INTERVIEWEE: LT. GEN. JOHN J. DAVIS

INTERVIEWER: DOROTHY PIERCE MC SWEENY

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M: This interview is with Lt. Gen. John J. Davis, United States Army. Today is Friday, March 7, 1969, and it is 2: 15 in the afternoon. We are in General Davis' offices in the State Department. This is Dorothy Pierce McSweeny.

General Davis, you were appointed to the position of Assistant Director for Weapons Evaluation and Control Bureau of the U. S. Arms Control and Disarmament Agency in 1966. To begin this interview, I'd like to have you give me just a very brief biographical background on your career, so we can kind of get started.

D: All right. Basically, I am an artilleryman in the Army--or was through World War II. I was an artilleryman in General Patton's Third Army in the European theater of World War II. After World War II, I also served in Korea as Division Artillery Commander in 1956-57 time frame. From then on--when I came back from Korea in '57--I spent the next approximately ten years in intelligence as the Director of Foreign Intelligence in the Department of the Army in the Pentagon, from about 1957 to about 1961. Then I was transferred to the National Security Agency at Fort Meade, Maryland, where I was the Director of Production from 1961 to 1965; and then back to the Pentagon where I was Assistant Chief of Staff for Intelligence to General Harold K. Johnson, who was Chief of Staff of the Army, until I was appointed by President Johnson to

this job as Assistant Director of Weapons Evaluation Control. The job is a Presidential appointee job, and I was confirmed by the Fulbright committee in Congress. I have been in that capacity since 1966--until the present time.

M: When did you first hear of your possible assignment to this position?

D: The Chief of Staff of the Army called me in early October, I think it was--1966--and told me that Lieutenant General Fred Dean of the Air Force, who was the Assistant Director for the Arms Control Agency, was being reassigned to another job. [He] asked me if I would like to have the job. He sent me over for an interview with Mr. William C. Foster, the Director of the Arms Control Agency. Then Mr. Foster concurred in my nomination by the Pentagon; and Mr. Foster forwarded my name to the White House where it was sent to the Senate for confirmation, after presumably it had been brought to the President's attention.

M: General Davis, could you explain to me why both you and General Dean have come from the Pentagon as members of this agency? In other words, we have two military men.

D: We've actually had three. Before General Dean, there was Vice Admiral Parker of the Navy. When the Arms Control Agency was created by act of Congress in 1961, Mr. William C. Foster was the first Director. He recommended that one of the four Assistant Directors in the organization agency be established as a three-star billet because of the great importance of the military implications of Arms Controls on national security. So that policy was adopted, and it has been followed ever since. As I say, there were first the Navy and the Air Force and now the Army.

M: Are they rotating it through the Services?

D: It has been rotated through the Services. I suppose that you might consider that that is an established policy, too.

M: Does this put you in the position of being sort of the Arms Control liaison with the Pentagon?

D: Not the only liaison to the Pentagon. The International Relations Bureau here deals with the ISA and the Pentagon. The Science and Technology Bureau here deals with many of their contacts or colleagues in the research areas of the Pentagon, and the Director's office and the Deputy Director deal with the Secretary of Defense and his immediate assistants. But my bureau, the Weapons Evaluation Bureau--myself and the people under me, including a fairly substantial number of active duty military people--does have voluminous contacts throughout the Pentagon and in particular with the Joint Staff and the Joint Chiefs of Staff.

M: Sir, before I ask you a little bit more in depth on your own work, I would like to ask you on what occasions have you met Lyndon Johnson?

D: Only on social occasions. I was at the White House on three different occasions--yearly occasions--when he gave a reception for senior military officers of the Armed Forces. On those three occasions I had the opportunity to meet him and talk with him a little bit from a social point of view.

M: What were these three occasions?

D: It was the annual reception that the President holds for senior military officers in the Washington area. It's a reception at the White House.

M: Do you recall what you all discussed in passing?

D: The main thrust, particularly at the last one, was his very emotional gratitude for the outstanding job the military were doing--particularly

in Viet Nam--but overall in backing him up, and being people that he could thoroughly rely upon to carry out his policies.

M: Did you gather any impressions from your rather casual meeting with him?

D: I distinctly got the impression that he was extremely dedicated to the national security of the United States and all the facets of it. Obviously, the Viet Nam war was much on his mind. As I said before, he was most appreciative of the dedicated service of all the military in this Viet Nam war, and he was most anxious to do what he could for the military. He specifically mentioned the pay raise the last time that was about to come up. He thought that the military richly deserved this raise, and he was going to see that it was approved up on the Hill.

M: General, about how much direction would you say that the agency received from the White House?

D: I think the Arms Control Agency received a great deal of direction from the White House. It was certainly my impression by listening to the evolvement of Arms Control policy by Mr. Foster and his immediate subordinates in the agency that the coordination with the White House and the guidance from the White House to the Arms Control Agency was almost on a daily basis, you might say--particularly when items of arms control nature were coming to a head for a decision. And I know that the President took a great personal interest in arms control matters of all kinds, and was in frequent touch with Mr. Foster about the President's opening statements at the Eighteen Nation Disarmament Conference in Geneva that had long sessions every year at the United Nations, in his yearly State of the Union message to the people of the United States--in all of these arms control was actively considered.

M: Sir, have you yourself had occasion to deal with someone on the White House staff?

D: Yes. I believe that the most frequent contact was with Mr. Spurgeon Keeney(?), who was a staff member of the President's scientific advisory. He was charged with staffing arms control measures that pertained to the White House. So all of us in ACDA--ACDA being Arms Control Disarmament Agency--had frequent occasions to deal with Mr. Spurgeon Keeney.

M: Do any of these sort of stand out in your mind? Were you there, or were these primarily through telephone conversations?

D: Mostly, I think it was Mr. Spurgeon Keeney coming over here and dealing with various members of the Arms Control Agency.

M: Do any of these occasions particularly stand out in your mind?

D: Not specifically because most of the measures were somewhat out of my line, and related to non-proliferation treaties and test bans and other Arms Control measures where I was not directly involved, where I was sitting in on discussions with him. But the policy proposed positions were very carefully worked out with him and others of the White House staff by the people here in the Arms Control Agency.

M: General Davis, would you outline for me what your responsibilities have been in this position, and tell me a little bit about what your primary activities have been in the last couple of years--or since you've been here.

D: The Assistant Director for Weapons Evaluation and Control--being set up as a three-star military billet, as I mentioned earlier--his responsibilities have been in the field of making sure that the Director understood the military implications, with reference to national security, of any arms

control proposal that was being formulated or considered from any source--that might be formulating this arms control proposal.

In discharging that responsibility, I have had on my staff in the Weapons Evaluation Bureau a number of active duty officers of various backgrounds and disciplines, as well as a number of civilian analysts. Our job is to do quite a sophisticated analysis of the military implications of our arms control proposals.

Also, another major responsibility has been to address ourselves to the inspection and verification requirements of arms control proposals, so that if we come up with a proposal, we want to know specifically just how that proposal--if agreed to be adversaries--could be safeguarded. In other words, what are the inspection verification requirements before the United States should agree to it. Now I think that's the basic fundamental policy requirements of this particular bureau that I head. The rest of the agency looks to this bureau to perform that function.

M: Can you give me specifics of what you have been working on primarily in the last two years?

D: Two general broad areas: One, in the field of conventional arms. We have done a great deal of in-house research, contract studies, and field tests in the conventional armaments area. We look here from a research and field test point of view at the possibilities of reductions of conventional arms--conventional armed forces.

For instance, the possibility of troop reductions in Europe as part of an agreement between us and the Warsaw Pack of Nations for instance, to keep the numbers of troops down to an agreed level. We have worked closely with the NATO headquarters, political and military headquarters

of NATO, in this type of work. And we have conducted a number of field tests throughout the United States, from 1963 on through 1967, at various Army posts and various air bases throughout the country. We've also participated in some major field exercises that the military have conducted and have looked at them from an arms control point of view of inspection verification if we had an agreement to reduce those forces.

The last effort in that field has been just this last summer where we had a large joint United States-United Kingdom field test in England in this conventional forces area that I have been talking about. There we conducted a field test in the Salisbury Plain area of England, which consisted of some two thousand square miles of training area where the British Armed Forces--the Army and the Air Force--normally conducted their summer training. In the summer of '68 they were to have approximately thirty thousand troops in the area. Well, this two thousand square mile area represented a country who had agreed to limit its conventional forces to a declared level of forces, and we, with the help of some three hundred of General Lemnitzer's young officers, and approximately a hundred of the British Army forces, conducted a field test. The field test was scientifically designed based upon the results of our previous field tests in the United States. We were trying to find out what the minimum intrusive inspection requirements would be to satisfy ourselves that if in the future we agreed to such reductions--say in the NATO area--we would know what kind of an inspection system we had to demand in order to satisfy ourselves that the treaty was being lived up to.

M: I think I understand. It would appear--I don't mean to reduce this--but you must have had to see if there were any way in which you could--

D: Evade?

M: Yes.

D: Yes. Evasion was a part of the field test, and we did have the forces engaged in their summer training practice evasion. This was a part of the test to determine if we could detect evasion of the treaty.

M: May I ask you what you concluded on this?

D: The detailed analysis is not finished yet. We contracted with the Research Analysis Corporation to help us on this test and very detailed records were kept. It will be some time this next fall--probably around August or September--before the detailed analysis has been completed. However, we have had a preliminary analysis of the results of the test. We had some twenty different combinations of test teams out through the area--two-man teams, four-man teams, eight-man teams. Some of them had a-cess to certain collateral information. Some of them did not. Some of them were only allowed to ride around an Army base or an air base in their jeeps. Others were allowed to ride through the base. Some had aerial photography results given to them. Others didn't. Some had electronic sensor information provided to them. Others did not.

We generally concluded that you could keep track of the Armed Forces in an area such as that with very small teams. It looks like it might work out, that one two-man team in a jeep, with proper backup from his headquarters and with binoculars and tape recorder and camera, could roughly keep track of the troops in a thousand square mile area. And so it looks quite optimistic that, if and when such an agreement in the future might be arrived at to keep conventional armed forces down to a certain level, that we have learned enough by this inspection test to

spell out just exactly what we would need. It would not be too great or hopefully not be looked upon by the adversaries as being too intrusive.

M: I have some very general questions to ask, and I think this might be part of one. I wanted to know, in your judgment, what have been the three or four most difficult and critical decisions for you in Weapons Evaluations since assuming this position, and this work on conventional arms and troop levels.

D: I would think that the most--

(interruption)

M: Before I turned that off, I was asking you what you thought were three or four of the most important and critical decisions that have been made in this area.

D: Under the general heading of inspection verification, I think you find the most critical decisions in both the conventional arms area and strategic arms area. In most all attempts to table a proposal for an arms control measure with the Soviets, they almost always say that any agreement must rely upon our national assets in the way of inspection verification. By this they mean, and say, that our intelligence systems on both sides open--not open--but our national assets in other words to inspect and verify by not having anybody on the ground in each other's country should be sufficient to satisfy ourselves that the agreement is being lived up to.

This obviously would not satisfy all requirements. In some cases you could rely upon so-called national assets to verify an agreement. In others, you could not. So one of the most critical areas of arms control inspection verification is deciding just how far you can rely upon national assets, and where that reliance would fail, and what

conditional measures you must demand before you could agree to an arms control measure. I think that is the area of greatest criticality since I've been here, and it pertains both to the general area of conventional arms control agreements and strategic arms control agreements.

M: What about in terms of weapons evaluation?

D: In weapons evaluation we rely completely on the intelligence community's best evaluation insofar as adversary weapons and weapons systems are concerned. So, in arms control proposal analysis we stay in very close coordination with the intelligence community here in Washington. We have all the necessary security clearances so that we have access to all the information. So that problem, as I said, is critical only in the fact that we must be completely aware of the best intelligence estimates of what we're faced with. Of course on our own side, we have access to all information of our own weapons systems.

M: General Davis, what have your activities been and your assessment of the deployment of ABM's?

D: We do a great deal of strategic analysis here in the Weapons Evaluation Bureau along with the analysis in our Science and Technology Bureau of the ACDA. We have been actively engaged for more than a year in analyzing the strategic nuclear forces of both ourselves and the Soviets. And we have participated along with others in the interagency areas concerned, with arriving at different proposals that we might talk with to the Soviets about limitation of strategic arms--both offensive and defensive. On the defensive side where you find the ABM's, we have done much in-house research. We have extensive contract research agreements with aerospace corporations who are very knowledgeable in this field. On the Soviet

side, we have complete coordination with intelligence community on their best assessment of the Soviet defensive weapons systems, including ABM's. So, in answering your question, I would say that we have been very intimately concerned with this analysis.

Now as to the decision or the policy--whether we're for or against ABM deployment--we have looked at it from the overall point of view of offensive and defensive weapons. We're all convinced that you must do this--that you cannot look at ABM's in isolation because by the very nature of a strategic nuclear war, it's an interaction of offensive and defensive weapons systems. ABM's are looked upon as damage limiting. In other words, you're trying to avoid damage to yourself if somebody attacks you. Of course, the offensive systems are designed to assure your destructive capability vis-a-vis the opponent if he strikes you first.

We have attempted to support the Administration's policy decisions, once they have been made, on the size and characteristics and deployment of ABM's as well as offensive systems. Prior to the time the decision is made, I think the Director has felt free to voice his own opinion from an arms control point of view, whether we should deploy ABM's or whether we shouldn't. Generally speaking Mr. Foster, the head of the agency, was against deployment of ABM's. Once, however, the decision was made to go ahead and deploy them, he certainly supported that decision.

M: Is this based on the furthering of efforts to achieve some sort of agreement?

D: Yes. He was concerned, of course, I think, that it might be more difficult to have the Strategic Arms Limitations Talks with the Soviets if we announced sizeable ABM deployments. From an arms control point of view, of course, his policy was to try to get both sides to agree not to escalate the nuclear arms race, and to hopefully even reduce the

the deployments of both offensive and defensive weapons systems.

M: General, during the Johnson Administration, was the decision to deploy what they considered a thin system--did that have to do with the direct influence of this agency on at least prevailing over what they would call a thick system?

D: No. I think that there never was to my knowledge, any decision or near-decision by the Administration to deploy a thick system. I think it was always looked upon as a decision to hedge against the Chinese capability to commit an irrational act as they developed their own strategic weapons, against accidental launch of intercontinental missiles, and that was about it as announced.

M: Have you also had some activities in analyses of the acceleration of the Posiedon System and improving the third stage Minuteman?

D: Yes, this has been part of our analysis. I mentioned before that, from an arms control point of view, we have been long engaged in analyzing both offensive and defensive weapons systems. From an Arms Control point of view--and that's what we're charged with, looking at things through those eyes--the so-called MIRVS in the offensive systems--the multiple independently target re-entry vehicles--where you find a number of warheads in one missile body, is looked upon here in the Arms Control Agency as highly destabilizing. By that we mean that if you have many MIRVS, your opponent could view that as an attempt by you to achieve first strike capability, and that you could knock out the other side's strategic nuclear forces in their silos or on bomber bases without using all your weapons because you had so many warheads. You therefore could disarm him without having to suffer unacceptable damage in a retaliation by him because his retaliatory force would have been destroyed. This is

looked upon as highly destabilizing. You can't have international peace under these kind of conditions because the side that has it of course or attempts to get it--the other side would react and attempt to meet that threat. It's part of the action-reaction cycle. It may cause you to put in more ABM's because you don't want those MIRVS to get in and kill you, you see. It's that type of thing that we get heavily involved in.

M: General, does the Arms Control Agency place an emphasis on defensive as opposed to offensive weapons?

D: No. I think they try to look at it as a complete package. In other words, under possible limitations of offensive and defensive weapons, they try to analyze the possible force mixes--both from offensive and defensive sides--that would assure both sides that they had enough weapons for assured destruction. In other words, that neither side could strike first at the other side and hope to do this without having inflicted on them unacceptable damage by the retaliatory side. In coming up with that type of force mix, you can arrive at this sort of stable deterrence posture by various mixes of offensive and defensive weapons.

If we start talking with the Soviets about this type of agreement, I'm sure we'll have to analyze various possible force mixes because there is a distinct asymmetry between U.S. strategic forces and Soviet strategic forces, and this asymmetry will have to be carefully understood by both sides in order to come up with an agreement that each side has enough to have it's own assured destruction capability, because there will be different weapons types, different weapons mixes. But the problem will be to have agreement with both sides that they have enough and that therefore, they don't need any more. Hopefully, therefore you can

stop the arms race, leaving sufficient weapons on both sides to assure that their own national security is not degraded.

M: Asymmetry in this case means parity?

D: No, asymmetry means not alike. Their forces are not alike. Their weapons systems are not the same.

M: But with the same effect?

D: Yes.

M: That's what I mean.

D: Yes. They have nuclear weapons. We have nuclear weapons. But they have them built differently. We have more bombers than they have. They have more megatonnage than we have. We have more warheads than they do. They have more IR/MRBMs than we do. That's what I mean by asymmetry. So it's a complex and difficult problem to sit down and say how many each side should have when you're talking about apples and oranges, as far as the weapons systems themselves are concerned. You're getting a good education in strategic weapons.

M: I've been interviewing over in the Pentagon and getting somewhat familiar with these. General, what, in your opinion, have been some of the most import breakthroughs in arms control during your time here?

D: Before I came, of course, the Limited Test Ban Treaty was one of the big ones. After I got here, I think it was the Space Treaty to prohibit the military use of space for mass destruction weapons, and to prohibit the orbiting of the earth with mass destruction weapons by both sides, or to prohibit military bases on celestial bodies--the moon and other planets. That's one of the big ones.

The current one, of course, that is up before the Senate now for

ratification is the Non-Proliferation Treaty. I believe that President Johnson said that, in his opinion, this was the most important arms control measure that the United States had ever attempted. So I would say that that is probably the number one arms control achievement since I've been here. I had very little to do with it, I hasten to add, but it has been very important.

M: Sir, the space agreement is in the form of an agreement and not a treaty. Does this mean that we are trying to reach a treaty level?

D: Which is it?

M: The space agreement--isn't that in the form of--?

D: No, it's a space treaty. It's a treaty. The Senate advised and consented and ratified.

M: Sir, do you see that the benefits from a limited test ban treaty with Russia, and their observance of it, outweighs all drawbacks to the U.S. in the preparedness and national security?

D: Yes. I do. It definitely has become more and more apparent that uninhibited testing in the atmosphere was bound, sooner or later, to have an adverse effect on health--Strontium 90 in particular, in milk and all this other thing. So it has been very important to limit that. I think it is generally agreed that underground testing has provided us with all the necessary information we have needed to go on with the development of new nuclear weapons. That includes the development of the ABM and the MIRV warheads. So I do not think that the limited test ban has had any deleterious effect upon the U.S.'s ability to go ahead and research and develop new nuclear weapon systems.

M: Have we made any headway in the controlling of international traffic in

conventional arms?

D: Very little. We study this. We do in-house research. We have some contract research relating to this problem with Massachusetts Institute of Technology. We have analyzed fifty-two different local conflicts since the end of World War II, and as a part of this analysis we have looked very carefully at the weapons used from old rifles and pistols right on up through very strategic jet aircraft and have studied the importance of various kinds of weapons in these local conflicts. We've studied very carefully who in the arms suppliers are to the developing countries of the world, and we've attempted to see how some suppliers agreement might be brought about. There have been arms control proposals along this line in the United Nations and other places. But, as I said at the beginning, very little has been achieved in the way of concrete results in controlling the proliferations of that kind of weapon around the world.

M: Isn't the United States the prime supplier?

D: Yes. I think they are, followed very closely by the Soviet Union as second probably. Not all of it, of course, is bad. Some of the weapons you supply to your allies are extremely important. If you did not supply sufficient weapons to your allies, some of them may have been taken over many, many years ago by forces that are inimical to U. S. interests.

On the other hand, when you do supply large amounts of weapons to underdeveloped countries, in particular around the world, they can be put to end uses that you never thought of. Even when you put a provision or caveat in providing the weapons, when there's a coup d'etat and you find a new government in power, the weapons could be used in areas where

the United States of course would not condone such use at all. It is a very complex problem and a very important problem. We continue to study it and to work with other people on it all the time.

M: Do you study the military assistance program?

D: Yes, very much in this. We have an Arms Transfer Division in the ACDA. They stay very closely to the MAP programs--the Foreign Assistance Act, and sales programs, along with the State Department people. So ACDA does have a continuing voice in this, particularly from an arms control point of view.

M: From the arms control point of view, do you put forward the emphasis of limiting in areas of underdeveloped countries, or in cutting back?

D: Yes. The arms control point of view of trying to control this proliferation of weapons and trying to get regional agreements to limit arms is quite active. We do play an active role in the deliberations. As you know, if it's a serious proposal to provide arms to a developing country, it gets coordinated between the State Department and the Arms Control Agency and other interested agencies before it finally goes to the President for a decision as to whether a request will be honored or military end items will be provided or whether they won't.

M: Did you have some activity in the decision to send planes to Israel?

D: Yes, we were in on the coordination for that decision.

M: How do you mean by coordination?

D: When a request comes in for provision of sophisticated items of military equipment, like the F-4's to Israel, there is a coordination mechanism that is followed throughout the government agencies by Defense, by State, and by the Arms Control Agency, as to what are the pros and cons of

acquiescing to such a requirement--whether we should provide them or whether we shouldn't. Of course that includes an analysis of the military balance, in this case, between Israel and the Arabs, and what there is also likely to be if you don't provide the equipment. ACDA gets intimately involved with those sort of staffing procedure, you might call it.

M: Did they reach a policy decision on this?

D: Yes. The policy decision that was reached was to provide the weapons and the airplanes to Israel.

M: This was before it was presented to the President?

D: Yes.

M: General Davis, how do you assess the understanding in the United States in the acceptance of the concept of disarmament in arms control?

D: I believe it's mixed. When I first came over, I think there was a general feeling that arms control and disarmers were not quite in the real world, that they were sort of dreaming of Utopia, and that there wasn't much to be gained by attempting to have serious arms control proposals.

But I believe now that has changed radically, as evidenced by everything you see about it now in the press. I have seen a marked change within the last two years in the general acceptance of the fact that arms control is a very important part of the national policy decision level, and is getting more and more attention paid to it, and for obvious reasons. One of the chief ones is just straight economics; that weapons systems are becoming so fabulously expensive that if there's anything we can do to meet the overall objectives of national security without spending all of the billions that we do spend, then we're

'way ahead of the game. One alternative, of course, to spending all these billions is to hopefully arrive at meaningful arms control agreements with our adversaries. This is not easy, and nobody is under any illusion that it's a simple thing to do. But its end result--if you can achieve such an agreement--is so important, and is now recognized as being so important, that much more attention is being paid to it within the military in the Pentagon, within the State Department, and the Arms Control Agency than there was in the past. So I think really what I am saying is that I believe that arms control has finally come of age. It's getting serious attention now as an alternative way of achieving national security as opposed to ever-increasing armaments.

M: Have you felt, or this agency, felt much resistance from the military? As a military man, I think you would understand this.

D: There's still quite a lot of lack of understanding, particularly among military people who do not come in direct contact with arms control staffing and arms control policies. However, at the top level, I think it is generally recognized in the Pentagon that you must pay serious attention to arms control as an alternative way of doing things. In this connection, I might give you a quote--a testimony of General Wheeler last year. Let me see if I can find that.

General Wheeler last year, in testifying before Congress, had this to say about arms control, and I quote: "The Joint Chiefs of Staff recognize that the national security can be improved by balanced, phased, and safeguarded arms control agreements limiting the military capabilities of nations in a manner conducive to the achievement of a secure, free, and peaceful world. We are equally aware of the historical record in

this regard, and conscious of the need to proceed with hope but without illusion." And I think that puts the situation very fairly and squarely--that if you can achieve safeguarded arms control agreements, then you can enhance your own national security. But they must be properly safeguarded agreements, or else of course you dare not go into them.

M: Have you had many occasions to testify before Congress?

D: Mostly on the appropriation hearings--the appropriations committees of the House and the Senate--when we're going before Congress to get funds for the Agency. I've had quite extensive hearings there. I've also accompanied the new director, Mr. Smith, before the Stennis committee on the Non-Proliferation Treaty Bill. But most of my hearings before Congress have been in the appropriations field. They review of course what the agency has done with its money, what it proposes to do with its money within that fiscal year, or what kind of research it has done, what kind of arms control proposals it has come up with, and a rationale for those things that ACDA does.

M: Certainly appropriations is a good reading of, I think, Congress' reception of the idea of arms control and the benefit of it. How do you feel that they have received this?

D: I think that it's almost like any other measure you take up on the Hill. You've got the Congressmen and the Senators who are for it and those who are against it. Certainly that's very true in the arms control field. Some of them are against almost anything that this agency does or attempts to do. On the other hand, there are many Congressmen and Senators who are heartily in favor of what the Arms Control Agency is trying to do. I would say, on balance, that the people who are in favor of the attempts

to achieve arms control agreements far outweigh those who are against such attempts.

M: Have you seen an increase in this in the last couple of years up on the Hill?

D: Yes. It is part of the overall awareness of the importance of arms control--looking at it as an alternative way to enhance our own national security, if it can be done with a properly safeguarded agreement, recognizing that it takes two to make such an agreement and that you proceed with hope but without illusion, as General Wheeler said.

M: General, how do you evaluate the progress that we have made thus far in arms control?

D: I think you have to say that it's painfully slow, and that it takes infinite patience to work in this field of arms control because it still is not too well understood as to how you're trying to achieve this, and that what you're trying to achieve should not be in competition with other measures to achieve a better way of life and more national security for all of us, but is complementary to the normal way of doing it. If you can have agreements to achieve meaningful arms control measures, then you don't have to maybe buy more arms or do more things of one kind or another. So it's in that context that I think the awareness has increased. I've seen an awareness up on the Hill since I've come over here in the last two years. I think this has become more accepted as a serious attempt to try to come to agreements with our adversaries. It's certainly not easy because you're dealing largely with closed societies, and we're an open society. It's much easier for us to agree to the necessary inspection verification, for instance, than it is for the closed

society to agree to it. They're very chary of this. They're afraid of it for the effect on their own closed society and their own control of their own closed society.

M: Do you feel that we can make real progress without the inclusion of China?

D: Yes. In the strategic nuclear arms field, if we achieved a meaningful agreement properly safeguarded with the Soviets to limit the offensive and defensive weapons of both of us--whatever that limit was that was agreed to, it would still represent nuclear forces on both sides that were far in excess of anything the Chinese could come up with for some decades. We're not talking about scaling down our nuclear weapons until we have practically nothing left. We're just really saying that if we both have enough now, why should we go on getting more, because it's a deterrence capability more than an attempt to pile more and more on top of each other.

However, if we don't get an agreement, then we obviously have to do whatever is necessary to assure ourselves that we're not falling behind in this nuclear arms race. But if we did get an agreement of that nature, then we would hope that some time in the future we might bring China into some agreement. We'd have to obviously change the political outlook of the country as it is now, but when Mao Tse-Tung dies, that may change. Then they may be more amenable to getting back into international circles than they are now.

M: Does the likelihood of agreement increase with the achievement of parity in arms race between the USSR and the United States?

D: It probably does.

M: We're very fearful of that though.

D: Parity is a word that's hard to define, chiefly because of the asymmetry in the strategic nuclear arms that I talked about earlier. It's hard to make an equation--say this equals that. We in this agency, like the term that President Nixon recently used in saying sufficiency. That's rather vague but deliberately so, because to try to decide what level of forces would be enough for each side to have an assured destruction capability--so that if it were attacked first it could just inflict unacceptable damage on the other--is the objective or the goal that you're looking at and you're trying to achieve. As I say, when you're dealing with asymmetrical forces, this is not easy. It's a complex problem. We, along with the Department of Defense and State, work hard at this, and we have in the past. We continue to address a great deal of attention to this basic problem. What kind of agreement would provide sufficient nuclear forces for both sides.

M: General Davis, we mentioned a moment ago about the military activity in space. But can we confidently assure that that is not occurring?

D: Yes, I think so. The capabilities of the U.S. are sufficient so that the so-called national assets, or national intelligence capabilities, are in my opinion sufficient so that any significant attempt by the Soviets to introduce weapons of mass destruction in space would be detected by us before any significant deployment could occur. I feel certain that this is the case.

M: But along this line, isn't it true that any sort of object operating in that sphere can double?

D: On yes. There's nothing to prevent us or them from putting nuclear weapons in satellites. But it's a very poor weapons system if you have in

mind attacking the other side. ICBMs, for instance, are much, much more accurate as a weapon than would be putting the same nuclear weapons in satellites and trying to deorbit those satellites as a weapon, because they're not accurate at all. If you tried to use that as a weapon, for instance, against a city or particularly a military target, it would be very inefficient as opposed to the much more precise way of firing ICBM's at the targets. So that the rationale of either side introducing weapons of the space field is not very great.

M: That's something that's bound to improve though with increasing technology.

D: Yes. But again, it's not really, for the foreseeable future, an efficient way to get the job done as opposed to firing a weapon from a hardened single silo at your target, or from a submarine standing out in the ocean.

M: General Davis, you mentioned before working closely with the Defense Department and the Joint Chiefs of Staff. Is it possible within these agencies themselves that there does not arise any duplication in effort here?

D: I'm not sure I understand your--

M: They have weapons system evaluation groups, and they have arms controls groups--the joint chiefs, and things like that. Is there no duplication of effort here?

D: No. Because I think basically each agency looks at the problem through slightly different eyes. They're looking at it from the point of view of "what impact would this have on the area that I'm responsible for." The Joint Chiefs of Staff, for instance, do have a staff section that deals in arms control. We coordinate with them very carefully.

Our job in the Arms Control Agency of course is to come up with arms control proposals. That's why they've established the agency. Naturally, you would not expect to find the Department of Defense trying to come up with arms control proposals. So when we come up with one, we coordinate it very thoroughly. A proposal even in its embryonic state would be sent over to the Pentagon staffs that are primarily set up to deal with arms control measures. Then it's staffed out throughout the Joint Staff or other parts of the Pentagon, so that they can look at it from its impact upon their obligation to safeguard the security of the country.

What I;m saying is that we in the State Department would look at it from a slightly different point of view of its impact on foreign policy. So everybody is looking at it differently. We, in analyzing strategic arms limitations, for instance, would be looking at the effects of a freeze on weapons, where they are now, even look at the effect of reduction on nuclear weapons. We can't except the Department of Defense to do that. But they are interested in our proposals to do that, and they will analyze it from their point of view, and we'll analyze it from ours.

Then we have a very definite coordinating mechanism that goes all the way in to the President. So before an arms control proposal is really launched outside of this country in international forums, it gets the thorough coordination various interagency levels before it is tabled in front of the President to make a decision. He knows, before he makes that decision, that it has been thoroughly analyzed, and he has all the pros and cons labeled for him of why it should be or why it shouldn't be.

M: Have there been some areas where you have substantially differed? When

you spoke of pros and cons, that there was no sort of ground in which you could reach any sort of a compromise, and I'm speaking in terms with the Defense Department.

D: There have been many differences because, as I say, naturally by being in the Department of Defense, they're going to look at it differently than we would in the Arms Control Agency. But you would expect, and it happens, that when these pros and cons are laid out that the Arms Control people generally would say that you can go farther without affecting the national security than maybe the Defense Department people would. They're conservative planners, and that's what they should be. Arms Control Agency people would not be so conservative. They would say, "Well, you have to take some risks, and it's important to get some movement in Arms Control, to try to get agreements, or that if you get agreement in one place, you can hopefully get another one a step down the line and get something progressing toward this field." So these differences, in serious arms control proposals, will generally persist and will be clearly delineated as the proposal goes up the line now through the National Security Council procedure to the President for his decision.

M: Do you feel that you must have strong weapons evaluation in order to support your side of it?

D: Yes.

M: Do you feel that you must have strong weapons evaluation in order to

D: No, because if we don't have strong weapons evaluation as an integral part of the agency, I think we would find that the agency would be attempting to promote arms control measures in the weapons area--for instance, conventional or strategic--and would unnecessarily be promoting

these proposals when they clearly were inimical to national security. So our job here would be to kill such proposals before they got off the ground very far. That is one of our functions, of course, as I said at the beginning, to make sure that the Director thoroughly understands the military implications of proposals. So there are many proposals that never see the light of day and never leave the agency, or they're modified in the working area so that they have no adverse effect. They not only have no adverse effect, but if you could get agreement to it, it would enhance our security. This takes quite a lot of analysis that you just simply couldn't expect the Pentagon, for instance, to do.

M: If the Pentagon accepted the idea, though, that arms control is [an] adjunct to national security, not an alienation of it, which is what you said it is, then they would proceed along these lines took wouldn't they?

D: Yes, that's true, and I think there's some movement in that area. It's my own opinion that arms control alternatives in planning should be an integral part of planning early on in the planner's mind--as he plans contingency planning, for instance. One of the contingency or alternatives should be an arms control one--that if you could get this done--

M: In planning weapons systems?

D: Yes. If you could get this done, you might not need this. We're not there yet, by quite a long shot. Maybe some day we'll get that far down the road.

M: General Davis, do you feel that this agency has been effectively used during the Johnson Administration?

D: Yes, I think it has. As I said, I think President Johnson personally paid a great deal of attention to arms control. He had a great interest

in trying to get strategic talks started with the Soviets to limit nuclear weapons--a great deal of personal interest in this. He had a great deal of interest in the Space Treaty. He had a great deal of interest in the Non-Proliferation Treaty. And he took personal interest in them. So I think that a great deal of attention was paid to the agency in all its endeavors by the Johnson Administration.

I think that the same thing will happen in this Administration. Any Administration nowadays is going to pay a great deal of attention to arms control because it certainly is an attractive alternative to any President--that if he could achieve a meaningful agreement, then that he would not have to go down some line that would result in spending many, many billions of dollars for a new weapons system.

M: Then you feel that accessibility to Mr. Johnson and the reception of arms controls proposals were rather high during this period?

D: Yes, I do. By the provisions of the act that created this agency, the Director had direct access to the President as well as to the Secretary of State for foreign policy measures. Mr. Foster did have that access and when things had gone through this coordinating mechanism that I've told you about that involved the Secretary of State, the Secretary of Defense, the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff--when that was all finished and things were going to the President, Mr. Foster had direct access to him.

M: It was no handicap in having to go through all this coordination procedure?

D: Oh, no.

M: And bureaucratic trips.

D: Well, it took time. It took a lot of time, and there were differing

opinions. But I personally think it's a very necessary type of coordinating mechanism to make absolutely sure that all sides are heard from and that everything is considered that certainly pertains to the national security interests of the country in proceeding with any particular arms control measure.

M: I have just a very few more questions here. I'd like to ask you what you see as future breakthroughs in disarmament talks on arms control.

D: I don't think there's any doubt about the fact that a properly safeguarded agreement with the Soviets to limit strategic offensive and defensive weapons would be a major breakthrough in arms control. It's by far the most single important thing that could be achieved from an arms control point of view in my opinion.

M: Do you see this anywhere in the near future?

D: Yes, I think that the Soviets have made it pretty clear that they are seriously interested in sitting down and talking with us about strategic arms control limitations. I don't think they do this because they've changed their objectives. I don't think that they've changed their outlook particularly. They're still very much an adversary of the West, still as dangerous as they ever were. But they have many compulsions to try to stop the nuclear arms race same as we do --and even more so probably-- because one of the common problems we both have of course is the ever-increasing cost of an arms race in this nuclear field, and the great and growing demands for money to be spent in other areas--the domestic problem that we have; the growing demands they have for more consumer goods, for upgrading their industrial base; the demands of some of their military for more conventional weapons. All of these things lend pressure,

will have a meaningful agreement, but it means that the pressures to will have a meaningful agreement, but it means that the pressures to talk about it are pretty strong. I think that whether we have or whether we have not, whether we reach one or whether we do not reach one, will in the end depend upon whether we can ever get agreement on inspection verification. That's the key issue of whether we can then will have an agreement. If we can't, why, we won't.

M: General, in light of our increased commitment in Viet Nam and the growth in spending on military assistance abroa-, how do you feel that the Johnson Administration, or even the '60's, will be judged in the area of arms control and disarmament?

D: Would you repeat that one for me, please?

M: How do you feel that the Johnson Administration will be judged in the area of arms control and disarmament in the light of the fact that we had a tremendous commitment in Viet Nam and spending in military assistance has grown so enormously?

D: I would think that it would be judged that the President tried very hard to get some arms control agreement and that he did make progress in that field--the Space Treaty and the Limited Test Ban and the Non-Proliferation Treaty, these measures that he was most anxious to really be serious about limiting strategic nuclear weapons. Probably he certainly would have gotten those talks started if it had not been for Czechslovakia. But this stopped what had been agreed to do in as far as the time to get going on talking. So I would say that he would be judged as doing everything that could be expected to push for arms control.

In my opinion the primary reason, of course, why progress in arms

control is so painfully slow is the fact that we're dealing with an adversary who has a closed society, and therefore, historically will never agree to any satisfactory inspection verification arrangements on his own territory. So this practically always becomes the stumbling block of getting anything done. We just must keep on trying; hopefully they will see it to their own national interest in some of these measures to accept some inspection verification in areas where both sides can't rely upon national assets to verify and still maintain to our satisfaction that the agreement would not be violated or evaded.

M: General, I did skip over a question I did want to ask you if you have had any activities regarding negotiations directly yourself.

D: No. It has never been a requirement for the senior military officer on the staff to be involved in negotiations. We just back them up.

M: Have you ever been interviewed before on any sort of oral history project, or even, for that matter, by the press regarding your work here?

D: Yes, I've been interviewed a little bit by the press, but not on the oral history type of thing.

M: Has there been anything written or quoted of yours that you wish to change or amend or correct?

D: No, can't think of a thing.

M: I don't have any further questions. Do you have anything further that you can add to anything I've asked or have not asked--have omitted?

D: I think you've asked a lot of questions--covered the waterfront.

M: Thank you very much, sir.

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By Lt. Gen. John J. Davis

to the

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