

Interview with William K. Hitchcock

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

WILLIAM K. HITCHCOCK

Interviewed by: Stephen Low

Initial interview date: July 7, 1998

Copyright 2002 ADST

Q: Today is July 7, 1998. This is an interview with William Hitchcock. This is being done on behalf of the Association for Diplomatic Studies and Training in Carbondale, Colorado. I'm Steve Low and I'm asking William K. Hitchcock questions about his life and career in the Foreign Service. Bill, tell us a little bit about where you came from, where you were born, your parents and what pointed you toward a life in the Foreign Service.

HITCHCOCK: I was born in eastern Colorado in the town of Wray named after an early stalwart of that community. The town of 2,000 population was the centerpiece of an agriculturally based area of the Great Plains. The town, with a small river running through it, was a little jewel in an area of dry land farming. My birth date of 1919, was within three months of the end of World War I, and I did my growing up between then and the beginning of World War II. Wray provided most of its own stimulus; there wasn't much else to depend on. But, living there at that time, one easily developed a sense of self-sufficiency and contentment.

My teen years coincided with some difficult times in that part of the country. But the Stock Market crash and other national events that produced the Depression beginning in 1929 did not have as great an impact among the farmers and in the small towns of the West.

Library of Congress

It was the repeated crop failures in the mid-'30s that undercut the economic base of prosperity in the Great Plains and created suffering different from, but more or less equal to, that being experienced in the industrial sections of the East. To get started on this account of my life, let me first recapture how my parents got to Eastern Colorado in the first place. Both of them had come to Colorado from different places in 1885. They could properly be called pioneers - not the first wave of pioneers, but the later homesteader types. My father and his family were from Missouri having moved to Missouri from New York not too long before and from England before that. How long before, I'm not sure. My mother was from Michigan having also originated in England. My family, on both sides, was from an English and Scottish background. My father was one of 15 kids, my mother one of nine. They came, presumably, in search of the opportunities for a better life they hoped to find in the West.

This West we are talking about is at the tri-junction of Colorado, Nebraska and Kansas - the western edge of the Great Plains before it bumps in to the Rocky Mountains. The town of Wray, where they settled, was surrounded on the north by cattle ranches and on the south by wheat farms. A little corn, rye and millet were also grown, but basically it was wheat and cattle on which people depended for their livelihood. But during the thirties the rains failed along with the crops and there was widespread suffering throughout the area. My formative teenage years were during that period.

About 45 years earlier, 1890 or so, when dad was of a similar age, he had faced a period of even greater difficulty and left Wray looking for a job. He ended up in Cripple Creek, one of the mining boomtowns in the state. There he remained several years working in the mines. In this tough environment, as a kid in his first job, he seemed to have shown he had the "proper" stuff: the history of Cripple Creek reported, in its 1895 edition, that he was in charge of the mule trains in the mines. Sometime around the turn of the century, he returned to Wray and soon established a reputation as a hard working person of great reliability. In 1913 or thereabouts, he was elected the County Sheriff, a job he held until the end of the decade. This led him on to other things, and he soon became one of the town's

Library of Congress

“entrepreneurs,” owning the furniture store, the hardware store, and the tin shop (important at that point in the early history of our small towns). He also was the local mortician and, to round it off, bought a wheat farm of 640 acres - small for that part of the country. It was a nice farm but not quite adequate for a full living. Besides, he was a town boy and we lived in the town, not on a farm.

This collection of business activities produced an adequate income for our family of four - I had a brother - until the depression of the mid-thirties. But, though our income declined then, the incomes of almost everyone else did too. And so did the cost of living. Throughout this period of change my father managed to save enough to support my going to college. He placed a high value on education, perhaps because he never finished high school himself. He saved regularly for my brother's and my education, but the local savings and loan bank collapsed in 1935 just as I was about to start college. In addition, at this same time we began to see evidence that his health was declining.

I should add a few things about myself at this point in the story. I was an achiever type in high school. I didn't care where I was going, but give me a problem and I would try to go some place with it. I think I was president of my class in all classes that had that office except one or two. I was also one of the top students in high school - almost straight As, not brilliant, but a good student.

As college approached, I applied for and was awarded a scholarship to go to Yale's Sheffield School of Engineering. Almost simultaneously, my father's health took a downward turn. He had to have a gallbladder operation in the spring of 1937, but his recovery was not satisfactory (this was pre-antibiotics). Under these circumstances, and given the amount of time travel took in those days, I decided not to go to Yale and enrolled instead in the College of Engineering at the University of Colorado. I was happy I made that decision because my father's health continued to decline throughout the fall of 1937, and I was home when he died, January 1, 1938. He was 63. It was a very sad moment, because I had great admiration for him.

Library of Congress

Q: But your mother was still there?

HITCHCOCK: Yes, of course, and she was the center of our concern, because she was never one for great leadership. Neither my younger (3-years) brother nor I were well prepared to face the challenges of dad's death, so I decided to stay out of school the remainder of that school year and help in any way I could. By fall 1938 when I returned to school, I had decided that engineering was not what I wanted as my academic major even though I had had good grades on my first try a year before. So, not knowing where I wanted to go academically, I enrolled in the College of Arts and Sciences (at the University of Colorado, Boulder) in the hope that a little more maturity would help me reach a decision later. Ultimately I had a divided major of economics and political science. I had the same kind of achieving disposition I had had before, and remained an A-student throughout my undergraduate years.

I was also very active in campus extracurricular activities, and, during my senior year, I was the first-ever elected president of the student body.

During my sophomore year I got to know a professor of political science by the name of Clay Malick who was to have a major influence on my life. He was an inspiring professor, 30-35 years of age, a Harvard Ph.D. and a deep interest in the world events of our time. From my contact with him came my interest in public service as a career. Under him I took courses on comparative government and international relations which I greatly enjoyed, but to say that that suggested a possible interest in a Foreign Service career did not even enter my mind. I was, however, encouraged to focus attention on public service as a possible career. In that period, you may recall the 1930 government service was almost the *crème de la crème* of career ambition.

Q: Roosevelt had an impact on the attractiveness of such a career?

Library of Congress

HITCHCOCK: Oh he did, immensely. He was the undisputed leader of our country in a time of crisis, and his programs inspired a lot of creative thinking about the role of government in our society. Malick was significant in guiding my interest because of his knowledge of governance in general and his views on comparative government in particular.

Frankly, we were simply living in a very stimulating and innovative time. For example, 1940-41 was my senior year at Colorado. Conscription, which passed the Senate by one vote in June 1940, became effective in October of the year. It focused the attention of everyone, men and women, on the prospect of war. As President of the student body I was heavily involved in organizing events that explained conscription and discussed the impact of larger events from Europe. As events in Europe unfolded that year, the assumption of a vocal minority on campus that the U.S. could stay out of the war eroded.

Q: If you saw what was coming, did you go into the military when you graduated?

HITCHCOCK: Not directly, but I did expand my horizons after I graduated in the summer of 1941 with my bachelor's degree from Colorado University. I accepted a graduate fellowship in Washington, D.C. with the National Institute of Public Affairs (Rockefeller Foundation). This prestigious program chooses 40 fellows each year. Its objective was to introduce selectees to government service, while furthering their education. I studied at American University and interned at the Bureau of Agricultural Economics in the Department of Agriculture.

Shortly after the war began on December 7, 1941, my supervisor at the Department of Agriculture was put in charge of recruiting social scientists for the war effort, and he asked me to go with him. NIPA agreed to transfer the internship to the Civil Service Commission.

Library of Congress

Of course, I was also caught up in the patriotic spirit of the time and enlisted in the Army Air Corps as an Aviation Cadet. Because enlistments exceeded training facilities, I did not enter the Army Air Corps until some months later.

Q: So, you saw service during World War II?

HITCHCOCK: Yes, I formally joined the Army Air Corps in 1943, earned a commission as a 2nd Lieutenant, and qualified as Pilot, Heavy Bomber (B-24 Liberator). After extensive training we were a crew of ten that had trained together at various fields throughout the U.S. We were assigned our airplane in late 1943 during training in Utah. Further training followed with our final inspection for Preparation for Overseas Mission Movement (POM), I think in Kansas City, Missouri. In late February 1944 we were one of group's 59 aircraft to fly from Florida to England via South America and Africa. At this time I was the co-pilot. Upon arrival in England the crew was assigned to 467th Bomb Group, 2nd Division, 8th Air Force, at Station 145, the Rackheath Air Base five miles northeast of Norwich, in Norfolk county. First, we undertook additional training in Stone, England, before we entered combat. The group's first mission was flown on April 10, 1944 against an aircraft assembly plant in Bourges, France. (Editor: For a history of the 467th Bomb Group see: <http://www.siscom.net/~467thbg/index.html>.)

By mid- to late 1944 our crew completed its combat tour (34 missions) and didn't lose any of the crewmembers. The crew was split up and went to different destinations. Later in 1944 I received orders that transferred me to London as analyst to the U.S. Strategic Bombing Survey. The survey was a major effort, now that we were on the continent of Europe, to assess the effectiveness of our bombing campaign.

In January 1946, holding the rank of captain, I was demobilized and returned to the U.S. One of the conditions of military service was a promise that one could return to one's previous employment, so I rejoined my pre military job at the Civil Service Commission. At that time I was in a car pool with civil service people working on the administrative side at

Library of Congress

the State Department. State was expanding. At their encouragement I sought a transfer to State Department and was assigned to State's Foreign Service Planning Division that had the task of helping organize the implementation of the Foreign Service Act of 1946.

Q: We are starting this tape again after a break; its 1947 and you joined the State Department.

HITCHCOCK: I don't want to make too little of my first brief period in the Department (1946-47), because it did introduce me to a lot of the workings of our foreign policy establishment and to the ways people were conceptualizing the future of an expanded U.S. role in the world. Even though I had had little experience in foreign service (none, apart from the War), I was able to absorb the views of several seasoned officers assigned to the same division as I. For example, I shared an office with Parker Hart, a seasoned FSO (Foreign Service Officer) and a top expert on the Near East. (Mentioning Parker reminds me that we were on the second floor of a temporary building located at the corner of 23rd and C Street, NW that was not air-conditioned. As I recall, we were automatically released to go home in the summertime when the temperature got to 97 degrees.)

The head of the division was another well-respected FSO named Tyler Thompson, who, possibly unknown to him, was a big help to me during my first few weeks. In addition, several other FSOs were also on the staff of our division, and I leaned on all of them.

Q: You were asked to design what an embassy staff should be?

HITCHCOCK: Please don't exaggerate my responsibilities in that respect: a lot of people worked on how a post-war embassy ought to be organized. Remember, the Foreign Service Planning Division was the unit with action responsibility for bird dogging the implementation of the Foreign Service Act of 1946; specific work projects were always carried out under the supervision of an expert. Mine was no exception. Nevertheless, I admit I was surprised when my first assignment was to study the question of how the

Library of Congress

legislative intent developed during the passage of the new legislation might need to be reflected in the organization of embassies.

Q: What were you basing all this on?

HITCHCOCK: The legislative history of the 1946 Act.

On another point, did you know Bill Flake? Wilson Flake?

Q: Yes, he was ambassador in Ghana later on. Yes, I knew some stories about him.

HITCHCOCK: This was well before that. I have reference to 1947 when he was in personnel in charge of Foreign Service Officer assignments. I will never forget how alarmed I was when I discovered that the FSO assignment task almost literally was conducted out of his desk drawer. When a vacancy came up, he'd open his left desk drawer, this wooden desk, slide it out and run through the folders with his fingers. He seemed to know everyone in the Service and to have all the information needed for their assignment. I'm not trying to say he didn't do an adequate job; I don't know. But it seemed quite reasonable to suspect that his placement techniques would not be adequate for the larger, more complicated Foreign Service that seemed imminent.

Q: I can't help interjecting that Wilson Flake was the one whose wife insisted that the wives of junior officers break in her shoes for her before she wore them. Enough of that.

HITCHCOCK: I was just getting into the swim of the foreign service planning work when something occurred that was to change the direction of my career abruptly and substantially. It directly related to what soon was to be called the "Cold War," the threats to our security arising out of efforts of Soviet Union (and later China) to promote communism worldwide. At the end of World War II, the nation seemed to assume war was a thing of the past, and our military capability was allowed to deteriorate. As tensions between the Soviet Union and us mounted so did concern about our military weakness, especially in

Library of Congress

the air. In 1947, very early '47, this concern crystallized into action: President Truman announced the establishment of a special commission, the Air Policy Commission, to take a look at our situation with respect not only to military aviation, but also air transportation, manufacturing, and associated activities. The Commission chairman was Thomas K. Finletter (a well-known New York lawyer and later Secretary of the Air Force). Other commissioners included: Henry Ford I (soon replaced by John McCone, a California businessman, later Director of the CIA), Arthur Whiteside (head of Dun and Bradstreet), George Baker (Professor at Harvard); and Palmer Hoyt (Editor and Publisher of the Denver Post). The Commission's Executive Director was Paul Johnston who had been my Strategic Bombing Survey boss at the end of the war. He shook me loose from the State Department to join the Commission as his Assistant Executive Director.

My work with the Commission lasted about seven to eight months until the completion of its report in January 1948. Called *Survival in the Air Age* the Commission's report contained recommendations that led, among other things, to the establishment of a separate U.S. Air Force of 70-wings. It also was influential in reestablishing an aircraft manufacturing capability in the United States and promoting a domestic and international air transport system. The Commission offered an fundamental reappraisal of the whole situation. Paul Johnston, having been the editor of *Aviation Magazine*, was pre-empted to write the report that meant, as a consequence, I had to do much of the administrative work. Because of my flying and bombing survey experience, I was well prepared to assist the Commission. As a result of this assignment I acquired a knowledge of air power in the U.S. and to a degree, an appreciation of its strategic considerations.

Q: Was this a Commission?

HITCHCOCK: Yes, the President's Air Policy Commission, or the Finletter Commission. When its report to President Truman was completed early in 1948 and I was able to return to the State Department, I was asked to go to work for the Aviation Division rather than

Library of Congress

return to the Foreign Service Planning Division. I never returned to administrative work as such.

Q: We had an Aviation Division even that early on?

HITCHCOCK: Yes, although over time it had different names: Aviation Division; Aviation Policy Staff. Essentially the division existed because the Department was responsible for negotiating international air transport agreements. The heart of these negotiations concerned commercial air rights and routes for airlines designated by parties to the agreements; and as these rights were the lifeblood of airline operations, the struggles for negotiating advantage were intense. Initially I was assigned another part of the air route establishment problem: arranging for international navigation and other technical facilities, usually through multilateral financing arrangements. After that I became the Washington backup for U.S. participation in ICAO (International Civil Aviation Organization).

Q: IATA (International Air Transportation Association)?

HITCHCOCK: IATA is an association of the international airlines. Deals largely with technical and air fare questions.

Q. Okay, back to your work with ICAO.

HITCHCOCK. ICAO is the UN specialized agency in the field of international civil aviation. I backstopped the U.S. delegation to that organization and negotiated a lot of multi-lateral air arrangements for air navigation facilities. One of the things we were involved with, at the time, was the improvement of the airport, which I see is now being declared totally unsafe, Hong Kong's Kai Tak airport.

Toward the end of the '40s I was promoted from Assistant to Associate chief of the Division and began to divide Division-wide responsibilities with the Chief, Francis Deak. This sharing of responsibilities was suggested by our heavy negotiating schedule which

Library of Congress

frequently took one or the other of us out of the country. Everyone seemed to agree it worked out well.

Then, at the end of 1951, I was asked to go to London as Regional Civil Air Attach#. I was happy at the chance to go because I planned soon to make myself available for integration unto the career foreign service under the so-called Wriston program.

Q: Was this the period of integration?

HITCHCOCK: Yes. Lateral entry they also called it.

Q: The New York Banker Program?

HITCHCOCK: Yes, the Wriston Program. I had no doubt it would be a good career move for me in the long run. But, in the short run, I was a bit concerned because I had been rising rapidly on the civil service side of the Department and was somewhat concerned that joining the Foreign Service might cause me to lose some of my career momentum.

That I might have some reason for concern became evident when my assignment to London as regional Civil Air Attach#, a FSR-2 (Foreign Service Reserve grade 2) position, was processed at the FSR-3 grade because my young age would make it difficult to qualify me as an FSO-2! Anyway, I arrived in London in June 1952 as a reserve officer and finally was converted to an FSO in March 1955. (As it turned out I was promoted to FSO-2 in March 1960, and finally made FSO-1 in May 1965. By then, age had ceased being a point of interest to me in relation to my assignments.)

Q: Still FSO-1 in that Foreign Service was a very, very senioposition.

HITCHCOCK: Yes, it was. It was the highest rank one could hold in the Foreign Service at the time, although there were some career ambassadors under the 1946 Act.

Q: You were four years in London? As the Air Attach#?

Library of Congress

HITCHCOCK: As the Regional Civil Air Attach#, stationed in London but also accredited to many of the countries of northwestern Europe. I did a lot of traveling in that part of the world during those four years. The job was especially interesting, because civil aviation was just beginning to take shape globally and the operations of U.S. airlines to and through Europe were central to its success.

Q: What were the kinds of issues?

HITCHCOCK: Bilateral agreements covering air routes, commercial rights, passenger traffic, and so forth. We either negotiated these agreements or, which was more likely at that particular time since more of the agreements had been negotiated, we were trying to keep them working. If the economic issues weren't difficult enough, new issues arose from the technical advances in equipment. For example, when the British brought the jet powered Comet airliner into commercial service.

Apart from the aviation and economic importance attached to these issues, they were also politically charged because most of the European airlines were state owned. Also, in the late 40s and early 1950s, a number of new airlines began to appear somewhat to the surprise of American air carriers who expected such a development but somewhat later. KLM [Holland], SAS [Scandinavian], SABENA [Belgium], SWISSAIR [Switzerland] were examples and, with surprising speed, they began offering competitive service and capturing a fair amount of the then available traffic.

This development was also a challenge to the kind of competitive, open air transport agreement we (and the British) had been encouraging other countries to adopt.

Q: Air France and Alitalia were government owned, weren't they?

HITCHCOCK: At that time almost all international air carriers were supported financially by their governments, as, indeed, ours were by us.

Library of Congress

Q: Not in the same way, were they?

HITCHCOCK: No, technically not in the same way. Our airlines were privately owned. But, under the U.S. Civil Aeronautics Act of 1938, we were committed to a national policy of promoting the development of domestic and international air transportation - and that included financial assistance, such as carrying the U.S. mail.

I found my association with civil aviation both in the Department and as Regional Civil Air Attach# in London enjoyable and challenging. This was an interesting introduction to Foreign Service policy responsibilities at a high level. We were dealing with top people in the European governments, as well as our own. By this one assignment I had done the top job in the aviation business. But I had no intention of making it my lifetime career, I saw myself as an onward and upward type and indeed had accepted the London assignment fully intending to join the Foreign Service and expanding my horizons. So I applied, was accepted and sworn in when in London. My first assignment as an FSO, in February 1956, was to the NATO [North Atlantic Treaty Organization] Defense College in Paris. I think I was in class number nine.

The Defense College assignment, though brief, was an excellent, broadening experience. I learned quite a bit about political-military affairs and the way NATO was evolving as a centerpiece of national military strategy. I also developed friendships with several military and civilian officials from various NATO countries. It was the first time the Germans had members in a Defense College class. At the end of this 6-7 month assignment, I received orders surprisingly transferring me to Tokyo. This was my first experience with the Foreign Service assignment process gone awry, and though I was mystified, I decided not to do anything about it and see what happened.

Q: What was the job there?

Library of Congress

HITCHCOCK: I can't even remember, but I do remember being told that questions about the wisdom of assigning me there arose quickly in Washington, and, within a matter of days, my Tokyo orders were canceled. Left in Paris with nothing to do at the end of the summer of 1956, my family and I spent four to five delightful weeks traveling around southern and central Europe. During that time I received orders transferring me to Madrid as Special Assistant to the Ambassador for Mutual Security Affairs. It made sense to send me there considering my history as a wartime pilot and a member of the Strategic Bombing Survey, my civil aviation jobs, my knowledge of western Europe, the NATO Defense College, and my work with the President's Air Policy Commission. This was a time when we were just building our air force bases in Spain.

Q: Did you get any Spanish there? Had you learned any foreign languages up to this point?

HITCHCOCK: I took Spanish and acquired a certain amount of skill while in country. Unfortunately, I had not previously learned any languages; remember I was not planning on going into the Foreign Service when I was in school. I also hadn't had time to prepare for the Foreign Service in terms of acquiring a language and/or area specialization. Lacking these, my attitude toward Foreign Service has perforce evolved in different directions - more toward understanding the expanding United States role in the world and how to fulfill it wisely. I know the debate that has surrounded the issue of language and area preparation for the Foreign Service, and I am a bit ambivalent about how I think it ought to come out. My experience, however, has led me to wish that a higher percentage of our best officer(in terms of ability to deal with complex international issues) were better linguists.

I would add that I became a generalist in the service, more or less by accident. I seemed to acquire a reputation over time as someone who could get things done and that led me

Library of Congress

to be assigned to positions of responsibility where the need was urgent enough to override delays that might have been involved in acquiring special skill training.

Q: Who was the ambassador when you were in Madrid?

HITCHCOCK: John Davis Lodge.

Q: I take it that you had an independent job?

HITCHCOCK: I don't know what you mean by independent. It was a busy job, and it involved working quite closely with him. My title was his special assistant. The substance of my job clearly was his number one responsibility, and he had to give it a lot of time.

Q: He was involved in your issues.

HITCHCOCK: They were our issues, and there were quite a lot of them month in and month out. Of course, he could have taken over whatever he wanted to handle among the issues that arose. But, frankly, I don't remember that we had jurisdictional problems between us. Possibly we might have, had we been less busy.

Q: And, didn't you want to go to Africa when you left Spain?

HITCHCOCK: I tried during that period of time and even earlier to go to Africa. Things obviously were heating up there. I had been in Europe virtually all the '50s, and that fact alone made it difficult to work out an African assignment as my Spain tour was coming to an end. Washington kept saying, "We will not assign you to Africa now; you are first going to have to have a tour in Washington." I never took issue with that viewpoint, and I was sent to Washington as Director of the Office of Projects and Studies of the Disarmament Administration.

Q: Before we go to Washington, let's go back to Madrid? Let's tala little bit about the process of getting Spain integrated into NATO.

Library of Congress

HITCHCOCK: That was later.

Q: That was later, but that process started with the negotiation of the U.S. bases.

HITCHCOCK: The base agreement had been negotiated in 1952 and I was helping implement it. Spain's objectives, unexpressed so far as I know, included some assistance from the U.S. in its political rehabilitation. Spain was run by Franco and was a bit of a pariah state. The U.S. in partial exchange for the base rights was willing, in effect, to help burnish Franco's image. This was a tough sell, because many in the U.S. simply were so anti-Franco that they block any opening to Spain.

Q: What were the obstacles? Who was opposing this thing? Whom did you have to convince to move in this direction?

HITCHCOCK: This aspect was resolved well before I had anything to do with the Spanish Base question.

Q: Eisenhower was President at this point?

HITCHCOCK: He came in '53. So he would have been President when the agreement was signed.

Q: This was the Eisenhower period?

HITCHCOCK: I suppose so in a loose sort of way. The base situation both preceded and followed his presidency.

Q: Who was your DCM [Deputy Chief of Mission] when you arrived in Madrid?

HITCHCOCK: An experienced FSO named Homer Byington.

Q, Who was later our Ambassador to Malaysia? Who replaced him?

Library of Congress

HITCHCOCK: He was replaced by W. Parke Armstrong, previously the Director of Intelligence and Research in the Department for several years. He had had no prior experience as a DCM or even working in an embassy, and his relationship with Lodge was very tense.

Q: Coming on top of your experience with NATO at the War College, how did you find this? Did this make sense to you, what we were doing?

HITCHCOCK: Yes, but I frankly can't remember the kind of detail you seem to be seeking, if I ever knew. The U.S.-Spain base agreements were concluded in 1952 almost 4 years before my arrival in Spain. I suppose, with hindsight, it could be debated whether we needed all the bases we thought we did. You will recall there were three air bases, one naval base and several radar stations (mostly for navigation), all of which were part of the agreement. Whether or not having decided to do fewer bases we would have avoided some of the difficulties we had, I doubt it. We had some jurisdictional irritations, but the only major problem between us and the Spaniards occurred in 1957 (?) after I left, which involved the ditching of an Air Force plane off the coast of Spain with a hydrogen bomb aboard. We actually had good relations with the Spaniards up until that time. I can't comment on our relations after that, although, so far as I know, they continued to be satisfactory.

Q: And, a good organization within the Embassy and with Washington. This was working well?

HITCHCOCK: I think the Embassy relationship with the Government of Spain on military matters was good, as were the military to military contacts.

Q: But the structure within the Embassy between you, the Military Attach#s, the political section, and intelligence was working pretty well?

Library of Congress

HITCHCOCK: Actually, the Attach#s performed normal attach# duties, and I had very little to do with them. We had a Commander of the U.S. Forces in Spain who also commanded the MAAG (Military Assistance Advisory Group) operation. It was with him and his staff that I had most of my contact on the U.S. side. Of course, the U.S. had an extensive network of relations with both the military and the civilian sides of the Government of Spain. These, as well as my relations with other parts of the Embassy, were excellent throughout my four years in Spain.

Q: Can you give us some feel for the relationship between your duties and that of the Commander, US Forces Spain, who was, I think, a subordinate of the Commander-in-Chief, Europe (CINCEUR)?

HITCHCOCK: MAAG and our base structure were part of the Spanish-American relationship, which also included our economic assistance program. It was the interconnection of those three that we tried to minimize as much as we could. But the Spanish were very conscious of trying to generate some kind of quid pro quo for the rights they gave us for the bases. Consequently, we had substantial military and economic assistance programs.

I personally had a very close relationship with the guy who was the head of MAAG and held the rank of an Air Force Major General. Among the embassy's economic team was Richard ("Dick") Aldrich, the famous producer married to Gertrude Lawrence, was the director of US AID (Agency for International Development) the whole time I was there. He was also economic counselor for some of the time. He was an old friend of John Davis Lodge. Aldrich had a deputy, who incidentally is someone you know, named Milt Barral. Milt arrived in July 1957 and subsequently became Economic Minister at the embassy.

I had hoped to be sent to Africa my next tour, but was assigned tWashington.

Library of Congress

Q: The people they were assigning to Africa at that stage, werlower ranking, people like me.

HITCHCOCK: You were in Africa at that time?

Q: 1956, I went to Africa.

HITCHCOCK: Well, regretfully, I didn't make it, because I sensed what was happening was important. I was arrived in Washington in October 1960 as director of the Office of Projects and Studies of the U.S. Disarmament Administration which was part of the State Department. Ed Gullion was in charge; the organization had a small staff divided into two offices. The head of the other office, which was concerned with Negotiations, waRon Spiers.

Q: Ron was quite young at that time?

HITCHCOCK: Yes, he was. He also had an even younger officer on his staff, an FSO-8 who was just beginning a skyrocketing career by the name of (Thomas) Pickering.

In the Projects and Studies Office we had a small amount of money (big by State Department standards in those days) of about one and half million dollars to improve and expand the research base for the negotiating positions we were taking in the various negotiations that were occurring or planned. Such was our research objective.

But our work was dramatically altered when Kennedy was elected President and, almost immediately after he was sworn in, announced his intention to dramatically increase the attention his administration would give to disarmament and arms control, including submitting a proposal to Congress for legislation establishing an Arms Control and Disarmament Agency (ACDA).

Q. I thought that was an Eisenhower initiative.

Library of Congress

HITCHCOCK: No, that was Kennedy. I can remember there was a bid debate in connection with the establishment of the Arms control and Disarmament Agency, as to where it should be located. It was felt it should have a degree of separation of authority from existing agencies and that it should have special access to the President. Now the State Department brings to this kind of issue a kind of political judgement about conflicts, without usually a tremendous knowledge of conflict in terms of weaponry and combat, in terms of what you do in maybe deterring or pursuing a conflict involving force. The Pentagon's view lacks all kinds of dimensions beyond the military that are relevant to such decisions. On the other hand, having it separate from either of those two and also separate from the CIA (Central Intelligence Agency) tends to encourage a collection of people whose pre-disposition was to favor disarmament or arms control and to have to be proven wrong in formulation of a policy that was not going to pursue that line. In this case, you are dealing with a symphony of conflicting opinions on subjects slightly different data bases and experience bases. We don't have the capacity to see the infinite nature of nuance that affects men and influences both the definition of and the outcome of a problem.

Anyway, to take charge of this initiative the President brought in John J. McCloy and, as his deputy, Adrian ("Butch") Fisher. They inherited me as director of the Projects and Studies Office, and I soon found myself involved in helping to develop the presentation for the ACDA proposal to Congress. More specifically, I worked on creating the prototype of a research program of arms control and disarmament. It was perceived that if we were going to be serious about disarmament, our approach had to be based on vastly improved research and development. I don't know now what I think of the program we put together then - about 40 years ago. But, as developed in the congressional presentation, it seemed adequate for the role it was expected to play. It was such an uncharted territory. You are dealing with some pretty esoteric concepts when you are talking about a disarmed world or a world disarming, but it was, nevertheless, an interesting couple of years. In the end ACDA was established and continues to operate to this day. Resource poured in, jobs

Library of Congress

were reorganized. The job I originally had became two or three major bureaus. I myself was detailed to ACDA in September 1961.

Q: You were reporting to Butch Fisher?

HITCHCOCK: I was reporting to Butch at the time. I don't know where Ed Gullion went, but he was an unusually able officer and deserved something good in my opinion. Ron Spier's office remained in the Department to continue to pursue the few negotiations that were then underway, the most important of which was the test ban treaty.

Q: I suspect Gullion may have gone to the Congo as ambassador.

HITCHCOCK: That may well be where he went. While I was working on disarmament I had an invitation from Tom Hughes and Roger Hilsman to come to work in the Bureau of Intelligence and Research (INR). (Tom had come to the Department as the Special Assistant to Chester Bowles when Chet was appointed Under Secretary of State early in the Kennedy Administration. Then, when Bowles was asked to return to India for a second tour as Ambassador, Tom moved to INR as Roger Hilsman's deputy.) Roger and Tom wanted me to become their Director of Research and Analysis for Western Europe. I agreed. The job lasted from April '62 to the summer of '64, and I found it a delightful experience. One that produced a certain kind of mental discipline in terms of analytical approaches.

You had INR assignments too, didn't you?

Q: Yes, I did, too - '56-'58 for the Philippines, but I came off from having just written a Ph.D. thesis on the Philippines

HITCHCOCK: You would have been a lot more knowledgeable.

Q: You had a lot of experience.

Library of Congress

HITCHCOCK: Practically everyone in the office except myself had Ph.D.

Q: You had on the ground experience in Europe.

HITCHCOCK: Yes, that's true. Hilsman was the Director during the initial part of my INR period and Tom the last. Then in 1964, I received orders transferring me to Barcelona as Consul General. From my previous assignment in Spain I knew that Barcelona would offer only limited professional opportunity, but, though disappointed, I did nothing to try to change the assignment. Fortunately, fortune intervened: Chet Bowles in preparing to go back to India discovered that he needed a Consul General for Calcutta. Tom recommended me to him, and, when Bowles and I met, I found him warmly receptive.

I can't remember what my initial reaction to the idea of going to India was, but Calcutta was clearly a lot larger challenge than Barcelona would have been. It was the second largest U.S. Consulate General in the world, it included a consular district of almost 140 million people, and lots of important things were happening there. A year and a half before, in 1962, India and China had had a brief, border war and tensions between India and (then) East Pakistan were almost constantly substantial. Calcutta was known as the most problem-full city in the world, etc. So, being attracted by all that, I accepted and was there from '64-'68. Calcutta turned out to be a good post with a lot of inherent complexity, and while there I acquired 4 years of experience as a Principal Officer in a major country. And, besides, I personally loved learning about the philosophical underpinnings of the sub-continent.

Q: Before we go to Calcutta, I'd like to go back to the INR periofor a little bit. Every year was important in U.S.-Europe relations.

HITCHCOCK: I'm glad you want to go back to INR - the Bureau of Intelligence and Research. I found my assignment as Director of the Office of Research and Analysis for Western Europe unusually interesting, useful, and enjoyable. The research the Office

Library of Congress

did was weighted toward the political and economic issues of concern to the U.S. and the countries or organizations of Western Europe. But, as other issues (such as NATO and collective security) became important, they, too, were included. Our analytical efforts rested largely on a staff of highly qualified civil service employees with impressive academic and experiential qualifications. These officers also represented an impressive institutional memory since they frequently had served in INR for years. In fact, with justification, many become known around the country as the Department's experts on country A, B or C. These Civil Service employees were complemented by a generous sprinkling of able FSOs, usually with recent overseas experience or assignment to the country or organization (e.g., NATO, OECD, etc) to whose analysis they were assigned in INR. The interaction of these Foreign Service-Civil Service backgrounds produced high quality analysis on the range of issues important to the bilateral and multilateral relations between the U.S. and Western Europe. That these analysts were able to use information from all-sources, classified and unclassified, helped also.

The targets of these analytical efforts were usually, though not always, other offices within the Department. Some papers had a long term perspective, some short; most were policy oriented so as to help insure that other parts of the Department or other Departments were au courant about the implications of a relevant overseas development or trend. Options available to the U.S. created by relevant international developments were discussed. Care was taken to identify possibilities or options without making recommendations as to U.S. policy. Frequently an attempt was made to estimate what another country might do in a circumstance of interest to the U.S. Often we would try to identify possible consequences for the U.S. of an event in another country; or how a foreign country might respond to an initiative we would like to undertake. The variety was great, as these examples suggest.

Studies were frequently undertaken on requests received from other parts of the Department. Or the initiative may have come from top departmental officers such as

Library of Congress

the Secretary or Deputy Secretary. I would guess that half were undertaken on our own initiative.

Once, during my INR tour, another bureau differed with an important conclusion of one of our studies and referred it to the Secretary for resolution. An answer was found (contrary to our conclusion), but the Secretary used the case in point to underscore strongly the need to maintain in the Department an independent analytical capability such as INR represented. This was an important reaffirmation of our purpose. One of the Department's essential responsibilities, of course, is the advocacy of U.S. foreign policy. But it is also responsible for constantly reviewing established policy to determine whether developments may require policy change or adjustment. INR studies often can help expose the range of possibilities to be considered under such circumstances. The bureau responsible for implementing a policy being re-examined might welcome such a contribution from INR. In any event it is important that the Department have the ability to do independent and more or less continuous analysis on these types of issues.

Q: Talking about your time in INR, I was curious, was there unanimity of view that we should fully support the movement to European unity or whether there were reservations expressed anywhere in the government? Ball I guess was the primary supporter. Were there any groups that had reservations?

HITCHCOCK: Not really. There was clearly a general belief that greater unity in Europe would be of benefit to the United States, and, of course, to Europe itself. Advocates of pushing European integration revolved around George Ball. The head of the immediate office associated with integration was Bob Schaezel.

Q: Tom Hughes in INR said you were the group that were saying, "Wait a minute, political integration has got real obstacles and real problems and, therefore, the policy that said we would only share our nuclear monopoly with a united Europe, wasn't a very practical policy." Was this the position they were taking?

Library of Congress

HITCHCOCK: That was the conclusion that one might logically draw from the things we wrote, I suppose, but I don't recall that INR took a policy position on the issue, past suggesting that all trends are not linear. INR's approach was to examine the consequences or implications of positions that had been taken or were being considered. The issue of nuclear sharing, as an example, was associated in our minds with a unified Europe. If there were a united Europe, we could share nuclear knowledge, but we were unwilling to share with individual countries. If you were pessimistic about integration, then you were pessimistic about the value of nuclear sharing. But sharing got involved in or affected by lots of other issues such as the subsequent de Gaulle veto of British membership in the Common Market in January 1963 and our efforts to provide an underpinning for British security through the Skybolt Missile Agreement.

We did not resolve the nuclear issue, but it was a subject of a lot of debate within the Department and it led to an very important confrontation on the subject of an independent group within the State Department taking positions contrary to the established policy line. It was on that issue that Secretary of State Dean Rusk took a rather strong view that it was very important for the State Department to have within its body a capacity for some kind of independent judgement or appraisal of these policy lines separate from policy implementation.

Q: Any other issues during that period because that was such an important position? It seems to me, in your INR position, at that stage so much of our policy revolved around our relations with Europe.

HITCHCOCK: There also were interesting debates, then within INR, between the Europeanists and the Africanists. You will recall that it was at that time that Africa was going independent rapidly. It was becoming independent largely from its European connections, and I think that we, in the European part of INR, spent a fair amount of time identifying the consequences that were likely to occur if some African countries were to

Library of Congress

become independent without better advanced planning. We should have pushed this point of view further, frustrating though it was to do so.

Q: I am interested in your characterization of Rusk as someone who defended the right of dissent and yet the testimony of the MacNamara book was that there were no warnings within the government on the winability of the war. I know Tom Hughes has taken a very strong position contrary to MacNamara.

HITCHCOCK: Can we defer the Vietnam era for a little bit? I had lot of contact with that issue.

Q: *Yes, we'll go to India now.*

HITCHCOCK: In many respects, India was the most interesting assignment of my career. I was truly fascinated with it, in large part because it was so different from anything I had known before. I did not understand eastern religions or the basic complexities of a society that large. I went to India in August 1964 on short notice and had virtually no time to prepare. (As you may now be gathering, this sort of characterizes my assignments one after the other.) As I said earlier, I was scheduled to go to Barcelona as Consul General, when Tom Hughes, a close associate of Chester Bowles, our ambassador-designate to India, discovered that Chet needed someone in Calcutta. He sold me to Chet who made the necessary arrangements within the Department to break my assignment to Spain.

My relationship with the Ambassador after my arrival in India began rather hesitantly but soon developed into a warm friendship. I certainly became an admirer of his, and I have no doubt that he liked me both personally and professionally. India isn't a place where you just arrive and gobble it up overnight. I read as extensively as I could before my arrival there particularly to begin developing an understanding of Indian philosophy and politics. Then I arrived in Calcutta after a quick tour of Delhi, Bombay and Madras. All in all it was a pretty modest preparation for the complicated tasks ahead of me.

Library of Congress

The Calcutta consular district contained 140 million people. Calcutta itself was the locus of 20-30% of India's industrial output and the center of a lot of the Western (read British) history in India. Calcutta had been the capital of British India from the 18th century until 1914. When I was there it still had many of the trappings of empire. Eastern India was much more than that; it was the center of a great deal of India's own history. It was, for example, the place where Buddha attained his enlightenment in the state of Bihar. Our consular district also included Sikkim and Bhutan, then independent entities, plus the Northeast Frontier Agency (NEFA), the Northeastern Indian territories bordering China where the 1962 border dispute had occurred. This conflict was still smoldering. There was also a great deal of tension between India and Pakistan. Indeed in 1965, less than a year after I had arrived, a war broke out with Pakistan, much of it centered in the area of West Bengal and East Pakistan.

Eastern India was big and diverse in many ways, and we in the Consulate General were involved in its problems, sometimes substantially, sometimes on the margins. Examples of a few of the region's problem areas would include the following:

- Calcutta itself contained the University of Calcutta: with over 200,000 students it was believed to be the largest if not the greatest university in the world;
- In Eastern India, the problem of development was at that time receiving urgent attention in which US aid was an active participant;
- The memories of India's colonialism were a deep and complicated feature of the landscape;
- Linguistic unity was totally lacking. English was the de facto link language, but a lot of it was not linking. People were trying to substitute Hindi for English as the most used language, but many parts of the country did not speak Hindi or understand it including the

Library of Congress

Bengal area where I was principally located. There were 16 major languages in India and about 225-230 dialects;

-The country also had a substantial tribal population and a large Muslim minority. Hindus were the overwhelming majority; and

-Residual cannibalism still existed in Nagaland.

All in all, there was a complexity about India that was interesting and important and sometimes perplexing. Shortly after I arrived, India experienced (1965 and 1966) successive famine years. This resulted from major crop failures in parts of the country where living was marginal at best. Suffering was great. The U.S., under Public Law 480, brought in over 11 million tons of food grains each year. One of the two centers of the famine was the state of Bihar, which was in my consular district. Obviously, it was basically an Indian responsibility to cope, but, given the suffering created by the crop failures, assistance of the type the U.S. provided was critical.

Throughout my tour, we were in the midst of a major attempt on the part of the Communist Party to take over West Bengal. And, in the year after I left India, they won a majority in the legislature and assumed the leadership of the state government. The communists were divided between the Chinese- and Russian-oriented approaches which was helpful in the sense that they often failed to achieve a cohesive approach in their revolutionary efforts.. There was, in this political ferment, recourse to a lot of extreme behavior. For example, they had a technique of bringing corporations to heel by locking in the management and turning off the electricity which meant turning off air conditioning. Production would become almost impossible in the oppressive heat.

We had frequent demonstrations against the United States, perhaps 30 or so per year. Most were small. But the ability of demonstrators to develop a crowd in a place like Calcutta is unbelievable, if you haven't seen it. Sometimes they would bring people in from the country by truck. But wherever the demonstrators came from they assembled

Library of Congress

in the Maidan, the big park in the center of Calcutta, which was two blocks from where the consulate general was located. We developed, in close partnership with the police, a technique whereby the marchers toward the consulate were thinned down as they proceeded. Let's say they would have a rally of 25,000 in the Maidan. The police would allow maybe 700 to march down the first block toward the Consulate and 150 or so to march down the second block. In thinned strength they would arrive at the locked gates to our office. We would almost always offer to meet with representatives to hear what their complaints were, and that usually was enough to diffuse the situation.

There was quite a lot of politically motivated violence throughout the state of West Bengal during the 1960s, though we were not involved in any of it so far as I can recall. I believe the reason might be found in the close and congenial relations we maintained with both the Calcutta police and the Indian Army's Eastern command whose headquarters were in the city.

Calcutta was considered by many people as the city with more problems than any other city in the world. It then had a population of eight million and now I guess it's 10 plus million and maybe more. The Ford Foundation financed a group of people to advise the Indians on what might be done to make living in Calcutta more viable. They had something like 22 specialists from all over the world, all recognized experts on urban problems. What the consequences of their recommendations were, I can't say. They had not been released by the time I left, but the problem of financing the improvements they were likely to consider essential would have been a major one in Indian terms.

Q: My impression is that you had an extraordinarily able staff.

HITCHCOCK: That's true. I also had a great deputy you know well - Roy Atherton.

Q: Beyond that you had some young people: Dennis Kux, Howie Schaffer - all of whom did quite well in the Foreign Service. There were some others too, weren't there?

Library of Congress

HITCHCOCK: Kux and Schaffer were not in Calcutta, they were in Delhi. In Calcutta, Don Gelber was our political officer, and Roy was the Deputy Principal Officer the first year of my tour. Our staff not only was good, it was also large - the total number, American and locally hired, being over 300, including our USIA operation. For any consulate general that is a large number of people.

Q: And that was AID (Agency for International Development), too?

HITCHCOCK: No, there was no AID staff there, they were in Delhi. But we had a lot of connection with AID projects in the Consular District. AID personnel also acquired a semi-staff status when they were in the area.

Q: How were relations? Did you report directly to Washington or did you have to go through the Embassy?

HITCHCOCK: Most of our reports were sent simultaneously to both places. We made sure, of course, that things we were reporting that might be of importance India-wide were routed through the Embassy. I don't think we'll get into the CIA (Central Intelligence Agency) side of things, except to say they have a fair presence.

Sikkim, the tiny territory under India's protection and located on the Indo-Tibetan (i.e., China) border, requires special mention when recalling activities of the Calcutta Consulate General while I was there. The Indians were particularly sensitive about foreigners visiting the border areas. With respect to Sikkim that was less of a problem for me because the Maharaja of Sikkim was married to an American, Hope Cook, and they would invite us to Sikkim fairly often. We received our permits promptly, in part I believe because the Indians were not ready to take on a problem with the U.S. that refusing permits for our visits might cause.

Similar Indian security concerns existed with respect to Bhutan, an independent country located in the Himalayan mountains contiguous to Sikkim. Sikkim and Bhutan (plus

Library of Congress

Nepal) provided a buffer in the Himalayan mountains separating India from Chinese controlled Tibet. As I have already mentioned this area, and the Indian direct connection with China east of Bhutan (the Northeast Frontier Agency - NEFA) were of high sensitivity to the Indians because the Indo-China war at the end of 1962. The area had a long and interesting history during the British period, but it was the war in 1962 that prompted the Indian nervousness that I experienced. For our part, we were interested in developments on the Tibetan frontier and reported from time to time on the way certain groups-some of them were followers or under the leadership of American missionary groups-were escaping China through northern Burma.

Q: When you went to Sikkim and Bhutan, did you go by car?

HITCHCOCK: We went by helicopter. We'd fly to an airport in northern Bengal and then take a helicopter.

Q: These were Indian helicopters? Air Force?

HITCHCOCK: Yes, we used Indian Air Force choppers to go to Bhutan. In the case of Sikkim, we drove over wonderful mountain roads. Bhutan, a country of 850,000 and about 500 x 800 miles in size, did not have a road going into it until 1962. Bhutan was poor, in part because the lack of roads isolated people from each other, even within the country. I should add that this isolation was difficult to overcome also because of the height and precipitousness of the Himalayas.

Q: How about issues?

HITCHCOCK: Well, I've covered a lot of them.

Q: I meant policy issues that you got involved with?

HITCHCOCK: Many of our problems could be seen as policy issues or potentially so. We were dealing with a newly independent India whose colonial past raised all sorts of issues

Library of Congress

to which American representatives, among others, needed to be exceedingly sensitive. One example was the role India wanted to play in its relations with the rest of the world: as the leader of all non-aligned nations. This caused frequent frictions between the U.S. and India as, I dare say, it did between India and other countries, including the Soviet Union. India tried to hue an even line between us and the Soviet on Cold War issues, though its tilt toward the Russians was frequent and disturbing.

Maintaining a healthy U.S.- Indian relationship on other shared interests was also a challenge, often because of the newness of India's nationhood. The policy impact of such issues was, of course, of primary concern to the Embassy in Delhi but rarely did we escape them in the "outlying" cities. Indo-American problems didn't blossom into true crisis, but there were a series of constant strains. Those strains persisted to a degree, but I believe they were also slowly changing with the passage of time. India was, as I said earlier, very resistant to approaches to the problems which would have been welcomed by a lot of people. They had an underpinning of class structures, caste structures, religion, extended familia tradition of 3,500-4,000 years out of which these things developed. They didn't want to be too close to us.

Not all U.S.-Indian relations concerned problems of the foregoing type. Far from it. I think we were really rather popular with influential Indians and on a personal level it was easy to relate to them and even develop warm friendships. India contains large numbers of intelligent, interesting people and they are a major reason why a foreign diplomat's tour there is so agreeable. But officially they saw in us some similarities with the British past they were trying so hard to get rid of.

Q: And, are still hanging on to.

HITCHCOCK: Yes, this is a constant I think. On the other hand, many Indians recognize that British contributions to India over the years will add vitally to its future development.

Library of Congress

Q: The Labor attach# would have been active and other people of that kind would have come up from Delhi? Was that Maury Weisz? Who was the Labor attach# at that time?

HITCHCOCK: I believe he was the Labor Attach# in Delhi at that time, though I can't remember his visits to Calcutta. There were AID teams that came, as well as lots of others. The Russians had a major program in our area.

Q: *Tata*?

HITCHCOCK: No, Tata is a privately owned Indian mill. The steel mill the Russians built was called Bukhara. It was in Bihar, one of the states in my district, and was said at the time to be the largest in the world. The Russians had, I think, 4,000 people there. It was a big operation. They perceived this, I'm sure, as a point around which they could hook a lot of other activities. We had helped India some in developing its steel production capacity and then we decided to stop. I can't remember why.

Earlier I mentioned that my relationship with Ambassador Bowles started off in a rather rocky fashion. The difficulty arose at the first meeting of the Consuls General he called after I had been in Calcutta a few months. When he asked me to report on developments in Calcutta, I gave what I thought was an honest analysis of the situation, emphasizing the many challenges that needed to be overcome, etc. He was absolutely furious and said, "I didn't bring you out here to be an agent of pessimism." (Laughter) That was one of the initial little frictions which we got over - not by my capitulation though. I thought it important to confront head on and discuss the unpleasant realities Calcutta faced at that moment. Chet may have feared I was bringing too negative or defeatist an attitude to my new job. That was not true, but Chet was a true optimist, as indeed am I. We soon got on the same wavelength and our 4 years working together were great, even when we were dealing with the numerous controversial issues that arose.

Library of Congress

My Calcutta tour ended in the summer of '68 and, not knowing what to do with me, the Department appointed me as Diplomat-in-Residence at the University of Pennsylvania. The fall of 1968 was a restive period in American education, but, perversely, I enjoyed my 4 months in Philadelphia. Little did I know it would be an abruptly shortened tour. To clarify this, I should mention that well before the Philadelphia assignment Ambassador Bunker in Saigon had indicated his desire to get me assigned to Vietnam as soon as he could find an appropriate position. This was back before Ellsworth Bunker and Carole Laise got married in Kathmandu (Being in Calcutta I went to the wedding, since I was an old acquaintance of both.) At that time I told him, in effect: that's the last place I want to go, but, I'm in the Foreign Service, and I'll go if I'm told to go. When I was in Calcutta, there were recurrent feelers coming at me from Bunker about possible assignments. Finally, around Christmas 1968, his intermediary, Jim Grant, called me in Philadelphia-

Q: Jim Grant lives two houses away from us.

HITCHCOCK: Jim Grant was responsible for Vietnam affairs in AID, a job of major importance since AID served as the administrative umbrella for all American civilians in Vietnam engaged in the direct prosecution of the war (as well as those doing regular AID functions). In his usual, effective manner, Jim explained how refugees and other types of war victims - between 2.5 and 3 million of them - had become a major problem both because of the human suffering they represented and the way they were being exploited by anti-war activists. After a few telephone calls, I agreed to take on the job, subject to my first reviewing the situation in the field. I went out in January of '69 and spent most of the month there, came back to DC for most of February and hit the job full time the first of March, 1969.

The Director of CORDS (Civil Operations and Revolutionary Development Support) at that time was Bill Colby (later in charge of the CIA). (I lived with him my first month in Saigon while looking for a place to live.) The Directorate of Refugees and War Victims was one of the four Directorates of CORDS, the acronym for the civilian side of the war

Library of Congress

effort, also known as the Pacification program. Nineteen sixty-nine was an interesting, challenging year to acquire the responsibility for intensifying our refugee assistance efforts. The war was still active but the general security situation had become more stable than it had been in 1968 after major enemy assaults during Tet the previous February. In these improved circumstances many South Vietnamese displaced by the war could be returned home or otherwise helped to rebuild their lives. A substantial proportion of them were given help either by our programs directly or indirectly through about 30 voluntary agencies (VOLAGS), the largest of which, I think, was Catholic Relief Services. About a hundred million dollars were spent a year on our refugee assistance efforts in addition to the contributions from the VOLAGS. We had refugee advisors in all the provinces of South Vietnam, some 18 in all, and the VOLAGS, too, had personnel sprinkled liberally throughout the country. It was an intensive effort.

Q: The objective was what, to ease the plight of the refugees?

HITCHCOCK: Yes. There were two and half million displaced people. Technically they were not refugees (i.e., people driven out of their countries); in Vietnam, they had been driven out of their homes and most couldn't return to them. We called them refugees. There were also several refugee camps usually located in areas where the war made their return-home impossible. They were mostly located in the northern part of the country. We also dealt with another category of war casualties we called war victims. These were people whose homes were destroyed as a result of some war related action. We gave them material for rebuilding their homes, food during the rebuilding period, and other help as required.

I spent a year in charge of our refugee efforts. It involved a lot of work, much of it done while moving around the provinces of SVN (South Vietnam) by helicopter. I usually traveled with the Minister of Social Welfare of the Vietnamese government.

Q: Your French was good enough?

Library of Congress

HITCHCOCK: Not really; nor was my Vietnamese. My work was almost all done in English. We also had translators as required, usually for dealing with village or provincial officials.. There were a lot of inspiring, committed people involved in the U.S. refugee effort, as one might expect. Quite a few were FSOs, usually on their first assignments. Others came from NGOs (non-governmental organizations) or other similar activities. One junior FSO was George Moose who later became Assistant Secretary for African Affairs.

Q: Do you think the program was effective?

HITCHCOCK: I think it or something like it was crucial. These people had to have the kind of help that was given including the food. They also needed assistance in preparing their land for planting. And, yes, I think it was very successful, especially during 1969 when the intensity of the war had subsided a bit.

Toward the end of January or February 1970, Senator Fulbright opened special hearings on the Vietnam war before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee of which he was the Chairman. Very near the start of the hearings he heard the CORDS side of things. To make our presentation, I returned to Washington with Bill Colby and John Paul Vann. The hearings were not as hostile as we expected. The Senator had decided that CORDS was not where he was going to focus his fire. It must be said that our presentations went well in part because we could report progress made possible by the improved security situation that existed during that period of time.

Ambassador Bunker, about the turn of '71-'72, asked me to move to the Embassy to replace Martin Herz whose tour as Minister Counselor was coming to an end. I, of course, agreed to do so and made the transfer after returning to Saigon from the Senate hearings about the beginning of March as I recall.

Q: Of 1970?

Library of Congress

HITCHCOCK: Yes. My new job was called Minister Counselor for Political Affairs, but it also had several other responsibilities beyond the range of the political section. We also had a Political Counselor for whom I was directly responsible. The Embassy structure included an ambassador and a deputy ambassador - Ambassador Bunker and Ambassador Sam Berger. Sam gave his attention to special problems such as corruption within SVN, and he served as principal adviser to the Ambassador. I provided special assistance to the Ambassador, going with him occasionally to meetings, drafting messages, undertaking special studies, etc. I also was our action officer on the Peace talks, then going on in Paris. Galen Stone was the Political Counselor when I arrived and rotated out shortly after. Lauren Askew was the Political Counselor during my tour and supervised the daily work of what I believe was the largest political section the Foreign Service had. But I, too, had a very active role and was in frequent consultation with the political section, including, of course, Askew. I was Minister Counselor for a little over two years - until the spring of 1972. I had been in the Refugee job about 15 months. So my total time in Vietnam was a bit under 3 and # years.

Q: You were much more involved in the policy issues in that position than you had been as the Refugee Coordinator?

HITCHCOCK: Of course, but our refugee assistance efforts were also important not only for the refugees as such, but also as a limited antidote to the anti-war movement in the States. As you will recall the war was a significant event in almost every American's life; many opposed it and their opposition increased in effectiveness as the war continued. In the Embassy we were well aware of the opposition, but our main concern continued to be the war and our role in pursuing it. Many of us, for example, had to remain sharply focused on the fact that there was a 12 or 13 hour difference between Washington and Saigon - every day. We had to get messages out at the end of the day in order to receive instructions at the beginning of the morning. These messages, in contrast to a lot of messages at other Foreign Service posts, frequently went directly to the President. We did

Library of Congress

not then have, as you will recall, a strong Secretary of State, but we had a strong National Security Advisor (who soon became the Secretary of State). This was just after the end of the Johnson presidency, early in the beginning of that of Nixon.

Q: I have heard from a number of the junior officers that they were aware of the deteriorating situation, but that they felt they couldn't report that.

HITCHCOCK: I have to ask when?

Q: Did you have personal contact with the junior officers in the field or were you able to get from them a flow of information that was satisfactory?

HITCHCOCK: Not always, but generally yes. We got what we needed - from the field, from our own officers in the Political Section (many of whom were Vietnamese speaking), and other contributors. We had information from many sources. The greater challenge was in evaluating and using it effectively. Knowledge of developments in and about the North was a weakness among our analytical tools.

Q: *Were we deluding ourselves?*

HITCHCOCK: Maybe in retrospect, but at the time, there wasn't much doubt about there being a feeling of general optimism in the immediate wake of Tet '68. You never approach a military situation as a military person with the conviction you are going to lose. And, indeed, you tend to see what happens as a reaffirmation of that positiveness. The indicators were generally much more positive in Vietnam at that time than they were in the States. But I would add that during that period in the States everything was really going to hell in terms of support for the Vietnam War. I can't remember the date of Kent State, but it was probably around '72. I'm not going to get into the U.S. side of the war except to say there were lots of people who came to Vietnam of varying degrees of importance - national importance in U.S. - who were strong opponents of the Vietnam War. Among them was George McGovern, as he was beginning his presidential campaign effort. I was the control

Library of Congress

officer for his visit. There was a tendency to put as positive a face on the state of the war as possible - or as negative as possible if you were an opponent. It was difficult to marry these two opposing points of view and reach useful conclusions in terms of our national interest.

From Vietnam it seemed to many Americans that a number of promising approaches to the pursuit of the war were avoided because of self-imposed constraints. For example, in Vietnam there was widespread support for a greater effort to interdict movements of the NVA (North Vietnamese Army) along the Ho Chi Minh Trail, which was predominantly located in Laos. There was even a constraint against bombing access to the Ho Chi Minh Trail in North Vietnam where the trail enters Laos, although we did some bombing of the Trail in Laos and there was some bombing of the Trail in northeastern-most Cambodia. The point was, we never undertook a major effort to stop the North Vietnamese from bringing war materiel into SVN over the Trail, and we could have. The effect on the ability of the North to pursue the war in the South would have been major, possibly decisive - or so many advocates believed. I don't know why it wasn't done, but I presume that, as in other cases, it was a concern about the possibility of escalating the conflict. I cite this not to reflect any disappointment on my part, but to identify the kind of dissatisfaction about the prosecution of the war one occasionally encountered in Saigon. But there were many Americans in SVN whose principle concern was with the obviously rapid decline in U.S. support for our continued participation in the war, not to mention our continuing support to our ally, the South Vietnamese. This latter concern was given a substantial boost by the introduction of the Vietnamization of the war effort by President Nixon and many of the actions that followed that decision.

Walt Cutler, in charge of external relations in our political section, and I work together on possible Peace possibilities, including negotiating proposals for presentation in Paris. The thoughts we developed, I thought, were sometimes rather inventive, never necessarily

Library of Congress

breakthrough stuff, but inventive. Even though we never knew whether anything ever happened to our efforts after we submitted them, I know we both enjoyed the work.

I also coordinated with the Vietnamese (the Deputy Foreign Minister) once a week, I think on Thursdays, the position the U.S. Delegation proposed to present at the peace talks in Paris that week. These coordination talks continued even after the highly secret negotiations involving Secretary Kissinger and Le Duc Tho of North Vietnam had commenced. Allowing us to continue our meetings in ignorance obviously was part of the effort to protect the secrecy of the Kissinger talks.

Q: It sounds to me as though you were more operational than analytical and that you were really putting out fires and didn't have the opportunity to stand back and see where we were going. People didn't develop strong positions pro or con on the war at this point. You were too busy doing it.

HITCHCOCK: I think you may be right. The pressure on us to do what we did was substantial - 90 hour or so work weeks. So it could be argued that we hardly had time to do what you suggest. It was also true that much of the criticism of the war coming out of the United States was criticism without much knowledge of what was happening on the ground. Of course, that may not have been important to the critics whose greater concern was probably what they feared the war was doing to the United States.

I became known, I think, as a kind of skeptic within the inner circle. I will tell a story that may not be flattering to me. One of the real warriors was Ted Shackley. Shackley had been the head of the CIA operation in Laos, for five years or more before he came to Saigon as the station chief. He was really committed. Whenever these issues or instructions from Washington that we had to pursue, or comment on, arrived, I was always skeptical or would say "let's look at this." He came up once with the sharp rebuke, "If you can't stand the heat, get out of the kitchen." Well, look. You go through four years in India

Library of Congress

in which one of their greatest doubts about American foreign policy was Vietnam, you become cautious.

Q: Had you had any content with people like Paul Kattenburg when you were in INR?

HITCHCOCK: Lou Sarris was the INR Vietnam specialist. I knew him when I was in INR in the early '60s. I also knew Kattenburg at that time, though not well.

Q: And, he had the reputation of being very pessimistic about Vietnam.

HITCHCOCK: Yes, and it was a view warmly shared by Tom Hughes who was the Director of INR at the time. I think sometimes that they were more skeptical than the events supported. But, I must admit, some of their skepticism turned out in retrospect to be almost prescient.

There is a piece on the war that has been pulled together under the auspices, I think, of the LBJ Library. Have you seen that? It is a brainstorming on Vietnam by a selected number of top-level policy people like Mac Bundy, Bill Bundy, Tom Hughes, Doug Cater, that level of person. It is a very interesting insight into some of the policy making during the war. I would say that even at that level, they didn't have time for a lot of quiet reflection on things. I'm not sure you always do in situations like that. Imagine a similar session on World War II.

The pace of events was stunning. Within a matter of days of my arrival, the Cambodian invasion occurred. I had no involvement in that, in the sense that I didn't know about it. I was just getting my feet on the ground. A succession of things quickly happened. I was a member of the limited country team which consisted basically, in this case of: Bunker, Berger, General Abrams, Shackley who was CIA, and myself. And, they added to that as the agenda required. Bunker had his embassy country team meeting and then he would have this limited meeting, usually at his home. There were certain issues that would get discussed that didn't get discussed at the earlier meeting.

Library of Congress

We had activities going on around the clock. Some of these became quite memorable. Bunker would get special instructions, usually from the President, to see Thieu (President of South Vietnam). He'd sometime see him at three o'clock in the morning. By the time I came to work, which was about 7:00-7:30 am, he would have drafted his report and no one knew about it. It was very secretive. Usually it was Thieu because most of the contact had to go at that level from Bunker and particularly if the message was a presidential instruction. The thing about the Vietnam War that I think you and some of the rest of us might try to understand is how basic decisions grow out of circumstances which soon get lost in the background or are just forgotten. How much did Vietnam emerge from some of the circumstances that existed in Southeast Asia in relationship to other things like the development of the Cold War, the statements the Soviets and Chinese were making at the time which were quite frightening? How much our involvement in Vietnam emerge from our early support for the French in Vietnam partly in order to get them to agree to lines of communication and logistics through France for NATO may be one such example. If you are able to take yourself back to such NATO prompted decisions you might end up with an attitude toward Vietnam which is much more understanding, even if you didn't necessarily agree with it.

Q: Precipitated into opposition to Vietnam?

HITCHCOCK: The war in Vietnam was an easy target for criticism by younger generation (i.e., draftable) Americans because they were interested in other things, and fighting a war, anywhere, was not one of those things.

I never became an advocate of the Vietnam War. I did become an advocate of our getting out of it as honorably as we could and with minimum adverse political consequences. I'm afraid we missed both these objectives. It's shaking a little more into shape with the passage of time, but it will never be seen as one of our major moments of honor.

Library of Congress

I came back to Washington in the late spring, June of '72 and, again, they didn't know what to do with me. There had been a lot of talk about an ambassadorship, but I was having major marital difficulties at the time, and I discouraged another overseas tour immediately following Saigon. So, I was assigned to the Policy Planning Staff where I did a little bit of nothing very important for about three months.

I can't remember why I was put forward for to the Educational and Culture job. Certainly I didn't campaign for it, but I was intrigued with my assignment there almost from the moment of my arrival in August or so. I was to be the Senior Deputy Assistant Secretary of the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs.

Q: Before you go to that, what was your impression of the Policy Planning Staff (S/P)? Has it always just been a tool for Secretary of State speech writing?

HITCHCOCK: No, quite a bit of longer range thinking is done there, sometimes in close coordination with what is going on in an operational bureau, sometimes out of the blue. Nevertheless, I agree with what you seem to imply: the role of S/P has been somewhat vague and variable over the years, its importance depending a great deal on who is its director and whether its staff contains some star performers who may have the attention of some top Departmental officers. Finally I believe the attitude of the Secretary at the time will effectively determine the S/P role during his tenure.

Q: *Was Kissinger Secretary of State at that time or was it still Rogers?*

HITCHCOCK: It was Kissinger when I arrived, as I recall.

The S/P job seemed like it was intended to be a temporary assignment until CU opened. I came to that conclusion because in S/P I floated around more or less aimlessly. I attended some meetings to bring me up to date on work they were initiating to examine the implications of a multipolar world for the U.S., and I wrote a couple of brief memoranda

Library of Congress

on Vietnam. I recall sharing the same office with Mike Armacost, although we worked on different projects.

The Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs job was as the Senior Deputy to John Richardson, then the Assistant Secretary. We liked each other immediately, and ours soon became a rewarding professional relationship valued highly by both of us. We worked together almost 4 years - until the Democrats won the 1976 election. John is an idealist, as you have probably gathered, and a wonderful person. An idealist frequently doesn't allow practicalities to deter him, and I often helped him get around obstacles we confronted. I also shared administering our programs with him and, in general served as his alter ego. We had a large constituency both within the U.S. and around the world.

The 'granddaddy' of cultural exchange programs was the Fulbright academic exchange program worldwide was one of many exchange activities we managed. Under it academics would receive support for continuing research. This allowed American academics to go overseas and foreign academics to come to US institutions. It was seen as an excellent way to overcome foreign stereotypes and biases among a group that would be writing Op-ed columns in foreign newspapers. Over time some private organizations, societies, firms, etc. also have established their own exchange arrangements - usually with different basic reasons for their actions but with benefits for mutual understanding as well.

Then there was the International Visitor Program (IVP). Foreign visitors nominated by the embassy came to the US for short periods to see how their professional counterparts in the US functioned. So, journalists would come and see large and small newspapers. Mayors would meet their counterparts and gain an appreciation of local government in the US. Embassies like this program because it gave them a 'reward' to single out some of the outstanding and talented people they met. Of course, this helped embassy contact work. There were other special exchange programs. I remember we sent author John Updike to Africa on a wildly successful trip. I think we had a budget of \$65 million in the 1970s. This

Library of Congress

was not an insubstantial amount. Anyway, as you can see, the whole program was a way of developing communications with other national elites in areas of shared interest.

Richardson had a variety of experiences that well qualified him for the CU position. Born in Boston he was one of the Boston Richardsons. His father was head of a prestigious law firm there. A Harvard educated lawyer, John left law practice after several years to take up a position as a Wall Street investment banker. He moved from Wall Street to a succession of public service related activities. He was head of Radio Free Europe and the International Rescue Committee (and a close friend of Leo Cherne, IRC [International Rescue Committee] founder). He was immensely popular as Assistant Secretary, and it was fun working with him.

I cite his background, eclectic and varied as it was, because I think it was what made him so good a choice to head up the bureau in charge of promoting exchanges between the American and other cultures. Why?

Briefly, World War II with its many advances in communications and transportation plus its devastation (enhanced by nuclear weapons) convinced a number of American intellectuals it was necessary to improve communications and mutual understanding among the world's cultures. The idea was to work continuously to develop an enhanced ability of societies to relate to each other, especially in areas of shared interest. An objective over the long haul was to improve the general quality of life on the planet as well as to reduce conflicts.

Q: It is a goody that you have to give away and so it is always popular from that point of view.

HITCHCOCK: We did that. We ran the Fulbright Program. The fact that it was in the State Department and not in USIA was, I was convinced, fortuitous - not to have been a part of the propaganda arm of the US government. There it would have lost much of its credibility. It absolutely gained credibility as being part of the State Department. The prestige of the Department helped make it acceptable to overseas elites. One could argue that as a

Library of Congress

government run program it lost some prestige, but I think less under State than USIA. You can see providing a home for the Fulbright program was a complex issue.

When the administration changed and Carter came in 1977, Joe Duffey was appointed as the Assistant Secretary. I had, initially, a stormy relationship with him, because he had been one of the leaders in the country of the anti-Vietnam movement and he entered this job, his first in government, to discover he had inherited as his deputy someone just out of Vietnam. There was also conflict with his wife on the same point. Do you know his wife, Ann Wexler? She worked in the White House in one of the highest-ranking jobs held by a woman in the Carter Administration. She behaved toward me as if she believed that I couldn't have been in Vietnam if I weren't a war lover. From that followed all kinds of presumed differences between her husband and me. They didn't really materialize.

Joe Duffey, when he first arrived in CU, was about as inept an administrator as I have known. For example, he seemed unwilling to trust any of the more senior people in the bureau, so he would characteristically assign a problem requiring action to the more junior officers with instructions to report directly to him. This destroyed established lines of authority and kept most of the Bureau unaware of what was going on. Chaos soon reigned, and realizing his approach was facing failure, he decided he needed help from someone who had been around a little while. This just happened to be his deputy - me. It was not long before we had developed a satisfactory, even enjoyable, working relationship. But he clearly had no long-term interest in the job of Assistant Secretary as such and began looking for his next position almost on arrival. He had a lot of contacts in the White House and within a short time got himself appointed as Chairman of the Search Committee for the Head of the National Endowment for the Humanities.

I don't know the details of what then happened, but it appeared that, as Chairman, he arranged his own selection. Without much more ado, he departed. This was unfortunate in a way because the CU-USIA reorganization was heating up and his White House contacts might have helped insure a broader consideration of the issues before a decision was

Library of Congress

made. Limited efforts on this point were made while Duffey was still there, but he was unaware of the history of the issues and, therefore, not predisposed to use his personal influence on solving a problem which, from his point of view, was soon going to be a past memory. So I think he was happy enough to leave the developing situation to me as the Acting Assistant Secretary and to our colleagues. Our basic message would have been to underline the need to keep distance between exchange programs and U.S. propaganda activities. In other words, moving CU into USIA, we feared would risk undermining the integrity of our official exchange activities. Additionally, USIA might use them to bolster its propaganda efforts.

But even as my colleagues and I mouthed these concerns I became convinced we were blowing bubbles. We were going nowhere. I strongly sensed the decision to reorganize had already been made, in part on other grounds, and our view was going nowhere.

Much of my explanation of what likely had happened is based on deduction, but it seems likely, nonetheless. The Carter campaign highlighted governmental reorganization as one of its objectives when it came into office. The President-to-be reiterated this intention frequently, giving it the aura of an action that would bring with it almost nirvana-esque consequences. Specifics initially were lacking. Later in the campaign one could pick up mention of integrating USIA and CU as one possibility, but it got little attention because such a move was peanuts and more was expected. But CU-USIA was a possibility that persisted and grew after the election. In fact it became more imperative as several of the other possibilities for reorganization disappeared.

The decision to move the CU-USIA reorganization forward, I believe, was a political one, presumably made by the new president-to-be, and most potential opposition to the idea or even a critical examination of it became unlikely after that point.

This political decision to bring CU into USIA precluded any serious thought about what that might or might not do to the integrity of exchange programs. In the State Department I

Library of Congress

found virtually no support for examining this or broader questions regarding the proposed organization. Top officials knew the basic decision had been made and were unwilling to raise questions about it, especially so early in the new Administration. At one point, early on I thought, USIA began behaving as though it was not examining the idea, but just working out the details of the transfer. Soon after they were openly doing just that. And the administrative side of the Department behaved as though it agreed.

(We can appreciate this situation better if we reflect on how the issue of exchange vs. propaganda has been handled over time. In 1953, USIA became a separate agency while the exchange programs were placed in State. In 1978, as discussed above, CU was moved into USIA which retained its separate agency status. And (was it in 1995?) USIA (with the exchange programs) was returned to State. No sooner had that move been made than pressure, I think from the Senate, caused the re-separation of exchanges from propaganda. It's an interesting story, although it sometimes gets a bit boring because of its repetitiousness.).

A new Assistant Secretary arrived at State early in 1978, I believe, to oversee the transfer of the bureau to USIA and then direct CU-type programs there. Her name was Alice Ilchman, and she arrived with excellent qualifications to take charge of CU type of activities. I hardly got to know her, but she was well and favorably known in and out of government. A late close friend of mine and a leader in the field of educational exchange was particularly warm in her praise. Dr. Ilchman chaired the Board of the Rockefeller Foundation and also served on other boards, such as the Council on Foreign Relations. Later she was appointed President of Sarah Lawrence College (1981-98). I don't know how well she did during her USIA period, as I retired shortly after the transfer occurred.

My retirement was foreshadowed by the fact that I was approaching the 60-year-old mandatory retirement age. A full term Foreign Service assignment was out of the question and I had no interest in a temporary Departmental assignment designed to squeeze out a final few months of employment in Washington. A decision as to whether to stay in the

Library of Congress

DC area post retirement was more difficult. I really liked the city, but, in the end, I decided to retire elsewhere: I didn't want to kibbutz on Washington events the rest of my life; and, as I was still under 60 and presumably had a while to go, I wanted to develop a life with some new interests elsewhere. I'm now 83 and have met my objectives, at least to my satisfaction, despite the realities of the aging process.

I moved to Boulder, Colorado, a lovely, university town of 100,000 situated near, but not in the mountains and but a stone's throw from a city, Denver. I found the world is everywhere and distance no longer matters as it once did. I brought with me my interest in foreign affairs and have been active in the leadership of both Denver's Council on Foreign Relations and its World Affairs Council. For almost 20 years, I have also served on the Social Science Foundation, a national board which advises the University of Denver on its international educational programs, especially its Graduate School of International Studies. The Board also manages an endowment which it doles out to University related activities of its choice, again to promote international educational objectives. With activities such as these to supplement a normally full retirement, I have lived the past quarter century in a really quite beautiful place removed in large part from many of the harassments of the larger cities I knew previously.

End of interview