassy by now.

Here it is midday, we're sitting out there at the airport with these Vietnamese refugees with no place to go. There are no fixed wing aircraft coming in and we've now got South Vietnamese paratroopers looking at us from surrounding rooftops and through the fence on different sides of us. They were not happy with us because they knew we were going to leave and they were not going to. Don had already had a run in with a couple of them and I watched him drive them off away from our area with only a bullhorn, yelling at them in English as they scowled at him, "Go, go back to your unit. Go defend your country." Very loudly, assisted by a bullhorn almost literally in their faces and he just bullied them back to their unit (if it still existed) but away from where we were. Later in the day we started getting a little anxious because we could hear rounds being fired but they weren't close enough to be sure that they

were firing at you or whether they were just firing randomly at whatever. It was getting a little noisy.

Earlier, before we even dismounted from that bus bringing us from the embassy, we were driving up the road near the main Ton Son Nhut airport terminal building. We're in front of that building, facing it as we're driving towards the DAO compound, when all of a sudden we see flying over this terminal building – almost literally scrapping its roof – came two Caribou transport planes which proceeded to cross each other's flight path all under 500 feet above the roof of the terminal building. I've never seen flying like that in my life. Then we saw other aircraft taking off. I saw a South Vietnamese Air Force F-5 Freedom Fighter do its take off run and when he got to the end of the runway he kicked the airplane on its tail, does a vertical climb to maybe 1000 feet, kicks it over on its nose and does a dive bombing run almost literally off the end of the runway, delivering his ordinance, and then flying away. I don't know whether he flew to Thailand or what but I saw another one of them leave as well. It was chaos at that airport.

Q: How did you get out?

MOSHER: Well, now we're sitting out there at the airport having been told that the evacuation has been called off. So we're just simply doing whatever we can for the Vietnamese that we've got, waiting for somebody to tell us that it's on again. I just simply was sitting there watching the skies. One of the guys, I think he was a military sergeant attached to the embassy, had some packages of food and I started helping him hand this out to the Vietnamese that were there with us. While we were doing that, which is just simply a question of handing them out and say take it, I'm watching to see any sign of aircraft. I know that before the helicopters will come there will be fixed wing aircraft overhead to secure the air space, observe, and report - so I'm watching for that. I see no sign of it which can mean either they're flying too high for me see or they're flying in another part of the sky that I can't see, or no one is coming and I start working out the odds as to which of these it might be.

We're American diplomats, the Vietnamese don't really want to piss off the USA so it might come to captivity of some kind, though probably not too bad, and then some kind of repatriation as soon as the Vietnamese can cut a deal with the USG afterwards. Maybe they'll put us up in one of the hotels or something, I don't know. I'm thinking that wouldn't be too bad - not talking Hanoi Hilton yet. So I wasn't too worried about that. Those angry South Vietnamese paratroopers outside our compound were beginning to be a concern.

Finally, I think Don got tired of me watching for airplanes and decided to send me away. There is a CIA guy there and Don had him give Jim Gagnon and me a ride in his sedan over to the other part of the DAO compound where by now we actually had landings zones established and were waiting for the birds to come in. We knew that much. Don stayed behind to deal with the Vietnamese group the rest of the day. Other people have told that story and he's told it, but I don't know that part of it first-hand.

So we get into the guys sedan, something like a little Toyota and Jim and I are in the back seat. The guy hands me his M16 Colt Commando, the sub machine gun version. I'm holding that on my lap so it's out of sight but I can hand it to him quickly in case

we need it. He doesn't want to have it visible up front in case we run into a checkpoint and we do have to drive by the paratroopers who in fact don't bother us fortunately. I'm admiring it because I had never seen one up close (having only trained on the standard M-16 myself). So I'm enjoying that. We drive maybe two blocks and arrive near the bowling alley, turn into the processing area, identify ourselves, and we're grouped accordingly. That's where we're standing when the first Sea Knight helicopters come in, the very first lift of Marines coming in to secure the perimeter and to begin the first flights out of this area.

The first two helicopters land on the tennis courts. That's not an easy thing to do. I expected them to come out on boots trotting to their positions taking up their perimeter, having had a little bit of experience with myself in the National Guard of unloading from a helicopter and setting up your line. What I didn't expect was that the Marines had one of those little four wheel drive Mules with a recoilless rifle on it. They drive that off the helicopter and now I think, "that's nifty." I felt a lot better though seeing them. The Marines have landed; we're going to be okay. Then they loaded some of those helicopters and we take off and fly out. [Years later, I would actually meet Monte Montgomery who commanded those Marines and was actually riding on that Mule when it exited the helicopter.]

Q: Your wife, where was she?

MOSHER: She is at the embassy in the consular section which was her duty station so to speak. By the time I left for the airport with Ken Moorefield she is showing up at her office awaiting instructions. Again, this is early in the morning when there was still no evacuation. All I knew was that she was at the embassy and embassy people were going to be taken care of, so putting my faith in that we got on the helicopters and flew out. Jim Gagnon and I were on the same bird. The helicopter's tail ramp is sort of half open and I can see who I assume is the crew chief sitting at the tail ramp with a flare gun in hand. I realize that he's there in case any missiles are fired up at us.

Q: A flare to create a heat source that would deflect the missile.

MOSHER: Actually I had had a conversation with McNamara once before about that. Flying back and forth between Saigon and Can Tho we flew Air America so we rode the old C46 commandos, we rode C47s, we rode these little Pilatus Porters, the STOL aircraft. While I was waiting at the airport in Can Tho, I went into the pilot's radio room (being American we pretty much had free run of the place) and there is a map on the wall that has all the surface to air missile sighting reports on it between Can Tho and Saigon so that the pilots would know what spots to avoid and so on. Well, I was very glad to see that they are keeping up with such information. Later, I mentioned it to McNamara and he went ballistic though I never could figure out what was his problem. You'd have thought there was a security breach or they were in the wrong for even admitting that there were surface to air missiles out there, or were they in the wrong for posting it where I could walk in and see it?. What did he think they were supposed to do with the information? So, now on the helicopter leaving Saigon I knew what the guy at the tailgate was doing. But we're watching out the tail and we can see the countryside as we flew out over the city. Finally, we're "feet wet," we're off the shore and over the water. I looked out the tail and I looked at Jim Gagnon and he looked back at me and I put my hand to lips and went, kiss Vietnam goodbye.

Q: I think this is probably a good place to stop and we'll pick this up the next time where we have you on a helicopter just getting out of Vietnam.

Q: Today is the 15th of March, 2005. This is the Ides of March. Do you want to say to say something just as a test? We've just gone over this but we have to start again. So you got on the helicopter and you're over the ocean and what happened?

MOSHER: Well we had flown out to, in our case, to the ship that the helicopters were from, the USS Vancouver. She's an LPD or landing platform dock ship, with a helicopter flight deck on the after section and a well deck beneath that for landing craft to go right up into the ship. The crew there get us off of the helicopters. There's a sort of reception committee cordon waiting for us where they screen people for weapons and they look for our identification. As we are identified and sorted out, those of us who were Americans – the embassy staff and others, we stay on board and they put us in the quarters below that were usually used for the Marines who were ashore so that was available. We all went in there and crashed.

The Vietnamese were taken down through the ship into the well deck where they were put in landing craft and carried over to the two container ships that they've got to transport refugees. These were merchant ships, they may have been Navy auxiliaries or they may have been merchant ships activated for the reserve fleet.

We got to the Vancouver pretty late in the day and most of what I remember is just going down into the quarters below and crashing as I was pretty tired. It was probably the next day when I got up. We were fed and accommodated pretty much like members of the crew only we didn't have duties. So we wandered around up on the deck, the flight deck area and the edge and the fore deck, just watching what was going on (while they kept us out of the way). I had my 35 millimetre camera that I had bought while I was in Saigon and I was taking pictures of all the goings on; helicopters coming in and landing and unloading. There were a couple of Hueys and other things that were clearly not ours, not US Navy birds. They were either Air America or Vietnamese army, and I got pictures of them being pushed over the side to make room on the flight deck; pictures of the helicopters flying around us and the other ships. A fishing boat came out with a bunch of Vietnamese refugees on it. That was sent toward the Contender once they were close enough to be communicated with. I pretty much spent that day just watching all the goings on.

I think it was late that day or the next day when we were finishing up bringing evacuees aboard that I was called up to the bridge over the loudspeaker system. The captain gave me a message that they had gotten from the USS Blue Ridge that my wife, Mary Lee, was on board there. That was the first positive news I had that she had gotten out and where she was. Previously I had run into some people from the embassy and who had been down at the embassy, unlike me out at the airport, who said that they understood that she had gone out with Mrs. Martin, the ambassador's wife. But no one could 100% verify it but I was pretty sure that there was no problem there. It was a relief to get confirmation of where she was and know to make arrangements to rendezvous once we got to the Philippines.

The ship had crewmen at different stations around the boat as lookouts. We're sitting on the fore deck watching everything go on and I saw a couple of jets come towards us from the ocean side, heading towards the shore, flying fairly low overhead. Looking up at them, I couldn't pick up any markings as they went past us flying overhead. I asked the lookout, stationed just above me a little bit, if he knew whether or not the F-14s had been assigned to the fleet yet. That was our new swing wing fighter and I was curious because these jets overhead were swing wing, with the wings bent back into the V shape for higher speed. He couldn't tell me and I was a little nervous because I was wondering if they might have been Vietnamese MiG-23s with their wings folded back. He didn't know either, but presumably it was okay whoever they were. I figured that I were the Vietnamese, I think I would have liked to have someone come out and talk a look at us. It was not unlikely.

I think we watched a movie on deck that night. The next day I think was our last day sitting off the coast and the evacuation was pretty much over. The last thing then was we were looking towards the coast; a group of ships were coming towards us. As they got near enough, you could make out naval ships and then word went around that it was the South Vietnamese Navy which had stayed behind in the Saigon for another day or two beyond our own evacuation. Apparently they were trying to get everybody they could on board and then they ran the gauntlet down the river to the South China Sea through the North Vietnamese gunfire. A number of the ships were smoking from hits they had taken running that gauntlet, but apparently they were all in good enough shape that they could make the Philippines with us. They were just sort of shepherded into the formation. I think sometimes towards the end of that day we finally left Vietnamese waters and headed for the Philippines.

We were an interesting group on board. Some of them I knew. I spent some time talking with one young guy who had been hitchhiking his way around Southeast Asia and then flew out of Thailand into Vietnam on one of the very last commercial airline flights. He admitted that he did it because he had heard that he could come and sponsor a refugee and make a little money while he was doing it, but he was too late and got caught up in the evacuation with us. I asked him what he was going to do next and he said he was going to go to the Philippines and work his way south through the islands and cross over into Indonesia, which I thought was fairly dangerous thing to do but for somebody who had already hitchhiked through some of the most dangerous parts of South East Asia, based on his own testimony, he was probably going to at least try. I have no idea if he tried or if the Philippines even let him in as I never saw him again after we left the ship. I have no idea whether he did. That was the kind of people who were attracted to Saigon at the end.

A couple more days at sea, we got into Subic Bay. The Navy ships go into the base there. I understand they sent the others off to Guam, like the two Contender container ships with the Vietnamese.

Q: Guam is where we concentrated the Vietnamese refugees.

MOSHER: Of course the airlift flights had been going back and forth between Guam and Saigon so we knew that they were already set there to receive and process the

refugees. For us it was pretty straight forward. We got into Subic and they had another receiving area for us where we went in, produced whatever documentation we had, and the Philippine government officials were there to process our entry into the country. They gave us 72 hour visas - 72 hours to get out of town. It was very generous. Then the Navy helicopters flew us from Subic, especially those of us who were embassy, State Department, and so on, up to the embassy grounds in Manila. Not much to remember about the flight, but I watched the helicopters come in after me and I actually took a couple of pictures because it was just an intriguing moment. There was Manila Bay in the background, and I worked out where Dewey had fought his battle further up the bay. In the foreground, was a little marker showing where the embassy staff burned the flag in 1941 before evacuating as the Japanese were closing in on Manila. And now there were the American helicopters bringing us out of Vietnam landing us on the embassy grounds.

The embassy, again, had a little reception area for us with various officials working out travel arrangements, where were we going from there, what was our next assignment, what were our travel orders, whatever we needed in getting that set up. I was able to find out from Dan that Mary Lee hadn't come in yet. The Blue Ridge was docking after the Vancouver so I knew I was going to be hanging around there. It made more sense just to wait there at the embassy area. Joe McBride, who had been with me out at the airport, me, and one other guy were just sort of cooling our heels. We'd go out and watch the helicopters come in, see who was getting off and walk around the neighbourhood.

The embassy was not in the best of neighbourhoods. We were walking down the street through that part of Manila and there were all these doorways on the other side of the street open, each with two or three young ladies standing there. Seeing three young American guys they would call us over, "Hello, come on over." The two guys I was with looked at these Philippine girls and we all realized, okay working girls. They then looked at each other, looked at the girls again and then looked at each other and just with the most distressing voice said, "Oh my God, what have we done?", clearly lamenting the loss of the Vietnamese counterparts to these girls.

Q: Vietnamese girls are beautiful, much more beautiful I think than almost anywhere else.

MOSHER: They were very beautiful. It was amazing. I think I had an excuse for the girls on the embassy staff who of course watched everyone's behaviour for their own amusement if for no other reason. The fact that I didn't go out to any of the clubs or bars or do any of that was easy to explain, I had a brand new wife in Saigon and they all knew that. Jay Dehmlow, my single buddy who was with me also on his first assignment, now they had a lot harder time explaining why Jay never went out. I think they finally decided he was odd, the only thing they could figure out. I heard enough stories from all the other guys that they were all very impressed.

Q: How did things proceed? You got out of there; you were united with your wife and then what?

MOSHER: Mary Lee came in on one of the helicopters later in the day. It was getting on to twilight and we were standing out there on the helipad waiting for them slowly

in turn to come up from Subic Bay. The ambassador was quite concerned because he saw a bunch of us standing around the helipad out there when he was on the balcony of the embassy building and he called out - I don't know if he knew who was out there or whether he knew he had one guy out there, but he called out and asked, "Who are all those people?" He was clearly concerned that somehow the press were standing around the helipad on his grounds. We said, "We are all okay. It's legit," and he calmed down a bit.

Mary Lee came in pretty quickly after that on one of the helicopters and we got her processed through whatever else they needed to do. They put us up in a hotel and we were going to fly out the next day. A lot of people from Saigon had already been given onward assignments. The Department had sent out a couple of cables from Washington while we were still in evacuation mode giving people their onward posts. It was not a directed assignment, so when they came up with - they wanted to send Mary Lee and me to Seoul, Korea, and we went, "No. We don't know the language, we're coming out of the tropics, and we're not going to Korea." We had all kinds of other things to sort out. I still had absolutely no training and had no thought of going to Korea without a clue. We said, "No, we are going to go back to Washington. So that's where we were given orders for. After sleeping it off one more night in the hotel, we then went out to the airport the next day.

There, of course, it was old home week. There were a whole bunch of us sitting around the waiting area waiting for our different flights, comparing notes, such as what was your exact route, what were your evacuation experiences, what did you think. There was a little bit of conversation about the word going around that Ambassador Martin had deliberately delayed the helicopter flights as long as possible because he was still trying to guarantee getting out as many evacuees as possible, as many Vietnamese and others. One of the military guys, as I was telling him that, didn't even look at me, just kind of went, "Bravo Foxtrot Delta." Wait a minute, I'm thinking, "Bravo Foxtrot Delta?" - Oh, okay, I think I've figured that out that meant.

There were some other conversations especially critical of Martin, for the most part for having waited as long as he did to give the final order. Not even letting anyone cut down that tree in the parking lot cum helipad on the last day. , I mean we knew it was over before it was over. Why were we dragging it out so long? People can debate that forever. Of course now we know that Kissinger finally ordered the Ambassador out.

Then the airport announced that our flight would be delayed. Somebody joked about how they were sure that somebody had seen a guy in black pajamas walking around our airplane -somehow the VC had gotten to us and they weren't going to let us go yet. But we finally got on our flights and went our different ways.

Mary Lee and I flew into the U.S. and we spent some time with relatives, we didn't go directly to DC. We finally arrived in Washington in late May and started to find a place to stay, quarters. Mary Lee lined up a job real quick with the African affairs bureau as Nat Davis' special assistant.

Even as we were still in Manila they were trying to get people who had been in Saigon to go to Guam to help them process the refugees. From the stories we were hearing, the need was desperate. They had people who didn't understand the first

thing, even about Vietnamese names, the difference between the surname, the family and the given names, the order and everything else. With Mary Lee already in her job it's looking like if I don't line something up I'm talking about another unaccompanied TDY to Guam for who knows how long to run around the refugees while hoping that nobody I run into held a grudge for anything I did while we were processing evacuees back in Saigon. So the second time they came to me about going to Guam, I just told them flat no, we're not going to do it. However, I knew that this sort of thing comes in threes and they were going to come back again. So I'm desperately trying to line up some kind of assignment.

One day, I run into an acquaintance in the hallway who is working in European affairs. We have the usual Foreign Service chat and he lets me know that East European Affairs is looking for somebody to fill a job in that office. I thought, okay jump for it and went around to talk to them. Nick Andrews was the Office Director and the Deputy at that time was Carroll Brown. What they were looking for was an assistant to the Yugoslav desk officer, who was Alan Thompson, but who would also cover Bulgaria and Albania. I didn't have any specific background and I didn't have the languages but I thought I could do this. We quickly agreed that I would take the job. I found out later that what they had gotten the department to approve a little bit of shuffling around of their manpower allotment to temporarily create this billet. They clearly needed one and a half people for the Yugoslav desk and virtually nobody for Albania and maybe a half of person for Bulgaria. It wasn't on the formal personnel charts in a normal sense of a position so it was kind of a test. Given my situation it worked out perfectly and it turned into a regular two year assignment. And as expected, within days of getting the arrangement confirmed the Asian folks came back to me a third time about going to Guam and clearly intended to insist, but I had to say "I'm terribly sorry, I start on Monday as the desk officer for Albania, Bulgaria and the assistant for Yugoslavia. I'm not available." So that put an end to having to go to Guam.

Q: You were working on the Yugoslav desk from '75 to '78?

MOSHER: 1977.

Q: What part of the action did you have on Yugoslavia?

MOSHER: Not a lot of specific big issues. I did handle most of the correspondence, letters from the public, congressionals, things like that which meant that I also handled a lot of the human rights issues that were beginning to fill our time. The Helsinki conferences and the accords and especially the third basket agreement on human rights issues were becoming active. The Soviets signing up to that really introduced human rights issues and divided families for our big ticket action agenda out of that basket, it was just beginning to be an important part of our work load. I did a lot of that and I did a lot of little bitty things. I was the dirty little jobs guy for the Yugoslav desk officer.

Tito was still alive but we had a three inch thick briefing book that had to be maintained and updated setting out what to do when he died. As I said, I handled the congressional correspondence, and then of course I had the Bulgarians. The Yugoslav account was a good bit more active. Eagleburger was interested very much in what

was going on there and you had a high profile ambassador in Belgrade who wasn't bashful, Laurence Silberman.

Q: Silberman, I interviewed him. He's doing something now I think with intelligence or something like that or at least considered for Director of CIA and Supreme Court Justice. He's now a federal judge.

MOSHER: Okay, I wasn't sure that was the same Silberman. In Bulgaria, the ambassador was Martin Hertz, who I learned during my tenure was a bosom buddy of Graham Martin and I thought, oh, my God. Of course, we had no embassy in Albania. There wasn't much interest in that country. So about 60% of the job consisted of whatever needed to be done on Yugoslavia, about 35% on Bulgaria, and then the 5% left was whatever needed to be done to just not be surprised on anything Albania.

Q: In the briefing book on Tito, you were new to the Balkans and all that but were they talking about the breakup of Yugoslavia?

MOSHER: It was very central to the whole approach to Yugoslavia that Tito was the key stone that held it all together, that the potential for a break up was at least recognized. I don't know that you could rate it at that point because Tito was also still very active, but recognition of the potential for break up was there. You knew that there were rivalries based on ethnicity within the party, politics such as there was in Yugoslavia, and there were divergences. Yugoslavia proved to me one of the things I had learned in university, at least that I concluded from my studies at university - that basically when the communist regimes took power in all of these countries, and this includes Russia, despite paying a lot of lip service over the years about equality and equal opportunity and everything else, they basically did nothing to change, alleviate, or improve inter-ethnic relations, or an industrial versus agricultural, urban-rural conflict. All of this stuff was just put in a freezer, forgotten and ignored, so what we've got as a result when Tito finally does go was Yugoslavia maybe of 1939, not even 1945, with all of these rivalries re-emerging. Yugoslavia is really only a 20 year old country and an artificial one at that. But that was all a long time in the future and Tito was healthy. We had this relationship with him because he still had a lot of old U.S. military equipment in warehouses, things that we sold him back in the '50s. Sometimes we had to discuss issues of whether or not we would sell them different pieces of new military equipment. This became my introduction to munitions control, vetting those possible sales and transfers and I ended up doing a lot of that for the East European countries as the first stop for the entire office when those came over. I had some military background and experience and I knew what the equipment was, so I could flag for the desk officers whether or not this is an important license and identify the issues attached to the equipment. One of the recurring issues was always riot or crowd control material, especially the chemical agents. There were various pros and cons on such items, did we want Tito to be able to break up a riot or demonstration with tear gas instead of guns or would it be even worse if he had the tear gas. We had to work out all those issues. Then of course there were the military equipment and technology that went with it. The Tito book was very comprehensive. A lot of the details dealt with the decisions that had to be made in the first 12-14 hours after his death including even the seemingly mundane bureaucratic ones such as who goes to the funeral, at what level is the US represented, how quickly can we get our hands on the delegation, put them together, send the messages of condolences, which

were all sort of drafted in there so that when the time came all you had to do was edit, not write anything from scratch, it was all in there as well as all the background papers on who all the other players were and everything. While I was on the desk, I think it was the Singapore desk officer came over and wanted to look at our Tito book because they wanted to prepare one for their account. They had a similar situation with a long time strong man leader and all kinds of potential problems when he left and they wanted to see how we organized for it. The desk officer proper, Alan Thompson, did most of the important stuff, meetings, briefing and policy papers, and things like that.

Q: Well then what were you looking towards doing as sort of a career speciality?

MOSHER: Well my principal interest was really still political military affairs. It was becoming more apparent that within the department I qualified very much as an expert on military operations. Most of the State Department, such as the ACDA people, were arms control focused and spent most of their time focused upon strategic arms control agreements and interpretations, etc. But State didn't have very many people, civilians anyway, who knew about military operations, warfare, defence planning, procurement, and defence industries, any of these things. Even at that point, I was looking through my old efficiency reports and the earliest one called me one of the most unprepared desk officers they've ever seen. Given the limited amount of time I'd been in the department that was pretty accurate but I found the military issues one thing that I knew that most of the guys around me didn't. One of the things that drove me towards State was to be able to do that kind of work on the civilian side having long ago written off any ideas of military service. I recognized that that was what I wanted to do in State and I was spending a lot of time working with the INR, Intelligence and Research Bureau analysts because I found that these were people who really knew these countries and had material that they could lend me so I could try and get up to speed on Yugoslavia, Albania and Bulgaria. The FSOs in the office were all busy putting out the fires in the in basket. They didn't have a lot of time to spend with me filling me in on the subject matter. Intelligence and Research was also an area that was of interest because of those contacts.

Q: So what did they do? Did they assign you to, in '77 where did you go?

MOSHER: After a very interesting two years in that job and we had a lot of things go on. In '77 we're trying to get an assignment as a tandem couple and this was the first time we were going through the bidding and assignment process as a tandem. Mary Lee and I were comparing notes on our bid lists and putting them in. We talked a lot about the pros and cons of Latin America which was her interest while I thought Africa was more promising. She was also coming out of the African bureau. So we bid for two jobs in the Embassy in Kinshasa, Zaire.

She got a job in the Economic section there and I was able to get a job in the Political section, but the openings were about three months apart. Our options were to both go at the same time and then I could be on leave for three months - but we decided (and when you're a tandem this is your key decision) that we would accept three months apart before we were reunited at post. We might also for example have accepted posts in different cities up to maybe three hours apart by road or an hour or two by air. Even to some degree an out of cone job was an option for us as well, so we were trying to

be pretty flexible about that. But it worked out. She got the Economic section job and I was the, number two in the Political section of three officers, arriving at post three months later than she did. In the end I actually arrived later than that because the East European job had resulted in an ulcer and the medical people wouldn't clear me at first. For several months I survived on one of those ulcer diets. It was one of the most ghastly experiences in my life trying to get through that but I finally got the medical clearance and was able to leave for post.

Q: You got there, we're talking '77, what was the situation in Zaire at that time?

MOSHER: By the time I got there we were at the tail end of the first of the two invasions from Angola by the next generation of the ex-Katangan Gendarmes who had fled to Angola in the 1960s. Of course this was in partial response to our intervention in Angola with the Zairians brought along for the ride as long as we kept them on a short leash. I understand that it was joked that the Zairians went into Angola backwards so that they had all the forward gears on the vehicles available for immediate retreat. They were a pretty unimpressive lot. The Katangans made their first go at Zaire and they'd pretty much been driven out while I'd been sitting in Washington reading all the traffic on this and trying to get up to speed. It was pretty much over by the time I got to Kinshasa, but everybody was by then waiting to see when the next shoe would drop.

Q: How did you find Kinshasa, Zaire and all?

MOSHER: If you've ever been there you know that the natives call it Kin la belle, Kinshasa the beautiful, and at the time Kinshasa was still one of the wonder places of Africa and the skyline, especially when seen from Brazzaville. They called it New York when seen from over there because it looked like Manhattan with the high rise buildings that had already been built with the proceeds from the copper mines and the corruption that was already out of control, but the city was booming. There was a big expatriate community, there was a moneyed class of Zairians, night life, and it was a swinging place. You had some of the best musicians in Africa to inspire the clubs where they played. Then you had disco. It was coming down from Europe and that is what they were playing the rest of time. I also got into the countryside a good bit because I was Refugee Officer, which mainly meant coordinating with the UN (United Nations) and the other international agencies on their relief efforts. We had refugees coming out of Angola into what was already Zaire, the Congo, to avoid the fighting there. I made four or five trips then from the capital towards Cabinda and towards the northern part of Angola, along the Zairian side of the border visiting the refugee camps, talking to the local officials, the missionaries, and talking to the aid workers. With the Cabindans and especially FLEC (Front for the Liberation of Cabinda) this developed into a regular little account for me. I was their "go-to-guy" because there were of course other groups fighting with the FNLA for the control of Angola but then there were these separate groups in Cabinda which was not linked physically to Angola, but was divided from it by the little neck of Congo/Zaire that comes out to the ocean. They had their own little liberation movements that were resisting the regime in Luanda and trying for their independence and even fissures within that group. By going out to the refugee camps and talking to these people I became the guy they went to when they wanted to talk to the Americans, so they would come into Kinshasa from time to time and tell me what was going on within

the movement, what was going on in the war, what was going on in the refugee camps. Much of it clearly pitched towards “America, are you going to help us?” It became a regular chore trying to keep that communication open because we wanted to hear as much of this as we could but at the same time not give them any false hopes and also try and keep them clear that our assistance was for the refugees and did not want it supporting anything other than that. So, we avoided the situation of having them base themselves in the refugee camps and only cross the border when they wanted to cause a little trouble. I remember the two years I was in Zaire I made that trip four or five times, first with a doctor for AID and then on my own and with another officer having all those contacts.

Q: What was the feeling at the embassy that you were picking up about Mobutu?

MOSHER: We knew we had a definite problem but we had limited options for dealing with it. The most important objective of course was to keep the country in one piece. Mobutu looked like the best bet for that. There weren't any alternatives in part because Mobutu made sure there weren't any alternatives. Although I never felt he was anywhere near as bloody as some of the other strong men in Africa. For whatever reason it was true it seemed liked Mobutu was eventually able to drive off or drive out of the country anybody who was a serious threat. Almost all of his opponents from one degree to another were bought off, sometimes they were in exile for a while, sometimes they would come back but you really didn't have a lot of his opponents end up dead in the river or anything or disappearing. Not that they weren't willing to beat people up. From time to time you would get riots, especially January which was the traditional rioting period in Kinshasa going back to when they rioted against the Belgians. It started in January in that last year in 1960 when the Belgians pulled out. I don't know how much of it was tradition or culture or society or even climate, but it was always the high point that you had to watch for. A lot of it would be focused in the area around the university where there were a lot of students and when the students would congregate to a degree they were either right in that area or they would demonstrate in that area and sometimes they would get some of the locals to join in. Mobutu would send in the military police and the army and the national police and they would sweep through it, beat people up, and there would be a couple of deaths as a result of that. They weren't too bashful about using force, but that would usually put an end to it.

Then we also introduced the whole issue of human rights and now had an Assistant Secretary in State for Human Rights, Patricia Darien, who actually came out to the embassy as one of her first trips to bring us up to speed and hear from us on the human rights situation in Zaire. It was a multi-faceted issue and discussion and was one of my best embassy experiences in a lot of ways. We were trying to keep military assistance programs to keep the place more or less propped up and in one piece, but we were tempering the military assistance by what other aid we were providing, we're not giving them too much in the way of weapons, we're trying to control that. So one of the big accounts was for C-130 transport aircraft so that Zaire could move what troops it had that were reasonably capable around the country as needed. The incursion by the former Katangan gendarmes showed us the need for this capability even though it was an old program. At the same time Mobutu's economy was so mismanaged and the corruption so bad that we were facing a possible Brooks amendment requirement that we cut off all financial assistance, aid, or whatever when

Zaire's debt payments fell sufficiently in arrears. The Econ section was really impressive on this issue, with John Heimann as the head of section, Mary Lee, and her colleagues in there. It was like they had the entire economy wired. You could go down there and they could tell you to the penny what your arrearages were on that day, when the amendment was going to be tripped, how soon another debt payment had to come in, how much the payment had to be to keep the amendment from coming into force. We'd go down to the Defence Attaché office, with which I had very good relations, and we'd talk about what the state was in the Zairian military. There was always concern about a coup, it being Africa where that's what militaries tended to do. We had AID, trying to improve agriculture, make them less dependent upon the mineral industries and diversify. It was a very busy embassy and all these things were aimed at that major issue - keeping the place together which would seem to mean keeping Mobutu Sese Seko in power. Keeping them from being vulnerable to expansion of the war from Angola at the same time trying to provide what assistance and support we could for the struggle in Angola, although you already had congressional limitations imposed and we were a lot less able to do that kind of thing and to see what was going on around us.

Q: Was there any concern of Soviet penetration or Cuban or anything like that?

MOSHER: Not so much penetration. They all had embassies there, even the North Koreans. Mobutu at one point had accepted assistance from North Korea to train what was called their Kamanyola division, named for a battle that was part of Zairian mythology dating from the 1960s. So we interacted with their diplomats. One of my jobs was to monitor their relations with Zaire, watch what was going on given the presence of the Cubans in Angola and the Soviet backing of that insurgency and others. There wasn't much threat of them gaining influence at least as long as Mobutu was in power. Trade deals were one of things we kept an eye on because that was always the sort of thing that if you can't do anything else you could make trade deals with Mobutu's Zaire. We'd see what was going on there, but we weren't too worried about it. I remember going around to inspect the Soviet embassy because there had actually been Zairian demonstrators massed in front of the Soviet Embassy on several occasions, and in at least one instance they stoned it. So I went over soon afterwards and to make a damage assessment. Some of these guys demonstrating had managed to throw stones up to the fourth level balconies of the Soviet Embassy and break the glass. They were truly angry I thought but they also got a little out of control, a little over enthusiastic, these students. You had a build up over the next year towards a second invasion so there was a lot of sabre rattling going on back and forth. The Soviets were being typically Soviet and the contacts I had with them weren't very fruitful.

Q: Who was the ambassador?

MOSHER: Cutler, Walter Cutler. Martin Hertz even sent me a kind letter about my assignment talking about Walter Cutler, sort of an introduction.

Q: Well you knew Walter in Saigon.

MOSHER: No, I didn't.

Q: I think Hertz knew or maybe not.

MOSHER: Well Hertz knew everybody it seemed to me from my dealings with him, however poorly we got along. It was a nice note from him. Walter, it was interesting too because he was the youngest ambassador I'd worked with in my at that time short career. That was fine. He was open. The political counsellor that I worked for, Robert Remole was a problem and I think this was generally recognized throughout the embassy staff.

Q: What was the problem?

MOSHER: I think Robert Remole may have had poorer interpersonal skills than I did, and I wouldn't claim in those days to have great ones. The number two in the political section, Harlan Robinson, was an INR analyst on an excursion tour. Magnificent French, knew Africa, had worked in Tanzania, made the observation once that Remole had the same relationship with the front office (the Ambassador) that I had with Remole. He said the only difference was when Remole went charging into the ambassador's office with a crumpled cable in hand, screaming, he always charged straight in. He said "Robert with you, you do the same thing, but you always get to Remole's door and you stop, and we can tell you're thinking about it, and then you do it anyway." It was not a great relationship between Remole and me.

Q: Was the relationship personality or was it on issues?

MOSHER: I think a lot of it was personality. There are all kinds of little things that made it clear that Remole didn't think any of the rest of us knew diddley on anything, that he knew everything, and that we were just a waste of his time. That was why the Refugee Officer job was a Godsend. I'd just leave the embassy and go off and do my own thing and come back. It was great when the department even sent out a cable talking about how great the resulting reporting on Cabinda was. I had every excuse to go out there and do more field trips, visiting those refugees. We spent a lot of time working with the UN High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR) and most of the time I would do those meetings myself.

Q: How did you find the UNHCR?

MOSHER: That office was at the time, fairly feeble. It was staffed by an African head most of the time that I was there who seemed to be a fairly competent international bureaucrat but was clearly not driven by the same sense of urgency that we at the embassy were, especially those of us who were going out to the refugee camp. You also had a hell of a time getting the Zairians to cooperate with you to bring in assistance. They put all kinds of restrictions. There was a lot of pressure, I imagine from local officials, for a piece of the action with all those goods moving through. We had them stealing PL480 grain out of our warehouses so I'm sure the UN wasn't having much better luck. The number two for part of the time was a Swede who was my first introduction to somebody who could never make a decision on anything. He was the perfect neutral. He was really frustrated, in part perhaps, because I don't know what his relationship was with his boss, but in part maybe because his boss kept all the decision-making to himself. That was implied but never clearly stated in our conversation. To give you an example, Remole and I went over for a meeting once

with the High Commissioner for Refugees and I was actually embarrassed to be there because you know you're meeting the representative of the High Commission, basically you're meeting with someone of ambassador rank. I'm sitting on this, some sort of settee love seat, with the political counsellor from the American Embassy who, when I glanced out of the corner of my eye at one point, had taken a position physically where he's got one foot over the other knee and he's jiggling so the couch that I am on is rocking. He's got his other hand, with his arm looped over his head, so that his right hand is stroking his left cheek under the ear while talking seriously to an ambassador equivalent. God knows what the commissioner thought, I know what I thought. That was in fact Remole's last post as Political Counsellor, he ended it in Martinique as Consul General. At the end of his tour in Kinshasa, two years, he came back and was quoted in the Washington Post accusing the embassy in Zaire of having suppressed and distorted reporting.

There had been a lot of open debate about policy there; I mean Harlan Robinson sent in a dissent message over the policy, an action which I had supported. We had all expressed concerns at various times over the policy in Zaire. But Remole went a step further with an accusation of the reporting, claiming that the ambassador and DCM had twisted the reporting. When the day arrived that he was to testify in front of the subcommittee for African affairs, he goes into the room and there's Mary Lee, me, Harlan Robinson, and a couple of the other embassy staff all sitting there in the front row waiting to hear him say this under oath. He didn't, he backed down because he couldn't. It wasn't true. One of my projects at one point was the Human Rights Report, the second year I was there. I took the draft up to the ambassador's office and I walked in to see Ambassador Cutler. I told him, "We can't say this in here. We're writing about the demonstrations and the violence but not the fact that people were killed, we're not saying it in the report, but we all know it's true." I said "What is written here, the way this is written right now, is not only not true but everybody knows it's not true. It's just going to make us look stupid. We need to write the truth here." He looked at me and said "Okay, how would you write it?" That is what we did and that is what we sent in. . After Saigon I felt like I know what happens when an embassy suppresses and distorts reporting and that's not what was happening. I was never asked to change anything for those reasons, to conceal anything.

Q: Did you feel any frustration or influence from the station there because the Congo has the reputation of being run by the CIA more than the state?

MOSHER: I don't know how much they were running the policy. If they were running the policy it was being done in Washington. You had a very professional station chief while I was there and I knew a number of their people, their station people, especially the ones we might encounter so that we didn't mess anybody's cover up. We knew each other. At one point towards the end of my tour, I asked one of them, "Do you realize that of the stuff you guys send in from this post, more than 90% of it is crap?" He said, "You should see the 90% we throw away." They had contacts that we didn't have. They had access that we didn't have because they had that long history of relationship. I would get to meet some of the old timers from the '60s who would come through, Maurice Tempelman and other people. We were able to compare notes on the history of the relationship and the evolution and everything. I think it was mostly from Washington more than anything else.

Q: There wasn't a strain or a particular divergence of your reporting?

MOSHER: No, I don't think so. I think there were disagreements but I think they would have been of degree rather than direction. The most outrageous example would have been when Pat Derian comes out to talk to us about human rights. You've got the DCM (Wolfgang Lehman), Harlan Robinson, and the whole political section except for Remole over on the balcony of one of these high rise apartments that the senior embassy officers sometimes got as quarters. Pat Derian is explaining her job, her position, her new title and her portfolio and how she sees it working. Then she gives a brief precise on what she understands the situation to be in Zaire. Then she says, "I understand that there is a slight disagreement within the embassy over what exactly the situation is here in Zaire." Harlan jumps in as quick as a blink of the eye and says, "No, actually there's no divergence of opinion." Really, there are all of us who agree on how bad things are," and then pointing to the DCM he says, "Then there is him, who says everything is fine." Nobody disputed him. There were differences. Basically a lot of what was going on was kind of a traditional matter of what you thought depended upon where you sat. Those of us who were farther removed from having to make the decisions felt more strongly that the decisions weren't fully recognizing what we thought was important which is what we were seeing on the street every day.

Q: The theme that runs throughout the Foreign Service, the junior officers want to report on corruption, how awful things are and the senior officers are stuck with you've got to have relations with this country and you can report all this but what does this do. It doesn't do anything regarding the problem and it just destroys your credibility or in Washington.

MOSHER: I think part of the problem too is that I don't think Washington in this case fully understood. I mean at the time we had not yet coined the idea of the failed state but even from 1977 to '79 Zaire was a failed state. Mobutu wrote a new constitution and brought back the parliament while we were there and we did reporting on the election results and noted that in more than one district the election returns recorded 110% more votes than there were voters registered for the district. I wrote a report on the constitution itself and I went through and I worked out all the articles about who did what, who had what responsibility and what authority. The summation basically was nobody does anything if Mobutu doesn't want you to do it. I actually attended the opening session of parliament. It was very funny. They were so new at it; I was actually sitting in one of the members' desks at the back of the main floor. It was only my second visit. Later on when I went they realized that I shouldn't have been down there, right down there on the floor.

They were going through the formal business of embodying the parliament so they were calling the roll and recording the election results to verify that everybody is properly a member of the parliament. I described it as being like a road company of "Advise and Consent" because they were doing all of those things, battering the desks, slapping the desks, pounding, making noises whenever somebody's name came up that they didn't like or approving when they did like someone. They didn't have a clue, even some of the older parliamentarians or else they knew that it wasn't going to amount to anything. But they needed the pay check so okay, I'll play along for a while

and maybe we can actually do something with this and make Mobutu back off a little bit more.

It was an interesting exercise and Parker Borg, then Consul General in Lubumbashi, sent me a very nice letter about what a great report it was. He says, "Right now all I've got is the area handbook to tell me how this place works; now I've got something that actually tells me where the levers are." You'd go over to the foreign ministry to deliver these demarches that Washington wants you to present about how they (Zaire) should vote at the UN and you'd find the North American desk officer asleep on his desk, if he was there, because he had two or three jobs in order to make enough money to live.

Q: Well then you left in what '79?

MOSHER: Yeah. We went through all of the second Katangan invasion.

Q: In the first place do you think this is going anyway? I mean did Kinshasa look like it.

MOSHER: The big unanswered question, especially at the beginning of the invasion was exactly who was coming across the border and as long as it was no more than the old Katangan Gendarmes and their descendants coming across the border it was going to be manageable with a lot of help. If the Cubans were coming across the border to help them out then we might have some problems although there were disputes about that. Geographically the distances, it was such that there was no threat to the capital certainly. The worst you were likely to end up with was another 1960s de-facto partition of the country with competing governments represented in different parts. There was always a certain regional pole and one of the things we did while I was there was write up the different blocks and different regions and who were the old Zaire mafia, in the sense mafia meaning the gang of politicians in that region and who were the haves and who were the have-nots in all the different areas. That was an interesting exercise in itself just beginning to learn how they networked among themselves and who did they see as friends and buddies and family and who were not tying that into the old tribal relationships that we knew from history. The real immediate crisis was there were a lot of foreigners in the way because they actually got fairly far across southern Zaire's Shaba province towards Lubumbashi after crossing the border.

Then it was the question of who were we going to line up to help them. We didn't want to do it even in 1975, especially in 1975. In '77 we were reluctant to send U.S. troops into Africa to engage in operations in Africa. In the end we were able to get Mobutu some help, the Moroccans offered assistance and then the Belgians and the French were willing to come in. We did lose one American for sure that I remember and I don't remember if there were any others but there was one in particular, a mine worker, a fairly big guy who apparently was killed pretty early. The impression was just simply that the rebels when they saw him just looked at this guy and said he's too big to mess with; we're not even going to try and do anything but shoot him now and get him out of the way.

We put together an airlift and dropped the Legionnaires into Kolwezi, one of the mining towns on the way to Lubumbashi. Darkness was falling so fast that they were only able to get 50 legionnaires out of the airplane before it was too dark to jump anymore. The legionnaires had already agreed that they would go but they told the Zairian army they wanted the Zairian army troops all out of the city, gathered at a race track that was easily identifiable from the air and they wanted them to sit there and squat. Clear indications being that the legionnaires didn't want to have to waste time. If they saw anybody African with a gun they were going to shoot and they wouldn't have to apologize later if it was a Zairian because they had them out of the way already. The 50 of them get on the ground and they organized themselves a perimeter.

One of the first beneficiaries was an American couple, tourists of all things, who had come up from Zambia into Zaire and got swept up in all of this. They were liberated and they spent the night in a house with three legionnaires that were part of the perimeter that they were holding until the next day when more reinforcements could come in. We de-briefed them when they came back to Kinshasa and they went home. The one comment that they gave, they said that one of the legionnaires told the other two, I'll go see what's going on and he went over to where the headquarters was. Comes back later, a little later, and in French tells the other two legionnaires, "There are 50 thousand Cubans coming this way." This was not with any implication of fear or anything else despite Belgian claims that the Legionnaires were all screaming like skunks, terrified of the darkness. It was said much more clearly with the idea that there are 50 thousand Cubans coming this way. There's 50 Legionnaires, which means each of us get a thousand Cubans. They were more than ready and eager. But that was the beginning of pushing the invaders all back into Angola.

Q: Did we get involved?

MOSHER: Not directly. We provided the airlift, we provided supplies, and we put in rations. We were doing a regular report out of the embassy on the state of the fighting and reports that we were getting from around the country and also on the status of the military assistance that was coming in, tracking petroleum levels. Also Mobutu was reacting to the crisis because they were. The one thing that might have caused concern would be if the rebels looked like they were succeeding well enough would we get urban unrest in Kinshasa. I had done in fact a special report on how close Kinshasa was to Angola and what were the assets at risk in that throat heading towards the ocean because my refugee trips took me through there time and time again. We very quickly learned that Mobutu had brought in some armored vehicles from his bases closer to the coast, brought them into Kinshasa, including a couple of Chinese made tanks. So there was some question of well, exactly where are the tanks and what were they likely to be used for because it's not a perfect riot control tool but it's a great tool for intimidation. I got my jeep and had one of the Marines come along with me and we went to the railway yard and we followed the tracks in the pavement all through the city and established where the tanks were and we were able to monitor it and make sure they weren't moved. Basically they went from the railway station, they brought them in there during the night, drove them through the city in the darkness up to where Independence Palace was, or his palace was up on the heights overlooking the city. It's actually right across the road from the American School which was always a nervous point. We were able to use the pavement marks so we knew where

they were and we knew after that they were okay. They were there for show. From time to time over the years they (the students) did like to go demonstrate in front of those gates when they really got irritated.

Q: In Cabinda was there much, that became an oil center didn't it?

MOSHER: It already was which is one of the reasons why we had a lot of interest. The oil fields that were being exploited were first in Cabinda and then they were beginning to explore whether there was oil on the Zairian waters and on shore. They knew there were reserves off the Angolan coast as well. The fields went that far. I don't remember what the company interests were in the development in the Angolan fields but, yeah that oil was there and that was definitely one of the things that was of interest was the condition of those fields.

Q: When you left there in '79 had you seen any particular change, were you keeping a folder on after you left or?

MOSHER: I don't know that anybody was and in fact my swan song was a report that I wrote that said basically tried to raise an alert about this. We've got to get ready for post Mobutu. There's no clear successor, there's no clear mechanism of succession. It's quite likely that you're going to have chaos on various levels when Mobutu disappears and I said, "Look at this guy's age, he's an African male of his generation, and then you look at the growing risks of disease, assassination, heart failure, anything else, this guy could be gone in five years." I said, "In fact I think it's almost certain that he's going to be gone in five years." Ten years later I come back to Zaire on another assignment, and Mobutu is still there and somebody was "unkind" enough to remember the report.

Q: Somebody was working on Haile Selassie from 1913 until the 1970s and they were continually planning for after Haile Selassie. There is a whole generation after generation.

MOSHER: I think there was concern about that. One of the things that Mobutu almost succeeded in doing was giving them a national identity. When I left in '79 they were still thinking of themselves as very much as being from Bandundu, or Kasai, or Shaba, not Zairian, but whatever part of the country they are from, from whatever tribe they were. The habit publicly was, especially from Mobutu, the emphasis was on Zaire, Zaire, Zaire, the country and Mobutu had introduced all the propaganda. Oh, look the animation troupes, the big dances and celebrations and singing whenever he would come and appear on occasions in the stadium that he had, he created the party that tried to control everything, the single party government. They even had a party ideology school, The Makanda Kabobi Institute. Makanda Kabobi was a kid who got killed in the riots with the Belgians back in 1960.

The junior officer in the section, Rick Sullivan, I did a dirty trick on him one day. He's on the phone talking to somebody who was trying to understand this party organization. Richard is trying to explain this to him and he's telling him about Makanda Kabobi Institute and I'm helping him by offering, I'm kibitzing with him while he is on the phone trying to have a conversation. While he's explaining this, I'm explaining it to him, yes, Makanda Kabobi is the Horst Wessel of Zaire, the guy who

gets killed in a street fight and becomes a martyr to the party. Then the person on the phone apparently said, "How do you spell that?" Richard starts going "M, A , K , A and he gets through Makanda and he starts to spell Kabobi, properly spelled with one O, but I'm reciting it and Richard is repeating it and I actually got him to say on the phone, Kaboobi and Harlan Robinson is falling over out of his chair and I quickly reached the second "o" I didn't think it would work. I didn't think Richard would fall for it – but we saved him from my joke and corrected it. Later, I went and talked to the labor union people, they were all controlled by the party.

Q: You left there in '79, where did you go?

MOSHER: '79 we come back to Washington which we were beginning to think would be a good pattern for a tandem. It's always easy to get good jobs in Washington. There are just so many options, whereas it's hard to get jobs overseas unless you're in Washington to work the system, especially back in the '70s. It's gotten a lot easier. We'll go back to Washington and we'll line up something there for the next time out. I came back and went to work in the INR watch. 15 months doing the shift work. Dolores Wahl was running the INR part of the Operations Center in those days; practically one of the founders. I'm not sure I remember what Mary Lee was doing, it will come to me. But anyway, we bought a house in the District of Columbia and started to adjust being back in Washington with snow and all those things.

Q: You did the INR watch from '79 to '80 more or less?

MOSHER: Yeah, that was interesting because it covered the Soviets going into Afghanistan, covered the hostage crisis. The watch at the Operations Center was large, even in those days, you had that task force area set to one side. The INR Watch Officer in those days was actually sitting in the Operations Center area with the stairs behind us that took us down into our (INR) area. We were sort of the intelligence community mirror image of the Operations Center only with a much smaller staff. We weren't called upon to do all the things the Operations Center did. Our job was mainly to monitor all source intelligence on 24 hour basis, identify reports that were critical and needed to be addressed, action taken upon them immediately, flag less important reports for attention at the beginning of business the next day, especially by intelligence analysts responsible for that area. In general to provide support for the Operations Center and anything else that was going on up there which included at times, task forces. We would help clear the channel through which their intel reporting would often come. We were also contributing to the Secretary's Morning Summary which was maximum eight page document, four pages of analytical highlights that could be no more than half a page. Ideally you'd want them so you get four of them on a page. The last four pages were all INR products which were ideally one page analytical pieces written by the analytical community within INR and attached to the Morning Summary. Our job was to edit all of the INR material, prepare it for final presentation in the Morning Summary and then we would coordinate with our counterpart on the Operations Center side who was writing items based upon press reports and embassy cable. Sometimes we would even collaborate because an embassy cable would come in and an intelligence report would come in and they would be on the same subject. So we would collaborate. It was, I think, one of the best products that the State Department turned out on a regular basis.

Q: I know it has a very high reputation.

MOSHER: As long as you had adults working in the Operations Center and working for INR it worked. But by the time I left it was already breaking down.

Q: What was the problem?

MOSHER: Ego. It was already understood to be an important product. It was the first thing the Secretary read coming in the department and it was one of the things he had in his pocket when he went to the White House. So they started competing for space and you started hearing, in my experience in this, and it may have been different for other people in INR, but my experience with this was listening to the Operations Center people claiming, well we get two pages instead of sitting down together, you've got 12 pieces, I've got 12 pieces and the best ones fill the four pages with and what doesn't make the cut we don't care whose it is, it either doesn't make the cut or it does. Instead of claiming well I get to fill two pages with anything I want. No, no that's not the way it works. After I left there were actually two morning summaries for a while. The Ops Center prepared theirs and INR prepared theirs, but we were already seeing the signs of this kind of attitude coming about.

The other thing you got to do was make those midnight phone calls and then there were either CRITICs when an alarm would go off and there would be a CRITIC message from somebody in the world. When I was in Kinshasa again later, we saw a CRITIC sent out about a congressional delegation changing their itinerary!

Q: So after your 15 months what did you do?

MOSHER: During the 15 months with all that going on, on top of it, Mary Lee and I came to a parting of the ways. We had different ideas about the relative importance of career, family, and all kinds of things and it just came to about as a friendly divorce as you could manage so I was looking to get overseas. I had a number of things I was looking at. I think I was within six hours of going to the Sinai. Instead, when I put my bid list together, out of the jobs that were available there was one job I really, really wanted. I had been in the department long enough, I'm looking at my career path. I'm getting to be about 30 years old here, do I want to keep doing this or do I want to go out and do something else now. It's not like I've been setting the State Department on fire here. I thought there was a job in Belfast that is open, I'm going to bid on it. Then at least the department will pay for me to go to Ireland for two years, that would be cool then I could decide whether I want to stay in or get out but at least I'd have had two years of living in Ireland. I put the job 15th out of 15 because I told myself, if I make this job first on the list nobody will believe I'm serious. I actually made the list of candidates. There was a new Consul General who was going to be going out at roughly the same time, Michael Michaud who actually interviewed all the candidates for the job. There was another guy working within the INR/Operations Center complex, that community, who it turned out was also bidding on the job. I honestly don't know what our relative success rate, you know likelihood of who's getting it but in the end he withdrew from the assignment and later I learned his attitude to the department changed. I learned he was gay. Northern Ireland was one of the most backward parts of Europe on homosexuality and I always wondered if there hadn't

been that issue would he have gotten the job instead of me. But I got the job, which was cool, and flew off in August.

Q: You served from what, '80 or?

MOSHER: It was like Labor Day 1980 to summer of 1982.

Q: Who was Consul General?

MOSHER: Michael Michaud.

Q: What was his background?

MOSHER: European bureau mostly, definitely much more than mine. He had done a number of jobs as a science officer. He had a lot of hard science credentials within the department. He had written some policy papers and published some stuff in that field. Physically, it was like night and day. When we walked down the street in Belfast it was like Mutt and Jeff. Michaud towered over me by a couple of feet. Big family, Catholic, which I didn't pay any attention to at the time but it did come up later on, being in Belfast it had to. It was a good assignment for them too.

Q: You were there '80 to '82. What was the situation?

MOSHER: During the period of course we had the hunger strike going on at the H block prison where the political prisoners were being held. Bobby Sands and I think ten of them in the end all died, which was really frustrating because you felt like you had to, you wanted to run down to the prison and slap them on the side of the head and say "Lads, this is Maggie Thatcher. She'll let you starve. Don't think otherwise." Then run over to Number 10 and slap Maggie and say, "Maggie, they will do it. They will kill themselves. Don't think differently." I think that was it. They both misread, each side misread the other in various areas. Then you had Gerry Adams beginning a prominent role as leadership of the Sinn Fein, and you had members of this community running for parliament. Bobby Sands was elected and then Owen Carron, his former campaign manager, was elected to succeed to him and these people were coming in to us for visas. Paisley was beating the drum and having his marches and also coming in for visas. Everybody wanted to go to the States and explain Northern Ireland.

Q: What were we doing visa wise?

MOSHER: Visa work in Belfast was interesting and I ended up doing most of it. I like to rub it in every once in a while with consular officers, noting that Belfast issued 26,000 visas in one year and I did almost every one of them myself. The overall visa policy was pretty simple. For the average person we were giving ten year visas, unlimited entries, and in the local community, people who were on the dole would be given a visa because the dole was such a good deal they were going to come home again. We weren't worried about these people settling in the United States. They were probably going to work for a while. I had a couple of them show up applying for a new visa with all of the papers accompanying the visa that made it clear that they'd worked before, but we'd give them another visa. The officials were a lot more

sensitive and there was a bit of cat and mouse as to who was making the decisions on the visas. There was also consultation going on. Whatever we did on a visa you definitely kept Washington informed. During my time there we refused Ian Paisley once. I got to do it, the Consul General never liked to give people bad news. Told him to his face we weren't going to give him a visa and we weren't going to give it to him because it was a particularly sensitive period where he was beating the drums over the policies, not cooperating with any kind of effort for a peace and settlement. Generally we refused anybody who was clearly labelled as IRA, which was illegal in Northern Ireland so they really weren't going to be coming to you. It was an automatic refusal. That wasn't going to be an issue, but you had to watch out because some of them, there was one guy for example, had four variations of his name. One in English, one in Gaelic, one in sort of Anglo-Irish and one a mixture of the others. It was very strange. You always had to be aware of what you were reading and in some cases like that you would say it out loud because then you would realize who it was. The next level were people they were trying to send to the States. We had the parents of some of the people on the hunger strike going to the States and they were clearly going to raise money. In one case I got a whole batch of visa applications with their passports in hand and I'm sorting through them very quickly to see if there are any automatic problems here that I can spot. One of the passports shows a U.S. birthplace. It appears to be the mother of one of the hunger strikers and I'm thinking I've got an American citizen, mother of a hunger striker. I may have an American citizen starving himself to death in the H block, shit. But I can't issue a visa [to an American citizen] and she's not there to ask. Somebody had brought the whole package in for the group because we didn't automatically require interviews for most applicants at that time. I sorted them out, started processing the ones I could, told them when they would be ready. I handed out the others and explained whatever I needed to process the application. Then I told them I needed to see this particular woman. I needed to interview her. I didn't want to go beyond that because I didn't want to tell them up front what the issue was. One, because privacy concerns, and two, I didn't want to tip my hand, I didn't want to have the interview go away from the truth if somebody thought it would be to somehow an advantage. That was what I was concerned about was that I had to clarify whether or not she was transmitting U.S. citizenship to her son who was on the hunger strike. I later found out that she had not been in the U.S. long enough, she had been a child and lived in the U.S. for less than two years and could not transmit the citizenship after they returned so we dodged that bullet. In any case she never showed up again. The rest of them went to Dublin and got their visas there which was a recurring headache. The consular section in Dublin was just incompetent.

Q: Was it incompetent or, I imagine, the embassy was always held by an Irish American political?

MOSHER: It has been and it hasn't. Not always. Actually there was just. I think it was incompetence. I had another instance when we had a band, an Irish band with a couple of members in Belfast and a couple of members in Dublin, invited to come to Baltimore to play for free at a fundraising function. I'm telling them, I can't give you guys a visa. Apparently Dublin has already issued them B1s, to the band members down there, but the two guys in Belfast I'm trying to explain to them, I need an H petition guys, you're performers, you're paid performers. I kept explaining this to people. The staff in Dublin called me on the phone and asked why I wasn't giving these guys their visas. I said, "Good, take down your Foreign Affairs Manual, Visas."

I opened up my copy and I told them, "Go to this page, half way down the page, read this paragraph." And I heard them, "Oh." Next day the INS office in Baltimore calls me long distance and says here's the H petition number. I said, "Thank you." I called the band up and said, "Get you fannies down here as soon as you can." I stayed late, after hours, gave them their passports and visas and said "Have a good time guys."

Q: How much did you feel the heavy hand of Senator Kennedy, the Irish Americans and all? How did this play?

MOSHER: It played sometimes, actually in good ways and also sometimes in bad ways, obviously, but not too often from them directly in a bad way. We actually had Moynihan, Senator Moynihan come and visit while I was working there. That was a terrific experience, that was fantastic, although it was curious. One of the meetings he went to, and the Consul General did most of these when anybody from the consulate went with him. They came back from seeing Ian Paisley and Moynihan was very impressed with Ian Paisley. He said something to the equivalent of "Now there's a man." Certainly Paisley was somebody who had a presence. He literally was in a way a biblical prophet living in the 20th century. He really believes this stuff and the positions he takes and any ideas he puts forth. Not everybody in his movement does. His number two in the party in those days and still a senior officer, Peter Robinson, was a much slicker, smoother specimen. We had a visit from a congressional staffer who was Pete McCloskey's press aide, out of California, and I lined up all these meetings for her, rather short notice, but we got all the meetings she wanted. One of them was with the Democratic Unionists, in particular, Peter Robinson. When I saw her after the meeting I asked her, "What did you think?" She said, "You know I could package that guy." He clearly came across as somebody who was politically ambitious and apparently prepared to trim his sails for whatever it took to advance his position. Moynihan met Ian Paisley and of course he had a long standing relationship, as did Senator Kennedy, with the legitimate catholic parties, the SDLP, the Social Democratic Labour Party. They would come to Northern Ireland and they would go to Derry and they would go to Belfast and they'd have their meetings at Stormont and meet in the Northern Ireland office. I thought it was great because here we are at dinner at the Consul General's residence that night. Here's Moynihan and Paddy Devlin, who is one of the leaders, Catholic leaders, of the Social Democratic Labour Party. The three of us are sitting and talking about Irish immigration patterns in North America and comparing notes, great fun.

The biggest fright we had with the Kennedy's was when the kids would show up in the province with us in complete ignorance. Then someone tells us, "Oh yeah, the Kennedy boys are out in Derry." Oh God, the last thing we needed was to have a Kennedy get into an incident. These are young kids, they're in their twenties. The imagination boggles at what could have happened, but they were taken care of. American tourists would come and ask us about Belfast and the safety was a big concern. We were still hearing bombs. We had to evacuate the offices a couple of times because of bomb threats in the area. The Consul General and I are walking down the street to a luncheon engagement with a local contact and we hear a bomb behind us a couple of blocks. A car bomb had gone off at the corner where you would turn to go to our offices. Everybody in sight is kissing concrete, lying down, face down, covering themselves up except for the two Americans who are standing there looking at each other and looking at the smoke rising and going, "Oh, a bomb." There

was a good bit of risk. We didn't feel it directly. The political games apparently were being done in Dublin and in London. There was very little going on at that point in Belfast which I think a lot of this was a shame, but there were no interlocutors in Belfast really.

Q: I mean the battle between London and Dublin, we're talking about our embassy.

MOSHER: What we did feel like in Belfast, definitely I did and I think Michaud shared that feeling, was that they really should have been drawing on us more because they go to Dublin and what they are getting is Dublin's view. They go to London and they're getting is the Northern Ireland office's view. I think George Bernard Shaw got it right, that something happens to an Englishman when he steps foot on Irish soil. His brain stops functioning. Neither one of those groups really knew what was going on on the ground. Here we were in Belfast going all over the province. I was driving all over the place regularly seeing what was going on. Drove through one or more riots a couple of times and talking to people in both communities about what was going on, talking to the peace people, Mairead Corrigan's group, the Nobel Peace Prize woman, and Peace People president. Talking to them regularly, going to their conferences, but we're not in the loop on political discussions. Part of the problem is that ConGen Belfast did not have classified communications so we either sent our traffic unclassified or we had to send stuff by diplomatic pouch to Dublin or London to be shipped out that way which was a little frustrating. Every once in awhile London would change staff and start editing our reporting thinking we were a subordinate post instead of just simply transmitting it which really irritated me when I did a report on a couple of terrorist attacks that showed clear signs of the IRA picking up tricks from ETA, the Basques. London edited almost all of the meat right out of the report which is very frustrating.

Q: How did the IRA play when you were there? Where they something that you were getting information on or were we interested, what were we doing?

MOSHER: We could not talk to them. The U.S. could not talk to the IRA. That was the official policy. At the same time we would not put them on the list of terrorist organizations like the PLO (Palestine Liberation Organization). One of the reasons was because we found out that by putting them on the terrorist list you couldn't talk to the PLO. With the IRA, at least, we had some potential flexibility as long as they weren't on the terrorism list. You also had the political problems of talking to the IRA, and not getting London, the British government, mad at you for having contacts that way. Now this didn't apply to a lot of Americans at different levels, like the Congress and the Senate although even they wouldn't talk to the IRA directly. Who you would talk to, you would talk to Sinn Fein, the political party which was legal. You would talk to the other organizations. There was particularly active Smash H block movement, H block being the prison where the political, where the IRA terrorists were held along with Protestant terrorists and everybody else in different wings. You could talk to that movement. You had interlocutors in the community that you could talk to. This did sometimes have obstacles. The first day I'm in the office one of the interlocutors, somebody who could talk to the IRA or at least could tell us what the IRA was saying and that we could talk to called the office, it was a Catholic priest. The Consul General is not there and I take the phone from the secretary receptionist and introduce myself, identify myself, Robert Mosher, Vice Consul and I

hear one of the thickest Irish brogues I've heard in my life. It was impenetrable. I took two tries at it and I finally handed the phone to the receptionist and said, "I'm sorry, please tell him I really apologize, but I know it's important that I understand what he is trying to tell me. Please get him to tell you and then you tell me."

Q: How about all these Irish patriots sitting around bars in New York and Boston killing the British with their mouth? Did they come over, these blowhards?

MOSHER: We never saw them. What would happen, we heard about them, but we would never see them. They would organize these trips, come over in groups and they would be bussed around Northern Ireland and the Republic and wherever. It was hilarious. First of all they had no clue who they were dealing with because we were getting both An Phoblacht which is the major republican newspaper in Northern Ireland and in the Republic and some of the other republican newspapers that they put out. We were also getting the American equivalents. We could see that what was being hidden from the American Irish community was the fact that the IRA and Provisional IRA, and INLA were Marxists organizations. They were socialists and there were articles in An Phoblacht that made it perfectly clear what their political agenda was. First, it was get the Brits out of Northern Ireland and then bring down the Dublin government. They both had to go. Then they had all these socialist ideas that they wanted to introduce. I said, "Get USA to pay to republish all these articles in the U.S." and we cut back their fundraising in the U.S. by half easily in the first week. But we did closely monitor and we would report on items in the press for the department and provide analysis where we could reflect what the thinking was within that community and in Ireland. Then these people would come over on these busses and they would be driving around Northern Ireland. They would always be taken to the Andersonstown Cemetery, the Crumlin Road, and the worst hit neighbourhoods down to the Divis Flats area up the Falls Road. They would take them to Derry, show them a memorial of Bloody Sunday there, and then they would drive them around the countryside. At some point during the trip in the countryside, they would be flagged down by men in hoods with guns who would identify themselves as the IRA, declaring "This is an IRA army checkpoint, this is liberated territory" and they would pass the hat, collect contributions, and allow the bus to go on their way. These people were too blind to realize that that roadblock didn't exist fifteen minutes before the bus got there and was gone five minutes after the bus left. I drove all over these places, I drove on these roads, I even brought these binoculars so that when I was driving around Northern Ireland if I saw a roadblock in the distance and I wasn't sure whose it was I could check and turn around if seemed like a good idea. I went through the army roadblocks all the time. They were everywhere. I never saw an IRA roadblock anywhere.

Q: It's a great tour thing you know.

MOSHER: Oh, it's great and they believed all that stuff, these poor people.

Q: Tell me, when you're looking at it at that time, before you went and after you came back, what were your thoughts, how did you feel about this thing?

MOSHER: I even then insisted that, I always said, "I'm a United Irishman." The United Irishmen were the group that led the 1798 rebellion and they were mostly

Presbyterians but favoured Catholic emancipation. They were for a Dublin government, independent of London, and they were free traders. They were also not very good military people and a lot of conspirators.

Q: Is that what they called races?

MOSHER: Oh, the “Castlebar races?” I had “The Great Year of the French” and I travelled and looked for some of the signs of that history. I had a lot of fun while I was there. I read all George Bernard Shaw has to write about Ireland and he also was of the opinion that the British had to go home. But he also recognized that the British were not going to leave except on their own terms, and if you looked at their post-colonial history from 1945 on they never just simply got up and walked out. They would actually pay whatever costs were necessary to leave things in what they considered order and then and only then would they go. For the Irish, well it was typical, they said the two communities just simply did not understand each other. One of my favourite quotes out of Shaw says in his “The Truth about Ireland,” he wrote that the problem with Ireland is that the English can’t remember their history and the Irish can’t forget it. You go around Northern Ireland, it [the history] was all around you. The history was everywhere. Just sitting in our consulate you could see the fort where the 1798 conspirators met on top of the hill near the Antrim Road. You walked down the street and there were memories from whatever period of a conflict one would come up with.

Q: I would think that running across these two groups, I mean the marching bands or whatever?

MOSHER: Twelfth of July, the Orange Order parades.

Q: This is what the Apprentice Boys sing?

MOSHER: The Apprentice Boys in Londonderry as they call it, and out of Belfast and the area around that part of the country, you would get all of the Orange Lodges parading out of the city in the morning, drums beating and everything and gathering at designated spots, the field, for a day of speeches and then they would march back in. The one time in particular that I stayed for the 12th of July, this would have been in ‘81. I had a lot of Catholic friends, as well as Protestant friends, but I visited the few people who stayed in town. Everybody who had a chance went somewhere on vacation to get away from it. You can hear them marching out. I actually went out and watched the beginning of the parade as they marched out down at the end of my street because I lived with a Protestant neighbourhood on one side and a Catholic neighbourhood on the other. They would march out the street on the edge of the Protestant neighbourhood and I’d watch them go by. In many ways it was impressive, band after band, after band and the baton guys with their big drum major staffs twirling them and throwing them up in the air. The all girl marching accordion band kind of caught me by surprise.

Q: I’ve never seen that.

MOSHER: Not very often, but there they were. And what they called the big Lambeg drums, bigger than bass drums, sometimes on wheels and these guys beating on these

things on a regular beat. I watched it for a while and then I went to nearby house of a friend who is Catholic. He was out working in his front garden for a little while, for about an hour. We chatted until neither of us could stand it anymore and we went indoors to see if it would cut the noise down a bit. After that, I went to the movies and I'm watching a James Bond film, whatever the latest one was at the time "For Your Eyes Only", in a theatre in downtown Belfast and I could hear the drums as they were coming back in at the end of the day. It was like being in Berlin in the '30s. It was really intimidating as hell.

Q: How did you see the relations between the Catholics and Protestants?

MOSHER: On an individual level, especially if you talked to the older generations that could remember before The Troubles, it was very different from what you thought it was at the time, the way it seemed at the time. I have Protestant friends and I have Catholic friends, but I always went to different places to meet them. There was almost no where I would go where they would both be. But the people, like the staff at the Consulate General, we had people from all across Northern Ireland, from both communities. They would tell me about before the Trouble, Catholics would go out and watch these Orange parades from the sidewalk. It was another event to be watched. It was something to do. They'd be living on the same streets, intermingle with each other. You didn't have any of this sort of personal level before that. They recognized the differences and they had their little codes, their ways of dealing with it. By the time of the Troubles, and I don't know how much it predated it. For example, you never asked anybody if they were Catholic or Protestant. If you couldn't already tell by their accent, and there were a wide range of accents if you had an ear, eventually you could learn who was who. Then you might ask them where they went to school. School was a dead giveaway most of the time because you had a Catholic set of schools, private Catholic schools, separate from the state schools. There was even the joking question of, "Well, what foot to you kick with?", the joke being that if you were a Catholic from a particular part of the country you kicked with one foot and if you were Protestant you kicked with the other foot. I found out later that that goes back also to the agricultural traditions. The spades that they used for potatoes, potato farming or for cutting turf, were basically half spades. There was only one step, the blade didn't extend down the handle of both sides, and there were regional variations. In this part of the country the step would be on the right side of the handle and in that part of the country it would be on the left side of the handle. So if you dug with your left foot you were one thing and if you dug with your right foot you were the other.

Q: I can recall back in '55, '54, I went and got a Masters at Boston University and all of a sudden, I'm a good left wing but I'm Episcopalian but dropped all church affiliations or interest in religion. But with the name of Kennedy I found myself being, I could tell I was being vetted, particularly by young ladies. Kind of what church, I don't go to any church, but I mean I could tell this was important to people. I was astounded.

MOSHER: We had two moments that were a little bit like that. A buddy of mine came over from the States on vacation and we were going to tour around the battlefields and historic sites and then we were going to go over to France and visit Normandy. We were both very big into military history. He wanted to get some souvenirs from Northern Ireland so we asked the staff to tell us where was the best

place to buy good inexpensive linens. They said, “Oh, it’s on the Springfield Road” which is a republican neighbourhood. So we drive over there and I’m parking the car and it’s dead, no living soul in sight, but we get out of the car and start walking down the street towards the shop. There’s a British army patrol coming the other way. I always like to watch the patrols because I like to see what regiment it is by the badge they are wearing, how long have they been here, because there were regiments that would come on recurring duty that had a history. You knew, for example, if the Parachute Regiment comes back, there’s going to be a very serious effort by the IRA to hit them. There were regiments that they hit successfully in the past but they wanted to do it again to punish them for doing security duty. In public, especially in a republican neighbourhood and following local rules, as far as I’m concerned they don’t exist. My buddy, being the American tourist, is looking and looking and looking and says “Hi”. I’m grimacing and going, “Shhh, don’t do that.” I know and explain to him that there are eyes behind every one of the blinds and curtains up and down this whole street and they don’t know us and you’re talking to the army.

So we got by that, the patrol went on its way. Later on during the same visit we found an old English Civil War period fort in the middle of this cow pasture and go in and walk all around it and we’re looking at it, having a wonderful time. After about an hour in there we come back out pushing the cows out of our way, never found a monument that didn’t have a cow herd or a sheep herd around it in Ireland. We come out to where the car is park and across the street we see a bar, judging by the sign hanging on the door so we walk in. It’s not empty, maybe a dozen people in there, but I very quickly realized that it’s not a Protestant bar because it’s a shabeen. There’s no pulls, nothing is on draft, it’s all from the bottle, very low overhead.

So once again, nobody knows us, two strangers walking in so everybody stays quiet and we talk loud enough. I always told the tourists, “Keep talking. They hear the American accent you’re fine.” Nobody said anything but we finished our drinks and left and I am sure everything returned to normal after we were gone. You would run into that from time to time.

Q: Were you having American politicians with Irish constituency come in and show themselves around and say I’ve been to Northern Ireland and I’m going to solve the problem and that sort of thing?

MOSHER: Not at that point. At that point, between the hunger strike and then part of the time I was there also we had the Falklands War in which case Northern Ireland was of a lot less interest to anybody. We didn’t have too much grandstanding on the grounds. We did have Moynihan come in. But even Moynihan wasn’t grandstanding, he was just coming through, touching his political bases, seeing what was going on. He was I think most closely sympathetic to John Hume and the Social Democratic Labor Party unit. Kennedy, Senator Kennedy, too. That’s where his ties were most closely in the province.

Q: How did the Falklands War play there?

MOSHER: One of the things we reported in our coverage of it, and we watched everything religiously; all the flights leaving and everything else and all the British coverage. We reported that in Belfast you were hearing the most popular song “Don’t

Cry for Me Argentina” being sung in both parts of the city of Belfast but for opposing reasons. The Catholics very clearly favored the Argentines and the Protestants and the Unionists were favoring the British. The one phenomenon that was interesting was that all the journalist showed up with Irish passports. If you are born in any of the 32 counties that make up the island of Ireland, the six counties in Northern Ireland that are part of Great Britain or the 26 counties that are part of the Republic of Ireland, you could get an Irish passport. So we had “British” journalists showing up with Irish passports to get American visas so that they could go to Argentina to cover the war. They wanted their American visa because they were operating out of Miami. I talked to a number of them when this started happening, so it was okay, it was fine to do it. If you’re entitled to the passport you’re entitle to the visa as far as I’m concerned. It was an interesting wrinkle.

Q: Well I think this is a good place to stop. I’ll just put at the end, after you left Belfast you went to?

MOSHER: Back to Washington to the Pentagon, 1982.

Q: Today is the 21st of March 2005. Robert, you were with the Department of Defence from when to when?

MOSHER: August to September 1982 to the mid-summer of 1984.

Q: What was your job?

MOSHER: That proved to be a little confusing at first. The whole arrangement was under the State Defence Exchange Program whereby military officers come to the State Department to fill billets and State Officers go to the Pentagon and fill billets there. I originally went expecting that I was going to be working in the office dealing with East Europe and Soviet Union. When I showed up for work I found out they wanted me to work in the office that did NATO (North Atlantic Treaty Organization) and Western Europe, specifically doing Greece, Turkey and Cyprus. My attitude and I think it’s common to a lot of Foreign Service officers, is put me in coach, what do you need? The tendency is to be quick learners on whatever you move into so I was willing although I had even less background in many ways on that then I did on Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union. I didn’t even end up to doing that job very long because they changed Office Directors almost within days of my arrival. I actually started doing Cyprus and Portugal and then later on became the officer for the United Kingdom, Ireland, Portugal, Cyprus, and apparently anything else that needed to me done. I was even back up officer for Spain, did all kinds of things before I left.

Q: Why don’t we talk about the perspective from the Department of Defence and your work on the Cyprus problem. This is ‘82 to ‘84. Where stood Cyprus at that point and what was sort of the defence perspective on this?

MOSHER: It was still pretty much of a deadlock. There were discussions between the two communities, the Greek Cypriots and the Turkish Cypriots going on in fits and starts showing very little progress. They would meet a few times and then they would come to a stone wall. The Turks were beginning to examine other ways of handling the Northern Cyprus area although none of them apparently included withdrawing

their forces. As long as there were Turkish forces in North Cyprus, you weren't going to get any kind of deal with the Greek Cypriots. The DOD perspective on the issue was that we were quite concerned and in fact our DAS, Deputy Assistance Secretary in DOD, wanted us to start exploring ways and solutions that we could push on State to start moving towards a solution. At one point we met several times with Richard Haas who, if I put on my State hat, I could understand perfectly where he was coming from. It was not a prolonged argument. Basically he said, "Sit down, shut up, and butt out. I'm handling it." It was a short lived initiative in that context. State numbered its priorities differently and assessed the situation with slightly less concern than we did in DOD.

Q: Why was there a concern in DOD?

MOSHER: I think in part it had to do with the leadership, who we were working for. My Deputy Assistant Secretary was a military officer, an army general, but we were both working for Richard Perle. He was very much interested in the region and was looking for ways to improve relationships with Turkey and that meant getting Cyprus off the table as a problem, finding ways to resolve it. I think a lot of this was also one of the reasons why Richard Haas shut down the whole thing as quickly as he could. In fact, we ended up doing more business with Cyprus than might have been anticipated because of the developments in Lebanon. The idea of trying to push some kind of solution itself from our side didn't go very far. State closed it up pretty quick.

Q: We were seeing, again we're talking from your job perspective, Cyprus was a problem because of its importance to the Turks. In a way from a native point of view, Turkey was the major player. Turkey had a couple of bases on the island.

MOSHER: There was still a vestige of the attitude that the Turks were more reliable allies in many ways than the Greeks and people would cite the example of Turkish performance in Korea, especially if you were in a Cold War conflict with the Soviets. The Turks had been very tough both as soldiers and later as prisoners in Korea. None of them turned even while in captivity. The size of the Turkish forces, the geographical location of Turkey versus the location of Greece, and the fact that the constant irritation between the two complicated NATO operations in the area tremendously because you always had to accommodate whatever you were doing whether writing it down or operationally to this dispute between the two of them. Who could fly where, when they could fly, how they could fly, what they could fly, what they could sail. It was all, it was a mess.

Q: I was Consul General in the Naples, '79 to '81, and I remember talking to Admiral Crowe who was CINCSOUTH at that point, was saying, this was a real pain the ass. From your perspective, looking at this problem as a new kid on the block, did you see any solution for it in the near future?

MOSHER: Not immediately and it was interesting that I was coming straight from Belfast because in many ways the situation is identical in terms of Cyprus itself. You've got two communities, they are divided by, they're usually identifiable as divided by religion and by ethnicity and by history. If you look at the history of Cyprus, it's a wonder that sometimes it is not even more confused and worse than it is. This is also, of course, another former British possession so I looked at how they

had handled getting out of it, disengaging. I didn't see any easy solution. The easy solutions required one of the key players, Denktash or the Greek Cypriots to suddenly become sane.

Q: Clerides I think.

MOSHER: Yeah, Clerides, that's right. But Denktash of course was our big problem because the Turks insisted that they couldn't give an inch until Denktash would give an inch. It was always confused about who was actually driving the Turkish position, Denktash or Ankara. There was, in my view, clearly a degree to which Ankara was quite happy to have Denktash to blame it all on. So they, at the worst, tolerated him and maybe even encouraged him to one degree or another. They did nothing to discourage him in his unrealistic expectation of what he was going to get in any discussions.

Q: How did you find the Greek attitude?

MOSHER: In many ways the Greek leadership that we were dealing with at the time was I think just perfectly happy to leave it exactly as it was. They were able to play the Cyprus card anytime they saw Turkey acquiring military assistance or equipment from us that they didn't want Turkey to have. They thought they could control the development of military capabilities and maintain more or less a balance. They could repeatedly beat up on Turkey in a number of forums because Turkey had invaded Cyprus and as long as it wasn't resolved then they could always point at Cyprus and say look at the nasty, wicked Turks which was I think also a miswriting of history because...

Q: I was in Athens just before this happened. Essentially the Turks brought the whole damn thing on themselves.

MOSHER: In many ways, because of how badly they played it. I think that there is a good deal, I think there are some very good arguments to debate on the Turkish behalf when you look at the situation in Greece at the time and the threats that the Turks were looking at that threatened the Turkish population on Cyprus. The Turks then landed their troops, Kissinger is going into his shuttle diplomacy and we think we've got a cease fire and then the Turks go further. Their PR just went downhill from there in the decades afterwards. After 15-20 years everybody forgot how it started anyway. All that mattered was the Turks had troops sitting on the northern part of Cyprus and the Greek Cypriots had all these refugees who couldn't go home again. What does that sound like? The Middle East, and parts of Northern Ireland, and any number of insoluble disputes between communities that could cite history and religion and society and everything else in their list of grievances. I think in some ways they got a bad deal in the first place, but then they made it worse by how poorly they played it.

Q: How did you find, were you working in some level with Richard Perle?

MOSHER: Yes, especially after I moved over to do the United Kingdom. I met with him quite often. This was the heyday of the 'Prince of Darkness' and all the other mythology that began to be widely touted about him. I found him an interesting character. I found him extremely intelligent. We often disagreed on the final answers

to a particular problem but we both did it on the basis of knowledge. Different perceptions of what was the top priority in different situations. I found I could talk fairly frankly with him and didn't have any serious problems although we did have a crisis at one point while I worked there; George Bader who was quite concerned about how we were going to deal with it.

Q: Who is George Bader and where did he fit in?

MOSHER: George Bader was the Principal Deputy underneath the Deputy Assistant Secretary. He oversaw the Europe and NATO office and others. Then we had the Office Director which for most of my tenure was an army colonel, Darryl Johnson, who became a civilian; and a Navy officer, Captain Dave Hilty who remained active in the Navy during that time. My chain of command was up through my office director to George Bader to our DAS who after General Smith, was Ronald Lauder and then to Perle. Perle, being very activist, spent a lot of time talking directly to desk officers. Anyway what George Bader explained to me was that Doug Feith, who was at that time Deputy Assistant Secretary elsewhere within this organization of Perle's, was apparently telling Perle that I was in effect double crossing everyone. I was running around telling other people one thing and Perle another and undercutting his initiatives on different issues, and it was all basically, pardon me, bullshit. My take of Feith was that he was trying to be more Richard Perle than Richard Perle was and he seemed to be playing on Perle's animosity for Foreign Service officers by telling him that "here you've got this Foreign Service officer and he's betraying DOD's interest". George Bader was quite concerned about it. He thought we were pretty close to the point where I was going to be sent back to the State Department and he was going to have to figure out who was going to do all this work. I kept telling him, "George, let me sit down and talk with him. Just the two of us face to face." I said, "If you can't sort it out fine, I'll go." Talking about that temper you mentioned earlier, George was afraid I might go off but he finally gave in and we got an appointment.

I went into Perle's office, just the two of us, and we sat down and just laid the cards on the table. I said, "My job is to give you the best possible advice I can give you. Your job is to make a decision. Once you make the decision that's what we go with. I may not like it and I may even still complain about it, but my actions are what you decide." We never had any problems again after that, never heard anything more about it. As I said I had no problems working with Perle because he was pretty much a straight shooter. I didn't see a lot of the kind of double dealings he was accused of because I don't think he felt like he needed to most of the time.

Q: When you're dealing with say Portugal, one always thinks of bases in Portugal and we're over the young officers' coup and all that. Portugal was firmly in NATO by this point so did you get involved in base negotiations?

MOSHER: I actually got involved in base negotiations in I think two instances and in three different ways because the negotiations for the agreement over the Azores bases was being re-opened before I came and there was an interval in which nothing was going on because they had basically broken down. They revived while I was there and I backstopped on the Washington end.

During the same interval we were also working on a sale to the Portuguese of some A-7 Navy aircraft, Corsairs. I was intimately involved in that, working it out to get their Air Force some more modern aircraft, and that's what the A7's were going to be. A US delegation, which I joined, actually went to Portugal, to Lisbon, to do that deal and then later on as the base negotiations met again, Dave Hilty went out. I stayed in Washington working with a roomful of lawyers to backstop our negotiating team. My job was essentially to get the lawyers and the other people in the room to come up with guidance and answers to questions raised in the negotiations in a timely fashion so that we could conclude the agreement.

Q: I don't know, I've never been involved personally, but I've heard from many of my Foreign Service colleagues who say, "Anytime you get into base negotiations the problem is not the other country, but it is the Pentagon lawyers who are the real problem."

MOSHER; I found that working with them the way I did, and we had one of the most senior DOD lawyers who just recently died in the last couple of years, Phil , I can't remember his name, I'll have to look it up, was leading the way. At times, yeah, it was pretty bad. I mean being in a roomful of lawyers for more than an hour is a sure path to insanity if you're not careful. I'm convinced to this day, that in two consecutive meetings, a week apart, the lawyers addressed the exact same issues and came to the exact opposite conclusion the second time from what they came the first time with no recollection whatsoever that they previously discussed the issue and come to the opposite point of view. My concern was to get an answer that the delegation can use and don't sweat the answer. Most of their answers were things we could live with from the policy point of view because the essential thing was to get an agreement that would allow us to keep using the base without restrictions on the use that would affect our interest. We pretty much got that with some recognition in return of Portuguese interest. The real tough spot that you get into of course is that you can't have identifiable quid pro quo because we don't pay rent for bases but we provide military interest assistance because it is in our interest to provide military assistance. We do not give military assistance in recognition that you gave us a base, especially for a NATO ally.

Q: Okay we're both looking with a straight face.

MOSHER: Exactly, yes, that's right. Where the DOD was absolutely incredible on this whole thing takes us back to selling the A7 Corsair aircraft. This was one of those really complicated cases because we were selling Navy aircraft, U.S. Navy aircraft, to the Portuguese Air Force but they were going through U.S. Air Force channels because the Portuguese Air Force talks to the U.S. Air Force. Then our Air Force would talk to our Navy. Airplanes weren't a big problem because the A7's were coming out of the Navy inventory, our Navy's inventory, and a fair number of them were either already in the bone yard in the desert or were on their way there being cycled through the process of coming out of the active fleet, with one exception. We needed one more engine to fill out the complete kit of flyable aircraft and spare engines that we were promising the Portuguese. I had a document on file, signed by a U.S. Navy admiral, a rear admiral, one star, saying "I promise the U.S. Air Force one engine." So we're getting close to cutting the deal and I go around to the appropriate NAVAIR (Naval Air Systems Command) ops office and hand in my receipt signed by

a Navy admiral so I'm here to collect my engine and the Navy found a polite Naval lawyer saying, "Fuck you, you're not going to get an engine." I've got the admiral's signature here. They said "We're not going to do it." We had to scare up an engine some other way then get the Navy to surrender the one they promised us, which we did.

Q: Do you know why?

MOSHER: Needs of the Navy. They were still flying enough of the aircraft and you're dealing with an old enough airframe that you're surviving on recycled engines. You're not getting new production engines so basically spare engines for old aircraft like that become like gold. That and the airframe define your life span. They just weren't too good. They didn't see any gain for it in the Navy. It would be the Air Force's fault for not being able to deliver the airplanes. The Portuguese would be mad at the U.S. Air Force. The air base involved was basically an Air Force asset, the Navy didn't have much use the air base in the Azores so they didn't care. Pure parochial politics at its worse. The Pentagon made the State Department look sane at times.

Q: Moving up to other parts of NATO. Do you have any particular issues?

MOSHER: The most dramatic issue was one of the things that got me working closely with Richard Perle. We have all those bases in the United Kingdom mostly established in the 1950s, some of them dating back to World War Two. Under the terms of those agreements that allowed us to use those bases it turns out that we had agreed that our base facilities would pay to the local political authority, the town or shire or district or county or whoever it was, what are called accommodation charges. Basically it is the equivalent of property tax here. When I looked into the history of this it turns out that some Air Force second lieutenant back in the mid-1950s was charged with sending all the paperwork up that would allow us to use these bases and he signed up, "yes we will pay the accommodation charges for the housing on our military bases". In theory, this accommodation charge covered the local jurisdictions' cost in providing public services, water, electric, sewer, streets, whatever they provided, basically like property taxes. Richard Perle decided that accommodations charges being paid by the U.S. to Great Britain were a violation of the arrangement under NATO since these bases were there as a NATO asset for us to assist in the defence of the United Kingdom. When you totalled up the charges across the entire U.S. infrastructure in the United Kingdom it amounted to a fairly tidy sum, a couple of millions, not billions yet, but millions. When we were tightening budgets as we often were on different programs, Perle thought it was worth fighting over and fight he did. They went through several iterations of dialog with the British, the Ministry of Defence, and their Exchequer and whoever. Basically, each time Perle was seen off by the Brits, who would just simply pull out all the paperwork going back to the 1950s saying you agreed, you signed it right here. How are we going to tell the House of Commons that we're going to backtrack on this deal?

So Perle started looking over the transactions going back and forth between the two countries and decided to focus on R & D costs, Research and Development costs. Any time we sell a weapon to a friendly country and you run down the list of things we charge them for, and this is a government to government sale, there is the cost of the

system itself and there is the administrative cost of handling the sale and then by Act of Congress we were required to recoup some of the Research and Development cost, so there is a Research and Development charge fee included in the final cost that the other government is going to pay us for whatever U.S. equipment it is we provide. Congress allowed us to waive that so it got to be over the years, one of these charades with particular allies, especially the Brits because they are such close allies, that when the guys are going down the audit sheet figuring the final price they would hit the line that would say R & D cost and they would write down the number and they would hit the line that would say waive and they would say, "Okay, erase the number because we'll waive that. We're such good guys and you're such good allies, we won't charge you the R & D cost." On a major program that could run to a couple of million dollars. Perle found a sale that was important to the Brits and said, "Stick in the R & D costs. They can't have it without paying R & D costs until I get my accommodations charges eliminated." They were dumbfounded. The British were gobsmacked. They had no clue how to deal with this. Looking quite rationally at the fact that the organizations involved in both transactions, we'd never pulled linkage on the Brits the way we played linkage with the Soviets. Here was Richard Perle playing linkage with them on two issues that had almost nothing in common in either the bureaucracies involved, the issues at stake, who was the deciding authority, who could make these two things happen. They were at a complete loss and they couldn't fathom what this was all about and so they kept going up the chain of command. They appealed to Perle, they appealed to Carlucci [Deputy Secretary of Defense], they appealed to Weinberger. They were appealing to the White House. What is this business of charging us R & D charges? This was important to them because the MOD, Ministry of Defence, has got their budget allocating how much we can get out of the Exchequer to pay for these. They didn't have a couple of extra million dollars all of a sudden that they had not counted on having to spend. That would mean that they would have to postpone the buy from us until somewhere down the road and it may go away completely as British purchases sometimes did. There was a real stress trying to get this done. I'd go into the meetings and Perle would explain it all to them and I'd watch the Brits take it all down and realize they didn't get it. This was one of the times that in a sense, Feith might have been right except that I started meeting with the British procurement guy from the embassy here in Washington. We had coffee in some of the endless numbers of snack bars and coffee bars all over the Pentagon, just the two us informally. I would sit there and I would explain to him, Perle means business, he wants his money and he wants the accommodations charges erased and if you won't erase the accommodations charges then he's going to start socking you for R & D costs on everything you buy until you give in. Then I started explaining to him, you've got to understand, he's not a diplomat. He's not like me, he's not Foreign Service. He's not even career government civil service. Perle learned the trade on the Hill in the back rooms of Congress and those are the rules he's playing you by. By those rules he's got you exactly where he wants you and he's got all the cards.

Q: On the other side, if the Brits were purchasing something somewhere along the line there was a company, Northrop or somebody, who wanted that purchase to go through.

MOSHER: They would do the same thing going up the chain to get somebody to break the deadlock, but Perle was in a very good position because his counter was, I'm trying to get the Brits to give up on the accommodations charges. He played the

argument about the importance of the bases to NATO, the importance of these bases to the defence of the United Kingdom. Why are they making us pay to use these bases when we don't pay rent, we don't pay this, we don't pay that, all the other arguments. He was playing a principle there that it was going to be hard for his higher command to back down on which was the importance to me of explaining to the Brits exactly the situation they are in. The ultimate counter of it would have been for the Brits to have a sale going the other way. There wasn't much at that point that we were buying from them that we needed as badly as they needed what they were buying from us. Before the year was out the accommodations charges went away and the R & D costs issue went away. Two entirely separate transactions once again. No official linkage between them, nothing was done. Out of the goodness of their hearts the Brits, as allies, realized that it wasn't fair for them to make us pay these accommodations charges. Perle recognized that ultimately it was important the British had the defence capability that they needed so he was going to approve the sale of the weapon system and he was going to waive the R & D costs.

Q: Were there any other issues?

MOSHER: The other things we got into, well there were two defence sales towards the end of the time that became important issues from the British side of the view. The Navy, our Navy, was buying a new jet trainer and the prime candidate was the British Hawk, what we now call the Texan 2, it's been in Navy service awhile [as the T-45 Goshawk]. Nice little jet trainer, single engine, that would be modified for carrier landings. It was a strong competition. The other thing that got more complicated than the Hawk, because the Hawk was a pretty straight forward decision. Our Air Force was looking for a mid- range, medium range transport aircraft to be used in Europe. It had to be large enough to be able to carry a military jet engine in its cargo bay, but it really didn't need to be any larger than that. Basically it was going to be like an Air Force Federal Express, running around Europe to move their engines and other spare parts for aircraft around Europe to help alleviate their management problems, keeping all the aircraft flying and operational. The two main contenders were the Sherpa, it came to be called the Sherpa Aircraft, manufactured by Short Brothers right outside of Belfast in Northern Ireland and the Spanish Casa Company had a Casa 212 one of their line of aircraft about the same size that was also a competitor. This contract in many ways was even more important for the British because anything that put jobs into Northern Ireland was something they wanted to have happen because it helped to reduce the amount that they would have to use to subsidize the economy there which they did regularly as I knew from serving there. Trying to keep the economy ticking over so that the IRA strategy of destroying the economy wouldn't succeed was important and here was an opportunity. As I said, the Hawk trainer competition was much more straight forward, but because of the Northern Ireland connection, there was actually some agitation within the United States in the Irish American community against the purchase of the Short Brothers aircraft. The Spanish also were fairly important as a new member of NATO and an ally we could now talk about and we wanted to help them. It was a competitive aircraft but I always felt that the Short Brothers aircraft probably had the edge though in the end, as I told the Air Force program officer, I would have been perfectly happy to tell the Brits on either one of those sales, tough luck guys but it's a tough field out there.

It did give me the opportunity to have a conversation with the Air Force once because we were waiting for the decision on the transport aircraft to be made and announced any day. The Brits wanted to know when the decision was going to be announced. They weren't even hitting me up with the sales pitch on buying the aircraft, they just wanted to know when the decision was going to be made. So, I called up the Air Force program officer for the transport aircraft and identified myself, "This is Robert Mosher, Office of the Secretary of Defence, European policy and I've just got a quick question, I want to know when are you going to announce the decision on the aircraft buy for these transport aircraft?" I got in return this horrendous harangue on, "You've got no business even calling me. Policy has no business interfering in a procurement decision. We never buy aircraft on political grounds." I'm lying on the floor in my office listening to this, laughing my ass off. I put the phone back on my ear and I said, "I'm sorry, wait a minute, does the word TFX mean anything to you and you're telling me we never bought aircraft on political grounds. I don't care about any of that. All I want to know is when are you going to announce the winner?" I didn't know who that guy was and I still don't want to know who that guy was. I thought what planet are you living on?

Q: Some people I find, well they enjoy feeling that they are above. I had this in this Oral History Program. Some people said, "Well I really can't talk about that." I said, "Well you know it was 30 years ago and there's been great discussions about it in the paper 25 years ago." "Well, I'm not really cleared to do that." Fine, fine, they hang on to these things, certain self-importance.

MOSHER: Which is sad because what they really should be worried about is whether or not I really can talk about this or not. Frankly I think I may have a couple of things too that I'm not going to tell you but I'm also not going to tell you what they are. Why should either of us have to go through that. It was strange. We ended up buying both aircraft which I thought was a great deal. It did almost derail because of that Irish American agitation. I was actually sent over to the National Security Council to talk to their staff. They were concerned about what are the political implications about us buying this airplane from Northern Ireland. Oh God, Northern Ireland. The whole concept cracked me up. I said, "Of course I have to go over and explain to them. These are Republicans." To them a Catholic automatically is an ethnic and that means a Democratic voter, so they know from beans about Northern Ireland. I go over there and I meet these two, not that young and not that old, guys working on the National Security Council. We're over in the Old Executive Office building so that gives you an idea of where they were in the hierarchy. I sit down in the office and I say, "Okay what do you need me to tell you about Northern Ireland and about the aircraft buy and so on?" All I got was almost literally on the level of, "Now let me see if I understand this, Robert. Northern Ireland, now, there's Catholics and there's Protestants, right and they don't like each other?" I go "Yeah, that's a good start." I gave them a 30 minute lecture on the history of Northern Ireland and the Irish question and the current situation on the ground and frankly also told them that it's in our interest to see some money going into this economy because Short Brothers, like all of them, is being required by the British government to hire Catholics. That's a big piece of the whole problem, is giving both communities access to economic opportunity. If there are no jobs to be had in Northern Ireland then we are going to have a few more bombers running around than we would have otherwise. They took it onboard and so

they, as far as I could tell the White House, kept its hands off because our fear was they would queer the deal and pitch it to the Spanish unfairly.

Q: How did you find relations with the State Department?

MOSHER: The attitudes of the two agencies towards each other, this is of course 20 years ago. I think it's changed since then, we gotten, both of us, more sophisticated about the other. My first day or two in the office over in the OSD, I'm this State Department guy, everyone's kind of looking at me out of the corner of their eyes. They said, "Call over to the State Department and see what you can find out about this," and I think it might even had been a phone call in Cyprus. I called whoever it was I was supposed to call at the State Department and got, having given these answers I recognized it immediately for what it was, which was State Department smoke and mirrors basically saying, "Stay away and keep out of our way little boy." I broke off the conversation and said thank you, hung up the phone and went, "God damn State Department." All the military guys go, "Oh yeah, he's okay." One of the military guys, you know within the same week, we're all getting use to each other and identifying how we're going to fit in on the team and he says, "You know, if the State Department and the Pentagon aren't fighting, one of them isn't doing their job." That was very much the kind of attitude I found which was, they recognized that there was a mission and a role for both and that the responsibilities and jobs were different. You need both in the process. You (DoD) put your best case forward and State put its best case forward and if you couldn't win on points at that level then you went up the ladder until somebody was willing to choose between the two of you. Then you saluted, took your orders, and went on from there. I didn't get wrapped up to much into the disputes I know were going on at a higher level because this was Schulz and Weinberger.

Q: I was wondering whether Schulz, Weinberger, I mean this is at a personal level.

MOSHER: It hit in my world only once and that was over Grenada. I later found out from friends of mine who were over at State that they were actively involved in the planning of the operations in Grenada, at the State Department. It was all being done over there. It was not being done at the Pentagon.

Here I am, the director for the United Kingdom in the Office of the Secretary of Defence. I found out about Grenada by reporting to work one day, turning on the news radio, opening The Washington Post and the radio tells me that we've invaded Grenada. I went, "What the frig?" So the first thing I do is I call up the OSD rep at the embassy in London, a long time civil servant, DOD civil service employee, really sharp guy, and these were people that OSD, that Weinberger picked to go into key embassies that he wanted an OSD rep where the ambassador would agree. Got a hold of the embassy operator and told him, I need to speak to so and so. He gets on the phone and he says, "Robert, I'm glad you called. You're never going to believe what they're reporting on the news here." I said, "It's true." He said "What?" I said, "It's true and I'm hearing it the same time you are. We invaded Grenada. It was all done over at State." That was the worst case of it.

Q: The invasion of Grenada, there was justification for it but the point being that, Maggie Thatcher was mad as hell. Normally one would say, well this is something where some of the diplomatic side wasn't taken into account.

MOSHER: Yet the planning was all done at the State Department where the diplomatic element should have been one of the things that they considered.

Q: Did you ever find out what happened?

MOSHER: Only from the same public stuff that's been out on it. That it was being handled from the White House and the planning, operational stuff was being done in State with JCS (Joint Chiefs of Staff) input. JCS guys of course are very good at being very closed mouthed. I had a lot of dealings with the JCS guys and was very impressed with them. I recognized the lines that when I was dealing with them on issues there was going to be a point where they were going to stop telling me anything. I would say, "Fine. I'm OSD, you're JCS, there are lines and I recognize it when you say, "That's the one I'm using today." So in this case it was one of those things where they weren't going to come around and tell us.

Q: Was there any retrospective on this thing? We've got the Prime Minister of the United Kingdom who is a great close ally.

MOSHER: You had a couple of things going. You had that relationship between Reagan and Maggie which was, over the long term, smoothed out a lot of things in the long run. Weinberger was a very strong Anglophile and we had a lot of dialogue with the Brits at his level. We had Michael Heseltine come to the Pentagon while I was there. We had Neil Kinnock from the Labour Party come while I was there. Weinberger made his trips to the United Kingdom. Do you remember the debates? It was not processed with me directly, but I became aware that Oxford Union, Oxford University, the student group, regularly invited senior officials of all kinds of governments around the world to appear to debate different issues and then they would vote on who won the debate in the British fashion by walking out to the lobby. As we're gearing up for one of Weinberger's visits to the UK, the invitation comes in. It came in in the wake of Michael Heseltine, Weinberger's counterpart, the British Minister of Defence, had declined to go to Oxford Union. There was a lot of discussion in OSD about whether or not he should do this. There was a strong feeling that he shouldn't. This is it, no formal position or memo or anything ever crossed my desk, but I, in the informal dialogue, said he should do it. I said, "He knows how they play this game." I don't remember if he actually went to Oxford, but he had enough first-hand knowledge and he was an attorney. I said "He can do this and he's going to get points just for showing up after Heseltine turned him down."

I read years later, Colin Powell's approach on this because Powell was at this time Weinberger's military assistant and went with him on the trip. He talked about it later. He said in his memoirs, he made a point, that all the members of Weinberger's delegation made a point, of going out the door that voted in favour, keep the vote total up. I was delighted when he pulled it off because I thought he can do this, this is no problem. I'd seen him in action. Had a great grasp of his material, he took briefings well and I tell you as an officer responsible for preparing him, the work you put into a briefing book, to be there and see it in Weinberger's office, meeting with his British

counterpart, Weinberger's got your briefing book laid out there in front of him and he's going through it making sure he's covered everything. As much trouble as you put into those things that was very rewarding. It was good to know he had this stuff and he knew the Brits. It wasn't going to be a problem. DOD was really well led in those days. The first part of my tenure tour we had Carlucci as the deputy [Secretary of Defense]. We'd go to Portugal to talk about selling airplanes, we've got Frank Carlucci with us, we're golden. I had to explain to people in OSD, the military guys especially, why this was so. They didn't understand the history of Carlucci having been ambassador in Lisbon.

Q: At a critical time, and he played one of the great diplomatic feats of our time.

MOSHER: Balancing our interest and Kissinger's desires against Portuguese desires and a strong relationship. It was brilliant. So it was really neat to be working with him which we did a lot until he left.

Q: Were there any other areas that you got involve in?

MOSHER: One of the things that we got into a little bit, when they decided that we were going to put Marines into Lebanon. JCS/J5 came to me because they were in the planning stages. I think at this point they were still planning for a proposal for all this work. I had my Cyprus hat and I had my British hat, and originally they came to talk to me because of the British hat. They wanted to ask the British if we could use the sovereign base areas on Cyprus. It was one of those corridor conversations literally where he pitches this to me and I pause and I'm thinking about this and I go, "Let me put it to you this way. I don't want to put the Brits in a position of wanting to say no or having to say no to us about the base authority." I'd read the agreements, the public ones anyway, about how those sovereign base areas came about and the sensitivities on Cyprus of them being used. I said, "Let me put this to you. If we in fact want this operation to be open and above board and not susceptible to interpretation as a conspiracy on the part of the U.S. and if it's physically capable of supporting you, can you use Larnaca? Why don't you ask the Greek Cypriots to use Larnaca. They would love to have us owe them a favour. They would love to do us a favor by letting us use Larnaca to support the presence in Lebanon and have that relationship with us instead of where we are right now." But I said, "You're the operational guys, you've got to tell me on what level you want this but the advantage of Larnaca also is, unlike the sovereign base areas, it's an international airport so it's a lot more transparent. If that's what we wanted to emphasize, that we weren't plotting on Lebanon but to assist peace keeping and resolution, if you can act out of Larnaca let's do that." In fact we chose to use Larnaca.

I got reengaged then because the embassy in Nicosia found itself all of a sudden having to process all this additional paperwork in support of the flight operations going in and out of Larnaca. We got a cable them and I had a couple of phone calls with the embassy as we sorted this out. We were buying more fuel from the suppliers on Cyprus than I think they'd ever handled before in their lives. Of course this was a big windfall business with them. They're doing double, treble and I don't know how many more times business than they usually do. But our payment procedures were becoming too slow for them. I think in part because they were so use to operating on a smaller scale. We had to sit down with the Air Force and they gave me the manuals

and I said, “Okay, this is what we do. When you send your flight clearance request message in, up front, through the embassy, which means you go through the Air Force attaché and so on, you include in the request for flight clearance, the fiscal data.” It’s already right there. It saved three steps. Instead of the embassy having to wait for the bill to come from the fuel supplier and then ask DOD for a fund cite number, the embassy had the fund cite numbers right there in the traffic and all they had to do was wait for the bill to come in from the supplier, match it against the flight request and the fund cite and the flight request told them what number to use to request payment. Everybody was happy. It was so easy to do in part because I’d been involved in enough of both sides of the process to know can we do this, this sounds like a solution. The Air Force was game. They had no problems with solving their problem and made the embassy’s life easier. So that worked out well.

In terms of the major issues in that tenure I think, oh, Reagan’s visits and Peggy Noonan’s speech. I saw the draft version of Peggy Noonan’s D-Day speech and the speech that one of the other people wrote for the speech in Dublin when he was going to speak to the Dáil Éireann, , the Irish Parliament. I’m reading Peggy Noonan’s speech.

Q: Peggy Noonan was the senior speech writer for Regan.

MOSHER: I’m looking through this speech and it’s good stuff. It’s got all these references to D-Day and the landings at Omaha, and the Rangers and all this stuff, and it’s all wrong. She’s got the Dieppe Raid taking place in the wrong year. She’s got the Rangers at the bottoms of the cliffs looking at the guns overhead. I couldn’t believe it. I knew that World War Two military history was not widely or well taught in the United States. I take it and I go into George Bader and I said, “George, help me. I’ve never cleared a White House speech before, George, how much leeway do I have?” He says, “Why?” I said, “It’s all wrong. She’s got him referring to these graves. The graves aren’t where he’s making the speech. The graves are up the beach by Omaha Beach.” I told him about the guns that weren’t there. This is all wrong. He says, “Robert, how do you know these things?” I said, “George, I’ve fought this battle dozens of times. I’ve walked those beaches, literally I’ve been there.” He said, “Have you?” So we had to correct the year that they referred to Dieppe taking place and we explained that the guns weren’t there, the bunkers were empty when the Rangers got up there. The graves, if you’re doing this speech where I’m told you’re doing it, the cemetery isn’t there. The cemetery is over here. I just went through it all. It was nice to see that it was such a big hit and they took all our fixes. Nobody ever called me up and yelled at me or gave me a hard time or anything else. So it was nice being a piece of that.

Then I also sent a note back on the Irish speech because I knew they would do this, so I looked at it. In the speech for Dublin they quote a traditional Irish folk song, a rebel song but I knew the music and I recognized what song they took the lyrics from and I sent a note back. I said “Find another song, because the song you have chosen is set in Ulster in Northern Ireland, and it’s the line about “from farmstead and from fisher’s cot along the banks of Bann, they came to fight for freedom.” I said, “The River Bann is in Ulster and you’re talking about the battle of Antrim [1798], which is right outside of Belfast. Guys, find a good rebel song but find one that the people of Northern Ireland would not immediately recognize that you are in Dublin talking

about the rebels who fought in Ulster. This is not a good way to go about it.” Find a battle, Vinegar Hill for crying out loud, at least it’s in the Republic. That was interesting. So now, today, I watch Peggy Noonan and I’m thinking, Peggy you owe me.

Q: In ‘84 did you get involved in the bombing of the banks of Lebanon? Did that put anything on, because of the Cyprus connection?

MOSHER: Not directly, because by that time the relationship with Cyprus and the use of Larnaca was well established and we’d worked most of the bugs out. It was a comparatively easy matter to sort out the immediate use of Larnaca to support whatever we needed to do in the aftermath of the barracks bombing. I’m sure there were complications, there always are in something that large especially when you got into it. We had an established relationship working with the Greek Cypriots. Again it was another case of their helping the United States which is the thing a lot of countries find to be a very good position in, to be able to do something to help the United States. Later on you can come in and okay, I’m going to cash in my coupon. I wasn’t called on directly to do anything much at that point. It was all pretty well handled. I think Ray Ewing was the ambassador, at least for part of that time because I spoke to him about the payment issue. Of course I have a great opinion of Ray Ewing, definitely a good guy to have on the spot when you are dealing with those kinds of situations after Lebanon. I don’t remember if he was still there or not. If they had needed help and called on me, but apparently they didn’t need it.

Q: In ‘84 you moved on, wither?

MOSHER: Back over to State and I took a job in the Intelligence and Research Bureau as an analyst in the African shop in INR, which was a good fit in some ways because I’d been on the INR watch, I knew the INR system, I knew the morning summary, I knew the publications, I knew the organization. I’d been in Zaire, I knew Africa, and because of my academic studies I had a rough background on at least the colonial period so I understand a lot of where Africa’s situations were coming from. I was made analyst for East Africa, Somalia, Kenya, Uganda and then the Indian Ocean states, Mauritius and the Seychelles.

Q: Did you get Ethiopia too?

MOSHER: No. Long-time analyst Harlan Robinson did Ethiopia. Later on I would pick up some of Ethiopia as his job pulled him in other directions. What we clearly delineated was one analyst to do Ethiopia and one to do Somalia, so that you had two separate sets of eyes and ears and analytical minds working in a sense the account for the Horn. It kept you from getting trapped in a mind set by mistake or by a preconceived notion.

Q: Going back to 1960 to ‘61, I was an INR analyst for the Horn of Africa so I had Ethiopia and Somalia. First place did you get a feel for how INR was working in those days, the relations, how relevant was it?

MOSHER: I think it was relevant in a lot of ways. I think one of the symptoms of the relevance of what INR was doing was the continued hammering from the top levels of

the department, and echoed by the INR leadership about the role of INR versus the role of the policy bureaus. INR was not to be doing policy, we were to be doing analysis. This is at a time when the Africa Bureau in general, we've got Angola and Mozambique going on, we've got Ethiopia and Somalia, you've got the RENAMO guerrillas in Mozambique. You've got all these conflicts across Africa. You've got Libya messing around in Chad and elsewhere. The analytical community in INR had a lot of responsibility, a lot of things going on that they had to work on and that product had such an impact that the policy community felt that INR was going over the lines, that senior levels in the department and in the White House were looking at the intelligence community's product and assessing the policy decisions. Some people within the policy divisions in State, in the Africa Bureau, felt that we were crossing the line at times. I can't possibly have read all of it to be able to tell you yes they were, or no they weren't, but we were clearly right up against the line because of the sensitivity and the immediacy of the issues that we were dealing with. Dick Clarke was a Deputy in INR and this was my first acquaintance with him. I didn't work southern Africa, but he was regularly coming down to talk to that analyst in our office, especially about the issue of how many Cubans were in Angola. There were never enough Cubans in Angola to satisfy Clarke. He always thought there were more than the analyst was willing to admit were there. I use to tell people, when I saw Clarke in later years because I came back to PM and was working for him when he was Assistant Secretary there, I said, "Clarke's mellowed. When I first knew Clarke if he disagreed with what you were doing he would hunt you down and shoot you. Now as Assistant Secretary in PM he only shoots you if you cross his line of sight. He doesn't come looking for you anymore." I found too, I had a couple of encounters with Clarke in those days and it was a lot like dealing with Perle. If Clarke came at you, you laid out your facts, you said this is what I've got, this is how I see it. If you knew what you were talking about he'd go "Okay". He had an agenda but he was interested in dealing with facts and if you could back it up then you were okay.

Q: One of the prime ways of telling where the Cubans were was to fly over Africa and as soon as you saw a baseball field, the baseball diamond, because everybody else plays soccer except for the Cubans and so if you saw that triangle you'd say, Ah huh, there are Cubans there.

MOSHER: Remember though how that caught us up in Central America. They started to try and use the same trick in Central America during the same years. We got so use to looking for baseball diamonds to look for Cubans they started looking at the inventory from Central America and they found baseball diamonds and they'd go "The Cubans are there." Someone would have to explain to them that, no that's the Boston Red Sox farm club and start explaining to them what countries in Central America play baseball. So a little bit of educating had to be done. Yeah, that was one of things we'd look for. You had all the other assets because the Cubans were operational. They were in the field. I remember the first time I'd been in Zaire we had a short wave radio and we're trying to have a Saturday sort of lunch, breakfast in our apartment and were tuning the radio and we get in a good signal. It's really great because there is this wide range of rock and roll and weird stuff. We're listening to the language and I'm going, what the hell is this? Could this be Romania?" It was like a romance language, but it wasn't one that I know and the play list was really weird. There was Michael Jackson and The Jackson Five stuff mixed in there with Yugoslav rock bands and all kinds of things. We listened to this trying to figure out who is this

and it finally dawned on us that it was Radio Luanda playing the records that had been left behind in '75, plus whatever they had gotten since then which consisted of Yugoslav rock bands and Cuban music and things. I swear, I'm convinced, they sent out a dedication to a Cuban soldier over the air for some tune. The tip-off that I knew was when they announced that the following several hours were going to be devoted to listening to a speech from the leadership in Luanda

Q: Your area included what now? First you were there from when to when?

MOSHER: '84 to '86.

Q: Your area again?

MOSHER: Somalia, Kenya, and Uganda and then Mauritius and the Seychelles in the Indian Ocean.

Q: What was the situation in Somalia when you were there?

MOSHER: Siad Barre is still alive, although while I'm there he has his auto accident which more or less I think eventually leads to his death. He is holding things together by playing the clans off against each other. We think we have an idea of who the heir apparent is, one of the senior military officers. We're mainly worried that he is going to push things in the Ogaden Desert of Ethiopia, primarily Ethiopian territory, again and find themselves in another conflict with Ethiopia which they're going to lose because the Ethiopians have got that army that's got all the Soviet equipment and Cuban assistance in the backing. The Somalis basically aren't listening to anybody and their equipment is all falling apart. They tried to fight it with tribal militias the time before and it didn't work. So we're keeping any eye on that.

Q: Do we have any base interest there at that point?

MOSHER: No, we didn't have a base interest. We had arrangements for access if we needed it. There are no real harbors anywhere along the coast, the airfield only would be of use and it's in pretty bad shape.

Q: How about Kenya?

MOSHER: Kenya, we're dealing with post Jomo Kenyatta and his successor Daniel arap Moi's efforts to build up his own tribe [Kalenjin] as the political majority, small minor tribe which means he's mainly disadvantaging the majority Kikuyu and other tribes by keeping their senior leadership out of positions of power and influence. Corruption is getting worse, crime is getting worse. It's not encouraging. He had bested an Air Force attempted coup in I believe '82 before I took over the account so he's still nervous about his military but at the same time he's got a growing problem on his northern border. It's getting pretty bad.

Uganda, we've got an insurgency going on under the leadership of Yoweri Museveni who is now president. At that time he was in the bush organizing and training the National Resistance Army, his guerrillas, and trying to build up some alliances and forces there. The government is pretty much in a shambles, worse than Kenya in

terms of corruption or incompetence. Milton Obote is back in power, post-Idi Amin. It's all a mess and the Tanzanians of course keep looking at it because they feel responsible for Obote having overthrown Idi Amin.

Q: Was Nyerere still in?

MOSHER: Yeah, Julius Nyerere is still alive as I recall. Tanzania wasn't my account but I kept an eye on what they were doing because of their role.

Q: Sort of in that east African area, basically do we have a watching brief or do we have major interests and concerns?

MOSHER: Well, the major interest, we're doing maybe a watching brief in the sense that there are no bases or installations and we don't have a major military assistance programs but the instability and the potential for instability is making us nervous. Castro has shown that he is willing to intervene more than once in Africa with troops, with military assistance, with money. Most often he just simply dumped a lot of oil money on people. We're worried about the spill over of conflict in the Sudan. John Garang and his guerrillas are still in the southern Sudan fighting the regime in Khartoum. Chad is still kind of nervous. The Ethiopians are fighting the Eritreans and the Ethiopians are fighting amongst themselves. You've got a little complicated conflict going on in there. It's a watching brief but we're mainly concerned. Kenya is in the best shape. It's at the higher end of the slippery slope we're watching as they start slowly going down. Arap Moi's actions were doing two things. There was the fiscal, financial corruption. Daniel arap Moi knew the corruption was going on but he was also just simply undermining all of the political institutions that Kenya had had that let everyone call them a democracy. Moi was doing things to undermine those by the way he was manipulating the political system and payoffs and either buying off or even possibly bumping off political opponents. He had the military under his thumb because he wasn't letting them have very much slack and that was weakening his ability to deal with any threats that came from Ethiopia or Somalia. Uganda is in bad shape. Museveni's guerrillas are running around doing a pretty good job. The government troops don't show any competency or capability to deal with them and in fact I was there in the job somewhere between four to six weeks when I started writing my pieces and I said, "Yoweri Museveni is going to win." He's been able to do things with his personnel in terms of teaching them tactics, teaching them discipline, teaching them to follow orders that the government can't get its troops to do. That's going to be the margin of victory. I said I can't tell you when, but he's going to win. None of the other analyst in the community, DIA, or elsewhere agreed with that and it took me a while to lay out the case and explain it. There was some difference. They were getting different reports from different agencies but we went out and said first, "He's going to win, he's going to pull this off." What I had to explain later to the Africa Bureau was that this wasn't necessarily good news but he was certainly better than Obote in a lot of ways, an interesting character. I read a lot about his history and his past and he was doing a lot of things that he had gone to Vietnam to learn how to fight a guerrilla war.

Q: What about the Seychelles and Mauritius?

MOSHER: Seychelles was a problem because we did have an Air Force radar station there that we'd established under the previous regime which the current leader, France-Albert René had overthrown. James Mancham had been the prime minister. He was attending a Commonwealth conference when René seized power. He [René] was very much in bed with the Soviets. There were lots of visits by Soviet Naval ships and his rhetoric was very sympathetic to the Soviet position on a lot of issues. There was the question of how long we were going to be able to stay in there with the radar station, or did we want to go where our situation was changing, with Diego Garcia perhaps we didn't need it anymore. So there was a lot of debate back and forth on that. The embassy from time to time would get pinched a little bit by the Seychelles security forces, minor harassment, things like that, nothing major. Mauritius was pretty stable. Interesting political situation there because of the ethnic makeup, you had ethnic Indians, Hindus. You had a mix of black Africans, almost mulatto, and Chinese. A lot of both French and English [language] being used because of the political history of the colonial powers over the islands, the French and then the British, running a very British parliamentary system with the balance pretty close between the Indians, Hindus and the black African, mulatto community, the Chinese sort of off to one side, like the smaller minority position, but influential economically and financially. You've got all these great trading peoples with connections around the world through a cousin here and a sister or brother there, but remote otherwise and looking a little old fashioned in some of their politics. The main issue we had with them was the question of Diego Garcia, which had been part of the British Indian Ocean Territory. The British at one point made a decision to return a lot of these islands to Mauritius, post-independence, but they keep Diego Garcia under their jurisdiction and I think one or two small rocks in the vicinity and then turn around and sign an agreement with us that allows us to use the base at Diego Garcia which is critical in future years. It already was important to us, so there was a lot hoorah back and forth with the Mauritians on that but otherwise nothing major in terms of serious interest.

Q: During this period, '84 to '86 who was the head of INR at the time?

MOSHER: I want say was it Mort Abramowitz. Clarke is the DAS that we worked most closely with. He covered the African areas. That was where your greatest contact would come with the front office. He wasn't bashful about coming downstairs to talk to us or summoning us to his office. I only got involved with those conversations a couple of times because for the most part his main interest was Angola, Mozambique and the Cubans. I helped a little bit on some of the reporting because I drew on my political-military background. They didn't have anybody in the African analyst shop who had the same kind of background, so I supplemented what they were doing. We'd sit down from time to time and explain things that I thought they needed to understand about the military operations they were looking at but made no claim to understand the history, ethnicity and all the other issues. I would give them the military operations side and back them up on that.

Q: In '86 you moved on, wither?

MOSHER: A year at the Navy War College. I had a list of jobs that I was interested in and I'm going around the department to the various offices and introducing myself and dropping off resumes or the data sheet on you. I go to the Japan desk because

there was a political section job or political job opening up in Tokyo and I thought I want to get to the Far East again, Japan is neat. There is interesting things going on there. I thought maybe I could learn Japanese, get the language training and then go out to post. I'm talking to the guy at the Japanese desk, he's looking at my background and he says, "Actually you know there is a political-military job coming up a year from now that you would be great for. Can you do something for a year, like university training or something?" which hadn't occurred to me otherwise, but I thought it sounds good to me. I start researching the university training issues and I'm trying to do this on a very short fuse. The traditional university training you pretty much have to write your program then sell it to the Department. The War College opportunities, by contrast, the program is already set, you just get yourself lined up to go to the War College for a year. The Navy War College looked like the best option. I thought especially if I'm going to the Far East, Naval issues, Japan, they've got to be primary, the Pacific Ocean but intra-service anyway so I'll get all of it, Naval environment, that will be good then I can come back and line up the Japan job and get the language training and go out there.

It took a bit more doing than that because DOD and the State personnel system got into a twist over what course I should be taking because of my grade in the Foreign Service. Normally they send people at State apparently to the senior command in staff college course and my attendance was more appropriate at the next level down, the more junior one with the majors and lieutenant colonels and so on. I asked personnel finally, "What's taking so long" and they explained this to me and I said, "Okay, okay, I understand the bureaucracies of what you're doing here, so you know, fight the fight, but for God's sakes don't screw this up because I really want to do this." It came through. I got lined up to go to the Navy War College for a year. I went back around the Japan desk and said, "Okay, I've got my year all lined up." They said, "Who are you?" I took that as a sign and perhaps I over interpreted it. I probably should have pushed it further. I'm lined up for a year in Newport at the Naval War College which worked out very well personally because that was the time Sue and I got married in June and went off to Halifax, Nova Scotia for our "island" honeymoon and came back and packed everything up and left for Newport, Rhode Island in July to report for a year at the Naval War College.

Q: How did you find the Naval War College intellectually and professionally?

MOSHER: Fantastic. They were accredited then, before any of the other war colleges, so you could actually translate two thirds of the work you did at the War College and apply it towards a Master's Degree at a local college, so I did that. Then you take nine more credit hours at the local college and they would give you a degree for that. It's academically accredited, you're getting grades for your work. The environment was terrific. The faculty was terrific. You were dealing with people who, I've got their books on my bookshelf now. You're dealing at a level, at the top level with the class. There's always the group looking for the "gentleman's C" but at the top levels of each class in the seminar there were some really sharp minds. There was a Marine Corps Major who just blew me away. I was so impressed with his knowledge and the sophistication of his mind, I'm thinking, this is a Marine?

Q: It's interesting. People I've talked to have gone to various War Colleges. For the great majority of cases say they found the Marines who are destined for upper levels

are probably the sharpest minds and look upon things in a broader sense. The airplane people or the ship drivers aren't really interested in driving ships or flying airplanes. The Army is close to the Marines it's just that they have to move up through the ranks and start getting into the higher education I really understand it.

MOSHER: We had Coast Guard, we had other civilians, so it was an interesting mix.

Q: Let's see this would be '84 to?

MOSHER: '86 to '87.

Q: I mean '86 to '87. How were they looking at the world at that time?

MOSHER: Well you had a number of things dominating. Of course, you started to see the resurgence of the American military, Panama, Grenada, things like that. Lebanon was a topic of discussion. Oliver North was a major topic of conversation, informally, because all the military guys wanted me to explain Oliver North and the whole White House thing to them which I thought was actually fairly simple. I said, "Listen, if you hire a State Department guy to work for you at the White House and you tell him something to do he's going to go, "I'm not so sure you really want to do it that way, maybe you ought to do this or that or the other thing." "If you have a military guy working for you at the White House and you tell him to do something he goes, "Yes sir." I said, "Who do you want working for you?" That's why they love military guys. But beyond that he just went off the reservation after that. I think the general consensus there was he was seduced. That he got carried away with where he was and who he was working for and did things that probably would have never occurred to him if he'd stayed on a military career path. So he got seduced and done in by that. It was an interesting conversation. A lot of great thoughtful and in depth conversations about the use of force and the different rules that were being written about when we should use force and under what conditions and circumstances. The Weinberger doctrine, things like that.

Q: This is at a period of time that I assume that the major threat including Naval threat was considered to be the Soviets.

MOSHER: Still very much the Soviets and you're looking at the Soviets bringing a lot of new platforms into service and we're only just beginning to catch up. Carter has actually begun the build-up but Reagan pushed it really hard. But we are still behind the curve when you look at what the Soviets were bringing into service. As often happens, later on we would find out, only later would we learn about the flaws in the Soviet equipment. One of the things I'd learned a long time ago, you know your own weakness better than you ever know the other guy's weaknesses so the other guy always looks like eight feet tall and you look like five feet eight. What we did appreciate was that the Russians were looking at the same thing. They knew how bad their equipment was, looking at our equipment and assuming it was better because we were smarter and had more things. So we were dealing with all of those issues. We'd been through the Pershings and the cruise missiles and the ABM discussions, Star Wars is still out there. It's very much super power confrontation context that we were in.

Q: Did you find yourself playing a role as a State Department person, I mean a source as opposed to a receptor of information?

MOSHER: Yeah, in various context very much doing both of those things. I was learning a lot. It was a tremendous year for that. One of my seminar leaders in fact “complained” about how I was always bringing the real world into the classroom. What I was shedding daylight on, as often as anything else, was just simply knowledge of the world but simply, “Guys I’ve been in the State Department, I’ve been in the Pentagon and this is how the two work and you’re going this way and you’re not communicating, you’re not exchanging, you’re talking past each other and this is why, this is where it’s coming from, this is the environment that you are working in.” So a lot of that.

Q: Then in ‘87, whither?

MOSHER: The summer of ‘87 we’re coming up on graduation of the college, getting my degree from the other course, without an assignment. We’d gone through the 15 on my initial bid list, nothing is happening. Everything is disappearing. There’s not much left and I’m really beginning to wonder, what are we going to be doing? Then the Africa desk called. They needed somebody to go to Kinshasa. They were going to have a gap between political counsellors. I’d been there before and that was a factor that they wanted and generally said, “Will you take the job?” I said “Yeah.” I knew from the living conditions we had, by then we were expecting a baby the end of August, but I knew from my previous assignment that it was a good post for families. There was a large community, good support. That would work out fine. I knew the country, I knew the language and they snuck in some French language brush up training that summer to sweeten the deal so we could be in Washington waiting for the baby. I thought, okay being the number two most of the time and running the section for a while on my own, sounds like a good deal. So I said, “Yeah, we’ll do that.”

Q: So you were there from when to when?

MOSHER: ‘87 to ‘89.

Q: Who was the ambassador when you got out there?

MOSHER: Bill Harrop for most of time there.

Q: DCM?

MOSHER: Brandon Grove was just leaving and Bill Harrop was there.

Q: DCM?

MOSHER: I’d have to look it up. I don’t remember. [Marc Baas]

Q: When you talk about Zaire at that time and a political situation it was still Mobutu Sese Seko wasn’t it?

MOSHER: There were some interesting changes from when I'd been there before. Mobutu Sese Seko was still there and I'm walking around remembering that I'd given him five years, and he now lasted ten longer. I'm going okay, so he's wicker than I thought he was. He's still there. In some ways the place is better and in some ways it is worse. The government, they were actually beginning to operate as a government. I'd go over to the Foreign Ministry and now they would actually meet you and you'd have to be escorted and I never caught the desk officer asleep on his desk. I would have serious conversations with officials of the Zairian Foreign Ministry who knew their brief. I wasn't doing the travelling anymore as compared to the last time because I wasn't the Refugee Officer, so I was focusing more on Kinshasa and the city itself. There had been some development but a lot of the infra-structure was still in need of maintenance, pretty bad. There was more of the government to monitor, there was a parliament, there were all these things going on, elections. It was all still kind of very dependent upon Mobutu. The other interesting thing too, that I wrote about in some of our reporting, that you were beginning now to get people who would say, "I'm a Zairian" instead of "I'm from Haut Zaire, I'm from Kivu." He had managed in spite of everything. You were beginning to get the glimmers of a national identity. He had to make accommodations.

We were seeing more involvement with Eastern Europe. Driving around the city I'm seeing East European automobiles on the streets in significant numbers. The sad thing during this tenure, compared to the previous time I'd been there, I go down to the Economic Section and I asked them, "Where are all these Romanian cars coming from? What is this deal?" They didn't know anything about it and they weren't interested. I finally tracked it down to a barter deal that Mobutu and Nicolae Ceaușescu had worked out where they got food stuffs and raw materials out of Zaire and he got automobiles to hand out to government officials. It was deals he cut with a number of different people. We started to see all kinds of weird cars on the streets of Kinshasa. It was a lot of fun. The economic section apparently had nowhere near the grasp of what was going on that I was used to them having ten years before when I thought the Econ Section was the strongest section in the embassy. They seemed a lot more removed and didn't have their fingertips on the debt issue or the finances or where the money was going or even the economic activity. These kinds of barter deals were off their screens.

Q: Did you get the feeling there that this is still a CIA post?

MOSHER: In a lot of ways because they still had access that we couldn't have. We also were handicapped a little bit because of that. We needed to talk to, you know Zaire had sort of legitimate opposition figures but we really couldn't talk to them as freely as we might have liked to either because some of them were on the CIA list of contacts. That was a little frustrating at times. There were also so many people in Kinshasa that we did go out and we had contacts. Sue was able to tell me things because she was running around in the expatriate community with the wives of all the expatriate businessmen. So I was hearing what, they were talking about over the bridge table, all of their problems and I was getting back from that plus the other embassy contacts at other embassies. The British Embassy at that time had a very good officer that we stayed in close touch with and kept each other alerted of what was going on and shared information and background when we could.

Q: Zaire of course is an amalgamation of a lot of tribal and geographic areas. What were you getting from the hinterland, from our consulates out there and elsewhere at this point?

MOSHER: There was a lot less concern than there had been. As I said, you were getting people who talked about being Zairian. One of the other points I made when I was talking about this to people was that now if there was a crisis in the country the first instinct was to look to Kinshasa for something, some kind of indication. I said, "My real concern post-Mobutu is that after Mobutu goes unless there is something in place that can respond and deal with the situation immediately, that first instinct of everybody in the country to look towards Kinshasa is going to fade after a couple of weeks when they don't see Kinshasa doing anything and they are going to start falling back into looking out for themselves. We were still in the transition. It wasn't one country yet. You could begin to see the outlines of the one country emerging but if anything were to happen to change the situation it was going to fall back real quick and it did in fact.

Q: Did you get any feel for the riff of Kinshasa out in the field?

MOSHER: Yeah. Basically the interior was taking care of itself. The government was so feeble and so poor and impoverished because of corruption and other issues that there weren't a lot of ways in which the center impacted on your daily life if you lived away from Kinshasa. So basically you just simply, just getting by the best you could and found solutions. Shaba traded with Zambia, the eastern part of the country traded with Rwanda, Burundi, and Uganda and Tanzania across the lake or across the border and the same thing if you were in the northern part you dealt with Chad and the Central African Republic whatever was in the day. So there was a lot of that going on. Simply because the communications, the infra-structure was so feeble and there were so few resources that you couldn't effectively deal and count on anything coming from the center.

Q: I would think the political section would, granted people hang on but had to try and figure out after Mobutu what?

MOSHER: The major problem there was that the general feeling was that none of the émigrés was serious enough or capable enough to become a leader post-Mobutu. None of the opposition figures still resident in Zaire was credible because at one point or another Mobutu had one way or another tainted them or weakened their political support. The understanding figure was Étienne Tshisekedi who during the time I was there was under house arrest in Kinshasa, then was in exile up in Gbadolite, Mobutu's home village and his residence in the country. Once in a while, he was allowed to go out and function normally and then quickly he'd be scooped up again and put under house arrest. That gave him a lot of prestige but we found later that the guy couldn't make, he wasn't a politician, he couldn't make deals. He wasn't flexible enough to assume a leadership position. He seemed to assume that it would be granted just simply by him being the most prominent opposition figure then he was the heir apparent. It wasn't going to work that way. He wasn't up to it. We did actually, more than once, find ourselves intervening on his behalf. We actually flew up to Gbadolite and visited him in exile with a congressional delegation. Other times we'd get to see him at his house in Kinshasa so that we could assure the exile community that was

either writing our congressmen or writing to people in Europe and other places demanding to know that he was safe and okay, that he hadn't been killed or wasn't dying. So I saw him on several occasions and had some conversations with him but he didn't have the flexibility and even he was tainted because earlier in his career Mobutu had bought him off more than once with political appointments. A government position in Kinshasa was a key to the bank. You got a car, you got a house, you got houses, you got mistresses, you got a payroll, you got a slush fund but it can be turned off instantaneously if Mobutu decided he didn't like you anymore. Tshisekedi had been on both sides of that trough. Other than himself, there really wasn't anybody.

Q: What was the impression at the embassy or at least the Political Section of Mobutu Sese Seko?

MOSHER: I think cunning and canny more than wise, not prescient at all. If he had had real foresight he would have been able to do a better job of stepping down in a way that something passed on and we didn't see the chaos, but we saw it coming. The talk about being in Zaire in the previous decade and how January was the big riot season, well, come January of '89 we got rioting again in Kinshasa. The opposition people who we were talking to had come to us and said that there were at least 25 people killed in the rioting near the university campus in the four quarter there. We wrote it up in the Human Rights Report because this was becoming significant now. People were getting to the point that their life was desperate enough that having a fight with one of Mobutu's police and possibly dying wasn't any longer such an unreasonable option. We reported on it. We didn't go see 25 bodies and nobody gave us a list of 25 names that we could verify were in fact dead people that were killed by the police. We reported it and I tried to include it in the human rights report for that year saying we've been told 25 people were killed. We have no reason to doubt this. It was dropped from the Human Rights report. It never got to the final reports.

Q: Did you have a feeling that there was a sanitizing effort?

MOSHER: Yeah, in that instance specifically. The rest of the report wasn't too bad but they wouldn't go with us on that. The following January was the big riots that we all remember as the beginning of the downfall of Mobutu. We had an indication a year earlier that things were going bad. I don't know if you could say he was increasingly paranoid, but paranoia became to be the dominant factor in his life.

Q: Was his spending a lot of time on his houseboat or something like that?

MOSHER: On the houseboat or in the Presidential Palace or out in Ndjili and away from Kinshasa much of the time. He was worried about AIDS which was now running rampant in Kinshasa. They were carefully screening all of his girls. Mama Mobutu, his wife, had died and he was now married to his mistress. That family was complicating his life because they were all now trying to cash in. "We're now legal, we're official, she's the wife of the president." So they were expecting government positions and everything else. That wasn't helping. The infighting within the family apparently was vicious because now you've got children from the first wife, children from the second wife and all the offspring and hangers on so there was a lot of infighting going on there. Almost enough to make you feel sorry for the guy but he's

pretty tough in his position. He didn't have to end up here but he'd gotten there step by step. That wasn't helping his prestige either.

There was actually, I've never yet really understood what it was or how we saw it, but there was on the television, at this point to the degree that they were broadcasting anything, TV was showing a lot of reruns of old TV shows from the different parts of the world. From Europe, from Japan, old French TV programs, sitcoms, something set in Japan called "Winchester à louer", Winchester For Hire, about a Samurai with a Winchester rifle, just strange things. Saturday night though, they started a sort of variety talk show that you would have recognized from U.S. television. It was mostly skits and musical performances. We were up one night watching this because to our amazement they're doing a re-make of the Michael Jackson Thriller video where Michael Jackson becomes a zombie and all the zombies and he are dancing on the street and they did exactly that. All of the dancers are these zombie-like creatures of the night and they're using the tune, the music to the Thriller song and they're singing what in another context would have been an animation, a praise song of Mobutu Sese Seko. And we are left wondering why is this TV screen not going black, why are they not burning down the TV station? Is it because they figure nobody in Zaire is watching or nobody who is in a position to object is watching this because normally they wouldn't waste their time? What is going on here? It was amazing. It wasn't the same.

Q: You left there in '89 and I think this is probably a good place to stop. Where did you go?

MOSHER: I had been called by Bob Walpole who was in INR and asked to come to the Strategic Proliferation shop in INR as an analyst. I was going to be replacing a friend of mine, Rodney Huff, who was one of my classmates and one of the strongest science background guys we had. They offered me that job and I said, "Yeah."

Q: Today is the 30th of March, 2005 and was the anniversary of the fall of Saigon [NB actually April 29, 1975]. 1989 was it? You had the job in INR from when to when?

MOSHER. Well, that's a little tricky. I went there in '89 and I was there in that job in INR/SPA for roughly a year. Then I asked to be transferred and I moved over to the Soviet shop working for Wayne Limberg for the last of my two year assignment in INR.

Q: Okay, well let's talk about this first one. What was it? This was in '93?

MOSHER: No, '89 into '90. I got there in July of '89.

Q: What were you looking at?

MOSHER. I was the lead missile, especially third world missiles and counter proliferation man in INR. I was working for Bob Walpole at first and Vann van Diepen was the immediate supervisor. We were especially focusing on third world missile programs, Chinese missile sales, the Missile Technology Control Regime

[MTCR] which was only, this whole family of issues, was only really just beginning to get attention. When I looked through the files that I had on hand, organizing them so I could find things and reading up to see what was in there. It was very much my impression that up until then the whole thing had been a little bit more academic and peripheral to the cold war focused missile shop which didn't pay so much attention to these systems, the kind of systems we were talking about in these third world programs. That was going to start changing and it was going to start becoming important.

Q: You want to give me, first we'll go to individual countries, but a list of those countries that you were looking at?

MOSHER: The main countries we were interested in at the time and some of the names will sound familiar of course. We were looking at what Argentina was doing, Brazil kept talking about it and we didn't distinguish seriously between what were openly and without any hesitation, ballistic missile programs and programs that were proclaimed to be space programs. A joke I picked up called an ICBM "a space launch vehicle with limited expectations". The Brazilians had a big space program and there were some military aspects to that, potential military aspects. There was Iran, Iraq, Egypt, Libya, Syria, as a potential they were a little bit further down the ladder in terms of capabilities, but they were seeking missile systems. India, Pakistan, China of course, and then you were also looking at anybody who was trying to buy them. North Korea was a bit marketer flogging their version of the Scud and its follow on systems. Then we were also watching the partners that these countries would find out of countries in Europe and elsewhere. They would also sell them components, hardware, technology and know-how.

Q: You didn't mention Israel?

MOSHER: Israel wasn't in the same category of concern because we were a lot more aware of what they were doing. They were working on systems like the ARROW for us, the U.S. They had other missiles systems that they had either bought technology from us or they were developing them to sell to us and their space watch program focusing upon getting satellite reconnaissance capability for themselves as an extra measure of security was something that we were aware of. The others were the ones that it was hard to be sure what was going on.

Q: Looking at the history of the Israelis, they weren't that benign a group. They were selling information and other stuff to other people that we did not necessarily know about.

MOSHER: That became an issue later. That wasn't something that was an issue at the time, in '89, '90. They were still focusing on getting technology and developing new platforms. I think there may have been some changes in their own approach to these things later that started to raise issues and concerns.

Q: Which ones gave you the greatest concern?

MOSHER: Well, the North Koreans of course were the hardest to find out about what was going on and the most unpredictable. You knew they were actively marketing.

The Iranians and the Iraqis of course were of concern because they'd used them on each other already. That was a concern. The Indians were a concern because they had the greatest potential capability already having nuclear weapons and approaching serious, at least intermediate range, ballistic missile capability since they were primarily focused on China. They were looking for a capability that would balance the Chinese capability to some degree. While looking over their shoulder, Pakistan in turn was worried about the capabilities the Indians had. So that was the early stages of worrying about an Indo-Pakistani conflict very seriously. You also had the issue of what the Iraqis were going to do in other directions other than Iran, any Muslim country to a degree, even including Pakistan that had missiles that could be combined with any kind of serious mass weapon. It was getting to be a potential threat to Israel so we were watching for that as well. By contrast, one of the things we monitored was the Chinese missiles in Saudi Arabia but these were considered not to be a serious matter of concern because, one they had been there for quite some time and it was our assessment, I believe, that they were mainly for countering Iran. There were some questions we had about the full capability so we were keeping an eye on that trying to see what was going on. I'm not sure how far they were pursuing it at the policy level but I think it would also have been some interest in seeing them just simply go away because we were aware of their crude, for their size and range, they were still a rather crude old fashion system, liquid fuel.

Q: How good did you feel the intelligence was?

MOSHER: Well that again varied. One of my jobs was to start working through a series of planned reports on each of these programs. The very first one was focused on the Argentine program which tapped into the grey and black market of expertise in Europe that we were trying to crack in addition to just simply trying to keep these kinds of programs from appearing in the hemisphere. We thought at the time, and it turned out to be fairly accurate, that we had a political opening to work with the Argentines to have the program go away. We were very heavily engaged for several months in pulling together everything we knew about the program and clearing a briefing with the intelligence community that we could then go to the political leadership in Argentina and say, "We don't think your guys are telling you everything there is to know about this program and we think if you did you'd realize this is a mistake." In the event we were able to do that, take that briefing to Argentina and get them to start winding down the program and closing it down. After that then we moved on to the Middle Eastern countries. The next one that I remember is the report on the Iraqi missile program that we worked on, again the same process.

Q: Did you find that in your area of interest, was there a difference of opinion of where things were going between INR's look at it and the military or CIA?

MOSHER: Not really and that may be in part because my recollection is that we had slightly different focus as well. The military people that we worked with and we worked close to them because that's where your real experts were. I did a lot of study in that job, reading up on propellants and ballistic theory and all kinds of stuff to build on top of my military background that I already had. But those were the people you went to to really get it explained to you quickly and clearly and what's the seriousness of the threat. What we [INR] were interested in was the intentions, what were the real intentions behind the programs, especially those that were proclaimed to be space

launch programs and working with the military experts who could tell us where's the tell-tale that makes it clear that it's one or the other. That was very hard. There were very few tell-tales. The other thing that we were focused on at State also was, "what can we do about it?" DOD's people were primarily focused on identifying and cataloguing the capabilities and assessing the potential threat to forces and allies. We were looking for information and knowledge that would help us identify the windows of opportunity that might open up to allow us to go in and make a political pitch to have the program go away or to somehow be secured by agreements and arrangements that would neutralize it as a threat. We did get into a lot of pitched battles over interpretation or argument in that context. There were some very good interagency and even international conferences on this and it was kind of fun sometimes the stuff you find yourself drawing on. There was an interesting amount of open source material. I found for example, first-hand accounts by Brits who had been living in Tehran during the Iran-Iraq war describing what they had learned and what their experience was being on the target end of the Iraqi missiles that were coming in. There were some quite interesting observations that they had made on the sizes of impact craters, the behavior of the missiles in the air, being able at times to actually see them come down. Apparently the Brits hadn't even known about that so we said, "Hey go read this magazine article and find these people." There was perhaps, too, a little bit of a difference beginning to emerge between State and CIA though in the analytical approach. It may be a reflection of my background in INR, but CIA was beginning to show what I saw signs of going down some bad paths in terms of product. I was concerned that sometimes their analysis was almost pandering to what they thought people wanted to hear and there was also a certain amount of product that was appearing to check off boxes and fill quotas. You have to write something. You weren't allowed to write nothing apparently, even if you had nothing to say, you had to write something. I think that may have sometimes given policy guys a mistaken impression of what the reality was, both good and bad. It may have to the degree to which they were made more alarmed, perhaps that was to the good but it could be carried to an extreme. As I said these were very early things and it didn't occur to me at the time because it wasn't going to have any kind of long term consequences.

Q: What about South Korea? It was sort of under our umbrella but at the same time there was always the possibility we might withdraw and I would think they would want to have something.

MOSHER: Well, South Korea is a complicated problem. The first factor was of course that we were such close allies that there weren't a lot of things that they could do without us knowing about them, but we were just enough concerned to always keep an eye out for tell-tales that maybe there was something going on that we wouldn't approve of. We didn't want to see them break out. We had sort of a 1990s version of the problem in the late '40s. We certainly weren't worried anymore about the South Koreans slipping the leash and invading the North, which was apparently one of the factors we thought was a problem in the 1940s, so we restricted their armaments, but at the same time we didn't want to overarm the South Koreans to the extent that it would upset the balance and start seeing new systems dumped into North Korea on the pretext or the excuse of we're only balancing what you've done for the South Koreans. They were under the umbrella so we're covering them. I don't recall anything at the time that would have given me the impression we were going to

withdraw. A draw down though was always on the table as a possibility whether it was stated so in policy or not it was a reality of the day of those days. We might have, for any number of reasons, found it an important viable option to pull things out of South Korea that had come to be taken for granted and reducing our profile and reducing our presence. The South Koreans weren't necessarily a threat in that sense but something to keep an eye on. Also potentially another source of technology and expertise on the commercial market because of the things we had helped them do on the technology side in related technologies, aviation and aerospace stuff without trying to let the cat out of the bag. At the same time there is a certain amount of Pandora's box. You can't give an engineer access to knowledge and technologies and expect him or expect all of them to refuse to go where you don't want them to go. Some of them are going to start wanting to be the Werner von Braun of South Korea or something. You had to monitor. But the relationship was such that it wasn't a great of concern.

Q: Were we concerned, this is '89, '90, the Soviet Union was beginning, it was still Soviet Union, to come apart or at least getting very weak which meant that in a way it was no longer a real or even potential threat to us but at the same time had all these systems that they might want to sell.

MOSHER: That was becoming something more on our radar screen in the second year when I moved over to the Soviet office, because it was only then that they started asking for papers and assessments. In that first year we really weren't yet expecting it to be that bad while they were still the source potentially with the technology. Like for Scuds, if somebody was buying a Scud and you didn't have good information exactly who the sellers were, you always had to kind of keep your mind open and say, "okay, it could be the North Koreans. It could be the Russians. It could be anybody else who already had Scuds, you can't automatically assume that a Scud only comes from one source." So there was that kind of problem. We assumed if it was being done, it was being done by policy out of Moscow. It wasn't because somebody was losing control.

Q: What about Libya? Libya was sort of really the odd man out about everything. What it was going to do was quite different than the garden variety of other states.

MOSHER: They were engaged in a couple of different attempts to develop missiles or to acquire missiles and they were talking to the North Koreans and they were talking to other suppliers. They were talking to potential European dealers in technology. They were even talking to a West German based company called OTRAG, which when I learned this, I almost fell over laughing because they had been in Zaire. They had actually taken over a piece of ground in Zaire for test launches of their missiles, their launch vehicles. Mobutu had gone to one of the launches and observed it, so I was pretty familiar with the German company [OTRAG] and the capabilities of their product, which weren't very good.

Basically what they were doing was taking a tinker toy approach to building a launch vehicle. They had solid fuel rockets in a standard size configuration which were designed so that they could then be strapped together to accumulate the lift potential that you would want for whatever size ballistic missile they were going to launch. There was a great moment in Zaire when Mobutu Sese Seko went out to the launch

site, which is on the edge of this plateau, this big mesa sort of ground down in Shaba, and they're all standing around in bleachers and around the control hut waiting for the test launch to take place. The rocket is launched and it ignites. It goes up and up, and then starts angling over and it flies over the edge of this mesa and falls into this valley adjacent to the mesa, crashes and explodes. Very dramatic. For a second there is a pause, and all the Zairians started applauding, everybody goes, "Impressive." Yeah, except that it didn't work. It didn't last much longer than that. So here I am a year later, back in Washington, and now they're trying to make some kind of arrangement to continue their project only doing it in Libya now, since Qadhafi has oil money unlike Mobutu who didn't have that amount of resources to commit to something like this. There is a risk there that these Germans might start working the bugs out of it and given Qadhafi's history we were very concerned. Ultimately it turned out to be nothing. The Libyans simply did not have the technological base and insufficient numbers of people to actually know what they were doing in these fields to support all of the programs that Qadhafi was trying to run. Most of these things turned out to be pretty much the same as his army, where he'd make these huge defence purchases from the Soviets and others and the stuff would all go into warehouses and sit there because he didn't have enough people to operate them.

Q: Did we see any imminent threats at the time?

MOSHER: Yeah. Not to us directly but the Iraqi program started becoming a major concern. The Iraqis threw their military parades and international military fairs were always hawking all these different missile systems so a lot of time had to be spent trying to sift through what we had, the information we had to try and determine what was the reality behind all of these different projects. Some of them existed only on paper and some of which it seemed to have been actually abandoned but they weren't going to admit it publicly that their finished missile didn't exist, it wasn't as capable as they proclaimed it. The problems really started ratcheting up when we discovered that they had in place fixed launchers for missiles in the western part of Iraq, all aimed at Israel and for the use of a missile that was at least as capable and perhaps a little bit more capable than some of the longer range systems they used against Iran. As I said that was the next big project, spending a couple of months sifting through everything we had on the Iraqi projects, on the Iraqi programs, and trying to offer some conclusions on the size of the program, what were their capabilities, what were the systems that they had, how would they likely use them. The fixed launchers were also a bit of a fun project because we did some analysis and it was felt that we knew what their targeting arc was. I sat down with our geographers at State in INR and we plotted for every one of those fixed launches, we plotted a line, drew the arc out from that center line and then came up with a range figure and we were generous but to be on the safe side we tried to identify what the targets were for each of these fixed launches. They were all major Israeli cities. It was really neat being able to do that kind of analysis. Nobody else in the community was doing it. We turned that into a report by itself and sent that out.

Q: As a matter of fact I think I did an interview with Bill Brown who was ambassador to Israel at the time who said he got this report in some form or other and sat down with Israelis and said "Don't tell anybody I told you, but this is what we got."

MOSHER: The version I saw was not releasable. That also would have been done after I left that job because that was one of the last products I did there. That was also, as I said, that was wrapped into the large report I did on the Iraqi missile program which was never published.

Q: Then you moved over in 1990 to the Soviet part of I & R is that right? And you were doing that for two years?

MOSHER: I did that for a year. When I was assigned in '89 to INR it was a two year assignment. I did the one year in SPA and Bob Walpole and Vann van Diepen both left after about three or four months and a new management team came in. They brought in Gary Dietrich from the Near East, South Asia shop in INR as the new office director and his deputy was a civil service guy named Alan Locke. Alan didn't like me. Alan, in fact after I'd gotten, I was reading through my old EERs here and I've got Vann van Diepen and Walpole and Randy Ford, the DAS in INR, all reporting on how well I'm doing and what a great job I'm doing and how little supervision I need and how little my writing needs to be edited and the first day on the job, almost literally the first week, Alan Locke sits me down and says, "I don't think you're very good." So the next six months were the most miserable experience in my Foreign Service career because this guy basically laid his cards on the table, "I'm going to fuck you over."

Q: Where was he coming from? What had he been doing before?

MOSHER: I don't know. He was new to me and I'd been overseas, come back to INR. I didn't know his background. I went around and I asked some people. Nancy May, for example, in INR/EX, who I knew from previous assignments in INR. The one thing she did tell me was he's perfectly capable of doing anything he says he's capable of doing which I already assumed anyway because nobody in the government makes those kinds of statements without being able to do it. The only thing I've been able to come up with since, or at least be able to develop a hypothesis, because the guy he started giving my work to, he started giving away my work even while I was still there - special assignments requests would come down from the INR front office and instead of giving it to me he gave to a presidential management intern who was assigned to the office. I found out later that was one of Richard Clarke's protégés. So the hypothesis that I've come up with was that Locke for some reason was doing Clarke a favour trying to bring this PMI along and put him in this job. The stupid thing being, frankly, is that if any one of them had sat down with me I would have been amenable to say let's make a deal. Instead, for whatever reason, Locke chose to play it this way. He covered his tracks beautifully. I looked over the efficiency reports that he wrote and there is nothing there. No fingerprints, no trail, nothing. Anyway after six months of this, and I spent all my time, those last couple of months working on this Iraq report. Major report on the Iraqi program, their capabilities, how many missiles we thought they had and I shared it with some of the other officers in INR who kept bootlegged copies for reference because they thought that highly of it. But it was never published. Locke killed it. I came back to the office and I found the intern doing the quick time turn around special request report for the front office on the Iraqi missile program and I went into Locke's office and I said "Okay, how do I get out of here?" He agreed, a no problems, no fingerprints, transfer. I talked to Wayne Limberg and the people in that shop and they agreed that they had some space there I could

move over to that and do Soviet foreign policy towards the Third World. So that's what I did after the first year and that then began my second year in INR finishing up the tour.

Q: So you were doing Soviet foreign policy.

MOSHER: Oh, and the footnote is, after the war with Iraq when we drove them out of Kuwait, DIA wrote a report that confirmed by my estimation 75% of what I wrote in that report before the war on what their capabilities were.

Q: You get into these things. Did you ever hear what happened to Locke?

MOSHER: Yes. I was on assignment to the embassy in Moscow when Alan Locke left the State Department because he was designated as the guy responsible for losing the laptop with all the classified intelligence briefing material on it.

Q: Yeah, I'm sure that this caused you great emotional distress.

MOSHER: One, I'm surprised that he let himself get caught up that way. I thought he was smarter than that. When I was there and in fact it was exactly the same job I was doing was what the laptop was for, only when I was there we used a Wang workstation which nobody was going to walk away with. I couldn't understand why they thought a laptop was sufficiently more advantageous given all the vulnerabilities involved. "What was he thinking?" Secondly, the fact that they reported it missing, but they did not report to anybody what was in the laptop for like three to six months after they reported it missing. I thought he was smarter than that, too. That was just amazing. In the end the State Department dragged the whole thing out so long I was damn near sympathetic. I was feeling sorry for Locke almost by the time it was over. They dragged that out for so long which I guess was at least somebody's doing with his lawyers trying to fight off something even worse. I don't know all the details.

Q: You were dealing with Soviet foreign policy towards the third world? In a way this had to be an after find of dying venture wasn't it? I mean what the Soviets are doing to at the time. The Soviets were, especially on the last leg before it became?

MOSHER: In fact, that was what I was doing, was documenting that withdrawal, that retreat, at a time when nobody believed it. A lot of what I was doing was taking the declarations being made in Moscow about what different third world policy issues, especially for Africa and Latin America, which were my two geographic areas. Then actually looking at what they were doing in the field. What was going on with the Russian presence, the Soviet presence in Africa, in Latin America, in these different places and going all the way across the range of efforts. I was looking through and Wayne made a note in one of the EERs that reminded me of the things that I went looking for that apparently nobody had thought of but were very serious major tell-tales. One of them, the Soviet fishing fleet, the Soviet fishing fleet used to just sail the world's oceans like a humongous vacuum cleaner, and that was going away while I was trying to track all these efforts. They were losing their funding, they were losing their access agreements, they were not able to follow through on the commitments they made that allowed other countries to permit this fishing fleet come into their waters. We saw all that activity going on and it all confirmed that it's collapsing, that

they can't do anything in the Third World. They have no assets, they have no resources, and they're on the retreat. It wasn't all good news in a sense either, because one of the reports they asked me to do was an assessment of Soviet arms sales policy. That was a quick turnaround, so it wasn't necessarily involving crunching a lot of serious numbers but when I looked into it based on my own background, I told them that we're probably going to be finding ourselves facing a more serious problem with Soviet arms sales rather than lesser because we were also seeing all those serious cutbacks in Soviet forces, reduction of forces, and the withdrawal and the loss of market share because they were no longer able to offer these sweetheart financial deals. Soviet arms plants were going to have to start paying their own way and they were not going to be able to depend upon massive orders from the Soviet military. So they're going to get desperate and they're going to start trying to find new markets, new buyers, and they're going to start looking for any kind of terms they can get to try and keep these factories afloat unless they actually get sane and start shutting them down, which to this day they haven't seriously done. The defence industry still hasn't been seriously restructured except by atrophy and rust. That was the first time anybody at State, to my knowledge, had even addressed that issue and we got a special request on it, turned it around in a couple of days, sent that up to the INR Front Office and said basically the news is not good. They will try hard. The good news, really, was that they're still flogging stuff in the post Desert Storm world that was used by the loser. So they are going to have a real uphill challenge trying to make serious changes in a world market that is going capitalist on arms when all they [Russia] can sell are T72s, which everyone saw burn in the Kuwaiti-Iraqi desert, and other systems that are the same thing.

Q: Were we doing an analysis of, okay the Soviets are pulling out of Africa where they made such an investment?

MOSHER: One of the most important things they got then was fewer body bags coming home. That was becoming a major issue, especially for Gorbachev, but to a degree even before that. It was becoming impossible to conceal the fact that Soviets were in places and doing things that were getting them killed and the civilian population at home was beginning to question what were they doing this for. The "International Socialist duty" was not quite as attractive as it used to be. In some cases they were trying to turn it into, especially country by country, the relationship issue that you should reward us for leaving, "We're friends, you should take care of us." In most cases it didn't go very far.

The toughest nut for them of course was Cuba. That relationship had been so important to both of them because of the sugar and other resources coming from Cuba to the Soviet Union. A lot of these third world country arrangements that had involved exchanges that supported the consumer sector in the Soviet Union in terms of goods and products and at the same time provided employment for Soviet workers because the other countries were getting Lada automobiles or other kinds of equipment and heavy equipment machinery, industries, factories, things like that that nobody would buy outside of the Soviet Union. But the Soviets were able to turn these into international transactions and create some economic activity that otherwise would have never existed and that loss hurt them a lot. The cutbacks on the Cuban relationship were a major hit to that kind of activity.

The other problem then was the Soviets coming around to all these countries to collect the bills due. All of these countries to one degree or another had serious debt to the Soviet Union. While they're belt tightening back in Moscow, they're also starting to try and collect these debts, debts that had been created and assumed in the expectation that someday or another they were going to be erased by Moscow or you would cut a barter deal and they would go away. That option was really off the table because both the former client and the continuing client and the Soviet Union, none were able to make those kinds of deals anymore. Both were forced to pinch pennies in serious ways. That was creating issues with countries that previously there wouldn't have been any problem in the relationship. It wasn't working out well.

Q: By this point had some of the threat of the Soviet Union, were we concerned more about hard or a soft landing as we watch the Soviet Union go, no longer really the enemy but what would be the repercussions of the top?

MOSHER: I think there was in that first year or two, there was a real lag between the reality and our understanding of the reality especially at the top levels. You always have to kind of hedge your bets anyway and there was a long period of time there that we kept referring to the old playbook, the old rule book on the relationship even though circumstances and the reality is that Gorbachev basically made that invalid. We had to kind of play it that way until we were actually sure what was going on. Gorbachev himself, of course, was a communist and is still a communist. This whole episode went in directions that he had no control over.

Q: He was trying to hold it together.

MOSHER: He was. In fact the hardliners are as responsible or maybe more responsible than Gorbachev for the way it played out in the end because they were so afraid of what he was trying to do that they staged that cockamamie coup attempt and you end up with Boris Yeltsin on top of an armoured vehicle in the middle of Moscow. The next thing you know he is the golden boy of Russia and the Soviet Union is gone. Nobody, I don't think, expected that. Then of course you're all over again. You've thrown out the playbook and now you're trying to figure out, well who is Boris Yeltsin and where is he going and what kind of country does he want? Is Russia going to follow his lead or is he trying to figure out where Russia wants to go and get in front of the parade? Who is really behind him? The major institutions were still there, the military, the KGB, the Ministry of Internal Affairs, all these organizations with the hardliners and the party, were all still much there and still, at least potentially serious players if they could figure out what the game was now - a lot of questions and not a lot of answers yet.

Q: I'm not sure it would be in your portfolio, but was there concern, oh my God, the Soviets are out of this aid game, a lot of it is military but are we going to have to pick up the slack ourselves or maybe it didn't pertain?

MOSHER: It didn't pertain immediately, but of course we were contributing to any awareness that would have existed or any concerns like that that would have existed because that was what we were spending a lot of our time was reporting. As we saw each country effort wind down we were writing it up and sending it up to the policy level identifying for them. In some cases, I think there was a certain amount of

justifiable scepticism about the reality of Soviet aid. One, is it really needed or warranted, and was it appropriate to the real need that existed in the country anyway? Sending Ladas and Zhigulis to central Africa may be great for the Russian automobile plant but I'm not sure that it does all that much for the average poor person in central Africa. A lot of their programs were like that. Aid is a complicated issue anyway. Every country that has an aid program I think you could have some very interesting results examining closely what are they doing versus what actually should be done.

Q: Did you get involved in what was happening with Cuba because politically in the United States, this is purely domestic, is sort of the third rail? Anything you come up with on Cuba, I mean Israel is almost benign as far as our relations there as with Cuba. Was that felt where you were?

MOSHER: That did, I think, from time to time raise the old INR shibboleth about "don't get involved in policy". Cuba itself as a problem was going to be more the responsibility of the Latin American shop but we would talk because that relationship with the Soviet Union and the way the situation in the Soviet Union evolved, very soon we were proclaiming Cuba as the last communist country or just about the last communist country and is it next. Even with Soviet assistance it was facing some economic challenges and debt, a little bit of debt which the Russians were going to start coming around trying to collect on. There was some questions about where was Cuba going to go, what was going to happen there.

I think there was also, and this would have been more on the policy side as well, but there was the whole issue then of, well, if the Russians are withdrawing, if the brigade of Jimmy Carter fame is finally going home, what about the Soviet Russian, later Russian, listening station or listening post, shouldn't that go? There was some efforts to find ways to leverage Castro to see if he would just simply send all of them home which on the one hand was framed as, "Well the world's changed now and if you want to have better relations with us these would be some nice things that you could do make us think better of you and that would be to send all these Russian Soviets home whether they are operating the listening station or the infantry brigade or the missiles or whatever they're doing, send them all home."

Of course that was the last thing from his mind. His security blanket was disappearing, thread by thread as he tried to hold on to it. After Grenada and everything else they were never quite certain what was Ronald Reagan going to do and what was George Bush after him going to do. You're playing one of the cagiest guys in the world when you start playing on the same game as Fidel. As I said, that was more the Cuban desk side in the INR shop. Our input was simply to the degree to which the Russians were pulling out and how fast and how extensively.

Q: You left there in '92 was it?

MOSHER: Late '91. Another one of these convoluted transfers. Among the jobs I bid on was a job back at the Pentagon in another defence exchange job with, in fact, a thought towards going back to the Pentagon, scouting it out, perhaps finding a more permanent job over there, leaving the Foreign Service. I'd been in the Department of State and the Foreign Service long enough and looking at my file and concluding, you know you're not going to be an ambassador and it may not be that you are going to

have all that much more time over here anyway especially after this fiasco with INR which doesn't look good on your record when the promotion board meets and they see two one year jobs in INR. This pretty much kissed off, this may well have kissed off any long term prospects.

I looked at a job in the Pentagon, went over and talked to the State Department officer who was occupying it, scouted it out and we thought we had the job nailed, all lined up except that he changed his mind and decided not leave, he decided to extend very, very, very late in the assignment process. But I'm on PM's roll's now but not against the slot. I think what may have been going on is that I think that the guy was so popular with his DOD boss that the Deputy Assistant Secretary level finally convinced him to stay on another year or two. That leaves PM and I to sit down and work out, what do we do now. At that time, and this is, Dick Clarke is the Assistant Secretary there, they've got what they call the Center for Defence Trade which consisted of the now Defence Trade Controls office which is doing the export licensing for munitions control and a Defence Trade Policy office run by Pam Frasier. They decided that there was a job for me in the Defence Trade Policy office and ending up as the de-facto deputy in that office. Never got it officially, but I ended up doing the job most of the time.

What they had done in this endless shell game that's gone on over the years in PM, between the munitions control function, the security assistance management function, and the international arms trade policy function, they had now sorted them out into three offices and you had Defence Relations and Security Assistance doing the Security Systems Management over in another part of PM, and then they brought together The Center for Defence Trade Control and Munitions License Office and a Trade Policy office. We would deal with policy issues where the Office of Defence Trade Control couldn't get into policy. We would coordinate and to some degree oversee trade policy with the Security Systems Management people so that there was an even level playing field between government to government arms sales and commercial arms sales. Though there was some consistency that industry couldn't come in and fault us and we could try and do things that would be good for our industry and also good for our national security interest on the international assistance side. So that is what Trade Policy did in the Center for Defence Trade Control. I think they were also trying to develop a better relationship with the defence industries, the U.S. defence industries, the companies that had to deal with the office of Defence Trade Controls. I think there is a long history of complaints that State Department licensing is too slow, it takes too long, you're too restrictive, you're too stiff, you're not flexible enough, just everything. All too often, I think, if a sale didn't happen it was somebody else's fault rather than the U.S. companies. The U.S. government is always a handy fall guy. They did need and they had been getting resources to improve performance. More licensing officers, more computer technology to support the licensing process and record keeping, so this was an ongoing effort, and that's the office I ended up in was Defence Trade Policy and with a portfolio doing space launch, missile technology, Soviet Union, the former Soviet Union, and it rapidly became former Soviet Union and Europe in general as well.

Q: Did this fit into was it Comcon?

MOSHER: We coordinated with Comcon but that was also going away. One of the things that we did a lot in that office was start rewriting the regulations to reflect the disappearance of the Soviet Union so we were rewriting parts of the International Trade and Arms Regulations. The legislation had to be rewritten. We were issuing Federal Register Notices of all the changes. In some cases we had to change the regulations just so that the enforcement capability wouldn't disappear because you could no longer prosecute someone for selling arms to the Soviet Union or transferring technology to the Soviet Union. You had to actually rewrite it so that it said Russia and all the other states. It was a source of never ending amusement the number of times we had to edit other people's drafts to add the Baltic States. You couldn't just simply say, drop Soviet Union, add Russian Federation, yaddah, yaddah, yaddah, because we never recognized the Baltic States as part of the Soviet Union so we always had to address them by name in anything we were changing. It was amazing how many people didn't know that. We were also in the early stages of talking to the Russians about a space launch vehicle, about using their space launch vehicles to launch our satellites, our western satellites. So there were discussions going on there that we actually drafted one of the early forms of the agreement we offered to them.

Q: Were there any issues or was there an issue that was particularly time consuming, worrisome or interesting?

MOSHER: We did a couple of things. One, of course my predominant experience was dealing with all the actions that had to be taken to adjust to the disappearance of the Soviet Union. We also had to start changes to the relationship with all East European countries. Since there were no longer Soviet satellites, we went through a process, as the relationship with each country bilaterally between the United States, Germany, Poland, Romania and all these countries changed, we had to adjust the regulations that governed the activity in arms trade, what could be done. What could be done on the security assistance side and what could be done commercially on our side. They also were all beating on our doors asking for F-16s, M1 Abrams tanks, Huey helicopters, Apache helicopters, and Spruance-class destroyers, anything. All of their Soviet equipment started falling apart real quick and they didn't want to be dependent on the Soviets [Russians]. They wanted to start looking NATO as quickly as possible in order to apply for membership in NATO.

We actually sent several delegations around Eastern Europe, and I was part of an inter-agency group that went through the Baltic States and we went to Poland, Hungary, Czechoslovakia, they hadn't broken up yet, and Bulgaria. We briefed them on the importance of having an arms export control system. We had people from the Commerce Department, we had people from State, we had people from DOD, and we would explain to them from the ground up, this is how the United States controls trade internationally in military technologies and advanced technology, high technologies. Part of the explanation was we need you to have something like this so that we can start trading with you in these things because until you have a working system, we're going to have to restrict what we sell you or what we give to you in these areas. There was a lot of effort involved in that. I actually got to head the delegation when we went to Bulgaria, but was just a member of the delegation for the rest of the trip, which was a fascinating picture of post-communist Eastern Europe.

Visiting each one of these cities in turn in '91 and seeing how both the first signs of change and how slowly change was coming out. Even then the atmosphere was different. Warsaw, we had a great moment. We were getting a briefing from a Polish army colonel from the Ministry of Defence. We'd arrived and they were all telling their concerns and why they wanted all this stuff and then we'd tell them why we weren't in any hurry to give it to them and what they needed to do to prepare the grounds so that we could start giving it to them. This Polish colonel is explaining Poland's security situation now, he says, "You know we have enemies in both directions." He was seriously briefing us that they were worried both about Germany and Russia so they had to be prepared. It's Warsaw, 1946. When he was talking about the Russians I thought I could hear them hammering those wings like the old Polish winged hussars wore and putting them on the back of their tank turrets because they were getting ready to go to Belarus. They wanted to go to Moscow again. So that was an interesting conversation.

Also the culture was different in each one. It was fascinating. Poland was already with a lot of new and nationalist people in these jobs when we went there. In Czechoslovakia, it seemed like what they did was go back and hire everybody back who had gotten fired after '68 when the Soviets invaded and the reformers would be kicked out. They were all back. In Budapest, nothing had changed except the name on the door and the plaque and the symbols. We were dealing with the same Soviet trained Hungarian officials whether they were believers or not that was the school that they'd gone to. We actually sat in a private house that belonged to one of the ministries in Budapest, and sat there for a whole day listening to this whole table side of Hungarian officials explain to us in endless detail their positions on a whole range of things. It was one of the most Soviet experiences in my life. Bulgaria was a mix again. There were still a lot of the same people in charge, all across the board, all clearly interested in looking more and more western as quickly as possible in every possible way.

Q: How about Romania?

MOSHER: We didn't go there with Ceaușescu and the whole issue that was still being played out.

Q: Did Yugoslavia come up at all?

MOSHER: Yugoslavia came up but it was quickly, it bogged down in their internal conflict. Our worst fears were realized. Tito is long gone and there is nobody in his place who could hold the place together. We hadn't yet realized that the leadership in Belgrade now were who they were, and like they were, the worst kind of bloody mis-managers.

Q: By the time you left there in 19?

MOSHER: That would have been '91 to '93 and I don't think I finished a full two years there because as part of this ongoing process of addressing what they saw as issues in the Defence Trade Control or licensing operation. The DAS, Rand Beers, asked me to go over to the Office of Defence Trade Controls and set up a new operation there on the compliance side. This became very much a hot topic in the

wake of Dick Clarke's departure from PM. The Inspector General, Funk, at the State Department, and there was a separate report by the GAO that was very critical. The Funk issue was that PM had not exercised due diligence comes to mind, but I don't think that was the exact language, but PM allegedly had not aggressively enough pursued allegations that Israel was stealing U.S. technology, misusing U.S. technology, diverting U.S. technology to unapproved uses programs, to other end users and so on.

This of course was something that had been discussed in reporting for years. Nobody had ever been able to nail anything down. It was so sensitive politically and also there was a good bit of the reporting that Funk clearly seemed to take at face value which wasn't worth the paper it was printed on. An awful lot of the volume of intelligence reporting is nothing more than crap and it's often repetitive. The same stories will make the world intelligence community circuits for decades and take on a life of their own eventually. Especially when you've got people out there willing to take pay from any intelligence service that comes along and peddle them whatever they think the guys want to hear and often they will work for more than one intelligence service at the same time. Then when services start sharing information the stories just keep going around and around so I had long ago developed a pattern of looking for the similarities when these reports would come in to try and distinguish between an echo of an older report and a brand new report, new information that actually changed the picture in some way.

To my surprise and by my estimation, Clarke misplayed the whole thing completely. Partially I'm told because of personal issues between him and the Inspector General, in part because it was just simply Clarke's personality which includes a serious impatience with fools or anybody he considers a fool, also, long experience, personal experience on his part, with the intelligence products. He knew what the products were worth and he assessed them fairly realistically. When someone claimed that he should be paying more attention to reports which in his experience and his judgement should be ignored, he answered in what for him was an appropriate fashion. Unfortunately, he did it publicly and he blasted right back, and then people on the Hill who didn't like Clarke started coming into it and everything started coming out of the woodwork. Before you know it, he's leaving and going over to the White House and we have a new Assistant Secretary, Bob Gallucci and a new front office. But this whole new team now is quickly taking action to try and address all the issues that have been raised and show due diligence and everything. One of those steps was to get more staff for compliance functions in the Office of Munitions Controls, munitions office.

I was asked to go over there and hand pick the team that would follow up all these intelligence reports and try and sift out actionable intelligence that could then be dealt with by the office of Defence Trade Controls and other agencies and where possible even U.S. law enforcement agencies. I hired three analysts and we set up shop as the Research and Analysis Branch in the Compliance Division of the Office of Defence Trade Controls. I have to admit in some ways I was disappointed because I had been under the impression that I was going to have five analysts, but they took two of the positions away from me, or else they weren't promised to me in the beginning and nobody was going to tell me that bad news. I still got three people, I was able to pick them, which was good.

I looked for people who had, I knew I needed three skilled sets and ideally I wanted them in each individual. I wanted them to be able to read and analyse intelligence and other information, all source information. I wanted them to know how Defence Trade Controls worked and how the licensing process worked, and I wanted them to be able to deal with the intelligence community and with industry in a sort of representational way. I figured if I could get two of those skills sets I could work on the third once I got them because I wasn't going to find three people with the grades they were offering that had all three. I figured with two of them I could make it work and that was pretty much what we hired on. They also spent money on beefing up the computer systems in Defence Trade Controls which was something we got actively involved in, helping them decide how to organize the data itself and make it accessible for our use as well as for the licensing officers' use. Also how to factor into the computer system the list of bad guys which existed but it had not yet been used in this fashion, so the computer was set up so that it would automatically compare all the licensing applications that came in against known bad parties. We worked with other agencies, sharing our information and getting information from them to make that as accurate and complete list as possible, always very carefully making clear to everybody that that list has no legal basis. It's just simply, if this name shows up on a license it means we need to look at it more closely and verify first of all who it actually is because there is a lot of duplication in the arms trade. When you're working in the international market how alliterative you can get when you start moving from one language to the other. Transliteration patterns can be different. Just simply like the names of, are you incorporated under U.S. law, or are you a limited risk organization in the UK law, or you go to Eastern Europe and you get the funny abbreviations that they would use to indicate how you were organized corporately. Just simply to learn how to read those things. We spent a lot of effort factoring all that into the computer system. Then we began to work on that filter. We would read the Intel and look for reported transactions that might match up with something that was in our records as a transaction that we had had handled through the U.S. government or had even turned down if we hadn't approved it and we turned it down and it was somebody pursuing it even without a license. We also worked with Customs and with other law enforcement agencies. If they had a line of inquiry they wanted to pursue they would ask us for information or anything that would match up possibly with what they were looking into. We could move back and forth between the Intel and the law enforcement, whereas Intel and law enforcement couldn't talk to each other directly. By reading and being aware of what was going on in both communities, we couldn't pass the information but we could kind of go, "Look over there behind that rock." Actually that became one of our unwritten rules as we had so many leads to follow for a while that we were telling each other, "Don't kick over the rocks because we know there is something bad underneath it."

Q: Did you see this having an effect?

MOSHER: Yeah, we did. One of the other things that we took on in that office was something called the Section Three Notifications to Congress. This referred to Section Three of the Arms Export Control Act (AECA) which requires the State Department, well it's the State Department's immediate agency, but requires the U.S. government, the Executive Branch, when it has information indicating that a transfer of military equipment covered by the Arms Export Control Act has taken place in violation of

U.S. law, Congress has to be notified. There was a huge backlog of allegations that had not been addressed by the State Department, mostly coming from the Intelligence Community, some coming from other offices within State, some coming from other agencies. What they had our office do, my little branch do, was we actually created an entire tracking mechanism that would identify incoming allegations, identify related information, and then track that information until it developed to a point where we could say, "We have reason to believe that a violation has occurred." We weren't dealing with a courtroom legal level of requirement. We just simply had to get it to the point where we could say, "Yes, I believe something bad has happened here." Then what we would do a draft, an action memo, that would go up to the Under Secretary for International Security Affairs for a decision that would identify the alleged violation, provide our considered opinion on whether or not we believed that it did in fact taken place, recommended a course of action and whether we should seek punishment, should we seek redress, should we seek legal prosecution, or should we just ignore the whole thing because no harm, no foul. Should it be notified to Congress, and here is the notification if it should be notified to Congress.

So we started processing those and that involved working with all these other agencies and offices again and educating them on how the process should work. If you have an allegation or you suspect, we're the people you call. Bring it to us and we'll start processing it. We became sort of the central clearing house for all these compliance aspects of the Arms Export Control Act, separate from the other part of compliance which worked more with the legal process of papers. We worked with the intel people and the law enforcement people. We actually managed to get a couple of cases to prosecution, a number of cases. We also sent enough notifications to Congress. When I came back to PM in 2000, I saw a report on notifications to Congress under Section Three that had been done in the previous decade. Well more than half of those notifications were either done by that office when I ran it, and I left it in '95, or were started but not completed by my staff before I left. We made a major dent in that obligation on the part of the department. I think my successor sort of weakened the process in the system and I don't know that it's working as well. I'm not familiar now with how they are doing it all. Enough time has passed since I left the department and they've changed some of the responsibilities, who does what on that. At that point we were being legalistic. We still had the General Accounting Office coming over every so many months checking up on us to see our progress on addressing all the faults that they'd found which provided some entertainment. Some of their people frankly hadn't a clue as to what business we were in. I take on the first pair of guys that came over to talk to me when I arrived there and got the office set up and running and I briefed them on what we were doing and how it met the requirements that they had laid on us for fixing the system. We got into a conversation about how, at times, when we thought we had an alleged transfer, we would work with our embassy in the country in question and give the embassy talking points and perhaps a paper to go in to the appropriate authorities in the host government and say, "What can you tell us? We have information that suggests the following. Can you confirm or deny or do anything on this?" A lot of these GAO lawyers looked at me and said, "Wait a minute, you mean you exchanged classified information with foreign governments?" I was speechless. I just thought, take him upside the head, wake him up with a good slap, and explain where he was. This is the Department of State. Our job is to talk to foreign governments. I actually had to explain the whole thing to him. Then he had even less idea about how international trade worked out

because I was telling him about another case where we were trying to identify the trail by which certain goods may or may not have been going from the United States to a country of concern. It was a country, like a number of them that had a national airline. The national airline serviced the United States, so it was possible for a U.S. supplier or someone in the U.S. who could get their hands on a piece of hardware to put it on a plane to an airport that was serviced by this foreign national carrier and have the product then moved from the one airplane to the other airplane and then fly out. Again, there was just this amazed look on their faces, looking at me like you know, "And you allow this to happen?" Until I can determine that it is illegal I can't do a damn thing about it anyway. It's called international trade and that's why we have Customs Officers at all the airports that involve international trade, it's their job. It's just amazing the lack of sophisticated knowledge that these people would have and yet they were telling me I was doing the job wrong. It's just an amazing experience.

The other major activity we got involved in was addressing the Israeli issue. I was tapped by the new Deputy Assistant Secretary who had replaced Rand Beers. This was a woman academic who had been brought in to oversee the defence trade operation. It was no longer the Center for Defence Trade. That went away when Dick Clarke left. She oversaw the three offices nevertheless, our two and the Defence Relations and Security Assistance office. She also chaired then this working group that I participated in that addressed the Israeli issue. We worked with all source information and the represented interested agencies, all of us sitting around a table digging through all the allegations and trying to track them down, trying to find a smoking gun. Eventually developing a body of information to package that the policy people at her level and above decided we should sit down with the Israelis and start talking about these issues and these allegations and start trying to clarify and sort out what's going on. We were sorting out the allegations into what can't be substantiated and there is no further trail that's to take us anywhere to pursue the inquiry; a category of, well we've looked at these and looks like whatever they're doing is in fact within the limits of whatever approval is attached to the technology so they're not violating the rules. They just simply know the rules better than we do and are stretching them as far as they can but they are not breaking them; then a category of, well, boss, if you give two engineers the same problem odds are their going to find the same solution especially if they went to the same schools. So there was a category of that and then there was a category of, well, it beats the hell out of me whether or not they've done it or whether or not it's illegal or whatever. It got to be some real hard slogging work because the relationship between the two countries is one of the closest in the world. I commented years before when I had been on the United Kingdom desk, desk officer of the Pentagon, that there was no way you could possibly know everything that was going on between the two countries. With Israel it's almost the same situation. It is almost impossible for any one individual to know everything that is going on because all of the relationships we have between respective agencies and companies and everything which is why it took all of us sitting around these tables to try and answer these questions. Then we began a political dialogue with the Israeli counterparts trying to clarify some of these issues. In some cases it came down to throw up your hands, we can't do anything about it, that horse is out of the barn. In some cases it came down to reminding the Israelis what the rules are and telling them that, telling them sometimes specially, if you do "x" that's a violation of the rules in our view, just to clarify for you. Instead of interpreting the law and regulation after you do it, we're going to start telling you in advance what you can and cannot do with our hardware

and our technology. This is all going on at the same time that we're still working on joint development projects like the Arrow missile and we're buying unmanned aerial vehicles from them and all kinds of other technologies are going back and forth. That's what we did for most of the time in that office. Towards the end of '94, there were administrative changes in there and again I started looking at perhaps taking a Civil Service position there. The head of the Compliance Division died and they were looking for a replacement, so I was competing for that job at the same time working the Foreign Service assignment process looking for a follow-on assignment. They didn't hire me. They hired a guy from the Department of Commerce. An interesting interpretation of the Civil Service hiring rules, they interviewed him but they did not interview me so I had the joy of watching them deal with his screw ups over the next year until they finally had to get rid of him. Instead I took a Foreign Service assignment.

Q: I was wondering, did you feel when you were dealing with the Israeli thing, anything particularly from Congress coming and saying, "Lay off this, don't embarrass our Israeli friends?"

MOSHER: I don't know that we were hearing too much of that but they were handled sensitively. One of the things that you can do, if you send a notification to Congress that somebody has violated the rules you can send it over in classified form because the unclassified ones are published. So that was an option if we had to pursue it with the Israelis. In some of the technologies we probably would have done it that way anyway because some of the materials were sensitive. Not sensitive nuclear, but sensitive advanced systems, electronics and all that kind of systems that we didn't want to have to give away to many details of that. In fact, giving the episode between Clarke and the Inspector General's allegations, if we were getting pressure it was the other way. It was to be able to demonstrate due diligence. There had been a number of books published in that period about the Mossad and the behavior of the Israelis on the international arms market and high tech market and what they were taking from us and re-marking as their own. The issue was open enough that I don't think we would have found ourselves getting pressure on a particular one and not from Congress. If there were sensitivities they were more from the point of view of the White House. Timing was always an issue. We didn't necessarily want to slam the Israelis over the head in the context of, for example, a Camp David meeting where we might be looking at a Middle East peace plan. At the same time there were open source press discussions about Israeli relationships with China on the high tech area. There were serious matters that had to be looked into and I don't think anybody was interested in being in a position to be telling us not to do that. It also told us that if we were going to try and nail them on anything we would have to make sure we actually had a smoking gun with fingerprints and powder residue.

Q: Then in '94 you moved on?

MOSHER: Late '94 into '95 I started lining up, going through the Foreign Service assignment process trying to also look for an assignment, which meant overseas, ideally that would perhaps give me one more shot at further promotion and maybe a longer career. We went through the list of 15. That went away without anything turning up. We got onto the short list on a couple of jobs, Wellington, New Zealand; Canberra, Ottawa. We were looking at any number of potentials. All of them at one

point or another would be turned over to somebody else or the job would go away for any number of reasons, the whole litany. I think I was on the short list for Wellington and somebody got a better phone call in than I did to the decision makers.

Out of the blue, they contacted me about a vacancy in Moscow, running the Political-Military Affairs Section in the Political Section. It turned out that the incumbent was having to curtail because of a family medical situation. They were trying to put somebody in the pipeline then that would come into it earlier than anticipated. I thought, okay, Russian Federation, Moscow, Chief of the Political Military unit within the Political Section, this looks pretty good. I had Russian language training, which was also an attractive plus. I spent a lot of time then working with the Russia desk people, sending resumes in, going and being interviewed by different people. That was the assignment, to go to Moscow after a year's language training in Russian language at FSI.

Q: So you took Russian for what, '94, '95?

MOSHER: Yeah, '95 into '96.

Q: Then '96 you were off to the Soviet Union? You were there for how long?

MOSHER: Yeah. I ended up being there from 1996 to 2000, four year tour.

Q: What was the situation when you got to Moscow in '96?

MOSHER: We've already been through Yeltsin coming into the Presidency, having to shell the Duma to reassert his authority. We're dealing with the aftermath of that. They're still trying to pick up the pieces after the Soviet Union. The Russians are trying to sort out what's their relationship with the other former parts of the Soviet Union. Still hoping to find some kind of modus operandi with Belarus or the Ukraine or both that would keep them within the fold. Not succeeding on any of these things and you're dealing with a war in Chechnya, the first war in Chechnya, while everything is falling apart around their ears. They're also trying to institute, and we're beating on them heavily to institute, more democratic reforms and more economic reforms. Everybody in the world is going to Moscow to tell them how to fix it.

Q: Who was ambassador when you got there?

MOSHER: Jim Collins was there when I got there and he left about the time I left. The Political Counsellor who was my immediate boss was John Ordway who was also back and forth as acting DCM a lot. John Tefft, I think was the DCM most of that time.

Q: You had this political military?

MOSHER: In Moscow this was an interesting animal in the sense that there had originally been an interagency Office for Political Military Affairs in the embassy, which brought together some DOD people, uniformed mostly, and some On Site Inspection Agency people, and some FSOs. It was headed by a military officer with a Foreign Service deputy and then he had two Foreign Service officers and I think four

military officers from DOD and the On Site Inspection Agency. The whole operation was meant to deal with all those strategic arms control and non-proliferation issues and the related programs between the two countries because he had a very big non-lugger effort to eliminate the weapons. You had also all the treaty compliance issues would start and the CFE Treaty, Combined Forces in Europe Treaty. All of the compliance issues related to those with inspection teams going in and out and going to different sites and notifications that had to be transmitted to the Russian government and so on. We were trying to work out a more satisfactory arrangement to help them eliminate chemical weapons and talk to them about biological weapons and agents and the whole range of weapons of mass destruction, plus looking at trying to develop a more normal, essentially a more normal relationship military to military like we had with other European countries with the attaches and with our office as well. That experiment was folded up and what was then created was the Political Military Unit that went into the Political Section which consisted of a Foreign Service officer boss and the Foreign Service officers who worked in the old unit and a military officer who had been in that unit. His slot went to this unit in the Political Section. The rest of the officers billets were moved into a new On Site Inspection Agency office that was set up. There was one all uniformed personnel and run by a military officer, usually colonel rank that was sort of dotted line through the Defence Attaché but basically reporting back to the On Site Inspection Agency in Washington and in Garmisch and elsewhere to do all the leg work, supporting all these inspection teams. As part of the inspection presence we had people housed right at the main gate, for example, of one of the missile factories that manufactured missiles that were going to go away under the INF Treaty, Votkinsk.

Q: I've interviewed Jane Floyd who was one of those.

MOSHER: She, I think, had some experience with that predecessor office.

Q: Here we are, in a way, the political military team is looking at dismantling military training.

MOSHER: Dismantling and the collapse.

Q: It gets out of control.

MOSHER: Yeah. You're dealing with a country that has the military resources to engage a global thermal nuclear war, only now they've got all of these independent countries that used to be part of them where some of that stuff is stored and it's now their property including nuclear tipped missiles. They have the production base for that massive military complex, with no market because they are no long fielding 300 plus divisions to fight the war in Europe against NATO or to occupy Eastern Europe or to occupy all of these other countries that are now independent. It's just devastating to see this. We talk about the rust belt in the U.S. of heavy industry. The Russian rust belt just dwarfed it.

Q: Dealing with the Russians at this time, it must have been very dispiriting for them and really in a way dispiriting for you because having to have a positive attitude and try not to annoy those very proud people and very proud military. It had to be very intense, sensitive and difficult time.

MOSHER: It was and there was even a certain amount of pain. I always said the Soviets bored me to tears. The Russians are fascinating. Russian military history is fascinating. It's got this one chapter that gets colored red and all the rest of it though is just incredible, and Moscow is a great place to start feeling it. They have monuments all around you to the Great Patriotic War. You start reading their history and the number of times Moscow has been taken by different enemies throughout their history, the history of expansion and contraction. You're dealing with officers your age or older who have spent their career looking across at you, across whatever boundaries we had created around the world as potential opponents and rivals. Now you're trying to establish a more friendly relationship, a more open relationship, and a more realistic relationship. The biggest threat to us from Russia wasn't the threat of Boris Yeltsin launching a nuclear war on us, it was that somewhere in the system something would get out of control and get loose. Then we would have to deal with the consequences as well as the issue simply of, "well wait a minute what actually just happened, who shot at us and why and from where and with what, what does it actually mean?"

Q: And what do we do about it?

MOSHER: Yeah, and yet trying to have these relationships in such a way that you didn't defend them. My point a number of times to people in briefings as you would have your different delegations come through Moscow was, they're going to be back. If you look at history, they're going to be back. These are very smart, hardworking people. Assuming that in the meantime somebody doesn't really screw it up, they're going to be back. They're going to be a player. They're not going to be "global threat to the free world Soviet Union" but they're going at least to be a major European, Euro-Asian specific player. The potential is still there. All of things that they were able to turn into military power before and economic power are still there and ideally they're going to start getting even smarter about using it.

The transition was so painful and watching them all adjust. You're trying not to rub in their faces because that is counter-productive in addition to just simply not being good or effective. It was just that you had to have a certain amount of sympathy. I think there is a certain truth to the old parable, that if there is any two people in the world that have the most in common it's Americans and Russians. There are so many things about our respective national experiences that sort of resonant with the other. Just simply being from a country the size that they are. My first week in the office in Moscow I'm going in and I'm reading up on all these issues that I'm becoming responsible for and I'm trying to learn who my staff are and what are their strengths and weaknesses and what are their portfolios and the phone rings. It's about 9:00 in the morning I think. I pick it up and it's our Consul General in Vladivostok. He says, "Oh, hi. We just wanted to say we're getting ready to go home. We're closed up here for the day. We just wanted to check in before we go. Make sure there is nothing we needed to do." I just got to work and you're going home. This is a big country you know.

Q: From your observation what was happening to the Russian Officer Corp?

MOSHER: The most important thing was the demoralization. There was the whole loss of prestige and importance and perhaps even some degree a sense that somehow they failed. They'd lost the Cold War. I tried on more than one occasion to argue with Russians that, "you guys don't get it, the Soviet Union lost the Cold War. Russia won." Actually some Russians would go, yeah, that's right. Russia won the Cold War. The Soviet Union lost. But there were 2 million of them who could not see it that way. You're a Soviet military officer. You've been to all the right academies, the right schools. You've been to all those military services. You've served in the right units and it's all gone. Your pay check is dwindling to worthlessness, when it shows up. Your privileges in special stores that you could go into are disappearing. The military department store was closed by the time I got to Moscow. There were some small shops around town that were still part of that old MOD stores for military officers chain that were still in business, but they had very little to offer. They were restricting themselves increasingly to just simply military uniform pieces and pieces of military equipment that you would need to buy for yourself.

Even the Russian department stores, Voentorg and the other stores were slowly disappearing or evolving. The Moskva, across Red Square from the Kremlin, was now a shopping center full of western style boutiques or even western outlets for goods that the Russian officer on his pay check couldn't possibly buy. Some of them would be working two or three other jobs other than their military duties. Military officers, especially in the construction corps, which was a major part of the Russian military complex, became contractors. They would hire out their construction troops for building projects all over Moscow that had nothing whatsoever to do with the military. It was just like another construction company somewhere in the city going off and doing work only they happened to be wearing military uniforms and supposedly getting military pay, which meant if the officer was truly venal he could pocket everything and just give the troops no more than their regular pay or a little bit extra to supplement it.

The officers, it was devastating, some of them refused to acknowledge it. They were still trying to play the old role. Perhaps just simply out of no idea what else to do or just simply refusal to acknowledge reality. They were clearly divided amongst themselves on how to deal with the situation. The resources weren't coming. The government in Moscow would write and pass defence budgets that would never be implemented fully. Some years less than half of the budgeted money would ever appear. Then you had the one Minister of Defence under Yeltsin, former head of the Strategic Rocket Forces who became Chief of the Armed Forces was, I believe, diverting what money he did get. They had no concept of internal fiscal controls. Money goes missing but eventually the fact that it's missing shows up in the books somewhere and you have big headlines, "DOD can't account for 13 million dollars." The Russian Ministry of Defence couldn't even begin to tell you how much money they got, much less how they spent it. So Igor Sergeev took it to a new level because he clearly took through whatever money was coming in went to whatever he identified as the most urgent need at the moment regardless of what it was supposed to be for. They were actually, by the time I left four years later, they were bringing people over from the Treasury, Ministry of Finances, to run the books in the Ministry of Defence simply as a way to try and maintain control of where the money was coming from and where it was going and made sure it got spent on what it was supposed to get spent on and not being pocketed. There was a whole new world of

press media outlets in Moscow that, a significant number of them, they lived on these various scandals that they could report upon, officers having great beautiful dachas paid for by Ministry of Defence funds or other sources of corruption, Ministry of Defence properties just simply being transferred over to officers. All kinds of things that were coming out.

Q: Did you see any effort to make the Russian army a modern army? What I'm talking about is the abusive treatment of recruits, one and two, the lack of a non-commission officer corps who really run an army.

MOSHER: There was a lot of talk. There was very little effective action. Many of the Russian senior officers and commanders knew what they needed to do. They'd seen Desert Storm, they'd seen the handwriting on the wall. They looked at what they had and they knew it wasn't going to fit the bill anymore. The direction they were all talking about going was an all-volunteer professional army that would have people that would stay in long enough to become expert in the modern systems that they would need to be able to operate. Modern main battle tanks, modern aircraft, all the communications and sensor systems that would be needed to link all those together. The whole TO&E[Table of Equipment and Enlistment] of an army that would at least in terms of capabilities, look more like ours than the army they inherited. They couldn't afford it.

I think by the time I left Moscow the monthly pay of a conscript was 30 rubles which barely paid for a metro ticket on the subway system. They were getting one meal a day, they might conceivably get a second one but don't count on it. Conscripts were openly begging on the streets of Moscow trying not to be seen by superior officers or anybody else who might hammer them for it. If the opportunity arose they would panhandle you especially if you were a westerner and they knew you were a westerner but it didn't matter, they would hit up anybody.

One of the scandal stories that was continually reported by all these new press media outlets was the abuse of soldiers. You were frequently seeing stories of this soldier or that soldier or a group of soldiers at different installations in the hinterland somehow grabbing a hold of weapons and ammo and shooting up the place and then deserting, or sometimes cornered they killed themselves. There would be a shoot-out and then disappearing into the hinterlands or somewhere into an urban area and then they would be pursued by the authorities for a period of time and either the story would go away or you'd hear about them being apprehended.

Draft dodging was rampant because the abuse was still so bad and so poorly defended against. Officers were becoming, officers had been for some time, some officers had been afraid of their men because the senior soldiers who were responsible for carrying out the hazing would threaten officers who threatened their privileges. They were also stealing rations and clothing from the new conscripts in addition to just the abuses that they use to impose on them, trying themselves to survive their military service.

There was no maintenance being done on barracks buildings or on supporting systems, heating systems were failing, the food wasn't getting there. The equipment didn't function so you couldn't train even if you had the money to pay for the training activity when you needed fuel or ammunition. It was a wreck. About my second year

there Yeltsin was pushing real hard and they started actually drafting a reform plan that talked about an army of 10 modern divisions, maybe 12, the number varied on your plan. What they looked to be going towards was a kind of mechanized division, a multi-purpose division that would have its own tanks and its own infantry and artillery in all the branches, basically each one a miniature multi-force instead of having an all tank division next to an all infantry division, which made a lot of sense for the situation. It was not a bad plan. They started identifying units in the army. This unit is going to be the first of the new reformed units and they started bringing in what they called *kontraktny*, the volunteer soldiers that would sign up for a five year hitch and be paid at a higher level and could theoretically be trained. They'd been doing that for about six months to a year and I went to see Dmitri Trenin who is a former Russian army officer who now works for the Carnegie Center in Moscow, writes widely on military reform there. I asked him towards the end of the conversation about the progress of military reform. I said, "Dmitri, the plan is 10 divisions. Right now in your assessment how many combat capable divisions exist in Russia?" I was kind I said, "Five?" He said, "Significantly less than five." He indicated maybe one division could be considered combat capable.

Q: Tell me, what purpose was this draft? People were ducking it, what were they doing?

MOSHER: Their first issue was that the situation was so bad that without the draft they wouldn't get anybody so they couldn't just simply abolish the draft. The second problem was that especially Yeltsin couldn't get legislation through the Duma that would significantly alter, enable him to change the situation as how the army was constructed and created. The opposition to him in the Duma was so strong they weren't going to allow him anything that looked like a reform major that he could claim credit for. Many of them, too, were still old hard line nationalists conservatives or communists who resisted any step that suggested that we were no longer at least second super power.

Q: While you were there did the situation in the Balkans, in Bosnia and then in Kosovo, how was that reflected in what you were seeing?

MOSHER: The most serious outcome of the whole episode in the Balkans was it reinforced the fact that U.S. and Russia and the West and Russia to a degree were on a confrontational course giving our difference of opinions over what should happen in the former Yugoslavia put us in a position of greater confrontation than we had been. That really encouraged those elements in Russia, political and in the military and elsewhere in the security services who insisted on continuing to play a zero sum game. That anything that was a gain for the West, anything that was a loss for Russia and so on that they could not comprehend a more sophisticated world model that didn't put us immediately in confrontation. Which frankly, given the resources and how limited their resources were, was really a short sighted understanding of the realities of the world, something that at least Putin has a more sophisticated grasp of what's going on there. A lot of these guys didn't get it, even yet. The whole escapade of the Russian column racing across Yugoslavia to beat us in Kosovo, it was a charade.

Q: I think we treated it well.

MOSHER: We handled it beautifully.

Q: Well actually the Brits handled it beautifully.

MOSHER: Exactly. Don't make a big issue out of it. Don't get confrontational and in fact if the Brits hadn't been there these guys would have been in real hurt because they had so little infrastructure of support that the Brits had to give them water and other supplies. The shock for them, which I enjoyed being a former desk officer for Bulgaria, they were, I believe, they were supposed to have been supported by an arriving Ilyushin – IL-76 transport aircraft that was going to meet them that didn't show up because no one would allow them to fly over their air space from Russia. The fact that these countries, former members of the Warsaw Pact, told the Russian Federation, "No, we're not going to let your IL-76s fly was a real wake up call for those who were listening.

Q: What about navy and air force?

MOSHER: I don't have as good statistics on them. The navy was obviously hurting because there were beached Russian naval vessels on every available coast line.

Q: I've seen pictures of these beautiful ships in _____.

MOSHER: For the other part of the navy they've got, I've seen figures as high as 30% of the navy seamen are occupied just simply sitting on ships that are tied at docks rusting away because you have to have somebody on board to keep an eye on it. They've got so many of these derelicts. That's a major manpower drain to them. The air force, it was just about as bad. I don't think they bought more than a handful of aircraft for the air force during the four years I was in Moscow. For the navy, they were barely able to finish a couple of ships that were under construction for more than a decade and send them out to the fleet and then barely able to operate them. It was really sad. The biggest problem that I perceived on our side was an inability to grasp this reality and thus to misinterpret a lot of what was really nothing more than posturing on the part of the Russian government. One of these episodes was the very first large scale, multi-service military exercise in Russia since before the collapse of the Soviet Union I think in '97. They were flying TU95 bombers and they were flying them out to their turnaround points and bringing them back.

Q: These are the Bears?

MOSHER: Yeah. They were conducting simulated and real missile test launches across the country and the army was out doing things supposedly. They were at their command posts sending messages back and forth to each other. I believe the two Bear bombers were the only two flyable in the entire air force inventory. The ships could barely get to sea. The army exercise consisted of virtually nothing more than command post participation, a bunch of guys sitting around a desk in some headquarters ordering the Eighth Guards Army to do something and somebody coming back and saying "Yes sir, they've done it." Must have been like Hitler in the bunker in Berlin. This cloud-cuckoo-land they were living in. Yet people were getting

alarmed in the press and elsewhere and talking about the Russian Bear is back. It's smoke and mirrors.

Q: Were we concerned about things like high performance jets, which they certainly had, getting leaked over to China?

MOSHER: It wasn't a leak. There were actually straight defence sales. China and India between them constitute the major portion of Russian defence sales for the last decade. The advanced aircraft were of concern but what's really the problem is what the Russians give the Chinese to hang on those aircraft in the way of air to air missiles and anti-ship missiles that are perceived as a threat to our capability against the Chinese.

Q: Were we doing anything?

MOSHER: Well I was talking a lot. We talked to them a lot. Their own people, there were elements within Russia that would be very alarmist and raise concerns repeatedly. Every time another one of these sales was announced they would stand up and say this is a mistake.

Q: Really looking at China.

MOSHER: Yes.

Q: What about the war in Chechnya, was that going when you were there?

MOSHER: The first one ended pretty quickly so there was very little overlap with that. The second one started while I was there and we saw it coming. I think they started in August and in February and March we started seeing press reports and other reports of Russian military activity that as they accumulated clearly suggested that they had something in mind again. I made a trip back to Washington in April, May time frame of that year because I was coming to the end of my assignment and I needed to touch base with the department on onward assignments and other things. I sat down with the Intel community people who were interested and we compared notes and it was almost unanimous that, yeah, they're going in again. They're setting the stage for another round with Chechnya. As it got closer to happening I actually started telling Russian counterparts, "Guys, you do not want to do this. It is a mistake."

Q: Were you there during the Kursk disaster?

MOSHER: I think it was the Kursk - I was there for one of the submarine disasters.

Q: This one was a big one.

MOSHER: Yeah, we kept track. One of the things that we also did in addition to all these other projects we were working on with the other agencies and their proliferation was we also started doing more reporting out of my office on the state of the armed forces. We drafted the annual report to congress on military expenditures. One of which actually got published in the newspaper as soon as it got handed to

congress since it was unclassified. We basically gave them a very unvarnished picture of the degree to which the Russian military were devastated by the lack of funding.

Q: Did you get any feel either, particularly from the Pentagon, but also maybe the CIA, that we're not talking about just unbiased reporting. If you're going to have a defence force you got to have an enemy. Sort of either over reporting, mal reporting or something like that. Did you get any feel for that?

MOSHER: There was some stuff in the media that suggested that people in the U.S. and elsewhere were looking for that aspect of it. I mean like the reaction to the military exercise and similar conversations would happen later. There was some related conversation in that context after the Balkans episode, about how the relationship was changing. I never heard a lot from either the Intel community or DOD that was sort of ringing these bells or banging the drum for that. I think because, especially at the worker bee level, analyst level, there was enough known about the reality. We were sending in everything we could to make it clear what the reality was. There was very little threat. My God we finally got the Pentagon people to talk about intentions and not simply capabilities. They recognized that there was no intention for the U.S. and Russia to become confrontational, to come into conflict. There would be disagreements but we've had disagreements with the British and French for years. While some people suggest we might want to nuke Paris it's not a reality, its frustration.

Q: Nuking Paris is not really an option.

MOSHER: Not really, but for that matter there was no point in nuking Moscow. The whole world framework had shifted sufficiently that everybody knew that's not where anybody's at anymore, that that's different. My major concern, and I expressed it in some of the reporting, was that Russia was so feeble that it was seriously vulnerable along that whole central Asian boundary. In some ways China was the least of their concerns because at least China was a coherent state that could be counted upon as far as we knew, based upon the leadership that was in power, to act rationally. Frankly it became increasingly apparent that if China was going to launch anything towards Russia it was going to be investment dollars. Economics, they were opening Chinese department stores in Moscow and selling Chinese goods. It was that kind of relationship. It had turned too far around.

Another moment when there was some alarm bells and some drums beating, there was Yeltsin's first rewrite of the national security doctrine which was published in the Russian media. This was the first one since the early ninety's and Gorbachev or post-Gorbachev. It acknowledged the changing world and reassessed the threat and no longer counted the United States among the threats. The later one when they rewrote it would re-include the U.S. based upon capability which even then I tried to explain to people that's the staff academy solution. You write these things on the basis of capabilities and then you talk about the intentions. In this one they didn't even identify the U.S. seriously in that context. That's not going to happen. They were acknowledging that that's not that kind of world. They listed where they saw the threat coming from in other ways. They were talking about an internal threat as well as external threats. Terrorism wasn't yet serious but it was included on the list.

Their clear statement, bottom line, in the whole document was, and it was aimed at those Central Asian states and potentially China although they weren't going to say it so openly, "You screw with us, we nuke you," which is based on the reality that they simply had no capability otherwise, militarily to resist or defend anywhere along that border. Their only option was to go for basically a MAD solution – mutually assured destruction, "We will be compelled to go back to using our nuclear weapons because it is the only way we'll have to reach out and touch you." My assessment was that they were talking short range missiles and fixed wing platforms, aerial bombs. The problem then was their strategic systems are governed by the bilateral relationship with the arms control agreement plus the fact that what are we going to do if all of sudden we start seeing ICBMs launched and they're too hard to target for that short of range. Their shorter range missiles were going away because of the INF Treaty. Most likely their solution was going to have to be bombers and short range ballistic missiles. That was what I was telling them. I sent it back [to the Department] and I said, "This is their admission. By being completely opposite and belligerent but it's in recognition of their own weakness, how weak they are." That vulnerability frightened me. That they didn't have any other way to respond if something did happen. I had actually done a paper at the Naval War College on that boundary as a potential trip wire because it's history. History alone of the boundary tells you that that's a weak point. That it's moved back and forth giving the vagaries of power in the regions through the centuries. It is ethnically mixed enough that it's vulnerable.

Q: You have a rise of fundamentalists and so a crusade is the wrong term to use.

MOSHER: They'd actually dealt with that kind of thing in that area in the '20s and '30s. They had a history there. They knew of the potential.

Q: You left there in 2000, then what?

MOSHER: Greg Suchan, who was a DAS in PM asked me if I would come back to PM to do Europe and the Soviet, the former Soviet states in what was then, now Defence Relations and Security systems is back. The Defence Trade Policy office was gone and PM had moved all the shelves again and that was where the Defense Relations and Security Assistance ended up this time. So I came back to that office and took over that portfolio.

Q: You did that for how long?

MOSHER: I did that for just about two years.

Q: And then what?

MOSHER: And then retired.

Q: Why don't we talk about the last two years. What were the issues that you were dealing with?

MOSHER: A lot of it was still the follow on; a lot of it dealing with the issues with the former Soviet states. Although now having to do with the fact that some of them are coming into NATO. Now you've got a different arrangement. I've got NATO,

I've got European neutrals, a dwindling club, I've got future members of NATO, nations that have already joined the queue and were in Partners for Peace and other programs and on the track to membership. I've got Ukraine and Belarus and Romania and then the Caucasus, we're trying to figure out still where's that going, Central Asia and then Russia itself of course. So I've got all that territory and the issues of what are the differing relationships, how do they overlap and how do they interact. If we're talking to Romania about eventually becoming a member of NATO, what about Moldova and what's our situation in the Caucasus which becomes an entirely different playing ground. Now you've got the Armenian Nagorno-Karabakh conflict and you've got Russia messing around still in the Caucasus with the war in Chechnya still going on and you've got Iran and Iraq right next door.

You go further to Central Asia then you've got Afghanistan and the Taliban and then China and North and South Korea on the boundaries in the Pacific Ocean so you've got that. There is a slightly different situation. What can we do with the Russians, at different levels of friendship. We're still trying to bring along the ones who want into NATO, we're dealing with Russia about the fallout from "you can't bring the Baltic states into NATO because that would insult us and hurt our pride and it would violate your three no's" and all these other yaddah, yaddah, yaddah. The political reality being, I'm sorry as long as they are eligible there's no way we can say no to the Baltic States being in NATO. It's the 21st century, get used to it. Oh, and in dealing with the fall out of the Y2K panic which we had gone through while I was Moscow.

Q: It's hard to remember, you might explain it.

MOSHER: There was a widespread concern, especially in connection with any systems that depended upon computers, computer software and programming that either because of deliberate bugs or because of fault in the software that when the calendars rolled over from 1999 to 2000, to the new millennium, all these computer systems would fail because the computers would not be able to deal with the fact that it was now the year 2000 and no longer 1999. Most western software programmed for you to only pay attention to the last two digits of the year. I had more than one Russian computer software designer come to me and say, "It never occurred to us to only put down two digits for the year. We wrote all our software for four digit years so we don't have this problem." The State Department lead a major global effort to prepare for any eventuality and Moscow of course was considered to be one of the vulnerable points because it's former Soviet Union and we know everything is falling apart, we don't know anything about their computer systems, we know everything else they've got is crappy. The whole thing might collapse. The reactors blow up, who knows what could happen.

The embassy across the community represented, the embassy in Moscow is like Washington, if there is a government agency they've got somebody in Moscow it seems like; but across the board unanimously we kept telling Washington, no problem, no problem, it is not a problem. We even sent every available dependent home that wanted to go. They even made extra arrangements for people to leave Moscow so they reassured people there to have to be saved from the disaster.

Our family, we sat down, my wife is a computer consultant, she knew Russian programmers, she knew Russian computers, she worked with them on Microsoft

products. She trained some of the embassy staff. I talked to the Russians at the MOD and other people and other people from the embassy had gone into even greater depth conversations. Our general assessment was first of all if there is any city in the world that has experience in dealing with the breakdown of any major system it's Moscow because in the last decade it seems like everything in the city had broken down at one time or another and been fixed. Secondly, from everything they tell us the only computers that are vulnerable are the ones that they've imported from the West. All the Russians ones, they've been dealt with and the Russians assured us they fixed any of the ones that were vulnerable which meant either they weren't vulnerable and they weren't going to tell us that or they weren't going to admit that they were vulnerable and they weren't going to tell us that. On top of that we have this huge embassy with backup generators, a swimming pool full of clean water, we've got all these other resources. This is the best lifeboat you could get is this embassy compound. We wrote it up. We had people detailed to stand watches all through New Year's Eve into New Year's Day and report back; everything normal.

Q: This is one of the great disasters that never happened.

MOSHER: Afterwards when everybody had to report in their wrap up assessment of the Y2K event Embassy Moscow also specifically said I think it was almost literally, "And we expect an apology from all those people back there who doubted us when we told you everything here was fine." There was actually, I gather, some fairly harsh criticism made of the embassy's assessment not possibly being right. I got through that and returned to the land of the big PX.

Q: Dealing with this were you running across concerns about, gee if we let these eastern European nations come into NATO we're going to annoy the Russians and this is going to sour our relations?

MOSHER: You had the whole range of arguments. You had the argument from, and it brings to mind an old colleague, a former now retired Foreign Service officer, friend of mine Jacques Reinstein who had been present at the creation of NATO was one of the strongest critics of the whole idea, "You can't let any of them in it will destroy NATO." I just didn't even pursue it with him, but thought Jacques, it's 2001. It's not 1949, it's not 1956. The relationships and the world has changed. NATO as you knew it isn't needed and yet NATO has capabilities that are unsurpassed by any other organization anything like it in the world. It's a wonderful tool for helping us reintegrate this part of the world back into the world community and having some say over how they choose to be reintegrated. NATO was in a position to tell them this is the way you organize your armed forces, this is the way you organize the civilian leadership that runs the armed forces. These are the military capabilities you should have, these are the military capabilities that you don't need to have and this is how you now play the game as a free democracy cooperating with other democracies in the world. At the same time you've got the EU (European Union) telling them this is how you organize to be part of the world free market economy. You need to have both of those dialogs going on to bring these countries into the fold and to put the stamp of approval on them. They badly want that stamp of approval.

Q: How did this play out during the two years you were there?

MOSHER: We went through the process of bringing in a couple of the NATO members, the new NATO members, and that meant working with all the regulations and legislation that had to be changed and adjusting their status, their eligibility for different security systems forms and things and then taking the money away. Traditionally we don't give security assistance to NATO members. In some cases though exceptions had to be made to recognize that these countries still had a long way to go and needed the resources. One of the things that hampered us was at the same time the goal posts in a sense kept moving. NATO itself was still evolving, still trying to identify a role for itself, and identify what capabilities it needed. We'd been through the whole Kosovo thing and the embarrassing reality that basically NATO couldn't play on the same playing field with us anymore, except for the Brits and to a degree the French, was a shock. We also needed to work with that. Then one of the problems they said was, "We can't become as capable as you are because you won't sell us or give us the stuff that we need to make it happen because your own export control laws are too restrictive. You won't share us the technology." So we were dealing with those kinds of issues at the same time we're dealing with the want-to-bes, what could they have, what kind of assistance should they get. Does Lithuania need an air force, what kind of air defence systems should the Baltic States have, what do we do about Georgia?

Georgia got to be a real problem because of the proximity to Chechnya, the Russia pressures on Georgia claiming that it was a channel through which the Chechens were getting into Chechnya plus the two break away parts of Georgia that still have some Russian troops on them as peace keepers – South Ossetia and Abkhazia. You had Eduard Shevardnadze as the head of Georgia and he's, of course, he's a golden boy to the West. It's very hard to bring people down to the reality that, okay, Eduard Shevardnadze is a good guy. The country is corrupt as hell, it's riddled with people that we're not sure we trust, either to be not crooked or not to be friendly. Yet people wanted us, including the White House, wanted us to do things quickly for Georgia and frustrated when we couldn't make it happen.

One of the things we didn't realize was that just simply, the processes that are established for providing security assistance and international commercial sales are very much set by Congress. There are very few ways you can short circuit that process and it takes time. The one really impressive thing, especially after 9/11, when we were working in that job now we're all of a sudden, it was interesting because before 9/11 we went down the list of all these countries in Central Asia and the Caucasus. You would be asked questions about different aspects of the relationship. Can we do this, can we give them this, can we sell them that. You'd run down the list of answers, yes or no, and a lot of them would be no for various reasons.

After 9/11 you go back down the same list, you ask the same questions and a lot of the no's become yes because now the importance is changed. The necessities have changed and the requirements for everybody have changed. At the same time from the very beginning, I was very sensitive to the fact that now we've got a war on terrorism and the Russians are going to be trying to jump on our bandwagon over Chechnya and try and start playing it as "It's you and me together against these bad guys."

I covered Chechnya enough in Moscow before I left, working with Ambassador Collins on this, what is going on, all the details to know that it wasn't necessarily so.

They would desperately play that card but there were enough things about the conflict in Chechnya that we were not comfortable with, that we needed to try and keep some distance. The other thing was resources. After more than 20 years in government and time and again you'd come up with a, boy it would really be great if you could do this in this country, but "We haven't got the money." We sit down and they start going down the list of the things we need to be able to do and you'd start adding up the cost and the White House would go to the Hill and we'd get the money. It was just a novel experience. It happened in a number of different situations that I can't imagine it happening any other way. We were able to get assistance to people who needed it in times that it really had some effect.

Q: Did you feel any of the political momentum, pressure, whatever you want to call it coming from the Pentagon, CIA, White House or something about estimates about Iraq? Did that come across your radar?

MOSHER: I didn't get into any of the discussions on intelligence or the threat. I knew enough of the same people in State who were still working that account from when I worked in that office myself. I also knew that most of what I knew from those days was still fairly valid. I deliberately stayed away from it because of the history. I didn't want to go into that. At this point the personalities were still pretty much there. Alan Locke was still there. The real issue on my level, what I was seeing, was the appointees in DOD and at State that have been generally identified collectively as the neo-cons. Paul Wolfowitz and Doug Feith at OSD and John Bolton at State as the Under Secretary and therefore our boss, I'm working for him. It was pretty clear to us at the working level that Iraq was on the hit list. It would be no surprise to anybody that at some point in the future we were going to be in Iraq and we're going to be at war. It was clearly on the agenda, the political agenda. It was going to happen and we couldn't right now predict the path by which we were going to get there, but that's where they wanted to be and they were going to try and find a way to get there for any number of reasons. It didn't help of course that it was hard to come up with an argument about, in the best of all possible worlds, why we shouldn't go ahead and get rid of Saddam Hussein.

Q: If you're going to have somebody on the hit list he's the guy but the rationale for it

MOSHER: At this level and this kind of sort of around the margins and between the lines it never even got to talking justifications. It was just right there, it was on the agenda, hit Iraq. That was very real.

Q: You retired in 2002?

MOSHER: Yeah, in late 2002 in September.

Q: And now you're doing what?

MOSHER: Well I'm working on a PhD (Doctor of Philosophy) in war studies which is something I started before I retired. I think it's probably worth mentioning, I sort of retired in protest.

We'd gotten through the immediate post 9/11, we gotten through Afghanistan and we were clearly gearing up for Iraq. At the same time now you've got the Palestinian and Israeli situation heating up. The Israelis have started using our Hellfire missiles on our helicopters, all of which we've sold them, to assassinate senior PLO (Peoples Liberation Organization) and Hamas and other terrorist figures that they're after that are senior leaders of the organizations involved. At the height of that campaign in that summer, the request came in for more Hellfire missiles. I ended up being in the middle of it because I was in the office when the phone rang one day and I'm running messages back and forth to the PM front office. In the process I tell Turk Maggi that I think there is a serious question here of a potential violation of the Arms Export Control Act by the government of Israel by using these missiles in this way that I believe somebody should address; which means someone has to write a memo and sign their signature at the bottom of that memo that says, yes this is a violation or no this is not a violation. I said, "I do believe this needs to be addressed before this sale is approved." Laid my marker down and that was never done and the sale was approved. So I put in my papers for retirement, and I sent a letter to the Secretary of State. We had copies going to the Under Secretary, John Bolton, and to PM, Hank Bloomfield, and to my DAS in my chain which would have been Greg Suchan saying exactly what I thought was wrong and why I thought it was wrong; that I thought it was a potential violation, that it needed to be addressed and that our failure to do so was a serious dereliction of duty. I could not be, in anyway, considered a party to it and therefore I was asking for my papers and I was going to leave which produced some interesting varied reactions.

The first question everybody had of course was I going to go to the press. To which I said, "No way, most of them wouldn't understand what the hell I'm talking about anyway, just simply too bureaucratic an issue and too complicated for anybody to be able to write a newspaper story on without getting it wrong. That made them a little calmer. Then my office director was asking, "Well, you can't at least wait until I leave?", having previously said to me, "Robert this isn't your responsibility anyway." I looked at him and I said, "Tim, you know that sounds even worse in English than it did in German." He went kind of blank. I hoped somebody explained it to him. The reactions were just fascinating to the whole thing. I said, "That's it. I don't have to put up with this anymore." For some time I had been joking that the stress levels sometimes in the job had gotten to the point where I would start the day with a blank retirement request form on my desk and every time somebody pissed my off during the day I'd fill out another box. When the day came that I filled out the entire paperwork by the time it was the end of the day that was the day I was going to send it in. So in a sense they filled out the paper for me so I left. I got a short little note from Paul, from the secretary, right there hanging on the wall, thanking me for my views and for my service and going on. It was a class act. I've never had any doubts about that whatsoever. I also, I made it clear, people asked me, I said, "I have no expectation whatsoever that this is going to change anything. It just means I don't have to deal with it anymore. You guys have to deal with it." So as I said I was already enrolled for this PhD program in war studies.

Q: Was this George Mason?

MOSHER; Well, no it's done through the Union Institute and University based in Cincinnati, Ohio which does a sort of distance learning, although it's not really that.

The best description I've heard compares it to the British tutorial system of higher grades, higher levels, whereby you work individually with a particular professor through the stages of your program and then at the end you've completed the requirements and you're awarded the degree. In this case you designed a program yourself, you assemble your committee and they give you criteria that you have to meet to choose someone to be on your committee, what their skills and credentials have to be and you design your program and you lay it out in what is called a learning agreement. You had a meeting with the entire committee that agrees, yes, this is a program that justifies, if completed, the awarding of a PhD and that then goes to the university authorities and the dean's office reviews it and concurs or suggests that, no you need to change it. So I got through that process a year and a half ago. My program was certified and I'm now hoping to complete it this year although there is a good chance that it may spill over a little bit into the following year. So I'm working in the general field of war studies and I'll be doing a dissertation on, what can we learn about the concept of the revolution and military affairs by looking at the adoption in the 19th century of the Greeks loading both action magazine fed rifle. How did it come to be adopted, how did technology come to be available and how did the armies have to change what they were doing because of the weapons capabilities. So that's how I spend most of my time these days when I'm not out re-enacting the Irish brigade or pursuing one of my other interests.

Q: Great.

ADDENDUM

12 July 2002

The Honorable
Colin L. Powell
Secretary of State

Mr. Secretary:

I am writing this letter in order to set out for you, and others, my reasons for choosing at this time to end my 29-plus year association with the Foreign Service and the Department of State. That association has included service in the Republic of Vietnam, during which time I participated in the 1975 evacuation of the American and Vietnamese embassy staff; a total of four years' service in the then-Republic of Zaire - during the 1977-79 years of conflict with forces based in Angola, and 1987-89; two years at the American Consulate General in Belfast during the Hunger Strike years - 1980-82; two years' service as a State-Defense Exchange Officer in the Office of the Secretary of Defense - 1982-84; several tours in the Bureau of Intelligence and Research as a Watch Officer and contributor/editor of the Secretary's Morning Summary, Analyst for East Africa and the Indian Ocean, Analyst for Soviet Third World Foreign Policy and Defense Industries, and Analyst for Third World Missile Proliferation. My last overseas posting was Moscow, where I was Chief of the Political-Military unit in the Political Section for four years, 1996-2000. I am

presently serving as Chief for Europe/Eurasia in the Office of Regional Security and Arms Transfers, in the Bureau of Political-Military Affairs.

Conflict and war, like all human activities, take place within a moral context. Civilization has long sought to temper acts of war by placing them within a convention of moral, legal judgements that attempted to define and separate what was permissible from what was not, while trying not to leave society unable to defend itself. Two important principles have emerged as guidance for the potential use of deadly force by nation states in self-defense - the concept of appropriate, proportional response and the prescript that the greater power, especially when it holds an overwhelming advantage in power, is expected to act with greater restraint and forbearance in the use of force against weaker states and entities, even when acting in self-defense. History has demonstrated that the use of deadly force in violation of accepted moral constraints is corrosive both of the military/security forces so acting, and ultimately of the society on behalf of which these forces are acting.

Over the past year, the world has witnessed the violent interactions of the state of Israel and the presumed “proto-state” of Palestine. It should be noted that, however horrific their acts the Palestinian suicide bombers and other users of terror do not, in fact, in or of themselves possess the capability to destroy the state of Israel. Therefore, the principles of appropriate, proportional response and self-restraint must be considered to apply. Nevertheless, the two sides appear to have trapped themselves into a lethal embrace of tit-for-tat violent escalations labeled by each as “self-defense.”

A review of the 50-plus years of the relations and interactions between Israelis and Palestinians should quickly make it clear that this is a situation of shades of gray - there are few if any aspects that can be easily and clearly cast in blacks and whites. The forces at work on both sides in this conflict are many and varied, and heavily encrusted with the complications of history, religion, politics, and even economics.

Nevertheless, the appearance on worldwide television news broadcasts of American military equipment in Israeli service being used to carry out these escalations has presented the world an almost black versus white image of U.S. approval if not sponsorship of these violent actions - an image that cannot be erased by statements of denial in Washington, DC. Nor could this image of approval/ sponsorship have been in any way reduced when further accompanied by statements at the highest level of a U.S. policy that has walked away from any attempt at balance in its assessment of the Middle East situation.

Personally, the image from this developing conflict that most blatantly contradicts the principles noted above has been that of American-built Apache Attack Helicopters using the capabilities developed to counter hordes of Soviet tanks in Central Europe, to now hunt down individuals in the West Bank. And having successfully hunted them down, to then dispatch their “target” using American-built Hellfire Anti-Tank Guided Missiles to destroy the car or building occupied by that target - as well as anyone else, including women and children, whom fortune had placed in the immediate vicinity.

The HELLFIRE II Anti-Tank Guided Missile System deployed upon Israeli AH -64 Apache Attack Helicopters are just over 5 feet in length and carry just over 100 pounds of explosives. With a speed faster than Mach 1.3, the missiles can hit targets at ranges greater than 4 miles, often striking the selected targets without warning. According to press reports, the Israelis modified the missiles to ensure that the warhead exploded at the desired moment, i.e., just after it entered the automobile or room in which the targeted individual was located. Obviously, the detonation of 100-plus pounds of high explosive is almost certainly lethal to anyone in the vehicle or room - and has a good chance to kill or at least seriously injure anyone unfortunate enough to be in the vicinity of the target.

It was in just this fashion, in scenes played out on the television news, that Israel depleted its stock of these weapons provided for its defense against the armored formations of any Arab state that might attack it. And it was just this depletion that led Israel to seek additional HELLFIRE Missiles from the United States, via the Foreign Military Sales System.

The Arms Export Control Act (AECA), as amended, states that the United States shall sell or lease defense articles and services to friendly countries “solely for internal security, for legitimate self-defense, to permit the recipient country to participate in regional or collective arrangements or measures consistent with the Charter of the United Nations, or otherwise to permit the recipient country to participate in collective measures requested by the United Nations for the purpose of maintaining or restoring international peace and security, for the purpose of enabling foreign military forces in less developed countries to construct public works and to engage in other activities helpful to the economic and social development of friendly countries.” This language is repeated in Section 502 Utilization of Defense Articles and Services, of the Foreign Assistance Act. Section 3 of the AECA and Section 505 of the Foreign Assistance Act both bar the use by any recipient of such defense articles and services in any way not consistent with these stated end uses.

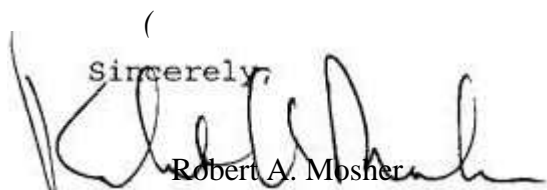
However, and in spite of the above noted and widely broadcast images of Israeli forces using HELLFIRE missiles on the West Bank to assassinate officials of the Palestinian Authority, this Administration raised no objections, questions, or obstacles to the rapid approval of Israel’s request for additional missiles. Despite the obligations of Section 3 of the Arms Export Control Act, no investigation or assessment of the Israeli use of these HELLFIRE missiles was made, no official report was made, and no official at any level in the Department of State received any decision memorandum requesting a determination as to whether Israeli actions constituted a violation of the Arms Export Control Act. An international relations metaphor currently in circulation casts the U.S. as the world’s sheriff and Europe as the saloonkeeper. However, in this context, Israel would be the cowboy in front of the saloon on Saturday night who has just emptied his six guns shooting up Main Street. And the U.S. would be his comrade who then calmly hands the shooter his own loaded pair of six shooters.

One of my previous postings not noted above was Chief, Research and Analysis Branch, Compliance Division, Office of Defense Trade Controls, Bureau of Political Military Affairs, where I served from 1993-1995. In that capacity, I was the highest level officer in the Department of State with full-time responsibility for reporting Section 3 violations of the AECA as well as violations of the Foreign Assistance Act.

From a report prepared during 2001, I learned that of all violations of AECA Section 3 reported to the Congress, as required under the AECA, over half were either completed or initiated during my two years tenure. Were I still serving in such capacity, I assure you that a decision memo would have been prepared and sent forward for resolution by either bureau or department leadership.

Against the background of continued Israeli actions in the Gaza Strip and on the West Bank and the public positions taken by this administration on those actions, the Department's failure to exercise its responsibilities in the area of arms transfers has become my line in the sand. While I am fully familiar with the Dissent Channel, and have in fact made use of it during my career, I have concluded that the above-noted circumstances warrant not simply and in all probability a vain expression of dissent, but in fact demand that I disassociate myself from this and related decisions. Therefore, I have asked to be allowed to retire at the earliest practicable moment. My last day in current position will be August 2, and my date of retirement will be September 30, 2002 - concluding twenty- nine and one half years of service.

I wish you and my colleagues the best of fortune in your continued service.

Sincerely,

Robert A. Moshier
Chief, Europe/Eurasia
Office of Regional Security
and Arms Transfers
Bureau of Political Military Affairs

cc:

The Director General of the Foreign Service
The Under Secretary for Arms Control and International Security
The Assistant Secretary for Political Military Affairs

End of interview