

Interview with John H. Holdridge

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

AMBASSADOR JOHN H. HOLDRIDGE

Interviewed by: Marshall Green and Charles Stuart Kennedy

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Q (Green): John Holdridge has had a remarkable career. He is one of the two people I know who is a West Point graduate and who ended up in the State Department. Hank Byroade is the other one.

Ambassador Holdridge has been my colleague on three occasions. First, I was regional planning advisor for East Asia back in the late 1950s. During that time, he was the Department's intelligence officer dealing with that part of the world.

My second encounter with him is when I was consul general in Hong Kong from 1961 to 1963. He was chief of the political section all during the time I was there and for some time after that.

The third encounter was quite a famous one. It had to do with the time when he was working for Henry Kissinger in the National Security Council as specialist on China affairs. He also helped to arrange for Henry Kissinger's miraculous visit to China, behind the backs of most of us in the State Department. During that time, I was the assistant secretary for that part of the world. He and I eventually accompanied President Nixon out

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to China. Thereafter, John and I visited all the posts in East Asia to enlighten the leaders in that part of the world with regard to our China policy.

John remained in the Service. Subsequently, he served as ambassador in Singapore, assistant secretary of state, and ambassador to Indonesia, retiring finally in January 1986.

John, as a West Point graduate and as one who had fought in World War II with the Army, how did you get into China specialization?

HOLDRIDGE: It was a rather circuitous route. Unfortunately, I graduated from West Point in June of 1945 and I missed the fighting. What I saw was the aftermath of World War II—the picking up of the pieces.

My first introduction came through Army connections. My father was an Army officer stationed in the Philippines. In those days, all good Army officers were paid enough and saved quite a bit on the Philippine economy. They saved up their money and went up to China just before they returned home.

It was possible to pick up the Army transport at Qinhuangdao Shandong. We went first to Hong Kong, Canton, and Shanghai. We then went to Japan for a couple of weeks—

Q (Green): How old were you?

HOLDRIDGE: I was eleven. Then we went to Beijing via Tientsin for the period of early March to early May. This is all in 1937, just as the Japanese war was beginning to generate. In fact, we traveled on a Japanese ship serving as a troop transport from Osaka to New Port, or Xin Gang as it is now called. It was just loaded to the gunnels with Japanese troops. It was an Osaka Shosen Kaishan ship, which I am sure you are familiar with.

In the city of Beijing itself you could feel a sort of tenseness. We stayed at a place called the College of Chinese Studies, which was cheap. We always looked for something less

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expensive. Missionaries and businessmen came there to learn to speak Chinese. It was located in the Tartar City in the northeastern quadrant of Beijing, very close to where the foreign ministry today is, in fact.

One of my early memories of that place was seeing the Japanese troops marching through the old city walls, since torn down, for exercises. The Japanese presence was all over the place. I ran into some Chinese Army language officers at that time and fell in love with Beijing. I resolved that, if I ever had the chance, I would learn Chinese.

After graduation from West Point, I was sent to Korea and spent two and a half years there and came back. I had taken my Foreign Service exams while in Korea, thinking that this might be something—

Q (Green): This is Korea before the war?

HOLDRIDGE: This was in 1947. I spent those several years in Korea primarily as an engineer officer. Dick Ericson, whom you may recall, was the only other member of the group of several hundred who took the exams and who passed, as far as I know, and who came into the Foreign Service.

Coming back to Washington, I had been informed shortly before my time was up in Korea that I had passed the exams and that I could go in, if I could pass the orals. I went from Fort Belvoir, where I was assigned, to take the orals in Washington, D. C. Old Joe Green was the head of the Board of Examiners and I passed. It took me two months to get in instead of the two years that it sometimes takes now. Shortly after I became a Foreign Service officer, I was asked if I wanted to take Chinese language training. I was in the FSI at that time. I jumped at it.

Q (Green): So they gave you the offer of Chinese? You didn't go to them?

HOLDRIDGE: Yes.

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Q (Green): This is early 1948 that you are talking about.

HOLDRIDGE: Yes. I joined the Foreign Service in May of 1948 and left the Army in March. While I was in the FSI, the usual problems cropped up. They had money for instruction but no money for travel. They couldn't send people back from overseas. They snatched up some of the younger guys who were available and asked if they wanted to take Chinese language or other languages. In fact, I found myself in a class essentially with Japanese language officers, Owens Zurhellen and Dave Osborn and Ed Seidensticker.

Q (Green): A lot of my colleagues with whom I had gone to Boulder (U.S. Navy Japanese Language School).

HOLDRIDGE: That's right. They were graduates of Boulder, to a man. I was the only Chinese officer among them. I went on from FSI to Cornell and then to Harvard, studying Chinese all this time. That is how I got into the business. I had this predisposition going back to 1937. In 1948, the Foreign Service gave me the opportunity, which I took gladly.

Q (Green): You really had three years of language study, didn't you? It was FSI, Cornell, and Harvard.

HOLDRIDGE: Well, I did because the FSI course was a compressed one-year course into a couple of months. Then I went on into Chinese at Cornell. That included literary Chinese. We were studying the characters in newspaper Chinese and the works.

Q (Green): Was Harvard the same thing?

HOLDRIDGE: Yes. Again, we studied Legg's Classics.

Q (Green): You really had a good immersion in Chinese language, didn't you?

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HOLDRIDGE: The problem was that, in my judgement, they concentrated too much on the literature and the written Chinese and not enough on the spoken. It took me quite a while to fit into—

Q (Green): That was exactly my problem with studying Japanese. Your first assignment was to Bangkok.

HOLDRIDGE: Yes. There I was Chinese language officer for, of all things, USIS. I was the most junior officer in the embassy there, but I had an area of concern which was the very large Chinese population in Thailand. At that time, they thought it was useful to make a distinction between the Thai Thai and the Chinese Thai.

Q (Green): They got along pretty well with each other, didn't they?

HOLDRIDGE: It's the only country in Southeast Asia where you find the religious situation is compatible. That is, the Thai are Buddhists. They happen to be Theravada Buddhists. The Chinese are Buddhists who happen to be Mahayana Buddhists. There is no prejudice on religious grounds. The practices aren't, of course, exactly similar.

Q (Green): Didn't they force the Thai Chinese to take Thai names, that is, to give up their Chinese names?

HOLDRIDGE: They did that. Indeed, the Chinese were much more separate until 1926 when the then king of Thailand—I think it was King Prajatipok—decided that this was intolerable and that there had to be a reduction in Chineseness and an increase in Thainess. This is when they took Chinese names, and language instruction in Chinese was curtailed rather drastically.

Q (Green): That went way back to 1926?

HOLDRIDGE: Yes. That started in 1926.

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Q (Green): Were you able to do much in terms of foreign policy?

HOLDRIDGE: Yes. I issued pamphlets. They were all very strongly anti-Chinese Communist at that time, which is rather ironic considering what came later. We probably made the egregious error of raising the Chinese Communist threat to the point where it seemed like a big bugaboo—"Stick with us fellows and we'll take care of you." However, there was always that little question mark.

Q (Green): You were there for three years and then went on to Hong Kong.

HOLDRIDGE: Yes. There I started out as one of the interviewers of people who were then leaving China mainland in large numbers—businessmen and quite a few of the Catholic padres. This was in 1953.

Q (Green): Most of the people had fled China already, hadn't they?

HOLDRIDGE: The missionaries stayed on as long as they possibly could. Do you remember Bob Aylward? Well, their good friends were the Ricketts. They had stayed on even though they had been on house arrest. They were teaching out at Yenching , later Beijing Daxueh, or University, in Beijing. They came out at that time, around 1954.

Q (Green): Was your job as a political officer in Hong Kong related to this problem of getting missionaries out of China?

HOLDRIDGE: It was not getting them out but to pump them of their information as to what was going on in China. I was a debriefer essentially. Later on, after that phase was over, I became in charge of the press monitoring unit.

Q (Green): Yes. This, I think, served a great purpose in foreign policy. When I was in Hong Kong, I recall that we had about 21 people in that translation unit, and several times a year we were putting out about 800 copies of translations. Was that true back in 1953?

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HOLDRIDGE: That was true then. We were the beneficiaries of some very fortunate circumstances. Quite a few of the Chinese analysts and interpreters/translators, who had been with the consulate general in Beijing and even in Shanghai, were able to make it out. They set up shop with the American consulate general in Hong Kong. We had, in effect, an institutional memory.

Q (Green): You were also getting lots of newspapers, magazines, letters, and things like that.

HOLDRIDGE: Yes. It was mostly newspapers and magazines. Part of the press monitoring unit at the time was publications procurement. We had one officer on the staff, Al Harding, who was the publications procurement officer. We went around and managed to get papers from all over.

Q (Green): The British authorities in Hong Kong were also debriefing the Chinese refugees who were coming in, weren't they?

HOLDRIDGE: That's quite right.

Q (Green): Did you have access to their information?

HOLDRIDGE: Yes. Since it is 30 years and more since that time, I can say that we cooperated quite fully.

Q (Green): We really had a tremendous wealth of information about what was going on in China, which was probably superior to anything outside of China anywhere in the world.

HOLDRIDGE: That was our feeling. One of the things I always felt is that, during this period when we didn't have relations with China, we did not lack for actual information as to what was going on. We were able to keep up with the internals and some of the problems quite well, even though it was like the old Chinese doctor treating one of the

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emperor's concubines. He couldn't see the woman directly, but he sat behind a screen and she described her symptoms to him. Then he had this little carved ivory doll which he could use. . . [Laughter]

Q (Green): It's interesting because, when you were in Hong Kong getting this flow of information, I was in Sweden. I was the first secretary of the embassy in Sweden. I had very good contacts with the Swedish foreign office, whose ambassador in China was picking up magazines—such as railroad magazines, etc. and things which were unclassified—and making them available to me. I would then make them available back to the Department. I was contributing a little bit to this flow of information about the great mysteries of what was going on inside of China.

HOLDRIDGE: I claim credit for one piece of reporting which I think was rather foresighted. In 1956, before I left Hong Kong, I was transferred to Singapore as political officer and head of the political section.

In April of 1956, the Chinese established what was called the Preparatory Committee for the Autonomous Region of Tibet. They had quite a conclave of senior people—the Chinese leading official whose name I can't remember, the Dalai Lama, etc. The Dalai Lama made a speech which was carried intact in the Chinese press which we, of course, translated. It was also released in English version, in the New China News Agency version in English.

A comparison of the two, which I made, showed that there were some very significant omissions from the Chinese in the English version. For example, the Dalai Lama was quoted as saying that the Chinese had built many roads in Tibet, and he was very grateful for this development of his country. He went on to say, “However, in the course of the construction of these roads, many of our people gave up their valuable lives, and we send our sincere condolences to the families of these people.”

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In other words, there was something wrong there. There were a number of other spots in that where you could see that the Chinese had overridden religious scruples. They had changed the social system, and there were deep resentments.

Before I left in 1956, I wrote this one dispatch—we don't write dispatches anymore since everything goes by cable. I came to the conclusion that the Chinese were having a real problem in maintaining their control in Tibet. If they thought they had it hand, they were “whistling in the dark.”

Later on, I saw a British evaluation of my report. They said, “No, no, no. This guy is way off base.”

But this was three years before the Dalai Lama—the Khambas—revolted in Tibet and the Dalai Lama fled with his whole entourage. He's been in India and other places in the world ever since. I feel that this is the kind of thing you could do—

Q (Green): Don't you think, John, in retrospect that writing these dispatches contributed a great deal to the maturing of your own judgement by focusing in greater depth on the issue, rather than by flashing off these telegrams one after the other.

HOLDRIDGE: Absolutely. This was because you had to think. You couldn't just look at the superficial aspects of it. You had to stop and ponder, considering what this was going to mean now, in a few years from now, or later on down the road.

Q (Green): Then there was a studious effort by the State Department, too, to commend those officers who turned in meritorious reports. Therefore, you realized that there was some recognition. There was a kind of incentive, in other words, to work hard in your job because it was rewarded in the form of Departmental recognition which, obviously, led to possible better jobs.

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In Singapore—again, you had a Chinese community. I assume that is why you were assigned to a city seventy-three per cent Chinese.

HOLDRIDGE: That's right.

Q (Green): Did you conduct much of your work in Chinese?

HOLDRIDGE: I tried to keep up with my Chinese as much as possible. In Singapore, English was and remains the language of government and business. When I first got there, though, the big problem was the clash between exponents of Chinese culture and education and the British colonial establishment—essentially, the schools that had been set up by the British missionaries or others who taught in English. An example is Raffles College. I hadn't been there but a few weeks when the riots occurred in 1956. It was then that the Chinese community challenged the colonial authorities, who would have none of it, over the issue of Chinese education and culture. They (the British) had battalions they brought in from all over Malaya, despite the emergency. They were not at all reluctant to use force. They put that Chinese disturbance down very promptly.

Q (Green): What was that disturbance aiming to achieve?

HOLDRIDGE: It was to establish Chinese as an accepted language of business, commerce, and government in Singapore.

Q (Green): Many years later you were ambassador to Singapore. By that time had English and Chinese become co-equal officially?

HOLDRIDGE: The funny part of it was that, once the Chinese won the battle, they did get Chinese accepted as an equal language, along with English, Tamil, and Malay. Then Chinese became an official language.

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Once that was accomplished, the Chinese began to send all their kids to the English track because that was where all the money was to be made.

Q (Green): Of course, back in 1953 Singapore was not a separate country. It was part of Malaya.

HOLDRIDGE: We used to have great arguments. Elbridge Durbrow was my consul general for a good part of the time. Derby, of course, is a very strong personality. In theory, Singapore was responsible for the consulate general in Kuala Lumpur. The two consuls general did not get along very well. There was some real tension there. In August of 1957, Malaya became independent. Singapore was not a part of it. It remained a British crown colony.

The problem has always been in that area of the world the population, the communal difficulties between the Malays who, in theory, are the preponderant race, and the Chinese who had moved in and established a very strong position in the business commercial world. Economically speaking, the Malays were way behind.

Singapore was kept different. When Malaya was established, the Malayan leaders, the Tunjku did not want Singapore in. This was because it might tip the balance in favor of Chinese preponderance. The way that question was eventually resolved was that Sarawak and North Borneo were also brought into Malaysia. This was somewhere in 1965. All these various components were brought in so that there would be a Malay, or a non-Chinese, majority.

Q (Green): This brings us back to roughly 1958 when you went back to be in charge of Chinese affairs at the State Department.

HOLDRIDGE: I wasn't in charge. I was one of the spear carriers. [Laughter]

Q (Green): How long were you back there?

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HOLDRIDGE: That was 1958 to 1962. I was in the old Office of Chinese Affairs.

Q (Green): Who was the head of the spear carriers at that time?

HOLDRIDGE: Ed Martin was for a good part of the time. Larry Lutkins, who had been my boss and head of the political section in my first tour in Hong Kong, was the number two.

Q (Green): This was in FE.

HOLDRIDGE: This was FE—Bureau of Far Eastern Affairs and Office of Chinese Affairs. Ed Martin was the head for a period that was the most extensive and the most important, because the Taiwan Strait crisis came along about that time.

Q (Green): The focus was so much on Taiwan. China almost meant Taiwan in those days. Hong Kong was, obviously, directed towards the mainland. Otherwise, in the Bureau most of the officers were working on Taiwan.

HOLDRIDGE: Well, we were defending the integrity of Taiwan. I hate to think of how many thousands of man-hours went into defending Taiwan's position in the United Nations and other international organizations, as well as making sure that the budget carried a sufficient amount of military assistance for Taiwan. We also had the AID program going, which was remarkably successful development assistance and which eventually reached the point where Taiwan became self-sufficient, economically speaking.

Q (Green): When you get back to the period of 1958 to 1962, that was the time of Walter Robertson. He dominated the China field. He was very much of a Sino-centric when it came to East Asian policy. I found that, while writing speeches for him, they would only pass muster if I pledged allegiance to Chiang Kai-shek.

HOLDRIDGE: Walter Spencer Robertson III, a Richmond lawyer, was a devoted, dedicated anti-communist. In those days, that was quite all right. In fact, it was the thing to

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do. I can remember Walter Robertson always talking about the Chinese Communists and how they had killed 20 million people. This was the era of the Committee of Two Million in the United States, Congressman Walter Judd, Senator Knowland from Oakland, California, and Admiral Radford, commander of the Seventh Fleet. Actually, he was CINCPAC at that time. This is the environment in which we labored. Of course, McCarthy was floating around in the background.

We had at this moment the Taiwan Strait crisis in this period 1958 to 1962. The first element of it was the Chinese Communists threatened to take the Dachen Islands, which are a little chain of islands in the Taiwan Strait. They were terribly exposed, and the United States persuaded Chiang Kai-shek to evacuate the Dachens in 1953.

In 1958 there was the second crisis. Marshall Green was very much involved in this one as regional planning adviser. I have to give Marshall credit for an enormous contribution to American foreign policy, and that was the Dulles-Chiang Kai-shek communique# that came out in October of 1958. I have always admired this. This is the one in which the wording was something along the lines that Taiwan was the repository, in effect, of the values of the Chinese people, but it was not, in effect, China. This was a kind of parenthetical statement that wasn't there. It went on to say that we supported Chiang Kai-shek's ambitions to restore freedom to the people on the mainland, but this was to be accomplished mainly by political means and not the use of force. That is Marshall Green's contribution.

Q (Green): I am glad you mentioned this because I did not mention it in my contribution to the oral history. I do recall very well drafting that. The return of the mainland lay in the hearts and the minds of the Chinese people. The idea was that Taiwan was the temporary repository of the culture, wisdom, and history of China. It would eventually be embraced in all of China.

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HOLDRIDGE: In drafting this and giving this particular thrust to it, was there opposition or forces who were trying to get us to say something different?

Q (Green): No, there wasn't. The problem here was that Dulles was about to go out on a trip to Taiwan. This is at what appeared to be the end of the firing on the offshore islands. There had been a complete lull. He was going to sign a communique with Chiang Kai-shek. What kind of language could we put into this kind of communique that Ambassador Holdridge was referring to that would be acceptable to Taiwan while, at the same time, making it clear that we had a long-range interest in the restoration of the whole of China. Also, we wanted to make clear that we just didn't see Taiwan as a separate appendage hanging out there in the distance and that it was unrelated to China. It was very important that it be regarded as an integral part of China.

HOLDRIDGE: We were not supporting Chiang Kai-shek's return to the mainland by use of force.

Q (Green): We tried to discourage the use of force, making them realize that, if they could live a life of virtue, this would radiate out and, in time, would have a favorable impact on all of China. In a way, this has happened.

HOLDRIDGE: Marshall, I've got to add something else. We were on another track from 1954 on, as well. That was that we tried to resume some degree of contact with the Chinese Communists. Zhou En-lai was the instigator or initiator of that at the Bandung Conference in April of 1955. He proposed that the United States and China get together to resolve their differences—to talk about resolving them, anyway. There had already been a contact in 1954 at the Geneva Conference which addressed the resolution of Indochina. Ed Martin was along on that and met some of his Chinese friends from earlier days.

In 1955 we began the ambassadorial-level talks which went on, off and on, between 1955 and 1970. The idea was to try to keep some degree of contact with the Chinese

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Communists. Alex Johnson headed up the team which was sitting in Geneva. He was actually in Prague. Wang Ping-nan, who was his opposite number, was in Warsaw. They used to come down and meet in Geneva. In the beginning, these meetings occurred weekly, and then they became more sporadic. I sat in on them for a few weeks in 1956. We came awfully close to having some degree of accord with the Chinese over Taiwan at this time.

The whole thing rotated around the wording of a joint communique# in which we looked to resolve the dispute between us by peaceful means. John Foster Dulles, the good old Presbyterian elder of the church, had put in a comma after this “by peaceful means” and said, “Including the dispute in the Taiwan Strait.”

This made life extremely difficult. Alex Johnson has probably recounted that period, too.

Q (Green): The 1954 meeting was famous because Dulles refused to shake the hand of Zhou En-lai.

HOLDRIDGE: That came up somewhat later in my own contacts with the Chinese. They never forgot that, and they haven't forgotten it yet. This is probably lingering around in the minds of some—

Q (Green): That's why, when Nixon came out of the plane at Beijing in February of 1972, the first thing he did was to dramatically shake the hand of Premier Zhou En-lai. This was the beginning of the new era.

HOLDRIDGE: May I skip ahead a few years in this regard. When I came in with Kissinger to Beijing in July of 1971, we were met at the airport by Marshal Yeh Chien-ying, accompanied by Huang Hua, the man who later became ambassador to the United Nations and then to the U.S. The old marshall, Yeh, was the senior man to meet Henry Kissinger. He and Henry got in the first car, a Hung Ch'i or Red Flag, and drove off. I found

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myself with Huang Hua in car number two, also a Hung Ch'i with the usual drapery on the sides.

The first thing Huang said to me was, "You know, in 1954 at Geneva, your Secretary of State refused to shake the hand of our premier, Premier Zhou En-lai."

I thought to myself, "Ah-ha! Is this what we're working up to. They don't want to have a repetition of some silly situation such as that."

I hastily assured Huang that we had not come all these miles, through such a circuitous and secret route, simply to have this situation recur as had occurred in 1954.

I said, "There will be no problem."

It was interesting when Kissinger was there at the guest house in Beijing, waiting for Zhou En-lai. There were a host of photographers around. Zhou drives up in his limousine, gets out, and extends his hand. Kissinger extends his hand, handshake, and boom, boom, boom—flashbulbs all over the place, videotape, etc. This was an historic handshake.

Q (Green): Getting back to this period of 1957, 1958, and 1959 when we were both working for Walter Robertson, this was also the time when we had the first indications of the Sino-Soviet rift. Do you have any recollections about when you felt a clear indication of such a rift occurring?

HOLDRIDGE: The first sign of it was in 1959 during the anniversary of Lenin's birthday. In Beijing's media, out comes this big editorial on "Long Live Leninism." This, in effect, took to task the "modern revisionists" for having deviated from the true course, saying that it was impossible to really bring about the victory of communism by peaceful means, that there had to be bloodshed. Later on, we found that he had also said elsewhere, in

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another context, that if 20 million Chinese died in the course of a nuclear war, there would be many, many more Chinese to carry on the tradition.

This was a real break with the Soviet Union, although they did not make it, as such. They called it an attack on Yugoslav modern revisionism to begin with. It was only later that they dropped the “Yugoslav” and began to attack the Soviets directly.

A lot of people, when this editorial came out, couldn't believe it. They thought that we kept saying that the cohesive factors are more important than the divisive factors in the Sino-Soviet relationship. It didn't work out that way.

Q (Green): Actually, back in 1957 when the Soviets put up Sputnik there was a Chinese reaction. They sent two or three delegations to Moscow with a clear intention of trying to share in this breakthrough and to, somehow, have it contribute to the glory of China. They were rebuffed. Shortly after that, the Soviets were pressing China on trying to declare a nuclear-free zone in the Far East. This was a better line for the Chinese to take than to try and participate in the development of nuclear weapons.

I was following this very closely with Alice Hsieh, who was with the Rand Corporation in California. I took about two or three trips there. It was very interesting because already there were clear indications the Chinese nose was out of joint. We know that the Chinese nose was out of joint at the time when the Russians walked into Manchuria; and the yellow peril attitudes of the Russians towards the Chinese go way back.

When you talk about 1959, then it was becoming really much more out in the open. In 1962, you went to Hong Kong.

Q (Kennedy): Did you feel under any particular restraints about thinking right concerning China and overall communism within the Department, or could one raise the issue of when could we recognize them? Could you talk about the split without running across ideology from up above? How did you feel?

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HOLDRIDGE: I think there were some cautions in the minds of people. You remember Josiah Bennett? He was the director of the political section in the old Office of Chinese Affairs. Shortly before the Taiwan Strait crisis erupted in 1958, he came out with a white paper, which he had written, on U.S. policy toward China, which was support down the line for Taiwan.

Then, at the very last, he said, "However, should the situation on the Chinese mainland change to the point where China would begin to live in peace with its neighbors, we would be willing to take another look at China policy."

Even then, we always had this feeling in the back of our minds—through the Geneva talks, the ambassadorial-level talks, and in various ways—that we didn't want to foreclose any opportunities which might open in the future. We wanted some kind of a relationship. In addition to that, Dulles was very upset by the second offshore-islands crisis, and the fact that Chiang Kai-shek insisted on keeping a large percentage of his forces on those highly exposed islands. This was a strong temptation for the Chinese Communists, as we called them in those days, to knock them out. In so doing, they could destroy effectively all the will to resist on the part of all of Taiwan. Therefore, it was a pawn that the Chinese Communists could take advantage of. Therefore, there was a great deal of disagreement and problems that we had with Chiang Kai-shek over the disposition of his forces, and their unwillingness to withdraw them.

Dulles said, "Never again are we going to get ourselves involved in one of these things."

This began to have another effect of making us more and more wary of becoming too much the protagonist for the causes of the Chinese Nationalists, and not taking a broader view of the total problem of China. I think that Dulles, who had been one of the strongest pro-Chiang Kai-shek types when he first came aboard in the State Department, by the time he died in 1959, he had a rather different view of the problem—a much more comprehensive understanding of the total-China problem.

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Q (Green): Meanwhile, of course, Walter Robertson, who had been such a strong protagonist of the Chinese Nationalists, was soon to leave the stage. He left by 1960, and Jeff Parsons took over. Jeff was a career Foreign Service officer who had a very balanced view of the total problem. The atmosphere was already beginning to change by 1960.

You went to Hong Kong in 1962. I was already in Hong Kong when you arrived. You became head of the political section.

HOLDRIDGE: At that time it was first the political section. Then it became the mainland reporting unit. We discovered that it made very little sense to differentiate between politics and economics. The two sections that were reporting on mainland China, economic and political, were merged into a mainland China reporting unit, which also included the press monitoring unit and the publications procurement effort that we had. We had quite a number of people working hard on analyzing what was going on in China economically and politically.

Q (Green): We divided because we had responsibilities for (1) Hong Kong and Macau, which had both a political and an economic aspect to it, and (2) mainland China. I would say that one of the things that struck me about that year of 1962 when you arrived was that Heyward Isham, who was in your section covering Sino-Soviet relations, found it impossible to find words strong enough to convey the tone of Chinese broadcasts against the Soviet Union. The language was so scatological, so intense and vituperative, that he despaired on being able to show that it was getting even worse than it was yesterday. [Laughter]

HOLDRIDGE: This all began with that “Long Live Leninism” editorial, but it got worse and worse. Then it became a personal diatribe. On the one hand you had Mao Zedong who, if he didn't write these editorials, was certainly the one who said that this is what you will put into them. On the other hand it was Mr. Khrushchev up until 1964. Then, when he was

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replaced by Brezhnev, the Chinese didn't change the tone one iota. They simply said that the new leaders were even worse than Khrushchev because they were smarter. [Laughter]

Q (Green): One of the things that I recall—and I'm very interested in your comments on it—is that Chiang Kai-shek, or the Chinese Nationalists, were using Hong Kong as a base for operations in the areas of mainland China, not too far from Hong Kong which caused great distress both to the British authorities as well as to the consulate general. I do recall going up to Taiwan one time—of course, we sent messages to Washington about that and to our ambassador in Taipei urging that somehow we put a restraint on this because the British were getting very upset. Also, it wasn't doing us or anybody any good. These little pinpricks, if anything, were being used by the Chinese Communists to steal their people and make them all the more vigilant, driving them more into their little shell. Our thinking in the consulate general was the other way around.

I was wondering if you recall those particular episodes. There was one particular episode that I remember fairly well which was at the time of the breakdown of law and order in Guangdong Province in May of 1962 when all these refugees came flowing into Hong Kong. It was quite clear there was a breakdown. At that time, the Chinese Communists were trying to get the young people in the cities back into the rural areas, to reconstruct their attitudes. A lot of them refused to go, and they came down to Hong Kong.

In this period of inner turmoil in China, there was a kind of an opportunity for us to exploit—at least, for the Chinese Nationalists to exploit. We were very careful not to do that. I remember putting a staying hand on the wrist of our embassy in Taipei in order to tell them not to stir things up and that it wouldn't do any good. More than that, we wanted to convey to Peking that this was our position. Do you recall that?

HOLDRIDGE: Yes. I recall that we took a very dim view of some of the things that the Nationalists were doing. For example, they para-dropped a unit of several hundred men into Hainan. Of course, the Chinese Communists rounded these people up in short order,

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and they all were discovered with American equipment still with the U.S. ordinance device stenciled on the outside of the crates. It made our position very shaky. The Chinese would come out from time to time and blast that Hong Kong was being used as a base for espionage by the American imperialists. It didn't help our situation any. The British were uncomfortable. They may have withheld some of the cooperation, as a consequence. I think that some of the people who worked on another floor in the consulate general were rather bothered in their relationship with the special branch as a consequence.

Q (Green): I remember you, John Lacey and I, as well as others in the consulate general were already beginning to see our problems with China in the long range as involving a first stage of entering into a more civil discourse with the Chinese and relieving them of any kind of fears that we were trying to exploit their internal problems. We were very active in this field, not under instructions from Washington although we reported our actions to Washington. It was because we felt that this was in our long-range interests. We were trying to calm down their vicious anti-Americanism and make them engage in at least a more civil discourse with us.

This point about conveying to Peking the fact that our government was not trying to exploit their internal problems and trying to set the stage for a long-term, better relationship—realizing that it was going to take some time—this was conveyed to their representative. As you know, they had a number of business representatives in Hong Kong. Who actually transmitted this information? I know it was authorized, because I got the authority from Washington. Who actually did it to whom, I don't recall.

HOLDRIDGE: Frankly, I don't. I do believe that, in the course of our ambassadorial-level talks, something of this sort was also conveyed. As I said, these things went on from 1955 until 1970 sporadically. For a long time, they were bogged down. The Chinese wanted to talk about major issues and the major relationship. We said we had to settle the lesser issues first, such as non-repatriated Americans, etc. This is a familiar one.

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I believe, in the course of these—and you would have to check these with Jake Beam or with Alex Johnson—that we did make it plain that we were not seeking to try to change the situation on the mainland. In fact, our conclusion in Hong Kong was that, despite problems such as floods, droughts, or problems generated by the collapse of the Great Leap Forward, which began to fall apart by 1962, China was going to be remaining under the control of the communists. There wasn't anything that anybody from the outside was going to be able to do about it, certainly not Taiwan.

Q (Green): Don't you think that, in this period of 1962 and 1963, there was a little bit of an opening in the clouds. You talked about the end of the Great Leap Forward. Clearly, it had been a disaster, and the Chinese knew that. Meanwhile, they were more and more concerned with the Soviets and the Soviet threat. Our interventions, both in Geneva or Warsaw, as well as in Hong Kong, were conveying the impression that we are not trying to exploit their internal problems. It seemed to me that there was an opening there. We were trying in the consulate general to make best use of it. We were trying to allow Americans to travel to China, to end our foreign assets control regulations. Obviously, this was a great nuisance and had nothing to do with our overall relations with China. It was more of an irritant. In other words, we were creating irritants for American businessmen, for American scholars who wanted to go to China. They couldn't get into China because China wouldn't let them, but it would appear to the world that we were the ones who were keeping them out.

HOLDRIDGE: As a matter of fact, I think that, to an extent, we were. We tried very hard, for example, to suggest that maybe some sales of humanitarian items to the Chinese would be in order. We finally allowed American journalists to travel. However, by that time the Chinese were so angered over the whole situation, they refused to give any visas.

Q (Green): That's true. We anticipated that might be the reaction, but we generally wanted to have people go in to find out what was going on. On the other hand, we were still up against a dead-head attitude back in Washington which was part of the cold-war mentality.

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They still saw these things in very rigid, red and white terms. In the consulate general, we saw opportunities—not just to gauge in a more civil discourse with China, but also possibly to be removing irritants, at the same making it clear that it was China keeping them out and not us keeping them out. That is one of the things we succeeded in doing.

HOLDRIDGE: Yes. We were, of course, the forward-most element in the United States-China policy at that time. We were the listening post, and we could make a lot of recommendations which, you might say, forecast the future. There wasn't anybody else, really, that they had to pay attention to.

Q (Green): In 1962, we had a more sympathetic audience, you might say, back in Washington. Governor Harriman became assistant secretary in 1962. Chester Bowles was the Under Secretary of State. Both of them were very interested in a change in our China policy. What we were saying in Hong Kong had a very responsive resonance in Washington in the form of the new Under Secretary, as well as President Kennedy. He was interested in some of the things we were saying and doing in Hong Kong. It resulted in my being asked back to Washington in the early fall of 1963 to take a new look at our China policy.

While all this was going on, Ambassador Holdridge was in Hong Kong. You were there all during this period until 1966.

HOLDRIDGE: I saw the breakdown of the Great Leap Forward. Incidentally, our political analysts were able to predict the Chinese attack on India in 1962, because of the tenor of the sound of the Chinese pronouncements about the border clashes. Blood debt had been incurred, and the debt had to be repaid, etc. During all this period, I was able to witness the collapse of the Great Leap Forward, Mao Zedong being shoved into the background, and as you say, there was a more rational attitude for a period on the part of the leadership, headed essentially by Liu Shao-chi, who was really the second man under Mao. Liu Shao-chi and Teng Hsiao-ping were people who were trying to run a much more

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realistic policy with the old ideology sitting in the background, glowering and waiting for a chance. This chance finally came in August of 1966 with the Cultural Revolution. In the meantime, there obviously had been some real problems inside China.

In September of 1965, for example, Lin Biao, then the minister of defense, had come out with a long diatribe saying, "Long live the victory of people's war."

Mao was still keeping up this barrage against the Soviet Union on behalf of his version of the future, and how to bring about the victory of communism. The other people seemed to be much more interested in running a country in a realistic, pragmatic, practical way. They had a lot of problems they had to face. At this time, it is conceivable—had it not been for Mao coming out of the wilderness again in August 1966 with the great proletarian Cultural Revolution—that there might have been an easing of the tensions, but there wasn't.

The whole thing was deferred until—I could give you a watershed—first of all, the election of Nixon. Marshall may have contributed to Nixon's view of China with his long chat with Nixon in Jakarta in 1967. This is prior to the issuance of a Foreign Affairs Quarterly article in October of 1967, which advocated a restoration of a relationship between China and the United States. Then, when Nixon came in, among the first things he did was to order a restudy of China policy. That was subsequently followed up by removal of a considerable number of our trade controls, removal of the certificate of origin—which used to be an onus to us in that any item that was brought into the United States had to show that it was not produced in mainland China—as well as the removal of restrictions on travel, provided the Chinese wanted to give visas to Americans who wanted to go. All of this occurred with Nixon.

I came back from Hong Kong in 1966. I went into an office in the Bureau of Intelligence and Research. I was number two. Eventually, a year or so later I was the office director of the Office of Research and Analysis for East Asia and the Pacific, known as REA. My job, on the one hand, was briefing senior people such as Bill Bundy, then the Assistant

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Secretary of State, on significant developments. The other thing was trying to keep up with what was really happening and analyzing these developments in ways which could be contributory to foreign policy. This is a period in which we saw a lot of changes begin to materialize. I think we worked very closely, INR, with the Bureau at that particular time. We never did anything that wasn't really working very closely together.

Q (Green): Let me go back on this period because it is a very interesting landmark. I felt that the death of Kennedy in late 1963 put a great damper on all that we were trying to do to bring about a new attitude towards China. Also, things were going on in China. You were in Hong Kong in 1964 and in 1965. There was this socialist-education campaign, the precursor of the Cultural Revolution. It was clear that, not only was the end of 1963 a watershed for those of us who were hoping to bring about a modification of the rancor in our U.S.-China relations—it was also our deepening involvement in Vietnam. The new President was totally wrapped up in Vietnam. Those of us who were hoping that we could have some kind of openings to China—I remember this was a real damper—

HOLDRIDGE: I'll tell you why. That was the influence of a predecessor of mine, once removed, as the office director for Research and Analysis for East Asia and the Pacific—Allan S. Whiting. Allan had written a book, going back to the Korean War which was entitled *China Crosses the Yalu*. He was convinced that, in a situation where China's territorial integrity was being threatened by the approach of hostile forces from the outside as happened when the U.S. went north of the old DMZ, the 38th Parallel, and then China entered the Korean War, the same was going to happen in Vietnam. Here we were, deeply bogged down or beginning to get deeply involved, shall I say, in the Vietnam War. Allan kept telling Averell Harriman that, "The Chinese are coming. The Chinese are coming."

I can recall watching on television, for example, the then-Secretary of State, Dean Rusk, having his innings with Fulbright on this whole question of China. Rusk kept saying, "Well, the Chinese are going to come in. That's why we have to keep a hard line, keep our guard

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up, etc.” The repercussions of this Vietnam situation really affected our China policy. It put it in a state of semi-paralysis for a while.

I can remember Fulbright's reaction to Dean Rusk saying something about the Chinese are coming—”They wouldn't do that.”

This was said in his best Arkansas accent. In fact, they didn't. The Chinese for a while were actually impeding the shipment of Soviet war supplies across China to Vietnam. They were so jealous of the Soviets for having the inside track, and they were worried about Soviet encirclement of China, as a consequence of this big diatribe between Mao and whoever happened to be in power in Moscow at the time. It began to look to the Chinese as if they were being surrounded, not by the American imperialists, or the Japanese militarists, or the Taiwan revanchists, but by the allies of the Soviet Union—the Soviet Union and Vietnam.

Q (Green): This is a very relevant point. I remember Bill Bundy, many years later, looking back and thanking me and John Holdridge for taking a view contrary to Allan Whiting. If only they had listened a little more attentively to this viewpoint. I felt the way you did. I didn't think that the Chinese would come massing down into Vietnam unless, of course, we carried the war up towards the borders of China. That was different. But, to be conducting a war the way we were—raiding parties and that kind of thing against North Vietnam—that certainly wasn't going to bring them in.

The question to me was, how far could you go? I was Deputy Assistant Secretary of State at that time. In 1964, we spent a great deal of time trying to figure out how far we were going to conduct this war into Vietnam. Would we bomb the North? Would we bomb Hanoi? Would we mine the harbors? Would we mine the dikes?

With strong pressure from the press and the Congress, critical of our war effort, we kept making self-restrictions—imposing restrictions on our own course of action. We said that

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we would not bomb Hanoi and Haiphong, we would not mine the harbors, and we would not mine the dikes and flood the country.

Every time we did this kind of thing, of course, it gave the enemy assurance. We just bargained ourselves out of the war.

HOLDRIDGE: Which we eventually did.

Q (Green): Of course, while this was going on, Peking was getting a clear impression that there were very distinct limits to our actions. Therefore, they were not so concerned about North Vietnam.

HOLDRIDGE: They did their bit as an ally. They did send logistical troops, line of communications, to help keep the roads and railways open. They also sent anti-aircraft units, but they never acknowledged the presence of Chinese forces. They used to talk about the “lips-and-teeth” relationship between China and Vietnam, but this was unacknowledged in terms of actual public announcement of the presence of Chinese forces. The Chinese were being very discreet.

When we would invade what they called their territorial waters or air space, they began this series of serious warnings that they would issue—serious warning number one, number two, violation of Chinese territorial air space on such and such a date over such and such a bit of Chinese-acclaimed territory, such as the Paracels. We actually had some aircraft, that strayed into China on raids to the north, which were shot down or went down over Hainan, for example. The Chinese really didn't make anything much of it. They played it very carefully, not to bring themselves directly into the conflict.

Our analysis on this was to look at what happened in India in 1962. The Chinese took on the Indian forces after Krishna Menon said he was going to drive the Chinese out of the disputed territory along the Indian border with China. The Chinese really hit the Indians very hard in the Northeast Frontier Agency's area—the NEFA—drove the Indians out and

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down to the Plains of Assam. Having done so, they turned around and marched up the mountain again—back up the Himalayas. They were not about to be involved in a major conflict at a time of deep, internal problems and contradictions.

I felt that the same thing was true during the Vietnam War. They had their internal situation to resolve. Along comes the great proletarian Cultural Revolution, and this threw China into a real convulsion while a lot of the Vietnam War was going on.

Q (Green): Don't you think, John, in retrospect, that we tended to regard the Chinese as ten-foot tall. The fact of the matter is that they were far weaker and far more concerned with their internal situation than with any kind of external adventures.

HOLDRIDGE: We did have an intelligence break on that. Do you recall the Tibetan Papers?

Q (Green): No. The name is familiar, but I can't remember what it was about.

HOLDRIDGE: It turned out that a group of Khambas, operating out of Nepal, crossed the border into Tibet, and managed to shoot up a Chinese military convoy, one of the trucks of which contained all of the workbooks of the political officer. When put all together, the upshot of these books was to show that the Chinese People's Liberation Army was in a terrible state. This was as a consequence, primarily, of the Great Leap Forward, and the siphoning off of energies into all sorts of non-productive things. It was a hollow Army.

Q (Green): I do remember that very well, now that you mention it. This simply confirms the fact that we tended to magnify the threat that China posed.

HOLDRIDGE: Well, the people who were watching China did not agree with the assessments of people like Allan Whiting, that the Chinese were going to be charging in —"watch it, fellows, because you'll have another Korean War on your hands."

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Q (Kennedy): Was there another side to this? The tremendous antipathy of the Vietnamese to the Chinese gets played up a lot now in the post-Vietnam period. They've been fighting them for centuries. Were you talking to Vietnamese experts who were saying that they may get together, but that China would not expand this way because the Vietnamese hate the Chinese?

HOLDRIDGE: That was known. I can't recall any specific individual who came up, waving a piece of paper. It was generally accepted that the Chinese and the Vietnamese were ancient enemies and not friends, and that their relationship could hardly be congenial.

Q (Green): May I say, though, that they may have been clear to you, John, but it was not clear to me. I was deputy assistant secretary at that time, and later on I was assistant secretary. I never really adequately appreciated the depth of Chinese-Vietnamese animosities. Never. What I did know was that we were exaggerating the threat that China posed, and the fact that China was expansionist. When you talk about the attack on India, it was basically because China was trying to settle its border problems with all the countries around its perimeter. They had succeeded in the case of Pakistan and the Hindu Kush, etc., but they came up against the Indians who refused to settle the Akusai Chin and the northeast frontier territorial dispute. The Chinese just gave them a lesson or two.

Basically, the Chinese were not this kind of expansionist force we perceived to be. That lingered on and on.

There is one other thing here that is important. While all this was going on in 1965, you were back in the Department dealing with intelligence. I was in Indonesia. The collapsed effort of the Indonesia Communist Party, PKI—in cahoots with Peking to pull off a successful coup that would put up a Nasakom government under the titular leadership of Sukarno, who was very compliant and working closely with the communists. That failed. It was a tremendous setback to China in terms of its external policies. This, of

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course, caused something of a breakdown of democratic centralism in Peking, etc. It sent shockwaves all over the communist world—far more than people have recognized.

HOLDRIDGE: Bob Martens, who was running the Soviet research area when I was running the East Asian side, has written a book on this. He was one of your political officers. He has maintained that this was a crucial factor in the whole sequence of events which followed—the Indonesian coup and its failure.

I don't quite agree. I don't think the Chinese were that deeply involved. I think that they were supportive of Sukarno and the CPI. There is no doubt about that. I don't think that they were as deeply involved as Bob Martens says they were.

Q (Green): I think Bob Martens has made a very important contribution to the understanding of this problem, though, by accenting the fact that Sukarno was a willing tool. Whether or not Sukarno was designing to establish a communist government, or thought that he could control such a government, etc., that is beyond my ability to evaluate.

There were a series of blows to China at that time, which had a great deal to do with Chinese attitudes and with the problems that we had in our relations with China.

HOLDRIDGE: I think the Chinese became even more surly and churlish as a consequence as some of these setbacks. The “victory of People's war” was certainly not being clearly achieved in various places. The Vietnam War went on for years, and Indonesia was no great plum for the concepts of Mao such as, “Long live the victory of People's war.”

As a matter of fact, the collapse of the coup came in the same month, only a few weeks after Lin Piao had issued this little pamphlet on, “Long Live the Victory of People's War.”

Along comes the Cultural Revolution, and Mao is now trying to set things straight—what was wrong was that the younger generation didn't know how to struggle, didn't know how

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to shed blood, and he was going to fix that. The Red Guards were going to storm the party headquarters and get rid of those people such as Liu Shao-chi, who were trying to turn China away from communism and back toward capitalism. The whole country went into a convulsion. This is precisely the period when we were becoming most deeply involved in Vietnam.

The idea of the Chinese—at a time when they were going through these throes internally—engaging in some kind of an external war of major proportions was absolutely ridiculous.

Q (Kennedy): This is how your unit and people dealing—

HOLDRIDGE: This is how we were telling people such as Bill Bundy, for example, whom I briefed. The first thing in the morning, I would come in and read the overnight from the intelligence channels, get together the stuff from other agencies, cart it down there, put it into some kind of a form, and make a fairly cohesive picture of it for Bill Bundy. I never felt that the Chinese were going to be charging in. This was after Averell Harriman and Allan Whiting had both left.

Q (Green): Going back to this period of 1963 and up to 1965, I think the Chinese clearly had a position of considerable standing and ambition in terms of influence—not military, but political influence—in Africa. They were putting a major effort in Africa. They were also making a major effort in the non-aligned countries of the world. They posed as a non-aligned country. Clearly, they were the biggest and most powerful “non-aligned country.” They were willing to let Sukarno be their cat's paw. They had these big meetings in Bandung. They made a major effort to make the PKI the dominant party—which it already was by the time I arrived there in 1965—definitely pro-Chinese. The Chinese had a great deal of influence in Jakarta. They were putting up a new CONEFO (the Committee of the New Emerging Forces) complex right outside Jakarta. It was a huge building built with Chinese money. Millions of dollars went into it from China. They were just nearing completion when all this PKI effort collapsed.

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I do think that this meant, in a way, the end of Chinese efforts to have influence in the outside world—not necessarily military, but ideological influence in Africa, Southeast Asia, etc. In a way, they were competing against the Soviet Union in these areas, too.

HOLDRIDGE: It was quite plain. Indeed, they were making a deliberate, direct challenge for the leadership of the world communist movement, vis-a-vis the Soviet Union. The Soviets actually resented it, which led to this whole situation. The changes, which then occurred, we were wise enough to attempt to exploit.

Q (Green): China simply wasn't that kind of an externally-aggressive country.

HOLDRIDGE: Ideologically, it was on the offensive.

Q (Green): Ideologically, it was out to make marks all around the world.

HOLDRIDGE: But, militarily it was extremely defensive.

Q (Kennedy): In China at the beginning of the Cultural Revolution, did you feel that this was a power struggle, or was this ideology?

HOLDRIDGE: It was power struggle in part. Mao was taking after some of the people who had thrust him back at the end of Great Leap Forward into what he called “the second line.” These were the ones who wanted to run China in a pragmatic, realistic way, with a diminished, ideological content, as opposed to Mao who wanted to carry the revolution forward to the end, both at home and abroad. There was an expression for it, “Ke ming tao ti”. This was, “Carry the revolution, through to the end.”

This was what Mao was trying to propose and, in fact, to conduct. It didn't work.

I saw on the television last night a young Czechoslovakian woman said, “Look. Marx was a romanticist. What he proposed was not suited to human endeavor.” [Laughter]

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Q (Green): This brings us up to the time when you served on the NSC under Henry Kissinger in 1969.

HOLDRIDGE: I want to add one thing: the perceptible change began during the events which the Soviets have now repudiated. This was the movement of the Soviet-bloc armed forces into Prague on August 21, 1968, under the Brezhnev Doctrine. Earlier that year, Brezhnev had come out with the Brezhnev Doctrine, which was that the vanguard party, to wit the Soviet Union of CPSU, since it had been through the revolutionary experience first, was in a position to define the ways which all other communist parties should go through the process of seizing power and building socialism. If they didn't do it the right way, then it was the internationalist duty of all these other good Marxist parties to come and set the errant country or party straight on the way it should go.

The Chinese got the message that the Yugoslavs were way off the reservation at this time, in one direction. They were becoming more capitalist all the time. Here was Mao and company in the other direction, becoming more screwball and extremist. Indeed, Lenin would call it, "A left-wing extremist, infantile disorder." This is what the Chinese were guilty of in the eyes of the Soviets. So, the relationship became very strained, starting in 1968.

August 21 was when the Soviet tanks moved in. I don't know who the genius was in EA, or FE at that time, who suggested a resumption of the Warsaw talks, which had been languishing. The ambassadorial-level talks had been moved as of the end of the Taiwan Strait crisis, September 11, [1958], from Geneva to Warsaw. They languished and hadn't gone anywhere for a long time.

Somebody in EA/FE proposed a resumption of the Warsaw talks. They sent a letter to the Chinese through whatever channels were available—I suppose the Brits or whoever—this was on September 17, 1968, proposing a resumption of the Warsaw talks. The Chinese responded. A Chinese friend of mine in the embassy said it was 48 hours. It was almost instantaneous for the Chinese.

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They came almost right back on the heels of the letter and said, "Well, if you want to have these talks, we might as well go ahead."

They responded in a rather condescending way. Then they added something which was very significant. It was, "It has always been the policy of the People's Republic of China to maintain friendly relations with all states, regardless of social systems, on the basis of the five principles of peaceful coexistence."

The Chinese had first brought up these five principles of peaceful coexistence with the Indians back in the good old days of "Hindi-Chini bhai bhai"—"Indians and Chinese are brothers"; Nehru, Zhou En-lai, etc. This was about the era of the Geneva Conference in 1954.

Later on, the whole concept of peaceful coexistence became a basic element in this terrible fight and diatribe between Mao and the Soviets. The idea that you could have a peaceful transition to communism, with a peaceful relationship between the capitalist world and the communist world while this transition was going on, was abhorrent to Mao Zedong—a basic element in his whole attack against the Soviets. Then, all of a sudden, for the Chinese to bring up the five principles of peaceful coexistence—boy, bells bonged all over.

Q (Green): What date were the five principles first brought up?

HOLDRIDGE: This goes back to the meeting that Zhou En-lai had with Nehru which was before the Geneva Conference of 1954. They met to talk about Tibet, in fact, in which the Indians were supposed to lay off Tibet and relinquish all claims, territorial and otherwise. This is where it first came out.

After the Bandung Conference, they came out with ten principles, five of which were the ones which the Chinese favored—non-interference in the internal affairs of other states,

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etc. Peaceful coexistence, itself, was the last of the five principles of peaceful coexistence—undefined.

At any rate, this was a formula which they had used for quite a while, until the time that they became involved in this whole fuss about revisionism, long live Leninism, etc. It kind of dropped out. Then, to see it suddenly revived after years, we thought that something was really afoot here, and that it ought to be taken up.

Q (Green): I do want to get into your problems working with Henry Kissinger in the NSC. This began in 1969?

HOLDRIDGE: Yes. I didn't really want to go. I was happy in my position as the office director of INR/REA. In fact, I had been interviewed by Kissinger in the very beginning of the Nixon Administration. I had indicated that I didn't really want to go, so he picked Dick Sneider to go over as his EA man, or FE, senior staff member for East Asian affairs. I don't know what the problem was specifically between Dick and Henry. Maybe their personalities did not jibe. Dick had his own ways of doing things. They were not compatible.

Eventually, Dick got the job of being Minister in Tokyo. He was primarily responsible for the reversion of Okinawa treaty. So, off he went, and then I came. I was transferred over in July of 1969. I had participated as INR representative in the SIG, Senior Inter-Governmental, Inter-Departmental Group, discussions of changes in China policy. I helped to contribute to some of the NSSMs, National Security Study Memoranda. NSSM 14, as I recall, was the one that called for another look at China policy early on. I contributed to that in my previous capacity.

Q (Green): Was your capacity one of handling only China, or were you dealing with East Asia and China?

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HOLDRIDGE: No, I had the works. I had everything, except that Henry kept Vietnam and the resolution of the Vietnam problem pretty close to his chest. I was perfectly willing to let him do that. As Henry himself said, “There is no glory for anybody in Vietnam.”

If he wanted to have Vietnam, he could have the “no glory” part of it, as far as I was concerned.

I did have a lot to do with China. In fact, in July of 1969, just a few weeks after I came in, these early changes in travel and trade with respect to China were made. Nixon then took a round-the-world trip. First, he went to see the splash-down in the Pacific of the moon landing.

Then, he went to Guam, and made a statement there which caught me by surprise. We had been used to an advanced military posture with respect to East Asia. Nixon came along and said that the security of an individual country was up to that country itself, primarily. He said that we would help with the wherewithal, but we weren't going to contribute the manpower.

Q (Green): I had written the scope paper for this Nixon Doctrine. I am very familiar with why it was. Did you accompany the President on this trip?

HOLDRIDGE: Yes, as far as Bangkok. My beat extended through East Asia, of course. I went to Vietnam, too.

We had the splash down, Guam, Philippines—where we had some fun with the Marcos people. I am not even going to get into that now. Then we went down to Indonesia and to Bangkok.

As I recall, it was between Jakarta and Bangkok where Henry came back to me on the plane, Air Force One. The NSC had a little enclave just behind the Presidential

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compartment. Henry asked me to draft a cable to the Chinese, proposing that we get together to talk about the improvement in our relations.

I very happily sat down and worked on this thing. I said that we should not look to the past, but look to the future. There were many things that we had in common. There were many issues that were of mutual value, and we should address them, and let's get together. I gave the draft to Henry. He looked at it, gave his characteristic grunt, said nothing, turned around, and went back into the Presidential compartment.

That is the last I saw or heard of it. I have no doubt that a message, somewhere along the line, was, in fact, sent to the Chinese during this trip. There were two places it could have been done. One was in Pakistan. Ayub Khan was the head of the Pakistani government then. Pakistanis and the Chinese were very close in the wake of what had happened in India in 1962. The other place was in Romania. I rather suspect that they would have done it through Pakistan. With Ceausescu, in Romania, even though he was not exactly in the best of light with Moscow, there were probably enough guys running around in Bucharest who would have slipped the word to Moscow. We didn't want this information to become public that we were trying to reestablish contact.

Q (Green): Do you think that that message you drafted was pretty much the one that he sent?

HOLDRIDGE: I have no idea, but I suspect that that was essentially what was said.

Q (Green): You have every reason to believe that that was the first of the real sounding out.

HOLDRIDGE: Yes.

Q (Kennedy): Had there been any intimations or discussions prior to that with Henry Kissinger?

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HOLDRIDGE: No, except that we had seen the developments, since Nixon took office in January of 1969, that he wanted to improve relations with China. We had seen these sequential developments.

Q (Green): I had had many conversations with President Nixon about China. I knew he was interested in it. This is the first time, right now, that I have heard from you, John, this very interesting fact that Henry asked you to draft this telegram. You then left the party at Bangkok, which then went on to India, Pakistan, and Romania. In any of those places this could very well been—

HOLDRIDGE: Subsequently, the communications all went through Pakistan. I think that it was probably Pakistan only. Even though Ceausescu was not exactly a favorite of Moscow's, there must have been enough Soviet KGB-types running around in Bucharest. Henry would be afraid that this would come out into the public domain.

Q (Green): Of course, we had had another clear interest, too, other than China. That was Vietnam. It is quite possible that, when he went to Romania, Ceausescu might have been somebody he sounded out with regard to terms under which we might—

HOLDRIDGE: That's quite possible. As I told you, I didn't really get myself drawn—

Q (Green): Well, we weren't in that part of the trip, so we don't—

HOLDRIDGE: I was not on that part of the trip, so I really don't know what happened. We went back, and not much took place. Things seemed to be on top, dead center. Walter Stoessel, ambassador in Warsaw, was back in Washington later that year for some reason, and he had a little chit-chat with Henry over in the NSC. He was told by Henry, "Let's see if we can't jog these guys' elbows and get somewhere."

The year 1969 was a very critical year for China. In March of 1969 were those very interesting clashes between the Soviets and the Chinese over this little island in the Ussuri

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River—Chenpao, as the Chinese called it, or Damansky as the Soviets called it—in which the Chinese came out second best. The Soviets, I have reason to believe, really clobbered that island with one of the most extreme artillery barrages in modern history, leaving it looking like the surface of the moon. That shook the Chinese.

In April of 1969, they had a party congress. I think for a period, the Chinese tried to reestablish a better relationship with the Soviets. It didn't work. The reason I think so is that, for about two weeks, all of the polemics seemed to stop. The nasty words that the Chinese had been using against the Soviets diminished to zilch. It picked up again later on.

Then, in the summer of 1969, there was a rapid Soviet troop build-up along the Chinese border. They went from something like 17 divisions up to 20, 30, 40, to a total of 54 over a period of time. There was a very rapid build-up. There was a lot of word floating around, to the effect that the Soviets were going to take care of these people who were getting so far off the reservation. It did look to me—doing my own analysis and drawing on the resources of the Department—that there was probably some debate going on in Moscow over whether military force might not be used as a surgical strike to take out the Chinese nuclear capability.

Q (Green): I recall that, in 1969, that chances were considered is one out of three by CIA, that the Russians would, in fact, try to knock out with iron bombs any Chinese nascent nuclear facilities.

HOLDRIDGE: That's right.

Q (Green): The Chinese obviously got wind of this and went underground. That was the time that they started building all of these extensive underground shelters. Also, the Chinese must have remembered what the Soviets did in Czechoslovakia. This must have left a very deep impression of what the Soviets were capable of.

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HOLDRIDGE: They hadn't forgotten. In 1956 in Budapest, the Soviets at that time were capable of utter ruthlessness in putting down any form of dissent. The Chinese, of course, were still going through the throes of their Cultural Revolution, and they were in a terrible state—economically, politically, and militarily.

Q (Green): Assuming that Henry did, in fact, send out the message or a feeler in July of 1969, it would have been a very receptive China that would have gotten that message. At that point, they were pretty terrified by the chances of attack.

HOLDRIDGE: It wasn't that easy. I think there was a terrible debate going on inside China as to the merits of what to do about the relationship with the U.S. It went back to 1968. I mentioned that they had accepted a resumption of the Warsaw talks. This was in September. Yet, the whole rest of the year of 1968, there were many attacks against Liu Shao-chi, probably already dead by this time, for having espoused peaceful coexistence. Clearly, there was not a common line in Beijing.

Then, in early 1969, when we were supposed to have a resumption of the Warsaw talks, the charg# of the Chinese embassy in The Hague defected. He dropped out of a second-story window and ran to the U.S. Embassy, asking for refuge. We, of course, granted it to him. He turned out to be a real dud for any kind of intelligence or political value. He was a psychotic.

I think that the opponents of resumed contacts between the U.S. and China in Beijing used that episode as an excuse for cutting off the contact, so nothing happened. You see, we had to pick up the thread again. Even though we were going to have Warsaw talks in early 1969, the Chinese canceled them. Then a cable comes, sent from the Presidential aircraft, I presume.

In the meantime, there had been the Chanpao-Damansky Island episode, then the Soviet build-up. Clearly, along about the latter part of 1969, the Chinese were beginning to take

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a good, hard look at their world situation, quite apart from the ideology of the thing, to wonder about whether it was a good idea to have two major enemies at the same time. By the way, we had already convinced them that we were not going to carry the war in Vietnam up to the point of attacking China.

Walt Stoessel, being back, was asked by Henry to convey the message—I think it went through Department channels—to make contact with the Chinese in Warsaw. Indeed, he was again to propose a resumption of the Warsaw talks, which Walt did at a Yugoslav fashion show where he caught the charg#—the ambassador was out of town. He proposed the resumption.

The Chinese charg# said, “I’ll come over and discuss it with you at your embassy. How about that?”

A few days later, a Hung-Chi (Red-Flag) limousine, flying the Chinese flag, shows up at our embassy in Warsaw, unmistakably to the great excitement of the press. The next day or so, Walt went back in his Cadillac to the Chinese embassy, flying the American flag. So we were back on track.

Back in the Department, Paul Kreisberg was head of the China desk at this time. Win Brown was the deputy assistant. The question was, what instructions would we send to Walt when he resumed the contact. We talked over all sorts of things.

The proposal was made that there be an exchange of high-level representatives to talk about the resumption of some kind of a relationship, up to and including opening missions of some sort—trade missions, etc.—in each other's capitals. That was presented to the Chinese at the first Warsaw talk in January of 1970. It really took the charg# there aback.

He said, “Well, I’ll have to call back to my people at home on this one.”

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He did. The next meeting was in February. There was a sort of a cautious acceptance on the part of the Chinese for this proposal. This was to have high-level exchanges leading up to some kind of a mission.

Now, I have to say that the Department got cold feet the second time around, and they wanted to back away from that business of missions. We in the NSC did put it back in again.

Q (Green): So it was there.

Q (Kennedy): You were a Foreign Service officer in the NSC under Henry Kissinger. How did you relate to the Department?

HOLDRIDGE: As best as I could, personally, knowing that I had my old friends over there. Henry would have had a fit if I'd run around and kept the Department informed about every little things which was going on. I would have been fired. There was no doubt about it.

I recall in the latter part of 1969, after his around-the-world trip, Nixon produced a Report to the Congress on Foreign Policy of the United States. It was the first time that it had ever been done from the White House, not from the Department of State. He got all the NSC staff in there. We sat around in the Cabinet room, and Nixon gave us a little harangue about what our jobs were and how, by God, he was going to run foreign policy.

In the course of this he said, "If the Department of State has had a new idea in the last 25 years, it is not known to me."

That was a lot of nonsense, of course, knowing what Marshall had said to him. Half the people in that room were Foreign Service officers. But Nixon had this thing about the Foreign Service. Those of us who were on detail from the Department had to be very cautious. We tried to be as open as we possibly could, to keep in good, personal contact with Marshall, Alex Johnson, old friends and acquaintances, but it was not the easiest

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thing in the world. This was because of Kissinger, himself. I think the only time he resolved this problem was later in 1973 when he became Secretary of State himself, and Brent Scowcroft took over as the Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs. I think we worked it out pretty well.

Q (Green): I remember that, on a number of occasions, I would call up John Holdridge over in the White House if something came up and I wanted to get it to Henry's attention. Sometimes I would call up Henry directly. I still have quite a bit of correspondence with Henry about various items. They were always very nice letters, nothing nasty. Nastiness was always done behind your back.

Nixon, when he concluded this trip around the world—I learned this from somebody who was at the meeting at Camp David—had the Cabinet and other people up there who were big-wigs. He told them about his trip around the world. In the course of this, he made many nasty digs about the State Department and the Foreign Service—especially the Foreign Service.

HOLDRIDGE: Let me say one reason why I think it might have happened. Nixon preferred one-on-one in his meetings with chiefs of state and heads of government. In one place, Bangkok, the ambassador, who is a very dear friend of mine and a man I respect enormously, Len Unger—he wasn't personally involved in this, but his deputy, Norm Hannah was—went again and again to the mat with Kissinger about Len going in and attending the meeting, as he should have. There is no reason why the ambassador of the country should have been excluded. The same thing, incidentally, happened in the Philippines.

Q (Green): It happened in Indonesia, too, where our ambassador spoke Indonesian. He would have done a better job than the Indonesian Interpreter they used.

HOLDRIDGE: I thought Frank was in that meeting.

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Q (Green): He was not in that meeting, and he clamored to get into that meeting. Henry took me aside several times and said that, if Galbraith once more brings that up, he is out.

HOLDRIDGE: This is what I think ruined Norman Hannah's career.

Q (Green): It has been traditional that ambassadors attend these meetings.

HOLDRIDGE: That's right, but Nixon would not have it.

Q (Green): No. He didn't have that, but he didn't have a Secretary of State present. Therefore, we had no record, except what Henry chose to recall, and what he then chose to tell us he recalled. Increasingly, we in the State Department realized that we didn't know all that was going on. When that happens, you begin to lose confidence.

This brings us back to the point you were making, indicating that there were certain differences that existed between you and me with regard to how we should carry on for the Warsaw talks. Should we go in for a high-level meeting, etc.? What was the next move?

I remember very well that Henry sent over and asked our views on this, for whatever they were worth. We would give them. One of the things that I mentioned to him was that I trusted, before we were committed to a high-level meeting, one of our high-level people would have some advance indication that it would result in something that was constructive. Nothing would be worse than to go out there, and then get slapped in the face. It would be the end of all that we hoped to achieve in our U.S.-China relations.

That kind of thing has been distorted in his account in his White House Years. He implies that we were throwing cold water. It was not true at all. All we were saying is that we didn't know all of the pieces in the puzzle. This is the first time I'd heard from John Holdridge about the telegram he had composed on the plane—

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HOLDRIDGE: This is the first time I had heard of the problems that faced the State Department with respect to having a high-level representative go to Beijing. This is very interesting. We are, at long last, cross-referencing. [Laughter]

Q (Green): We weren't in communication with each other. John knew certain things. He was under strict secrecy not to tell us. We knew that we didn't know all of the parts. It created a distrust. Naturally, old friends maintain the same kind of ties we preserve all our careers—John and me—but it put it to the real test, to be dealing with the same problem and for me not to be privy to all the information that he had access to.

HOLDRIDGE: I wasn't always privy, either. You know, Henry would have three different groups working on a problem in the National Security Council, which might even include China. Not one of the members of those groups knew that the others were working on the same problem. That is the way he did it. It was a paranoiac way of doing things, which I hated. I detested it.

Q (Green): This is a very key point here, because we recently had this trip of Scowcroft and Eagleburger to China. I think it would be the instinct of anybody in the State Department to say, "If they go to China, we trust that there would be some advance understanding with regard to what they might achieve out of such a visit."

To go there and make this highly visible toast, etc., forgetting all the recent, well-remembered incidents in Tiananmen Square would be unthinkable, unless there was some definite result expected out of this thing. We would probably have had some advance indicators that, perhaps, they might make some concessions on this or that, etc. Therefore, it would be worth investing our reputation on such a visit.

HOLDRIDGE: Maybe there had been an advance indicator.

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Q (Green): We don't know—still don't know—because the White House still operates in this kind of highly-secretive way.

HOLDRIDGE: Let me tell you why. This brings up a little bit about the surroundings of the Kissinger trip to Beijing in July of 1971. The reason that there was no publicity given on this is—the way Henry Kissinger put it—if it came out, we would be trying to negotiate our China policy, not with the Chinese but with the Washington Post and the New York Times. He felt that this would be absolutely unacceptable. That is why there was so much secrecy attached to it. Not that we were worried about how people would view it, etc. The question was that advance publicity might have even killed the whole opportunity, because the Congress or the press would have been hanging caveats all over, to the point where we couldn't move. The only way that he saw it was, if you are going to do something like that, you've got to do it in such a way that there are no prior limitations on what you can discuss or how you can go about it.

Q (Green): I am prepared to accept that, but I have some caveats, too. I think the Assistant Secretary of State in charge of that area should be informed.

HOLDRIDGE: I was shocked that Dick Solomon, who is my successor, twice removed, was not present.

Q (Green): That's right. Not to inform me about Henry's trip was almost disastrous. When I was told at a staff meeting in June 1971 that it had just been announced on the radio that Dr. Kissinger had suffered an attack of flu at Islamabad and was taking several days off to recuperate in Muree, I told my staff that no one suffering from Delhi belly would ever drive up into the mountains.

I just said to my people, “well, he's probably gone to China.”

I suddenly realized that maybe he had gone to China. So I swore them all to secrecy about our conversation just in time to prevent the leak. What I was saying in my demurrer in early

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1970 about having a high-level emissary go to China was that there ought to be some kind of advance indication that it succeed. That was exactly what Henry was doing. He was going out there, in secret. When he got to China, he didn't know whether this was going to result in a Presidential visit, did he?

HOLDRIDGE: Let me say that there had been enough from the Chinese through Ayub Khan in Pakistan to suggest that there would be a positive response. He was not going blindly into outer space.

Q (Green): What I'm saying is that it is terribly unjust for him in his book to be criticizing the State Department on this issue.

HOLDRIDGE: He, of course, was absolutely unjust.

Q (Green): In fact, what he was doing was exactly what we are suggesting he should do. Find out one way or another whether or not this trip would result in something—

HOLDRIDGE: I feel confident that there was something there. When we were talking about the Warsaw talks in 1970 and the whole question of a high-level emissary, all this became moot. In May of 1970, the U.S. military went into Cambodia and Mao Zedong cut off the Warsaw contact by a piece that was signed by Mao, himself, on the front page of the People's Daily. The whole thing languished. There may have been some efforts by Henry via Ayub Khan or whoever to reopen, but nothing really happened.

Then Edgar Snow visited China in the latter part of 1970. He stood next to Mao Zedong on Tiananmen Square for the October 1, 1970, ceremony. I think some word came back through Edgar Snow that there was some receptivity. In March of 1971, there was an issue of Life magazine, in which Edgar Snow gave some of his accounts of his visit. In this issue, which became almost our Bible, Edgar Snow reported how Mao said a visit by Nixon to China would be welcome, and if he wanted to bring his wife and daughters, too, that would be fine.

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Q (Green): By March of 1971, it was very clear that the Chinese had made up their minds. Of course, we had ping-pong diplomacy shortly after that. You made an interesting point about 1970 that I overlooked. That point was our involvement in land warfare against the Vietnamese in Cambodia and bringing Cambodia into the war. There was a very strong Chinese reaction to this thing, and it clearly set back everything.

In the latter part of 1970, it must have been a period in which the Chinese were doing some very serious reevaluation of their total strategic position. By the beginning of 1971, maybe by March, when Snow reported his meeting with Mao, they had already made up their minds that they were going to have to change their policy.

HOLDRIDGE: Yes, I think so. Actually, apropos the strategic threat, about the same time that we started in 1968 to propose the Warsaw resumption, Zhou En-lai was hosting an Albanian military delegation. He took them out to Shuangchangtzu, the missile-testing base, and announced to the world—to our great interest—that there had been over 2,000 violations of China's territory by the Soviet Union. In other words, this is a sense of the magnitude of the Soviet threat as the Chinese perceived it.

After a decent interval and after the furor over the Cambodian exercise had died down, the Chinese could once more take a look at their strategic needs, the idea of having one enemy rather than two, and resume the contact with the U.S.

In the early spring of 1971, Henry called me in and said, “We're back on track. I want you to start working on a book.”(A “book” meant a collection of issues and talking points on these issues for use by our representatives at high-level meetings.)

Q (Green): There is another interesting point here which is the Cultural Revolution. The Cultural Revolution, as you say, started in 1966. I would say 1965. In any case, it was beginning to peter out in 1971, wasn't it?

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HOLDRIDGE: It had already thrown China into such turmoil, that even Mao Zedong had repudiated the Red Guards and thrown 30,000 of them from Beijing out to Yenan, where they were supposed to be able to steel themselves through revolutionary struggle.

Q (Green): In other words, internal events in China were also bringing it to the point of a rapprochement with the United States.

HOLDRIDGE: Yes. I think that the voice of those who preached a less-ideological policy and a more realistic one were beginning to be heard again. Zhou was able to save some of his people from purgatory, keeping them out of jails—

Q (Green): They had their kind of McCarthyism that was now lifting, where people began to say what they thought.

HOLDRIDGE: Yes. I think there was still an intense debate going on in China over the whole merits of this, and they probably continue right to this day. Nevertheless, the strategic considerations were uppermost at that time.

Q (Green): Tell me about the preparations for Henry's trip. At what point were you cut in on it? What was your role in it?

HOLDRIDGE: My role was doing the books. As he said, "Start working up position papers on all the issues that would be discussed with the Chinese."

Except for Vietnam—I didn't draft those. I drafted the relations with Japan, with Korea and the Korean problem, Southeast Asia, all the various areas in East Asia and the Pacific, which were mine. Henry wanted to talk about Vietnam himself. Of course, I heard what was going on. He took Dick Smyser along on that trip. He was his resident expert on Vietnam, although Dick didn't open his mouth the whole time. [Laughter]

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My job was to think up the positions. The way we worked it out is—first of all, there was a three-inch paragraph which indicated the issue involved. Next came the anticipated Chinese position, and then “your response.”

Q (Green): Whose clever idea was it of having—the United States says and the Chinese say, and then where both agree? To me, the format of the eventual Shanghai communique# was a stroke of genius. I don't recall seeing any kind of communique# drafted that way, where you were able to get in your independent positions and differences and then show where you agreed. Where did that idea crop up?

HOLDRIDGE: That came out after the return from the first trip, in preparation for the second. I think that the second visit in October of 1971 brought this formula into play. The Chinese had to say their say. We wanted to make it very plain that we were supporting South Vietnam. The way it worked out is that each laid out his position—we declared this, the Chinese side declared that.

Q (Green): It is a reflection, I suppose, of your first talks. Henry said that the Chinese sounded off—I assume it was Zhou En-lai—for the better part of two days about all of the injustices that China had suffered at the hands of the West. They had to get it off their chest.

HOLDRIDGE: We expected that. At the same time, Zhou was very pragmatic, too. We worked from the early spring of 1971—and I made a trip down to Key Biscayne once with the books to show Nixon, who was down at his Florida White House. We finally arranged the take-off and all of this correspondence through the back channels. Again, Kissinger was hypersensitive about any leaks on this. In this particular respect, such a dramatic break with the past, I think he was correct. He didn't want to have our China policy defined by the New York Times and the Washington Post. He wanted to do it himself.

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Q (Green): The only thing there is that, as I heard it later on, the Chinese insisted on the secrecy. The fact of the matter is that we insisted on it.

HOLDRIDGE: Henry never intimated that the Chinese laid it on, although they were quite prepared, of course, to accept. We went public on July 15, after we got back. The only problem was making sure that there was some forewarning to everybody concerned.

Q (Green): You wanted to be sure that, when the news broke, that it broke at the same time in Peking as it did in Washington. That was critical.

HOLDRIDGE: We did that. It was at 8:30 or 9:00 at night in Los Angeles. The President was making a speech before the World Affairs Council. That would have been roughly 9:00 A. M. in Beijing, so it was no problem.

The Pakistanis were very helpful in this regard. They were not only the conduit, but they provided the means of transportation.

About the reassurance factor—we were stepping into the infinite. Getting aboard the airplane around 4:00 A. M. in Rawalpindi, who should we meet aboard the airplane but Chang Wenjin, Wang Haijung, Nancy Tan (Tan Wanshuang), the interpreter, and the guy from the protocol department, Tang Wangbin. Chang Wenjin later was ambassador to Washington. He was one of the senior people in the foreign ministry in Beijing, and had been associated with Zhou En-lai since the time of the Marshall mission. Wang Haijung was Mao Zedong's grandniece. There were four Chinese, plus a Chinese air crew aboard this airplane who would navigate the aircraft once it got into Chinese territorial air.

Chang Wenjin made it very plain that he had been sent by Premier Zhou to reassure us all that we would be well received, and that there would be no problems about security.

Q (Green): You stayed in that compound?

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HOLDRIDGE: We stayed in the Tiao Y# Tai. We landed, in fact, at an airport which was south of Beijing. I believe it is adjacent to where China makes its MRBMs and which nobody else has visited. We thought very little of it, of course. We were whisked off the airplane and into those Hung Chi's (Red Flag limousines).

Q (Green): Your presence in Peking was all secret?

HOLDRIDGE: Yes. No one knew.

Q (Green): Were the blinds drawn on the car?

HOLDRIDGE: Yes. People were looking at this cortege. Just like Gorbachev going to Beijing in April of this year, we went in a small door in the Great Hall of the People, underneath the main steps. We went into the Great Hall of the People to talk to the Chinese, to Zhou En-lai. We went up in an elevator about the size of a telephone booth, all crowded together.

I took the opportunity while we were there—I thought Kissinger ought to know more about China than just seeing the inside of the guest house or the Great Hall—to suggest to the Chinese, since Beijing is a beautiful city and we were there at a good time, that we take a little time off to see one of the major attractions of Beijing. I suggested the Summer Palace, the Temple of Heaven, or the Forbidden City. The Chinese were nice enough to give us a tour of the Forbidden City one morning. They closed the whole thing off. Nobody else was there. Just us. It was an eery sensation.

Q (Green): If there had been any foreign newsmen around, thought, that probably would have broken it, wouldn't it?

HOLDRIDGE: In fact, the correspondent of the New York Times was there.

Q (Green): How did you keep him quiet?

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HOLDRIDGE: Well, he was in the hospital having his appendix taken out. [Laughter]

Q (Green): He was under heavy sedation. How much time elapsed between Henry's trip and the President's announcement?

HOLDRIDGE: We got there around July 7. We had about two-and-a-half days there. They were tense, by the way. Zhou En-lai would say, after we had had a long afternoon of conversations followed by a dinner—we would be sitting just among ourselves—“I will join you at 9:00 when we will resume our talks.”

Nine o'clock came, nobody came, nothing happened. Ten o'clock, eleven o'clock, midnight—Henry really was going through all sorts of paroxysms here, “What is happening? What is going on?”

So we would go out and take a little stroll around the gardens of the Tiao Y# Tai, where we didn't think we could be bugged. He would ask me, and I said, “Well, they are probably debating it.”

I had assumed that maybe it was the People's Liberation Army was dragging it's feet, but in retrospect it was really the ideologues, the people who are the kind we see who have been challenging the reform program in Beijing today. These are people who later showed up as the Gang of Four, etc., who challenged this whole idea of an opening to the United States. It was very tense.

Finally, we reached an accord. They came out with a communique# which talked about both sides renouncing and rejecting hegemonism, which could only mean the Soviet Union. [Laughter] Since we were there, we couldn't be hegemonists because we were renouncing it, and the Chinese weren't hegemonists, either. The only persons who could be were the Soviets.

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Q (Green): How far would you say you went in actually framing the positions that were eventually taken in—

HOLDRIDGE: Not very far. This was only the opening gun. That is why the second trip was necessary—

Q (Green): So, what you were really saying is that you were getting the okay on the President's visit, and getting a clear indication that it would result in something.

HOLDRIDGE: That is correct.

Q (Green): You came back knowing that the President was welcome, and that that would be the real opportunity for a new era in our relationship.

HOLDRIDGE: Yes.

Q (Green): Then you went back again in October. What was the purpose of that trip?

HOLDRIDGE: The purpose of that one was to start framing the joint communique#. I started this whole process by doing a draft. I looked over some other joint communique#s which had been done, and I used that as a skeleton outline and went on from there. What emerged was still quite different, but at least it started the whole process going. This was in September.

Q (Green): Were you using this concept—the Chinese say, the United States says, where we agree? Were you using that kind of format?

HOLDRIDGE: To an extent, yes. I noticed that it was reflected in other joint communique#s.

Q (Green): What would you say were the difficult points?

HOLDRIDGE: The difficult point was Taiwan. There was no question about that.

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Q (Green): You were trying to find the right language.

HOLDRIDGE: Yes. To jump ahead a few months, the night before the Shanghai communique# was issued, we sat up until the wee small hours of the morning at the hotel in Hangzhou. Chang Wenjin and Foreign Minister Chiao Kuanhua were on one side of the table and Henry was on the other side. They were going back and forth about the wording. It was a very tedious thing.

You are familiar with the last-minute changes on the morning that the communique# was issued.

Q (Green): I precipitated them.

HOLDRIDGE: Alexander Haig, who was on the National Security Council, made a trip in January of 1972. He said that he also negotiated some more about the joint communique#. He may have, for all I know.

Q (Green): The idea of that trip was the logistics.

HOLDRIDGE: The logistics, the communications, and all the rest of it. I think that AI, characteristically perhaps, may have made more of it in his book, *Caveat*, than was actually the case. I don't want to dispute what he has to say.

The process was involved, and it was complicated in October by the fact that the Chinese had just undergone this reputed coup d'etat against Mao Zedong by his formerly-designated heir apparent, Lin Piao. It was an eerie situation in Beijing. The streets were very nearly deserted, as they were when we got there in July. (It struck me then that it was a city like Warsaw, having been bombed out, because it was so still. People looked dazed. It was the Cultural Revolution coming to an end.)

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In October, the problem was the military presence. I remember we went to a function at the Great Hall of the People, in which Madam Mao was hosting Henry Kissinger. We saw one of these revolutionary dramas of which Madam Mao was so fond—and authored, perhaps. On the way back to the Tiao Y# Tai, which was a distance of some four or so miles, at every street intersection along the main road there, there was a lamp hanging down. I think it was a normal street lamp. Under every one there was an armed soldier, standing with an AK-47. It was kind of weird. We had wondered whether, in fact, in the light of the reputed coup, which took place just before the Kissinger mission went, the Chinese would actually follow through with it. They did. Zhou En-lai seemed his usual self, and there didn't seem to be any problem.

In fact, we went out to see the Great Wall. This was going to be one of the high points—

Q (Green): There was no secrecy on this trip?

HOLDRIDGE: No. There are some interesting by-play there, too, in that the Chinese took great care to publicize it, and to show that Yeh Chien-ying, the old marshall and presumed leader of the PLA, was the one that was squiring Henry around. Q (Green): That brings us to the president's trip itself. You and I were fellow passengers in the plane going out there. As a matter of fact, so was Scowcroft, Win Lord, and a lot of other people who were featured in China-policy issues.

When we got out to Peking, you were in one building and we were in another. In other words, State and NSC were kept—

HOLDRIDGE: The sheep were separated from the goats, Marshall, I am sorry to say. [Laughter] How Bill Rogers put up with that nonsense as long as he did, I don't know.

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Q (Green): Henry would touch base with us occasionally with regard to progress in the talks he was carrying on with the vice foreign minister. I assume that you were very closely involved.

HOLDRIDGE: Actually, it wasn't the vice foreign minister. It was with Zhou En-lai.

Q (Green): The negotiations, I gather, at the working level were more or less conducted by the vice foreign minister.

HOLDRIDGE: We did have some talks about some of the issues, which are “lesser included issues.” Those were not much taken up on the Presidential visit. They were taken up on subsequent visits.

Q (Green): What were you doing, then, during those days when we were in Peking, prior to the Shanghai communique#? We were in Peking for the better part of three or four days, as I recall. We were in one guest house, and you were in the other.

HOLDRIDGE: He managed to sneak off and see Mao Zedong without me, which I hold against him. Again, his propensity for trying to keep it down to—

Q (Green): He saw Mao Zedong twice?

HOLDRIDGE: Yes, it was Nixon, Mao, and Henry, but not yours truly. I said, “What the heck.”

I did sit on the conversations that Henry had with Zhou En-lai.

Q (Green): Was there much done in terms of the Shanghai communique#'s framing and wording during that Presidential trip, or had the document been pretty well done?

HOLDRIDGE: It had largely been done. I did one little bit while I was there, and that was on exchange of persons—a paragraph that was added about newsmen, scientists, etc.

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Q (Green): When the President went out there, the Shanghai communiqu# was pretty well formulated.

HOLDRIDGE: Yes. The big problem was the wording of that one paragraph on Taiwan.

Q (Green): People on both sides of the Strait—you eventually did come up with a satisfactory one.

HOLDRIDGE: We changed it from “all people” to “all Chinese.” That was on the morning of the communiqu#, just before it was issued. There was a last minute scurrying around. This was because there were many people on Taiwan who do not call themselves Chinese. They call themselves Taiwanese. If we had said, “all people,” this would mean that the Taiwanese had also maintained a position of one China and that Taiwan as a part of it, which is not necessarily the case. If you said, “all Chinese,” this gets you into something else again.

Q (Green): This was not my major intervention. The major intervention had to do with the fact that, in the communiqu#, as I saw it, at Hangzhou, it had already been approved by the President and by Zhou En-lai, that it contained language in which we listed all of our existing commitments, and that America would stand behind them. It left out our commitment to Taiwan. I reminded Rogers, when I saw it, that this would certainly revive in people's memories the fact that Dean Acheson similarly left out Korea as one of the places for which we had a commitment and for which he was held responsible for the Korean War—very unfairly, of course, but there it was. This could really unravel the whole document.

HOLDRIDGE: I don't know that it was all that unfair, Marshall. Harry Truman said the same thing. There were two speeches within a few days of one another in the early part of 1950.

Q (Green): All I'm saying is that this, to me, would have been a great opportunity for Kraslow and others just to pull the whole document apart at a time when we released the Shanghai communiqu#. It would have riled up the defenders of Taiwan back in the

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Republican Party—people like Vice President Agnew and the Secretary of the Treasury, who had many reservations about the President going out to Peking in the first place.

HOLDRIDGE: Let me add that, when this was presented to the newsmen in Shanghai at the Chin Chiang Hotel, Marshall did a brilliant job of presenting it. He was the briefer, even though he had not been deeply involved in the drafting of it. He was stuck with the job of presenting it to the press. Bringing up that one point, he did orally what we did not say in wording.

Q (Green): Let me just say that you are giving me too much credit. All I did there was to present what had gone on in the counterpart talks, where I had been present. Then Henry took over. Meanwhile, Henry had worked out—presumably with Zhou En-lai or somebody—that same night when we were in Hangzhou, an alternative way, leaving out this language about which security treaties we'd stand by, simply leaving it out. But then he said, in response to a question from Kraslow of the Los Angeles Times, that no mention was made there of our commitments to the Republic of China on Taiwan or of our other commitments. These were all covered in the President's state of the world message that he had made earlier on in the year. In that, we said that we stood behind all of our commitments, including to the Republic of China in Taiwan. Henry added this. He hoped this, in view of where this press conference was being held, there would be no further discussion of this point. There weren't.

The way that Henry handled it was brilliant. He did, once and for all, dispose of the problem. I give him credit for it. What I will not give him credit for is the fact that, in his memoirs, he treats my intervention as being lots of silly little, minor nitpicks, very typical of the State Department.

HOLDRIDGE: Henry is a brilliant man, but he is a [expletive deleted] when you really get down to it. [Laughter] He is not the most lovable personality in the world. He is terribly

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arrogant, and he wants to make sure that nobody else can shed any rays of light on any subject. He does not give credit where credit is due.

Q (Green): I do think that the greatest things that we do sometimes in diplomacy are the things that don't happen. This didn't happen because of my intervention. Since it didn't happen, nobody ever notices. When somebody says exactly the opposite of what you did in his memoirs that everybody reads, clearly it is a time to speak up.

HOLDRIDGE: I read his memoirs, and there are a few other episodes which do not accord with my own memory.

Q (Kennedy): In all this work in the NSC, was the Russian card ever mentioned? What I mean is, was the China card being played as opposed to the Russian card?

HOLDRIDGE: Yes, of course. We did not do it in ways which brought up the Russians as the bugaboo, but we simply pointed out what the Soviets were doing worldwide, and the problems that this posed for both of us. Therefore, we pointed out the advantages which we could gain mutually by recognizing the problem and working together to resolve it.

Q (Kennedy): In many ways, the Soviet problem was the glue that held it together.

HOLDRIDGE: Yes. This was the point from which we started. To give Henry some more credit, from the very beginning our thought was that, in addition to the strategic elements in this relationship which we hoped to develop, we also wanted to assist China in turning away from its inward-looking positions—its policies which had taken it apart and away from the relationship with the outside world and which had turned it inward. We thought that, maybe by opening up to the United States, this would help to turn China outward, to make it more a normal member of the world community, and something that would be a benefit to the Chinese people as well as to everybody else. This element was there from the very beginning. It was not simply the strategic value.

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Q (Green): When was the idea of the U.S. liaison office in Peking? Was that agreed to during the President's visit, earlier during your visits with Henry in China, or did this occur after?

HOLDRIDGE: It was after. It was in January of 1973. We had managed to have a number of visits to China, subsequent to the President's visit. There was one in June of 1972. There was another in the fall when I recall Henry spent some time in Japan. Japan was feeling deeply hurt, having been let out of all of this situation. There was one in January, and then we really got down to brass tacks. In some of these others, we had addressed the issues. Some were claims versus property, the sequestered funds which we had in the United States—the Chinese assets versus the claims of Americans against the Chinese for property seized, etc. We resolved a number of issues.

By this time, by the way, the State Department was very much a participant. Al Jenkins went along on the October trip and all subsequent ones, to my knowledge, including the President's trip.

In January of 1973, we began to talk about the future relationships between us and the advantages of having a mission. I personally thought that maybe the Chinese would balk at going too far. It was my thought that maybe something in the nature of a trade mission might be more acceptable to them. To my astonishment, it was Zhou En-lai who proposed going on up to the level of a liaison office which, of course, we immediately accepted.

Q (Green): So he was the one that really made the suggestion.

HOLDRIDGE: Again, this is a follow up to the position we had taken as far back as 1969 that we wanted to set up missions. The question was, what kind of a mission would be possible under the circumstances. What would be acceptable? We were willing to go as far as the Chinese were. I didn't think they would make this quantum jump into

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something which was as advanced as a liaison office. To all intents and purposes, we were a diplomatic mission.

Q (Green): It was really justified in the eyes of the Chinese on the grounds that this was a stepping stone to full recognition. We had to go through the antics of liquidating our relationship with the Republic of China on Taiwan and having a new relationship there. That would take time. During that time, it was important to have a continuation office.

HOLDRIDGE: In the Shanghai communiqu#, in fact, there is a paragraph which talks about the ultimate goal of normalization of relations.

Q (Green): It was a seven-year period, then, that we had a liaison office.

HOLDRIDGE: We opened in May of 1973, and it turned into an embassy as of January 1, 1979.

Q (Green): So it was a six-year period. How long was it before the liaison office was actually started? You were one of the first people there.

HOLDRIDGE: Al Jenkins went in several weeks ahead of time to set up shop in the Beijing Hotel. He went in and came out again. We all then went in together. Martha Jenkins came along at that time. My wife was unable to leave. We had to liquidate the house. We had left on such short notice. We went in from Hong Kong in May of 1973 to get to Beijing in time to read (in the Chinese press) that, as of May 1, Deng Xiaoping had been brought out of hiding and had reappeared on the scene, resuscitated.

Q (Green): Zhou En-lai, meanwhile had died?

HOLDRIDGE: No. He was still very much in evidence. He didn't die until 1976. We went in and set up shop, first in the Beijing Hotel. The Chinese were working overtime to finish up a mission for us. It was intended for somebody else, but the Chinese redid it to our specifications, which meant extensive remodeling of the communications section, as

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you can well imagine. Other things had to be adapted to our needs, but they were very cooperative. To begin with, there were no problems, really.

The Chinese seemed to be going out of their way to be accommodating. That didn't last too long. After a while, I think, we were still catching the backlash of differences within the leadership of the Chinese Communist Party about the merits of opening up to the United States. Our relationship would blow hot and blow cold. Sometimes we would be doing very well, indeed. We would see Chiao Kuanhua, the foreign minister, who helped to draft the Shanghai communique#. He would be very congenial. Then we wouldn't see him for a long period, and we would only see the deputy director of whatever office we were working with in the foreign ministry.

We would be summoned from time to time. The phone would ring, and one of the little voices at the other end of the line from the foreign ministry would say that so-and-so would like to see you. We would say, "What for?"

They would say, "Something involving the liaison office."

This always meant that we were going to be hit between the eyes with some sledgehammer blow. They were going to discipline us for something. It was rather interesting.

Q (Green): Were you head of the office?

HOLDRIDGE: I was deputy. There were two deputies. Al Jenkins was there, but Al took himself out of the running.

Q (Green): Who was the representative, then?

HOLDRIDGE: I usually went.

Q (Green): Who was the chief?

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HOLDRIDGE: At that time it was David Bruce, one of our most distinguished diplomats. He was a very great man.

Q (Green): How did he endure all of this? It must have been a very unusual experience.

HOLDRIDGE: Stoically, with great interest. His feet hurt much of the time, but he was fascinated. He thought it was just great. He made the mistake of having his corns removed by a Chinese foot doctor. That was not the most clever move he had ever made in his life. [Laughter] He had to wear Chinese slippers around the office for quite a while thereafter.

We had this on-again, off-again relationship. We were often zapped. I would be called on some kind of a protest given. David would go along sometimes.

On one occasion, for example, one of our young officers from Hong Kong was allowed to visit. He stayed with one of the people in the liaison office and went out bicycle riding. He rode his bicycle right into a compound which was off limits and which said so on a sign. He was stopped by a PLA soldier. We didn't know about that. Two days later, he was down in Hangzhou, and he called us.

He said, "Something happened which, perhaps, you might be interested knowing about. I was stopped by the Army for going into a proscribed zone."

We winced at this. Sure enough, within several days the phone rang and, Lin Ping, the deputy director of the American department from the foreign ministry, wanted to see us. He always loved to give us the business.

In this particular episode, we thought, "Now, what could it possibly be? Oh, it must be that bicycle episode."

We had already reported it. As soon as he told us, we reported it to Washington. We took note of the problem which could arise. Sure enough, when David Bruce went in to see

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the Chinese, Mr. Lin Ping delivered this admonition about one of our people going into a military zone. We told him that we had already taken note of it, that he had told us about the episode two days later, and that we had reported it to Washington. We assured him that it would not happen again.

Another problem which we dealt with in the early days was the Chinese exhibition of archeological articles dug up during the Cultural Revolution. They had a special exhibition which they eventually called “cultural artifacts.” It was quite an exhibition, including jade body suits, Tang dynasty figurines, all really beautiful things. It was making a tour of the world, and it was going to come to the United States. One of the things we were negotiating with the Chinese was the terms, the agreement, that we would have between our two countries on this exhibition.

The Chinese presented us with an agreement which they had used in every other country worldwide where this thing had been visiting. Lo and behold, when we sent it back, the people in the legal division of the Department objected strenuously. There was not enough protection, etc. We had to go back to the Chinese to try to change certain paragraphs. Each time we suggested a change, the Chinese would toughen up, until the terms were stiffer than ever before which were even more objectionable to the people in “L” (the Legal Division).

Finally, I got to the point where I wrote a cable back saying, “We have to determine whether we want this exhibition to come to the United States or not. If we want it to come, we are going to have to accept the Chinese terms the way they are. They are not going to change. The alternative is no exhibition. Now, what do you want?”

Ultimately, the exhibition came to the United States and was a great success. But the Chinese had, meanwhile, used this little episode to teach us a lesson—Chinese love to teach lessons.

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Q (Green): Looking back over the span of years between the time you were in the liaison office, when you went to Singapore in 1975, and then later on when you were assistant secretary, have you seen the Chinese much easier to deal with? Do you feel that their exposure to us developed a greater mutual understanding and trust than there certainly existed at that time?

HOLDRIDGE: Yes, to an extent. There has undoubtedly been quite a change up until the present and the reaction to the Tiananmen situation of June. Starting with normalization and now more recently, the Chinese had begun to function as normal members of the world community. They joined the IAEA, the World Bank, IMF, have applied for the GATT, and begun to function just like any normal country. They sent 40,000 students to the United States.

People were accessible at various levels of the government—you could talk to them as individuals and not as ideologues. It used to be so bothersome to me when I talked to Lin Ping. There was always this consciousness of the superiority of China—the “outer barbarian” versus the “middle kingdom” kind of concept. Lin Ping used to rub it in. He was always smug about the value of the thought of Mao Zedong.

Q (Green): In Singapore, you had a close relationship with Lee Kuan Yew . He has always had an ambivalent attitude towards China. He has had close relations with, and he still visits and spends a week or two every year in Taipei. At the same time, he is the premier of a Chinese city. They have normal relations with Peking, and yet they have this personal relationship with Taiwan.

HOLDRIDGE: Actually, they don't have normal relations yet. They are waiting for Indonesia to take the first step. In fact, when I left Beijing and Lin Ping gave me a farewell lunch, he asked me, “Now that you are going to Singapore, when do you think that normalization between China and Singapore will occur?”

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I said, "Well, it is going to have to await Indonesia."

Lin then said, "Ah, then it will take a long time."

Q (Green): Why do they take this stand?

HOLDRIDGE: It is because Indonesia is hypersensitive—

Q (Green): I know why Indonesia feels that way. Why do they feel they have to play second fiddle to Indonesia?

HOLDRIDGE: It is because of the Chineseness there. If these uppity Chinese, as perceived by the Indonesians, were to run ahead of Indonesia and to establish diplomatic relations with Beijing, this might be a touchy, political problem in Singapore's relationships with Indonesia, which Lee Kuan Yew didn't want to have. He had enough problems left over from "Confrontasi" (the confrontation between Indonesia and Malaysia) as you remember. The Chinese in Singapore did not wish to advertise Chineseness by establishing relations with Beijing before Indonesia.

Q (Green): Are you aware of any desires on the part of Peking to have relations with—

HOLDRIDGE: Certainly. Indeed, there is a trade mission there now, operating in the Bank of China. To all intents and purposes, it is like a liaison office.

Q (Green): When I was in Jakarta last year and talked to Suharto, we didn't talk about China. We talked about population issues, basically. I gave a talk in front of an audience of diplomats and other leaders, and during the question and answer period—this was all open to the press—they asked me whether I thought that Indonesia should normalize relations with China.

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I said, "Well, since we have good relations both with Indonesia and China, I would say yes. I personally hope very much that there would be a restoration of normal relations."

It touched off a storm in the press. The latest word I heard on that is that they are seriously considering—

HOLDRIDGE: They are working on it now, but you were probably a little premature, Marshall. When I was there, I knew it was a little more than premature.

My position on restoration of relations was that it was a question which they will have to decide for themselves, in the light of their own determination of their national interests. As far as we were concerned, we believed it was in the interest of both the U.S. and China to have this relationship, helping to open China to the outside world, to turn it outward, etc.

Q (Green): Basically, that is what I said. I also said, "You asked me the question. I'm answering your question."

I didn't raise it. They raised it.

HOLDRIDGE: I pointed out the advantages which we perceived, but said that they will have to make up their minds themselves.

Q (Green): I remember talking with Lee Kuan Yew one time back in 1964. He said, "We are a rich country, surrounded in a sea of poverty."

He was pointing to Indonesia.

"We are also a Chinese city in a sea of Moslems. We are very lonely. We, therefore, welcome our relationship with the Western world."

I never could quite understand the position that they took in Singapore with regard to nonrecognition of Peking. This is the first time I've ever heard it from you that it was

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because they were deferential to the Indonesian position. I always thought Lee was worried that it would create tensions amongst the Chinese in Singapore, between those that favored Taiwan and those that favored Peking.

HOLDRIDGE: I'll grant you there is some element of value in that perception, as well. Singapore has only been a nation since 1965. It has only had 25 years of nationhood. Since over 75% of the population is Chinese, Lee wanted to have time for Singapore to develop a sense of national identity. There is also that element in his calculus. He was principally concerned about not rushing ahead of Indonesia.

As to this nationhood or national identity, shortly after we got there, I was talking to one of the Singapore ministers. He mentioned that there had been a soccer game in the Kallang sports stadium between a Chinese team and a Singaporean team. The place was jammed. The minister said that they were holding their breath in the Singapore government to see which team the Singaporeans cheered for. It came as a great sense of relief when the crowd was cheering for the Singapore team. [Laughter]

Q (Green): We have not covered your years with the Agency, or in Indonesia, and as assistant secretary, as well as your years in retirement. These years covered the important years where the United States and China were getting together.

HOLDRIDGE: My last accomplishment regarding China was the communique# on arms sales to Taiwan on August 17, 1982. Al Haig picked me as his Assistant Secretary for East Asia and the Pacific. I sat in that chair, even though not confirmed until May, as of January 21, 1981. There was no one there to do it since everyone was in a state of disarray. We were having problems about having politicos being appointed to deputy assistant secretary positions, etc. I just picked up, walked over from CIA, and sat down in the chair and functioned.

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I ran into some interesting problems about Ed Reischauer's memoirs coming out, talking about nuclear ships visiting Japan, etc.

Q (Kennedy): It was ships with nuclear weapons on them. There were American ships coming into Japanese ports.

HOLDRIDGE: Yes. There was also the time when the United States submarine managed to ram and sink a Japanese fishing vessel, a small freighter, with some loss of life. It didn't stop to pick up the casualties. These are some of the things that I had to deal with.

The very first thing I had to deal with was Taiwan. Our friends in Taiwan saw their great and good friend Reagan come along. Remember, Nixon sent Reagan to Taiwan to explain what was happening after the Shanghai Communique. You and I visited and saw Chiang Ching-kuo in early March of 1972. Later on, to keep things on track, especially over the whole question of the United Nations' membership, Reagan was sent by Nixon to reassure Chiang Ching-kuo that we would stand firmly behind Taiwan and its position internationally. In comes President Reagan, and Taiwan thought that it was going to have it home free. The first thing that I had to worry about was who was going to attend the inaugural ceremony. It was made public by Anna Chennault that there was going to be official representation from Taiwan. The governor of Taiwan, the secretary general of the Kuomintang Party, and the mayor of Taipei were all included to represent Taiwan, the Republic of China, at the inauguration. Chai Zemin, the Chinese ambassador let it be known that if these people showed up, he wouldn't. The last thing we needed in the world to start the Reagan Administration off with was a big fuss over China policy.

The way I resolved that one was first to go to Anna and tell her she had made a dreadful mistake, and that she should do what she could to pull back on the reins. I then made an international phone call in the clear, assuming that ears would be listening all over, to Chuck Cross, the head of our American Institute in Taiwan. During that telephone call, I

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told him what dreadful consequences would ensue in the relationship with Taiwan if we started out the Reagan Administration with a big brouhaha over China policy.

The word got through, and the secretary general of the Kuomintang Party, who was here, got a diplomatic illness. Jim Lilley, who was in the CIA at the time and was our AIT representative later on, and I went over and called on the poor, ill gentleman in his hospital room over in Alexandria. This was to show that our hearts were in the right place. That was issue number one.

Issue number two was this whole constant arm-sales issue which they had created. Taiwan had been told earlier at some stage in the process that they would get an aircraft which would be an upgrade of the F5E/F series, which they had. It was known as the F5G, and it was carefully designed by Northrop so that it did not have a kind of a range or a loiter time capability which would allow it to be an offensive weapon against the mainland. It would be a fighter interceptor and useful for defensive purposes. Along comes the F5G and Taiwan begins to talk about it all over the place—in the New York Times, the head of the Chinese Nationalist Air Force, and various other leading figures talked about it.

Immediately, this whole arms-sales issue became inflamed. The Chinese fired back their responses. Over a period of time, it became known to us through actual diplomatic representations that they could live with what was there—the F5E/F—but they could not accept an upgrade. This they would not go beyond.

Al Haig had reassured them in 1981, when Kuanhua foreign minister, visited Washington after a visit of Cancun and to the U.N., and told us that we were going to have to set a deadline on the cessation of sales to Taiwan. Al very strongly resisted that idea, but said across the table that we would be willing to accept limitations on quantity and quality—keep it at an existing level. We had a big problem about what Taiwan's actual needs were. Various government agencies labored long and diligently to come up with the idea that Taiwan did not need an upgrade. The F5E/F was perfectly adequate for anything which

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China, at that time, was able to put into the air. They still haven't finished their F-8 which Grumman, I understand, is working on along with a few other subcontractors. The best they have is the MiG-21. That is no great threat to Taiwan, nor was it at the time.

Q (Green): How was it resolved?

HOLDRIDGE: It was a reformulation of the joint Shanghai communique# in which the Chinese stated that Taiwan was a part of China. This was their long-held position, and we said that we had agreed with this position. There was no problem with that because it was in the Shanghai communique#. The Chinese then expressed a resolve to continue to pursue the reunification of Taiwan with the mainland by peaceful means—continue the policy.

We said, “Under these circumstances, we would then find it possible to conduct arm-sales policy toward Taiwan, which would result in no increases in either quantity or quality, and looking to an ultimate resolution of this question.”

Q (Green): Wasn't there a congressional resolution at this time with regard to this issue?

HOLDRIDGE: There could have been.

Q (Green): In any case, that resolved the issue.

HOLDRIDGE: Yes. I had to present this joint communique#. We didn't know until about three days before it became ok to have something, that we were going to get one. The problem was this August 21 date which came up. By August 21, 1982, the Air Force was going to have to notify Congress of the continuation of the F5E/F line. If we didn't have a joint communique# to resolve this whole question of arms sales to Taiwan by this time, our whole relationship could have been plunged into chaos, if not worse. We had a tight deadline.

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Al Haig admits in his book that the best thing he did for his country at this time was to take himself out of the position of Secretary of State. He was so disliked in the White House — the suspicions were so intense—that anything that Al would have sent over would have been thrown back into the teeth of the Department of State. Time would have been wasted.

In fact, Al actually opposed the visit of Vice President Bush to China in May of 1982, which happened to cut the Gordian knot. Maybe this is some explanation for why Bush was willing to send Scowcroft. Somebody has to take an initiative. In the course of a visit to other places in Asia such as Korea, Japan, Singapore, Australia, New Zealand, etc., the Chinese had agreed to accept the Vice Presidential visit, which was at the tail end. He went and was able to convince the Chinese that we were absolutely sincere in trying to find a resolution. We weren't trying to do them in, but we had our own domestic problems to take care of, as well.

Q (Green): In looking back over the years, there has been a very stormy relationship with China. We've been dealing with a country that has had very much of a Sino-centric view of the world and still does. What you are saying, in essence, is that a constructive relationship between the United States and China is very fundamental. This is not only in dealing with the problems of today and in the long range. Cooperation between two such important nations—the most populous nation in the world and the most powerful nation in the world—is absolutely essential for all of humanity. But we are the ones that have to make the first move every time.

HOLDRIDGE: The Chinese are very much in the mood today—as they were, in fact, over the years in which I have known China—as Japan was prior to World War II. You were there as Ambassador Drew's secretary. You know that the Japanese had this terrible chip on their shoulder. They felt that they were being looked down on by others, that they had their own consciousness of their national heritage and national worth. The Japanese were in a very bellicose and belligerent mood—stripping American women in Tientsin,

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etc., which occurred at the time of the war between China and Japan in 1937. They had to show the outside world that they weren't going to be pushed around.

China is in something of the same state of mind now. If they were confident of themselves and of their own system and situation, they wouldn't be so difficult to deal with. But, at a time when they are still going through what John Fairbank calls "China's long revolution," which began in 1800 with China finding it necessary to come to terms with the outside world, it is up to us, I am afraid, to make the first move. The Chinese are not likely to do it themselves under the circumstances of the psychological conditions which prevail in Beijing.

Q (Green): In essence, you think that President Bush did the right thing by sending—

HOLDRIDGE: I think it was a very courageous move. I think it was correct, and I hope it succeeds. I hope the Chinese understand, though, for it to succeed, they have to respond.

Q (Kennedy): Could you explain what the situation is right now?

HOLDRIDGE: The sudden appearance of Scowcroft and Eagleburger in Beijing—unannounced—like the circumstances surrounding the Kissinger visit to China in July of 1971, has inspired enormous criticism in the American press, the liberal wing, and the conservative wing.

Q (Kennedy): Why has this inspired criticism?

HOLDRIDGE: This is in the wake of the Tiananmen episode last June 4, when the Chinese used military force to suppress the student demonstration. I don't know how many Chinese students were killed, but there were numerous killed. There is revulsion and abhorrence on the part of the United States—

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Q (Green): It is whipped up all the more by the presence here of tens of thousands of Chinese students from the Chinese mainland.

HOLDRIDGE: There are 40,000 Chinese students. Now the President has vetoed a congressional bill which would have allowed these people to stay on indefinitely, pending some kind of a return to normalcy on the mainland. I think the President was quite correct in vetoing it. He can handle this problem administratively.

The same thing is true about sanctions. If you codify into law measures which are regarded by the Chinese as hostile to them—anti-Chinese, which interfere in their own internal affairs—the Chinese are bound to take note and respond vigorously.

Q (Green): This was so true of the Japanese with the Oriental Exclusion Bill back in 1924. The Japanese never forgot that. That is why I continually pointed out the dangers of the position that we took at the World Population Conference in Mexico City when we identified the Chinese as being the principal culprits, etc. This is a kind of slap in the face that these Oriental countries remember forever.

There is, however, a kind of xenophobic attitude. There is also a feeling, in the case of the Japanese, that they are unique and different.

HOLDRIDGE: That is one of our great problems in dealing with Japan today, and why the Japanese are more competitive. A Japanese businessman, going out into the world, thinks of himself as a samurai, serving the interests of the shogun. He is doing his bit, not just for his company but for Japan. The American is out to make money. If he can't make money under existing circumstances, he throws in the sponge and goes elsewhere. Not the Japanese.

The Chinese have something of the same attitude. I was at a conference just the other day when a young lady was talking about Southeast Asia and the climate for investment there. She began to wax eloquent on the talents of the Chinese. She happened to be from

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Singapore, married to an American. I thought to myself that she was really laying it on pretty thick. There is this chauvinism on the part of the Chinese in which they think that they can do anything, given the right conditions, and probably better than the rest of you people can.

Q (Green): They also have a very strong sense of the injustice at the hands of the imperial West. They have never forgotten that. That is understandable.

HOLDRIDGE: That was the first issue we ran into after opening up the liaison office. We brought American Marines along with us.

Q (Green): In other words, we had an awful lot of baggage—

HOLDRIDGE: We had a lot of impedimenta we have to shed. The American Marines, in their uniform—

Q (Green): I think this is what President Bush understands. Having been our there in charge of our liaison office, he recognizes that we really have to make the first move. After a while, if you just sit back there and nurse your grudges—where do you get? You just go into a long, frozen relationship and it doesn't help the Chinese people. It doesn't help the world at a time when we are going to have to have understandings with China on environmental issues, etc. A large segment of the world's population is involved here. I think the President is right in making the first move.

HOLDRIDGE: Not only is it in the interest of the United States, but it is in the interest of the Chinese people that the ideologues, who seem to have regained prominence, be cooled down. I have told you all along of the struggle between the more ideologically inclined and the more realistically inclined people in Beijing that we've dealt with over the years. After Beijing, the Tiananmen episode, the ideologues seem to have regained, if not the upper hand, certainly a lot more prominence. If we take this hard line, we run the danger of

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isolating those who would like to see progress continue toward a normal relationship with the outside world—

Q (Green): And the flow of students continues to come here. This is terribly important—

HOLDRIDGE: They'll cut off the flow of students—

Q (Green): It was the students that came to the United States for postgraduate training that saved Indonesia economically. By the same token, these students that are here now are China's hope. I think that's what the President understands.

HOLDRIDGE: We cannot afford to isolate ourselves and to let this situation continue—to isolate the Chinese and force them back into a kind of a situation somewhat akin to what it was under Mao. That would be most egregious error.

Q (Green): John, thank you very much.

End of interview