

INTERVIEW I

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INTERVIEWEE: RAY S. CLINE

INTERVIEWER: Ted Gittinger

PLACE: Dr. Cline's office, Washington, D. C.

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C: I suspect that I have a few vivid impressions of President Johnson that might be of interest to you that are not so much associated with a particular historical event, but I would think that some beginning anecdotes might help give you an impression of my awareness of the President.

Actually, my first contact with him was when he was vice president and he made a visit to Taipei, which would have been in 1961, I believe. He made a celebrated swing through Southeast Asia and came up to Taipei from Saigon. I was [CIA] station chief in Taipei and a quite public figure, because I was also adviser to the ambassador and it was such a friendly country and we had such an elaborate intelligence liaison operation at that time that I was treated as a regular official in the country team. Accordingly, I was instructed from Washington to get out and meet the Vice President when he arrived and to brief him on any recent intelligence about the area, particularly about the Taiwan Strait, that he might be interested in. And as usual they send you a package of stuff from Washington; it's some trading material to impress the VIPs. But my vivid recollection about it is based on this anecdote.

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When I met the Vice President at the airport, I said to him that I had a message for him from Washington, that I was the local representative of the Central Intelligence Agency, still Mr. [Allen] Dulles at that time, and that I would like to follow him to the hotel and see him in private to give it to him. And he was pleased with that. You could tell he thought this was the way the government ought to operate, you know. He loved all that protocol business and special channels and so forth. Well, I did follow him in the motorcade, and when I got to the Grand Hotel and was able to speak to him privately, I handed him some messages and chitchatted a little bit. But I introduced one subject which I was not instructed to that I've often laughed about since. I told him that not too long before, in 1960, President Eisenhower had come through on a very similar visit; this was his trip which was supposed to take him to Japan when he was cancelled out by the peace demonstrations in Tokyo, and he didn't ever go. But he had a very warm and fascinating visit to Taipei which he loved very much. And I had met him at the airport in the same way, although in that case I had known Eisenhower, having worked for him before he became president.

So I told Lyndon Johnson that I'd served the same function for President Eisenhower, giving him some messages. But I said, "You know, on that occasion it was rather exciting because the Chinese communists announced that they resented the appearance of the American President on Chinese soil and they fired a hundred and forty thousand rounds against Quemoy, against Chinmen." Usually by that time they

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were just firing token rounds of propaganda shells, which they kept up for many years.

Well, this really caught Johnson's imagination. He said, "You mean they just did that to show their contempt and disapproval of our president?" I said, "Yes." I said, "I don't know whether they'll do the same for you, but I thought you perhaps should be warned that there could be a little thing like that, so you wouldn't be surprised if you hear it." Well, that was the wrong thing to say, because he was so hopeful that they would fire a hundred and forty thousand rounds at Quemoy in his honor, and of course they didn't do a damn thing. They didn't say anything, they didn't do anything. And he said to me, "That's marvelous. I'm glad you're in touch with me and you're going to keep me informed [of] anything from Washington that happens and anything here. And if they fire at Quemoy, I want to know it immediately." I said, "Yes, sir." He said, "Now, have you got instant communications with my motorcade and everything?" I said, "That can be hooked up." I in fact had not intended to be wired right in. But he said, "Get yourself a communications jeep or something. I want to be sure that I can get through and you can get through in case there's any important intelligence for me." So, by golly, he called me up at least four or five times in the very short period of time he was there, "What are they doing out in Quemoy?" (Laughter) And I had to tell him each time that, well, so far we didn't have any sign of any activity. But it was clearly a disappointment to him; he would have loved the same treatment as President Eisenhower.

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Well, that gave me an impression of him that I've never forgotten, as a fascinating man, very attentive to what you were going to say, but extremely interested in the dramatics and the theatrical qualities of leadership.

There are some other stories about that trip. If you want to hear them I'll tell you some time.

G: Please. Go ahead.

C: Well, this is purely personality color, but the second most vivid impression I have of him from that period--this is the first time I'd ever laid eyes on him, you see, that's why I remember it--was that he wanted to give a farewell statement at the airport as he was about to leave, and he told the embassy people--and I was there; as I say, I was treated as part of the country team at that place in those days. I heard him say he wanted a short departure statement and he was counting on them to work it up, and he told the USIA people to make sure it had the right local twist and so on.

Well, the next morning I went up to the [hotel]. I think he was only there one day really. My recollection is it was the morning after his arrival, or in any case the morning he was to depart. Actually, the first time I discovered there was a problem I think might have been very late the night before the departure. Now, he was quite a night owl; you never could tell when Johnson would be around. But I was in the hotel with messages for him, and he had lost his departure statement and it was not many hours before he was to go. I

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think it could have been very late at night or very early in the morning. Everybody was in a tizzy at any rate.

I came up to the group. It didn't have anything directly to do with me, of course, but I came up, having brought a message to him, to find out what the ruckus was. And he had the head of the USIA and the Ambassador [Everett Drumwright], who was a pretty crusty character himself, up there on the carpet, and he said, "What do you mean, you can't find my departure statement? Where the hell is it? What have you bastards done with it?" He said, "Now, listen here, I want you to know that I expect service from my staff." And he turned to old Carl Rowan, who was traveling with him, and said, "Carl, what the hell's the matter with these information people? You're supposed to get these things out when I want them." And Carl, you know, said the appropriate things, trying to reassure him, but he wasn't very easily reassured. Then he turned and said--I'll never forget this--"I'll tell you this, goddamn it, if these Foreign Service and USIA people don't perform, the next time I make a trip, the whole goddamn staff that's with me is going to go home with their peckers in their pocket." And everybody kind of gulped, and he turned on his heel and strode off, and Carl Rowan just dissolved into hysterical laughter, I'll never forget. He says, "Goddamn, can you imagine a vice president of the United States saying that to these guys?" He said, "I never thought I'd hear that," and he just laughed and the tears rolled out of his eyes. I'll never forget that picture.

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Well, that was my opening introduction to the personal style of Lyndon Johnson, and I must say as I got to know him better later, mostly in Washington, because I returned to Washington in the summer of 1962, I rather liked him. And when he became president, I saw not a lot but enough of him to feel that I had some accurate picture.

G: In that connection, I made a couple of notes from the presidential diary here with some dates that may not be inclusive at all but they may be suggestive of some of the times you saw him and may bring something to mind.

C: Well, October 16, 1964, of course was the formal briefing on the missiles in Cuba--oh, no, that's not 1962, it's 1964. Yes, I think I know what this was. I believe that probably was the date of one of two things; they came almost at the same time and we discussed them together as I recall. [One was] Khrushchev's departure from the government, he was sacked about this time, and the other thing it was tied in with was the explosion of the first Chinese communist nuclear weapon or nuclear device. I think you'd have to check the dates. I would guess this morning, the sixteenth, was very close to the time we first learned of Khrushchev's stepping down, and shortly after that, that explosion. We did have a very small group called together in the Cabinet Room at the White House, and I did give them a quickie intelligence briefing which was intended to be on how we had handled the nuclear explosion, because we had known it was coming and I'd shown the President and other people a photograph of the test site and so on. And we had asked [Dean] Rusk to blow the test before it took

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place, so it would not get tremendous publicity as a great achievement. After all, as I explained to them, one test device doesn't make a great nuclear power.

G: Right.

C: Actually, afterwards we arranged a mission which I went on to many different foreign capitals to tell them a little bit about the Soviet Union, but especially to tell them what the status of the Chinese test program was and how little they had in the way of nuclear power and military power. So I think that occasion was one where we were reporting on the actual fruition of our predictions about the test and announcing rather proudly that our countermeasures had been successful up to that point, that it wasn't being taken too seriously in most places, and then to have an impromptu discussion of what it meant that Khrushchev had been deposed, he'd been fired. So that's probably that occasion.

Let's see. Well, this 1965 [entry], the Mansion, the bedroom, is a story I mentioned in my book [Secrets, Spies and Scholars].

G: I was going to ask if that was the one.

C: And I'll tell you that in a little bit more detail if you like.

I can't recall the Kashmir one--I often accompanied [John] McCone and then [William] Raborn to NSC meetings, and I had done it for Dulles, too, so most of them aren't very clear in my memory anymore as to which were which. Those first two, though, I do remember. What September 2, 1965 was [I don't remember], probably just a routine briefing, some item for which--this would have been Raborn and he wanted me to be

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present to field questions. That was always the system in the CIA. Some substantive officer went along with the director to back him up, and I'd started doing that when I was a much younger analyst with Dulles. He often took me, and then I kept doing it when I was deputy director.

G: Let's do a couple of things on background here, and then we'll launch into the main body of this. I've heard it said, or read, that you worked on the question of the Sino-Soviet split a good deal in the 1950s.

C: Yes, I did. I don't think I know J. J. Hagerty. Where was he?

G: Well, he was a lieutenant colonel who was on loan to CIA. He was a Kremlinologist.

C: It sounds familiar but, you know, I can't place him.

G: From Columbia and Georgetown, I think his degrees were.

C: Unfortunately, my recall for names is getting bad in my old age.

G: He had an office across from Bill Hyland, if that's any help, I don't--

C: Yes, that's right. No, I'm sure I would remember Hagerty if I talked to him or something.

G: Well, it was just a shot in the dark I threw out.

C: That would mean he was on the ONE staff, the Office of National Estimates, with Bill.

My interest in the Sino-Soviet split does go back to the mid-fifties. I recommended to Dulles and to Bob Amory, who was the deputy director for intelligence, that in terms of current intelligence

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reporting and analysis on China and Russia that we should do something to bring these two giant countries into a relationship to one another in our studies. Until about 1954 or 1955, the tradition was just like the State Department's. You know, Asia has got China in it, Europe's got Russia in it, and you've got a big bureaucracy on both and that's the way they're handled. But without making any predictions about the relationships, I said, well, I had been studying the Soviet Union for a long time but I am also keenly interested in China, and I think it would be a great idea to put some kind of a staff together to study them both, or put the whole staff together because that would stimulate people. And much to my amazement, they decided to do that for an intelligence office, and they asked me to go down and take charge of it.

G: Why were you amazed?

C: Well, people don't take suggestions in the bureaucracy very often and you should learn not to suggest things, because then you are volunteering. When this occurred, I was back in ONE writing the Soviet estimate and having a very fascinating time. As I recall, it was then that I was doing the net estimate with the JCS on the Soviet threat to this country, a special enterprise that was set up under Dulles and [Arthur] Radford and ended up in that year, 1954 I think it was, in my writing the whole paper and getting it cleared through both the JCS and the CIA. And it ended up being briefed not by me personally but with me present to the President in a big extended National Security Council group. That net estimate business was a fascinating one.

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At any rate, shortly after that I became chief of the Sino-Soviet area of the Office of Current Intelligence. Having taken charge of the work on these two countries for that purpose of reporting in our current publications, I did become fascinated with this issue: how close can these two so different countries be? They have the same ideology and then, as you recall, the political belief was very firmly held that there was a new bloc, a new axis, that was tightly bound, as it was in theory, by treaties and common ideology. The people who studied the two countries obviously accepted that, but when you really talked to them they didn't see much cultural affinity. So what I did was set up a very small group, I think four or five people initially, to study only the relationship between the two countries from a strategic and long-range political viewpoint. I didn't know what we would find.

But that probably happened in 1955. At any rate, in 1956 when the Hungarian explosion took place, the very first quite clear evidences of a different approach of Mao, and I guess it was already Khrushchev, to first the Polish crisis, then the Hungarian crisis, appeared to the public. If you look at these things seriously, you had to say that there was some kind of ideological difference. So I began to pay very close attention to it at that time, and I had this very small staff just devoting themselves to seeing how the two countries viewed the world and each other. As soon as you do that, of course, once you set up a special lens to focus on something, you find out all sorts of fascinating things. Their speeches didn't agree in

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many different ways that had not come to attention particularly, because they weren't very exceptional speeches and they weren't very interesting anyway and, you know, people just shut them off. But if you had your mind [on] to what extent are these two drummers beating the same tune, very early in 1956 and 1957 I was convinced that there was a major difference between the two.

Now, that precipitated a great fight in the CIA of course, and the old Soviet hands especially all denied it because they thought that probably it wasn't true. However, the DDI [Directorate of Intelligence] analysts were at least flexible and open-minded, whereas-- oh, dear, who was the head of the Soviet division in what we now call the DDO [Directorate of Operations], or the DDP [Directorate of Plans] at that time?

G: I can't go that far back.

C: Well, I can identify him easily. [His name was Dana Durand.] I'd known him from Harvard days. He was a tutor in the history and lit department, which I was a student in. He was only a few years older than I at Harvard. He came down to Washington and somewhat accidentally became a Soviet expert, but he was in the clandestine side, trying to penetrate the Soviet Union in those early days in the fifties when we thought there might be still a chance--

G: What became of him? If you'd tell me that I might be able to recall.

C: No, I'll think of it sometime. At any rate, he was well known. What became of him was that after a number of years had passed, and his predictions, his strong statements on the unbreakability of the

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Sino-Soviet bloc had proved to be dead wrong, he was eased out of all the operational work that he had been involved in. And I set him up in the continuation of this study staff for a while to make sure he got a fair chance to do his thing, and I don't think he ever did change his mind. You know how people are.

G: He never came to believe in the split?

C: No.

G: Did James Angleton ever come to believe in the split?

C: No, he was James Angleton's right-hand man in all this. The two of them--it was the chief of counterintelligence and the chief of Soviet operations--were in agreement, whereas by the time I was DDI the whole position had changed, and we still had to fight with those two guys but not much of anybody else. Once I was DDI I had pretty much a free hand to propagate our view, as the senior analyst.

Well, at any rate I finally let him run this division, this little staff unit, for one year, and then I helped him get some kind of a research job outside the agency and gave him a stipend for a while, so that he could work cheap, and eased him out of the agency. No ill will but I don't know what's happened.

Dana Durand. I knew if I talked about it enough, I'd come to it. D-U-R-A-N-D. Very bright, intelligent, rational fellow, a perfect example of the intellectual errors of becoming totally identified with a body of knowledge and a viewpoint. He just could not believe that these two communist nations would split when that was against their interests from our point of view. Jim Angleton believed the same

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thing as Durand, and as far as I know, Jim still believes that they are getting back together. Of course, Jim's going to turn out to be right, they are getting back together to a certain extent. (Laughter)

G: If you hold a view long enough, it will come true.

C: It will come around, yes. So I'm sure Jim is going to be saying, "Hey, look, you guys told me they split. Now twenty years later, here they are getting closer again. What are you going to say to that?" Well, you know, I never said they would have a war against one another or that they'd be eternally totally alienated.

Anyway, as a result of that early work in OCI [Office of Current Intelligence], I did become keenly interested in this issue and in part that's why I was willing to accept an assignment overseas in the Far East, which I had never been to until quite recently before I went to Taipei.

G: Before we come to Taipei, let me interrupt you just a second. Now, you mentioned speeches. What is the story of the famous Khrushchev speech in 1956?

C: Well, that's an Angleton story, you know, because Angleton had connections in his liaison with counterintelligence agencies which were very special and very clandestine. And out of those came the speech. Jim will never go on the record saying what it is. My impression--and this is just fuzzy memory and lack of clarity even at the time--is that the people who handed him the speech were the Israelis, with whom he worked very closely and operationally, and that they got it from an agent of theirs in some East European country, probably Poland. It

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was passed along as a contribution to our common interests. All I know is that I said in my book that CIA had looked for it and had spent a lot of money trying to find it out, and Jim jumped on me and made a press statement, of all things, and said, "We didn't spend any money; we got it free." I said, "Hell, Jim, I didn't mean that you paid your friends to get it. It's obvious to me that we spent a lot of money on operations over many months trying to get it." "Well, it sounded like I had to pay my contact." Jim's a real stickler for his special interests and things. But it was procured, as I described briefly in the book. It was a document which suddenly hit them, and Angleton very much wanted to keep it secret so that he could feed it out piecemeal here and there as he wished, probably occasionally misinterpreting as well as interpreting it for psychological effect on communists in Eastern Europe and the USSR. He, I suspect, still believes that had he been able to do that he could have used it to such advantage that he would have discombobulated the Russians and their security services and perhaps have used some of these emigre groups that we still at that time hoped to activate, and liberate the Ukraine or something of a general political nature. I never was very much a part of that operation, not in on the planning, and I certainly didn't agree with the thinking behind it. I just didn't think you could do it. That's why we had this difference of opinion.

Allen Dulles, who by then knew me fairly well, suggested that Frank Wisner have me read the speech, because I was then chief of the Sino-Soviet staff. It was a perfectly appropriate thing, and I knew a

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lot of the players in the operational side. So I read it. What they wanted was for me to say, "Yes, this is Khrushchev himself speaking," and I did. Because as you probably know, the speech started out as if it had been written with a lot of boilerplate. Somebody had drafted it. Then it began to launch into these emotional personal stories. I had read a lot of Khrushchev's speeches and I just felt sure this is Khrushchev speaking, so I didn't hesitate to endorse it. I couldn't vouch for every word in it, of course, but I said, "It is a fantastic revelation of what undoubtedly are the true feelings of all these guys who had to work under that old bastard Stalin for many years. For God's sake, let's get it out. This is great."

And, by golly, Wisner and Angleton didn't want to do it, and that's why I told the story in the book, that I succeeded only when I talked to Dulles personally and told him how I felt about it. I can still see the old man. He put his carpet slippers up on the desk; he had gout and he wore carpet slippers in his office. He leaned back and pushed his glasses on his head and said, "I think I'll make a policy decision." (Laughter) I never forgot that, funniest thing I'd ever heard. The only time I ever know when anybody thought they were making a policy decision; usually presidents and everybody else don't know when they've made a policy decision. And he flipped the switch and talked on the squawk box to Frank as if he were alone--he did not admit he was sitting there with me--and kind of coyly talked Frank into a position where Frank could not disagree with releasing it, and using the same kind of arguments that I had, that it was a great

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historical chance to, as I think I told him to say, indict the whole Soviet system by its own chief. I said, "What more could you have, citing the crimes of the chief who ran it for so many years and gave it its coloration?" So he got Frank reluctantly to say we could release it, and he immediately called his brother [John Foster Dulles] over in the State Department and said, "I'm going to send you over something, and I think we ought to get it out." It was in the [New York] Times the next Monday; this was a Saturday, I recall because the following Monday was my birthday. The fourth of June was the day it appeared, if I remember right.

But that handling of the speech was where the drama was in the agency. I didn't have anything to do with getting it, naturally. But my operational friends gave me the impression that Jim was the person who ended up with it in his hands, that he got it from the Israelis and its place of origin clearly was a version prepared for Eastern Europeans and that the place most likely to have been penetrated was Poland. Though it could have--you know, we had agents, and the Israelis had agents, in nearly all of those countries--come from any of them. It did not come from inside the USSR and some people thought therefore that it might not be totally accurate, because it was prepared to explain the situation to party members outside the USSR. But I have never seen any evidence that it was not quite accurate, and all the suspicions about the CIA having fiddled with it are totally untrue, as far as I know. As I say, I think Jim Angleton would have loved to have fiddled with it, and there was some business about floating false

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ideas of where it came from. I've forgotten the details now, but there were some spurious versions of the speech that were floating around, and at one point they surfaced in Italy. Whether that was something the CIA did or some other entrepreneur was working on it, I don't know.

G: Well, James Angleton was associated with Italy, too, in his past, wasn't he?

C: Yes, Jim's perfectly--I think there may have been something about him wanting to cover the trail by letting some of it and not quite the same thing surface in Italy. I've really forgotten that now. But the central story was the case of the historical-minded analyst overcoming the native instinct of the operator, and particularly the counter-intelligence operator, to use all intelligence to confuse the enemy rather than to triumph.

Well, the only thing I want to end up on, to go back just for a moment to the Sino-Soviet split, was that I had a pretty good idea that there was a difference of view between Mao and Khrushchev when I went to the Far East. But once I got in Taipei and began getting the much more intimate feedback of radio broadcasts and talking to people who knew all these communists--you see, much to my amazement Taiwan was a fascinating place. I was sent out there with a briefing that it was a very fragile political establishment and the intelligence people were all just as tough and mean as the Russians and so on, a very hostile kind of attitude about the Republic of China at that time which we've, I guess, never completely gotten away from, but it's certainly

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different now. I was amazed how intelligent these people were and how well informed they were about their own people on the Mainland. Naturally, you should not have been surprised and yet we were, because there was a lot of mythology. At any rate, by the time I had served there a number of years there was no question in my mind that the Chinese and the Russians were going in a diametrically opposed view direction, not necessarily forever, but for a period.

So when I would come home, as I did about every six months on TDY, I would needle both the analysts and the operators about getting on with getting the agency on to a firm position. If there was a Sino-Soviet split, I said, gosh, after Mao came out for the communes and said China was going to leapfrog Russia in developing socialism and communism, there wasn't any question about it. In fact, I always considered, and still consider, the Quemoy crisis of 1958--when they fired those hundreds of artillery shells, not the hundred and forty thousand rounds [for Eisenhower]--but when they really were firing them in anger for several months in the fall of 1958--to be the turning point in the Sino-Soviet relationship.

We now know from Khrushchev's memoirs that he had a secret trip to China--I think we knew it at the time--and that he and Mao had discussed war and that Mao had said it didn't matter if we had a war, that the socialists would win, there'd be a lot more surviving Chinese than Americans, and so on. It's hard to believe this discussion, but it was very frightening; it clearly frightened Khrushchev. Shortly afterwards--maybe he also knew they were going off on this ideological

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tangent--he broke the agreement to give them nuclear weapons. They could not agree on the stationing of Soviet communications and intelligence people on the coast of China, even as a back-up to the Taiwan war. In effect, they just did bloody nothing to help the Chinese in this very symbolic little fight over Chinmen. So I date the definitive split as at that time with Mao pressing for military aid but not wanting any Soviet troops on his shores, and clearly Khrushchev thinking, "I've got to control this old devil. If I'm going to give him nuclear weapons, I've got to be sure I can keep him in hand. The way he's talking about nuclear weapons being a paper tiger and how the best thing that could happen to the socialist world would be to start a nuclear war, I can't do that."

Sure enough then, before I came back to be DDI, there were much more open and clear-cut indications of a split, especially their returning the Soviet advisers and stopping Soviet economic aid in 1960. But still, every time I came back to Washington, I found there was a cultural lag, that that stuff which was so vivid--and this is one of the things about being a CIA operator in the field, the details and the personality data you have and the coloration of events is so impressive that you know what is happening, beyond just having the evidence in your hand. You go back to Washington and, God, the paper mill's still turning on, and people are still fighting over the arguments they had five years before, and old Dana Durand was still fighting as if it was all a fraud, and Jim Angleton, too. That really, I think, didn't get resolved until it simply became resolved in a fashion

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by my becoming the DDI and adopting the point of view which I had always tended toward and which I felt absolutely clear about. It's an interesting example of the way intelligence appreciations are made. They're made by people, and I think it was my unusual combination of experience of a long-time analyst of China and the Soviet Union plus that field experience in Taiwan that made it happen. Well, that's a lot on that one subject.

G: Oh, that's all right.

C: We can't go on like this on all these subjects.

G: Can we talk about your field experience in Taiwan as it relates to Southeast Asia at least?

C: Well--

G: Did you have responsibilities to support operations in Southeast Asia?

C: In a sense. We all had delimited, local responsibilities, but headquarters could assign you anything and since my main job was getting intelligence on the whole of the Mainland, I did move around to the different stations to see what could be done to get agents through Burma, Laos, Cambodia, anywhere, into the Mainland and clear up to Japan and Korea.

As the war clouds began to develop in Southeast Asia, I followed that region very closely and was instructed by Washington to be helpful to--I think it was Bill Colby originally in the area. I went down to see Bill at least once, twice in that period; I didn't want to get in his hair too much. Station chiefs are like ambassadors, you know,

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they don't like to get into each other's territory intrusively, but Bill and I were good friends and got along well.

At any rate, the Chinese were asked through my channels if they would assist the South Vietnamese in methods for collecting intelligence, including signals interception and the flying of clandestine missions behind enemy lines. All of that was a technical science which we had developed with the Chinese. It was their science and their business and their responsibility in Taiwan as well as in Southeast Asia.

But one of my achievements as station chief was working with the now-President, Chiang Ching-kuo, who was then the chief of the national security bureau, the intelligence coordinating outfit, to send substantial personnel and administrative and financial assistance down to the South Vietnamese. I cannot go into detail about what they were doing, but they did in effect put the South Vietnamese quickly into the professional business of signals collection and clandestine air operations. I think they coached and they trained and they flew some missions and they set up operations for them, to get them started. It was a kind of on-the-job training business with them. I think that was a very important contribution to some of the early achievements of the South Vietnamese.

G: Did you ever get any feedback on the success or lack of it that the South Vietnamese were able to make--?

C: Well, a little bit. But you know, I think the collection of military operational intelligence was pretty good from intercepting messages,

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and certainly many were intercepted. As they went on in time, I think they got to be pretty professional themselves. But the Chinese helped them for a long time. They just did it at our request. It's a perfect example of having an ally that wants to do things rather than one that doesn't. We were having a hell of a time, and Lyndon Johnson was very preoccupied with the fact that other friends of ours weren't very keen on doing anything in Vietnam. I know he used to talk about that a lot. But all I had to do was mention it to Chiang Ching-kuo and to the old Gimo [Chiang Kai-shek], and, boy, the sky was the limit. They would have deployed their whole army down there, although the Gimo--incidentally, this is a matter that's in the record but very arcanelly I suspect--talked to me many hours about not getting bogged down in Vietnam. He said, "Don't put many American forces down there. You Americans don't know how to fight that kind of a war. You'll be in trouble. You'll just spend countless resources which you don't want to waste down there. If you want to fight a war, go fight it on the Mainland and get rid of the regime that's causing you the trouble in Southeast Asia."

He was eloquent on that and really just spent hours telling me about his viewpoints, which I reported back to Washington. But everybody assumed that he was just trying to get the Americans to fight his battle, and he was of course to some extent. But I think he was very sincere in saying that we were making a mistake in getting our own forces deeply involved in a military situation unless we were prepared to fight right through to Peking and stop the resistance. I mean he

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would have agreed heartily with the Cambodian operation and he would have suggested we go to North Vietnam and squelch them, but as he said, "You won't do any of that. I mean, you won't do it right. You'll just get in trouble and lose your resources and your money and your manpower, and God knows what will happen." Boy, as I look back on it, he was so right about all those things. I argued with him that we had plenty of power, which we did, plenty of determination, and at least the key men knew what they wanted to do. But the protracted battles, he was correct, we should have stayed out or we should have taken a much more direct military approach to stopping the source of the problems.

So I think that's about all the detail I should give, but the Chinese support, particularly in these early days, the early sixties, you see, I think it advanced the timetable of the South Vietnamese being able to field security forces and build up their own armies and so on by a great deal.

G: Was there ever any problem with the fact that these advisers were Chinese helping Vietnamese, in view of their long history of hostility?

C: No, and I tell you, those Chinese forces from Taiwan, I dealt with many of them in their operations. We set up U-2 operations later over the Mainland, and we sent these specially picked communications experts to many parts of Asia to do odd jobs. They were so disciplined and so tightly controlled, it was a fantastic facility. Of course, I often had to remind people back in Washington that it was not surprising that the Chinese understood the Chinese language better than our

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ninety-day wonders from our own training programs. As I pointed out, some of the guys who listened, say, a radio connected with air units, he'd been listening to them for ten, fifteen, twenty years. He knew the tone of voice, he knew the style of communicating--whether they used old-fashioned keys with fingerprints and so on. It was a totally different thing from running any kind of normal military intercept station, which I observed, an American one. These guys could be put into a foreign country, they were under tight military discipline, they were doing these intelligence tasks but they did them as if it was the most dangerous operation in the battlefield, and they would just disappear. There was no community problem, there was no difficulty with having them stay for months under deep cover and reappear, never having caught. . . .

G: Of course, there was a Chinese community in Saigon, I guess, that you--they didn't need that?

C: They didn't touch it. They didn't touch it, at least not to my knowledge. Maybe a few of them were clever enough to collect a Chinese girl friend, but that was not the way they played the game. They stayed out of sight, out of touch. It was just as if you'd put them in a fur-lined foxhole and pulled the cover over them. They stayed there and did their job until they were relieved and brought home.

G: Kind of a monastic existence.

C: It was terrific, yes. I've seen it in other areas that I shouldn't designate, but it was always amazing to me how they could find these

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guys to go for six months, nine months, and do interesting but very confining intelligence work and live black for all that time, had no contact with the civilization around them. And they were able to do it, if we protected them. I suppose at that time still one of the real incentives was a lot of good food and good treatment and relatively pleasant living conditions. But, you know, we couldn't get our people to do anything like that.

So they did make, I think, a real contribution to the security of the South Vietnamese armed forces at a time when neither the Americans nor the South Vietnamese knew a hell of a lot about what was going on in the Viet Cong and North Vietnamese operations. And especially when they were able to find out what the Chinese were doing to provide weapons and transportation and things. As you know, the Chinese communists had nearly forty thousand troops in North Vietnam at one time, and they were providing a lot of logistic assistance to the Vietnamese right up till the end of the war. It was the Russians who gave them the heavy hardware that crushed the South Vietnamese, but the small arms and a lot of railway battalion experts in logistics and that sort of thing were Chinese throughout the war. Of course, our friends in Taiwan were the ideal people to figure this out, sort it all out as to what they were doing and how it was showing up in the way of Vietnamese operations.

G: You made some admiring comments about the dedication of Nationalist U-2 pilots in your book, that they would destroy themselves rather than allow themselves to be captured.

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C: Yes, yes. Well, that's right. I tell you, the ability of the Chinese to produce patriotic and dedicated people in their armed forces was fantastic, at that period at any rate. I presume it was the result of good political education in the armed forces and the fact that this army, these military people, had relatively good American equipment finally, after many years of being poorly equipped and in trouble on the Mainland. They got to Taiwan and we began giving them the chance to organize themselves in a sensible military way. It was exhilarating to them, and when they would get a new piece of American equipment, they were just like kids in a candy store; they loved it. But there was no doubt in my mind about this being a highly motivated people out of necessity. They knew that if they lost the battle of Chinmen, they would lose the battle of Taiwan; if they lost the battle of Taiwan, they were all going to be gone, dead or red or both. They were pretty emotional about all that. So they were highly spooked up on the ideological as well as the military conflict. But more than that, the present president, Chiang Ching-kuo, and his immediate assistants, whom I knew in the air force, which did a lot of this stuff--it was General I Fu-en--

G: Could you spell that for us? My transcriber will never get it.

C: Yes, it's transliterated usually I, pronounced E--[that] is his family name--and his two first names are Fu-en, F-U, hyphen, E-N.

He was a very brash Americanized type of air force officer, had spent a lot of time in the States, and was full of dash and adventure. When he undertook one of these things, like organizing the U-2 squad-

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ron, he was very, very energetic about selecting the cream of the crop. He interviewed everybody and he got undoubtedly superior young men to do it.

But they did that in all of their intelligence activities. Anybody that they were going to permit to do work on behalf of or in association with the Americans, they wanted them to be A-1 people. That was a policy. It paid off, I think, in that gradually in the five years I was there, 1958 to 1962, nearly five years, I think the whole attitude in Washington toward the Chinese Nationalists changed. It was very skeptical to begin with. They sort of thought that was the end of the line and they would eventually collapse. But they did fight at Quemoy, as I predicted they would, and with a little logistic help from us they held the islands. That was their first real victory against the communists for many years, you know, and it gave them a tremendous shot in the arm and turned them toward the philosophy that this little island could become a laboratory and an experiment in economic development and political security.

G: I'm glad you brought that up because it brings a name up that I wanted to mention, Wolf Ladejinsky. Did you have any contact with him?

C: Well, no, no, I remember his name, I don't remember much about him. Where was he assigned? Why do you bring him up? I'm trying to recall.

G: Well, my understanding was he was a land reform expert, consultant, who had been very influential in the land reform in Japan after World

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War II. Then he had gone on to Taiwan and been a consultant and went from there to Saigon. So he made a circuit.

C: Well, I'm pretty sure--I'm just fuzzy about what I recall about him, but I'm pretty sure he was identified with the Land to the Tillers program which was a big success in Taiwan.

But then it was easy in Taiwan because the land belonged to a relatively small number of local Chinese, Taiwanese, who had been the aristocracy under the Japanese, aristocracy of the local residents, but of course treated as colonial types by the Japanese. What the Chinese did was to take the land away from them, give them the nascent industries which the Japanese had been starting--cement and obvious things that a colonial country could have--to develop, which they did, and have made the Chinese industry a miraculous thing in the last thirty years. But it meant that since the Japanese had to abandon it anyway, it was free. So they could give the landowners the chance to become successful industrial entrepreneurs, thus compensating them for their land, give the land to the peasants who had never had it before, who were just tickled to death, and nobody was a loser. The country just got stronger and stronger. Of course, some real geniuses at helping organize the agricultural program came in, and I think Ladejinsky was involved in that. If I knew him, I didn't know him very well. There was something called the JCRR, the Joint Commission on Rural Rehabilitation, and it had scientists and economists, agronomists and all that, half American, half Chinese. The Chinese are still in effect running the same office without any Americans. It was

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a system of educating and providing superior seeds and techniques to these peasants who were terribly primitive in 1950 when they started.

G: Right.

C: So the Land to the Tillers program was one of the showcase economic improvement areas which really paid off. The only thing that was so sensible about this issue was that it was accepted that if Taiwan was going to become an economic, modern power, it had to build up its agriculture as a base. Now, many other countries launched into steel mills and other things that they were not technologically ready for, and their agriculture wouldn't even support the tax base to run anything. The Taiwan economic development is a marvel of efficiency, because you had a very literate population, the government had a good bit of authoritarian control and then this highly motivated feeling: "Boy, if we don't do things well here, there isn't anyplace else to go." And it was just an amazing performance.

G: Sounds like you could draw some parallels with Israel.

C: Yes. Well, I do. I'm writing a book now, and [to] wander slightly, I come to a conclusion that in addition to the classical allies like Germany and Great Britain, and perhaps Japan, that we can depend on and are very fortunate in being able to depend on, [there are] four [other] countries, which some people call outcasts, that are highly motivated, disciplined and military minded because they are surrounded by a much larger hostile population trying to do them in. One is Taiwan, one is Israel, one is South Korea and one is South Africa. And I see those four as really strong points in world affairs, where the people for

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their own reasons are maintaining these highly supercharged societies that will in fact serve as kind of an outpost of American strategic interest.

G: I'll deviate a little. Where does Thailand fit into this picture?

C: Well, Thailand is not quite that caliber. It could be. Many countries could be viewed as strong points because of a close relationship with Americans, and in a sense the Thais are sufficiently worried about relations with both Vietnam and China that they could be lumped there. But the difference is that in comparison to the other four places, Thailand's been there a couple of hundred years. It's had a free and independent society, it moves more to the rhythm of its own political culture and less to this menace from outside the gates that threatens to extinguish a society that's only had a generation of political existence, and that's true in all the republics of--

G: Their psychology is different.

C: Psychology is different. Well, you can see it, too. The Thai are happy-go-lucky compared to any of these other people. See, that Chinese feeling in Taiwan was impressive to me, and Chiang Ching-kuo said it once to me very simply. He said, "You know, in my lifetime and the lifetime even of my father, China has known nothing but war and tragedy and suffering. We know that that's our fate and we have to overcome it, we have to create a new China that can deal with these problems. So we don't have the luxury of being slack or lazy or frivolous. We're a dedicated group of people. History makes us this way." That's very interesting, you know, and true.

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G: Yes.

Well, I wanted to ask you one other--

C: Yes, I think I've touched most of the things that you've asked here, although in a rather random way.

G: You may not feel free to comment on this and if not I certainly understand--

C: Go ahead. As they say, no indiscreet questions, only indiscreet answers.

G: There were stories at the time in 1960 that Francis Gary Powers was supposed to have done what the Nationalist U-2 pilots in fact did, and that he found a way around it.

C: Yes.

G: Can you comment on that?

C: Well, I think it was fair to assume that a red-blooded American boy is a lot less likely to pull a self-destruct button than these Chinese, carefully selected, patriotic, dedicated types I've been trying to describe to you in Taiwan. However, what I was told at the time by the people who were in charge of missions like the Gary Powers flight, and apparently what he told them when he was interrogated was that he was unable to activate the destruct mechanism because it required him to reach somewhere on the cockpit, and that when his plane started spinning down, the gravity forces simply made him unable to do anything if he was going to get out of there. Now, exactly how specifically incapacitating that was, I don't know, but I can easily imagine that psychologically if you felt your plane was going to take you down

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shortly and that your only chance was to get out quickly, you would not worry very much about destruction, you would try to live. He was supposed to have destroyed the plane, but he was not supposed to destroy himself if he didn't have to. He made a choice, to save himself and let the plane go undestroyed.

G: That's fair enough.

C: That's the way I understand it, and I suspect that's literally true. I don't think he--I'm sure he was not under instructions, nor were our Chinese pilots, to kill themselves. But as I think I said to somebody, one of them said to me, "You don't need to worry about what happens to us, like Gary Powers. If we go down, everything goes with us, including the--"

G: We did furnish them the option in some fashion or other?

C: No. . . . Well, those guys all carry some way of destroying themselves, but we didn't ever talk about it. That was left to the Chinese, and I don't know how they briefed them. See, we only set up the unit, we did not command it. It was a Chinese operation and all we did was make it possible for them to get the airplanes, which they could not have purchased otherwise, and nominally they purchased them from Lockheed. So it was a Chinese operation, a regular squadron. I've still got the shoulder patch of the squadron; it's a black cat with enormous yellow eyes. I had it on a flight jacket they gave me so I could get on the flight line. I lost part of it and I've still got that one patch. So they told them what to do, but all the pilot was saying in effect was that he would destroy that goddamn

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plane, he was not going to let them catch him alive. What he meant was that he was going to drive it into the ground, which they all did.

G: But his fate in the hands of the Chinese communists would not have been a happy one, I suppose.

C: No, that's right. He didn't--well, in a way I suppose if he'd been willing to bargain a little bit and say the right things that he might have come out of it okay, but he had no intention of that. Now, you know, when they defect a pilot, they give him thirty million dollars or something and marry him off to a beautiful movie star immediately. It's pretty tempting.

G: Especially if he's got a brand-new airplane.

C: And the Chinese in Taiwan do it to their people. They just got a good one recently.

So the main thing I felt was that in that period Taiwan provided two crucial elements which I helped get the U.S. government to appreciate, though I don't know if they entirely appreciated it. One, it was a very trustworthy and reliable partner in operations, military, clandestine or whatever, that were in the American interests in Asia, because they thought anything that was in the American interest was in their interest. As I say, the Gimo would have preferred we'd just head directly into destroying the Chinese communist regime, but he knew we weren't going to do that, so he just wanted us to be in Asia and be working with them. And that was a tremendous asset, particularly in the intelligence field.

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But more important than that, and I think in the long run it will be very crucial in the history of East Asia--and this was a revelation to me, I knew the intelligence capabilities when I went out there--was the ability of these dedicated people, with their American-oriented education, to create a dynamic Asian society that would eventually be threatening to outproduce the Japanese and the Americans and everybody else, simply by their technological skill and their ability to turf up a very hard-working labor force. I just had lunch today with a young official from there, from Taipei, and I said, "You know, everybody's talking about hard times. How are they doing in Taipei?" He said, "Well, we are having a hard time; this American slowdown in the economy has hurt everybody. But we'll get 5 per cent growth this year." I said, "I don't suppose you have any problem with unemployment." And he said, "Well, it's up. It's up to 2.2 per cent."
(Laughter)

G: These are not alarming figures.

C: But I just came to admire their ability to think out and focus on the key elements of economic development. By the time I left, they had all got the message: showcase of democracy, showcase of economic growth, showcase of at least a constitutional government. They aren't hooked on all the aspects of the electoral process that we are, but they've picked up most of those by now. In any case, they've always had a legal and representative form of government according to a written constitution, dated 1946. And they believe that they will create, are creating, a society that has many of the best features of

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the Confucian society, the Chinese-style, self-regulated, disciplined social system plus the dynamic of a free enterprise economic system, and a really quite open society. You can get in trouble for saying the wrong things in Free China but not very easily. It's a comparatively open system whereby the people can do about what they want to do as long as they don't give the impression they are going to overthrow the government; they don't approve of overthrowing governments.

G: Tell me about Mrs. [Anna] Chennault. What was your contact with her?

C: Well, as I say, it was purely social. My wife knows her better than I do, but I discovered she knew a lot about Asia and China when I was in Taipei so I kept in touch with her very intermittently. What Tommy is reporting--

G: This is Tommy Corcoran?

C: Tommy Corcoran, who as you know became her sort of protector and guardian. He was her legal adviser, he was the legal adviser of Claire Chennault, her husband. When Chennault died, Tommy really took her over and almost raised her as a child and [it] became a sort of family relationship, very close, I think. Tommy came to see me once-- and I didn't know Tommy before, though I knew about him--after I was deputy director, and said, "You know, this woman, Mrs. Chennault, has a fantastic acquaintance with Asians, not only in Taiwan but even more in Vietnam and Korea. I just think somebody who really understands the area and understands high level politics of the area ought to talk to her once in a while, so that the U.S. government gets the benefit of what she knows. Would you do that?" I said, "Well, gee, that's

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not my bag. I'm sort of supposed to be running the analysis here now. But of course if she wants to talk to somebody, I'd be glad to once in a while."

So what it amounted to was about every six weeks or so we'd find some occasion to have lunch, or [we'd] see each other at a party or something. It was never very formal. And she'd tell me what she thought about Asian politics. It was very casual in many ways. But I told John McCone that I would do it if he thought it was okay and if he thought it might be useful. I sometimes made a little memo of things she told me, mostly it was just exchanging ideas on policy. But that's why he says here that she was in touch with me or something of the sort. She's still "reporting," in quotes. This is characteristic, [reading document] "I doubt if any longer high enough up to get the Asian nuances of what she alone can get and has to tell." That's his feeling. He really was very sincere. He just wanted to build Anna up and make sure that people appreciated her. There was never anything very unusual about it, to my knowledge.

(Interruption)

As DDI, I had dozens of people with whom I had these open, perfectly overt contacts to exchange ideas and interpretations, not information. [They included] a lot of newspapermen; Joe Alsop was one of my designated contacts.

G: General Alsop, as Lyndon Johnson called him.

C: I had thousands of lunches, hundreds of lunches with Joe, mostly I listened to his tirades. I finally got pretty ticked off with him.

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We disagreed over Vietnam. He was big on the generals after [Ngo Dinh] Diem. I told him he'd probably set us back three years in the war. He felt he overthrew Diem personally and I think to some extent he did. He and [Averell] Harriman and those guys really did a great deal of damage, and that's a place I think where Lyndon Johnson agreed with me, because he was pretty pissed off with them when he came back.

G: Were you consulted about Diem's viability and--?

C: Yes, I was very much involved from the CIA point of view in that whole period. Of course, McCone was the one who was able to inject policy views as to what we ought to do, but I helped him write memos. And our general attitude, and the attitude of course of the CIA station chief, was that we couldn't do any better than the Diem brothers and that you couldn't have one of them without the other. The State Department view was that you could get rid of brother [Ngo Dinh] Nhu and the dragon lady [Madame Nhu] and then you might have a chastened Ngo Dinh Diem. I never believed that, and McCone and--the station chief at the time was Richardson I think, wasn't it?

G: John Richardson. Do you know where he is these days?

C: No, I don't.

Both argued against it, and of course Richardson got shipped out as a result, and in effect we were overridden, though I don't think Kennedy ever quite understood what Harriman and [Roger] Hilsman and General Alsop and old Cabot Lodge, Henry Cabot Lodge, who became the ambassador, were doing. They just felt they had a mandate to get rid of Diem.

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G: Did you go to any of those policy meetings that were going on in August and September [1963] when Ambassador [Frederick] Nolting came back?

C: I was in some of them, yes. My intervention in these things was always very sporadic; it was when they decided they needed a working level, analytical type or when McCone would say, "Come along, you know more about this than I do." He was always very good to me on that. He loved to get me into these arguments because he figured I could stir up the dust.

G: Did Ambassador Nolting get much input? I've heard conflicting stories on this.

C: From CIA?

G: No, I mean did he get a chance to express his view?

C: Oh, a chance to make an input. No, not too much. Nolting was a little gentle fellow, too dignified and easygoing to deal with these types like Averell Harriman. The old crocodile would eat him up. You know, we forget how rough days those were. I guess the Watergate was worse maybe but--and there were some awful good guys involved--people did get eaten up in that period, and this was a real showdown. Overthrowing Diem was pretty much the State Department staging a coup against the advice of CIA, which is a curious inversion of the way you really think of it. But there's no question about it, if McCone and I had [had] our advice followed, we would have kept Diem in power and we would not have been--although there was never any real discussion of this--surprised, as both Kennedy and Mac [McGeorge] Bundy claim to be, when Diem was killed. We knew you played for keeps out there and that

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once that empire crumbled, it was gone. And they just couldn't bring themselves to understand that this was the kind of thing they were talking about. I'm sure none of them meant for Diem to get killed. They wanted him to be saved, but they wanted him to sort of step down the way Eisenhower had turned over to Kennedy. They just didn't understand the difference.

G: Some journalists on the spot reported at the time that the CIA establishment in Vietnam was not at all unanimous on the viability of the Diem regime.

C: Well, that's probably true, yes. But the station chief was, and of course he was the one who was feeding money to brother Nhu and therefore was considered sort of the enemy by the State Department and that's why he got sent out. I don't know who the opposition might have been, but, oh, hell, CIA headquarters are always riven with controversy of this kind, except usually they keep it inside the family and don't fight quite so publicly as a lot of people.

Well, I wish I had been a little more systematic about going through some of these things.

G: Well, that's all right. Do you need to conclude at this point?

C: Yes, I do. I've got someone waiting.

G: Let me shut it down here.

(Interruption)

C: I was pretty close to Des [Desmond] Fitzgerald, the deputy for operations when I was DDI, and of course he and I had worked together on Asia previously when I was station chief [in Taiwan] and he was

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division chief for Asia. I think that Des had a genius for developing operational programs that had a clandestine quality but showed a real understanding of the culture of the people you were trying to organize to do something in their own benefit and let them develop it in a way that did respond to their own cultural values. Now, this takes great attention to people and the plans and a slow evolution of thinking under essentially an educational atmosphere. I remember talking at length with Des about his plans for various types of teams to operate in South Vietnam in the villages to find out what the local views were, to protect the villagers against the Viet Cong. Some of those teams had very heavy artillery; they could fight a whole battalion of Viet Cong. But essentially they were to make contact with the minds and wishes of the people. So when you talk about winning the minds and hearts, you know, this was imbued in the Vietnamese teams who went out after, I think, almost a nine-month period of training and indoctrination.

G: These are the RD [revolutionary development] teams, is that what they were called?

C: Yes, then there was some called censorship, too. I forget, there were two or three types of teams, a real big, heavy-armed hit team to protect an area that was being covered.

G: The RD team was a fifty-nine-man team in its final--

C: I think that may have been the one. But then they had one called censorship teams, and normally they just went into a village to count people and find out who was there. And incidentally to find out if

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they had any problems, like digging a well and all that. They were terrific. That was a great idea. Then there was a light-armed indoctrination team.

G: Armed propaganda team.

C: Yes. To tell them how to protect themselves and what to do in case the Viet Cong were around. Anyway, Des was very ingenious about dreaming up these things, and I think they were very successful in a limited way in the first. . . .

(Interruption)

Soon it was decided to turn all of that kind of thing over to MACV, to the military. What happened, I recall, and it drove Fitzgerald up the wall, was that all of those carefully trained cadres, a few hundred of them, who had the finesse to operate in a true counter guerrilla, counterinsurgency fashion, got mopped up and put into training operations to turn out a thousand more of them, you know, in a few months, so that MACV could have a big record of thirty or forty thousand people all of a sudden. And I think the thing fell apart at that point because you can't replicate that kind of training in a ninety-day-wonder course, and you do tend to chew up all the personnel you've got trained by trying to have them teach people something that they had just barely been able to learn themselves. It's not the right way to do it. But it was what happened, and I think that was one of the real failures of the war, which came from beginning to turn it into a conventional military operation, even though they still were stressing the same counterinsurgency concepts.

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G: Right.

C: That's all. Okay, well--

End of Tape 1 of 1 and Interview I

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