Association for Diplomatic Studies and Training Foreign Affairs Oral History Project

THOMAS L. HUGHES

Interviewed by: Charles Stuart Kennedy

Initial interview date: July 7, 1999

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Q: When and where were you born?

HUGHES: I was born in December, 1925, and grew up in Mankato, a small town in southern Minnesota.

Q: Can you tell me a little about your parents and your family?

HUGHES: My grandfather Thomas Hughes was a successful lawyer, judge, and civic leader. He was also a prominent local historian. We lived with him in his house until his death in 1934 when I was eight. He wrote several well-regarded books-on the Welsh in Minnesota, on Blue Earth County history, and on Minnesota Indian themes. He was in fact the major frontier historian of Southern Minnesota. For instance, he interviewed Indian chiefs after they lost what we used to call the "Sioux Uprising" of 1862. So I grew up in a house full of his library books and local historical objects. Many years later I edited the second editions of two of his Indian books.

Dr. Thomas Lowe, my other grandfather, was a well-known prairie physician in Pipestone, an even smaller town located in southwestern Minnesota. He also served as the town mayor, and in his last years he was elected to the state legislature in St. Paul. I spent some memorable times with both grandfathers in my youth, and I suppose my interest in history, international affairs, and public service derives from both of them. My parents also played active roles in our small town community life. I had one sister, five years younger than I.

Q: When you say a small town in Minnesota?

HUGHES: Mankato was a then a town of some 15,000, located sixty miles south of the Twin Cities. Mankato meant "Blue Earth" in Sioux for the local blue clay deposits.

Q: What was life like growing up in Mankato?

HUGHES: I had all my early schooling there, through public high school. It was a privileged, middle-class, atmosphere. I was surrounded by encouraging parents, teachers, and friends. Even though these were the years of the Great Depression, my youth was more or less problem free- lots of good schooling, lots of devoted attention, and lots of opportunity. In the fourth grade my teacher said, "You're wasting your time taking an hour at lunch. Give it a half hour, come back here, and I'll teach you Norwegian for the rest of the lunch period." Such attention is rare these days. In school in the eighth grade we all composed autobiographies. Mine touches all my then interests-family trips with my parents and sister to Canada and Mexico, school sports, youthful neighborhood clubs, foreign correspondence, stamp collecting, piano lessons, the family genealogy, and already the writing of small historical sketches.

Q: How about at home - the dinner table conversation, that sort of thing?

HUGHES: My forebears were very much interested in their own family connections who happened to include several luminaries from early in the century. Grandfather was a cousin of Charles Evans Hughes. Grandmother was related to Grover Cleveland and more distantly to Elihu Root and William Howard Taft. That meant that history and politics had a family setting. My Hughes grandparents were stalwart Republicans while my Lowe grandparents were Democrats. So that spurred lively discussions and gave me some early lessons in diversity and relativism.

Q: Was the grange movement established by the time you came along?

HUGHES: The grange flourished in the previous century. By the time I was growing up, the plight of Minnesota farmers was a serious one and the Farm Bureau and the Farmers' Union were contesting for political strength. In the middle '30's Minnesota's Farmer-Labor Party was in power and the flamboyant Floyd B. Olson was governor. By the time I graduated from high school in 1943, Hubert Humphrey had just arrived on the scene and was busy merging the Farmer-Labor party with the Democrats.

By then, of course, we were in World War II. It had a major effect on politics. Minnesota had been one of the most isolationist of states with its heavy Scandinavian-German-Irish population. The war transformed state politics, with internationalist Republicans like Harold Stassen and Joseph Ball competing with internationalist Democrats like Hubert Humphrey and Orville Freeman. The Cowles newspapers also played a big role in the isolationist-to-internationalist conversion in Minnesota.

In 1942 the issue of postwar world organization was of growing national interest. By then I was already deeply involved in high school debating circles, and world federal government was one of the national debate topics. This prepared me for an early interest in the Student Federalist movement. One thing led to another and, at age 17, I organized the second Student Federalist chapter in the nation. Mankato high school followed right after Scarsdale, New York, high school, where Harris Wofford, also then 17, started the movement. He became the first national president of SF (1943-44) and I became the second (1944-45). (Note: Wofford later was president of Bryn Mawr College and then US senator from Pennsylvania. We have been lifelong friends.)

The consequent coast-to-coast travel, public appearances, contacts and networks gave me unusual national opportunities before I was twenty. In that sense I left Minnesota by exposure and experience much earlier than I actually left it physically. For some reason even as a child in Mankato I had always been very much on public display. I played the piano when I was very young and frequently performed in public recitals. As a high school debater I traveled widely on weekends to debate tournaments all over the Midwest, and we won a lot of trophies including the state high school championship. I placed second in the national oratorical contest. Then at age 18 I became the national president of the Student Federalists, and that meant speaking tours all over the US and Canada, testifying at both national political conventions in 1944, broadcasting on national radio programs, and attending the United Nations founding conference in San Francisco in 1945. All of this gave me a big jump-start for a career.

Q: Well who were the Student Federalists? What was their outlook?

HUGHES: We started in 1943 as the high school offshoot of Clarence Streit's "Union Now" organization which worked for a postwar federal government of western democracies. At the time this was a proposition that was taken quite seriously by a good many prominent people, not only by students. Within a year or two, Student Federalist groups had sprung up at many high schools and colleges across the country. The movement eventually was a casualty of the Cold War, and by the late 1940's my own interest in federalism had also dwindled.

The experience had been stimulating, however. It is hard now to recreate the atmosphere of those years. Students were idealistic, and many of the adult generation, feeling guilty in retrospect about their inactivity between the world wars, were supportive. Indeed we were almost mainstream at the time. Federalism, after all, was an American idea. Former isolationists and nationalists were able to make an easy transfer to internationalism partly because federalism was a kind of bridge. In 1944-5 everything seemed possible.

In retrospect it is easy to dismiss the Student Federalists as hopelessly naï¿½ve. But it was a different world then. The atom bomb and the Cold War were yet to come. Both of those developments later helped splinter the federalist movement. But before all that, we offered a kind of preview of coming attractions. We debated whether democracy or universalism was the right approach to organizing the peace. The democracy side of that argument later moved into the Marshall Plan, Point Four, the European Union, and NATO. The Universalist side moved into the United Nations, the Peace Corps, the Alliance for Progress, and arms control. Those big ideas were already in tension in our early student organization.

Student Federalists helped provide the groundwork culturally in this country for America's active international roles in the 1950's and '60's. In 1944-5 we were on stage at a period of maximum interplay between American exceptionalism and international opportunity. Our stress on both internationalism and an institutional approach to world order foreshadowed much that was to follow, albeit along different projectories.

Q: Well were you feeling any of the conflict with the homegrown communists - you know, in colleges, appeals to an idealistic group are rather disciplined.

HUGHES: When I was still at Carleton in 1946-7, the war had ended but the open conflict with the Russians had yet to emerge. This was the time of Churchill's "Iron Curtain" speech and I remember how divisive that was on the Carleton campus. I delivered two lectures at a Student Federalist conference in Chicago in 1946 on "Marxism and Federalism", trying somehow to reconcile them. The lectures were printed in the Yale Political Journal the following year.

(Note: these lectures have also been reprinted recently in a useful history of the Student Federalists. For this and other extensive treatment of my role in that organization see "One Shining Moment" by Gilbert Jonas. 2000.)

Q: During the war of course it was benevolent "Uncle Joe," and you were seeing movies like "Mission to Moscow." There was a real attempt to portray the Soviet Union in the best possible light.

HUGHES: Yes, I remember. One of my own college orations at the time was called "The Century of Henry Wallace." The oration was laudatory and represented my world outlook at age 19. It led to my having lunch with Wallace in Washington in August, 1945. I gave a copy of the speech to Wallace's daughter the other night. As a reflection of the atmosphere of those days, it makes interesting rereading 55 years later.

Q: Was politics perking in your brain as far as a career was concerned?

HUGHES: Yes, politics and international affairs, or some combination of the two. I was the Carleton campus chairman of the Roosevelt reelection committee in 1944. Humphrey had just become the state chairman, and my friendship with him dates from then. I was also active in the district congressional campaign working closely with Eugenie Anderson. She was a Carleton graduate, active in state politics, and later Truman's ambassador to Denmark.

Q: You were in Carleton from 1943 to 1947. At one time, I was with a foreign service board of examiners. We found out that of the groups that took the foreign service exam from various colleges, Carleton always did the best. Could you talk about Carleton?

HUGHES: We had a very strong international relations department, headed at that time by David Bryn-Jones, the Welsh-born biographer of the former Minnesota US Senator and Secretary of State, Frank B. Kellogg. I had a modest Kellogg scholarship when I was at Carleton. Bryn-Jones was a personable and popular professor on campus, liberal-left in his politics. His colleague in the department was Reginald Lang, a charming conservative with a Harvard law school background. Rex Lang was my closest friend on the faculty. His interest in federalism flowed naturally from his devotion to history and international law and especially to Hans Kelsen and the Austrian School. Thus we majors in international relations at Carleton had the advantage of working with two very different professors, Bryn- Jones and Lang, who usually attracted rather contrasting devotees. I managed to work easily with both of them, which was fortunate, since I so often had get permission to leave Northfield for my many off-campus activities.

Speaking of international relations and the relativism implicit in my sampling of different viewpoints-from the debate team to real life- let me digress for a moment. I had another prominent strain in my international interests which I neglected to mention earlier. This was my close involvement with the former German royal family. It began before the war, was resumed afterwards, and continues to this day. It led to a lifelong fascination with Germany, an interest which coexisted but contrasted with my federalist identification, my political enthusiasms, and my later British and third world inclinations.

Q: How did this come about?

HUGHES: My maternal grandfather was one-fourth German, but that fourth was genealogically rather exotic. His own grandfather, Charles Frederick Schlaberg, was a lineal descendant of the Hohenzollern family and therefore related to the then kings of Prussia and emperors of Germany. There had been repeated contacts with them in earlier generations, and at age twelve I myself started writing letters to ex-Kaiser Wilhelm and his five living sons. They answered, with the result that I now have nearly 300letters from various members of the former royal family.

This experience also stimulated my early efforts at composition. Painstakingly typing my handwritten product in my father's law office, I composed two thick volumes of Hohenzollern family history, bound to resemble books. In March, 1939, the local Mankato newspaper ran a lengthy article entitled "Tom Hughes, Age 13, Grandson of Historian, Writes Books on German Royalty." The article described at length my correspondence with Kaiser Wilhelm II and his family. Their last letters from Germany not surprisingly attracted the FBI's attention in early 1942 after we entered the war. My father explained it all as the caper of an adolescent youth, and I was exonerated.

Q: You resumed these contacts after the war?

HUGHES: Yes. When I visited Germany for the first time in 1948, I managed to get in touch with some of the Kaiser's surviving sons and grandsons. I visited them in Berlin, Bremen, Wiesbaden, Hechingen, and Munich. They in turn occasionally visited me later in Washington. I remember once, perhaps around 1956, taking Prince Louis Ferdinand, then head of the House of Hohenzollern, to lunch in the Senate Dining Room. As we were leaving, I spotted Dean Sayre of the Washington National Cathedral in one of the Senate corridors. He was Woodrow Wilson's grandson, and I was able to introduce him to the Kaiser's grandson. What would their grandfathers have thought? All this is meant to illustrate my early ease with diversity. For better or worse, I felt comfortable in many different environments. Perhaps there were already several Tom Hugheses.

Q: Fascinating.

HUGHES: But I am getting ahead of myself. Let me return to Carleton, which for me was nearly ideal. It had all the advantages of a small, liberal arts college, even smaller at that point because so many men were away in the war. (I tried to enlist in the army a number of times but flat feet kept me out of service. A few years later the same flat feet were fine for the Korean War when I enlisted in the Air Force.) From 1943-45 there were very few men on the Carleton campus, except for the military trainees who were based there. We led a lively, serious, hardworking, even scholarly, existence. As the college orator I was also pressed into service for important events at Carleton-for example, giving the memorial address for Franklin Roosevelt in April, 1945, and speaking for the student body at the inauguration of President Laurence M. Gould later that same year.

Q: I would have thought by '46 - with Stassen back from the navy and Humphrey mayor in Minneapolis - Minnesota was certainly on the forefront of the cutting edge of both parties at that time.

HUGHES: That's true. In the meantime I had also made my own transition from the Republican party of my father and grandfather Hughes to the Democrats. I got to know Humphrey even before he was mayor, and I used to invite him down to Carleton to speak.

Q: Would you talk a bit about your impression of Humphrey in those early years?

HUGHES: He was sort of breathtaking. I remember his visiting Mankato once, perhaps in 1944, and I went with him to see the local newspaper editor. Humphrey sailed in talking a mile a minute about city, state, and national problems, leaving the editorial staff in awe. He was a meteor, a whirlwind of excitement. He told the editors he had to rush back to Minneapolis, but actually he was taking me with him in his car so that he could learn more about southern Minnesota! (I remember that we also discussed Henry Wallace. His "Sixty Million Jobs" had just been published, and Humphrey was enthusiastic about it. A couple of years later, of course, Hubert was busy ejecting the Wallace "Progressives" from the party and from liberal groups like Americans for Democratic Action.) Humphrey was very much on the make and impressively energetic from the very beginning. He clearly had his sights set on higher office. He certainly inspired young people and was already attracting a devoted band of admirers.

Q: You were at Carleton in '46 when the boys came home from World War II. Was there a change in atmosphere at Carlton?

HUGHES: Yes. The veterans were of course more sober and serious than they would have been without those three years of war. Marriages were now permitted. Young couples lived in Quonset huts at Carleton, just as they did on other campuses across the country. In some ways the return of the servicemen from their wartime experiences also bolstered campus interest in international affairs. The veterans infused the international relations classes with some up-to-date experiences.

Q: I'm three years younger than you and I was in college in '46 to '50 and I found, in a way, one almost became a veteran by being around these guys. You developed a more mature outlook because people were always coming at you and saying "yeah that's all very nicbut."

HUGHES: Yes, I think that's true. Many of us shared that experience.

Q: While you were at Carleton your major was what?

HUGHES: International relations and political science.

Q: By the time 1947 rolled around, what were you pointed towards?

HUGHES: Well I was pointed towards law school, but suddenly I happened to have the good luck to be awarded a Rhodes scholarship for study at Oxford. That meant extending my college experience for two more years in a very different setting with further courses in international affairs, political theory, and some jurisprudence.

Q: Talk a bit about your Rhodes scholarship. This would have been '47 to '49?

HUGHES: Yes, ours was the first postwar group. The scholarships of course had been interrupted during the war, and consequently there were also a few Rhodes scholars, elected in 1939, who arrived to take up their scholarships after the war.

Q: Harlan Cleveland got one year and then left.

HUGHES: Later on, in the State Department, I knew Harlan very well. In 1947, the whole idea of getting a Rhodes scholarship was enormously romantic. I was already well credentialed with grandfathers of Welsh and Scottish descent and with grandmothers of old Yankee stock from New England. They all thought that my going to England was terrific. Of course the England we found was less romantic than prewar England- with rationing still severe, a struggling Labour government, and the effects of war everywhere.

Q: There was a terrible winter there.

HUGHES: Yes, an awful winter. It was anything but the romantic Oxford of pre-war years. I remember reading prewar books about Oxford in preparation. They all seemed hopelessly out of date when we arrived in October, 1947. Still, it was a wonderful, life-changing experience. Returning servicemen at Oxford had had five or six years in the army. So the age spread among students at the university there covered ten years.

Q: How were Americans received? The American troops had been there for a long time. Did you find resentment in the British soldiers coming back?

HUGHES: There were jokes about it, of course-about the GI's being "over fed, over sexed, and over here". As was often the case at Oxford, both before the war and reportedly still today, the English students were harder to get to know than the Welsh, Scottish, and the Commonwealth students. And then there was the temptation at Oxford for the Americans to mingle with fellow Americans. My experience was that while the English were perhaps initially the hardest to get to know, once the barriers were broken lifelong friendships were formed.

Moreover, the lavishness of the hospitality scheme laid on for Rhodes Scholars was irresistibly rewarding. You would simply write a letter to Sloane Square, London, addressed to Lady MacDonald of Argyle and the Isles, saying "During vacation I would like to spend a couple of weeks in Scotland," or "I would like to go to Kent, or Devon, or Yorkshire, or Ireland". In due course an invitation would come inviting you to some great house and off you would go, sometimes for a month or more.

Q: Get ready for real life.

HUGHES: Right. In addition, most of the American scholars used their extended vacations at Oxford to travel on their own. For example, I went to Italy for six weeks in the spring of '48, partly to take in the critical postwar Italian elections.

Q: I must say, that must have been a fascinating time. Were you still in international relations?

HUGHES: Yes. Naturally everyone in Italy suspected that we were working for the CIA, because those elections were being financed partly by Moscow and partly by Washington. Nevertheless, I escaped without permanent injury. Of course, I also visited my Welsh and Scottish relatives while I was at Oxford. Most importantly, I had a girlfriend from Sweet Briar who was spending the 1948-49 year in Paris, and that was an additional powerful encouragement to cross the Channel both ways.

Q: We were beginning to move into the Cold War. Did that affect your studies? Did you find a difference between Labour and the Tories? Did you see a change?

HUGHES: Even though the Labour government was in office, the Anglo-American tie remained firm. The Marshall Plan underwrote the Atlantic relationship generally. Moreover fate in the western world kept requiring conservative governments to live with liberal governments or labor governments. This helped assure that the foreign policies of the Western allies would be less ideological than might otherwise have been the case. There were certain advantages in simultaneously having a conservative government in Germany, a Labour government in Britain, and a Democratic administration in the US. Two decades later, for example, the same phenomenon occurred, although the posture of the governments themselves changed, and we had such implausible combinations as Richard Nixon, Willy Brandt, and Harold Wilson. You had a kind of compensatory politics working on a transnational basis, cutting across potential ideological divisions.

While I was at Oxford, Stalin's misbehavior became more and more evident, culminating in the 1948 coup in Czechoslovakia. But at that time at Oxford we still had major arguments about the Cold War. Some of my leftwing friends would spend their vacations widening the railway gauges in Bulgaria to fit the Russian model, doing their bit to help the Soviets solidify their control of eastern Europe.

Q: Did you find yourself interested in going into these countries and helping create a new society in the eastern block?

HUGHES: No, I didn't enlist in the eastern block recovery effort. In fact, I didn't visit Eastern Europe at all while I was at Oxford. I ventured only as far as an Austrian ski resort for New Year's 1948-9 with my Paris girlfriend. I did write articles about Britain for the Minnesota papers. I attended meetings of the various political clubs at Oxford, attended a Labour Party weekend retreat, participated in the Oxford Union debates, and even spoke for Harry Truman in an election-eve broadcast on BBC-TV.

The TV episode was rather amusing. I had the good fortune at Balliol College to have Lord Lindsay, the retiring Master, as a tutor during his last term. Lindsay had been a celebrated figure at Oxford for many years. He had run in the Oxford by-election of 1939 as an independent candidate for parliament with considerable support from the student body. How he lost that famous "Munich election" has been written up in the history books. He was now, in 1948, a Labour peer. Nevertheless his wife, who was a socialist and didn't like titles, insisted on being called Mrs. Lindsay. So they were always introduced as Lord and Mrs. Lindsay. One day in the middle of a tutorial Mrs. Lindsay came in and said, "The BBC is on the phone". As the Master rose to answer it, she said, "Oh, no, it's not for you Sandy, it's for Mr. Hughes."

Mr. Hughes went to the phone. The BBC was begging, rather plaintively, "We hope you can help us". I asked "What is the problem?" They said, "We're having a program on the American election tomorrow night " (the eve of the American vote in 1948) "and we've been scouring all of Britain to find someone who will support President Truman. We have the Chicago Tribune chief in London supporting Mr. Dewey, and we have a Negro from the cast of Anna Lucasta supporting Mr. Wallace, but we can't find anyone to support President Truman. We were told that there was a person at Oxford named Hughes who might possibly be willing to do this." I quickly replied, "That sounds like a good idea to me and I'll be happy to come." The BBC said, "We shall send a car to fetch you tomorrow. We shall all convene at the Alexandra Palace, we'll feed you well, ply you with port, and then put you on the telly." The next day I was whisked off to London in a chauffeur -driven car for my baptism with television, then in its primitive stages. My friends later told me, that, after my considerable wining and dining, I began by saying "The American people will choose tomorrow between two of the least seductive personalities in American public life, Dewey and Truman. Given the choice, I would support President Truman." Not exactly the endorsement to end all endorsements!

Q: Well, to carry through with that, how did that go? This is the election where Dewey was supposed to win in a landslide and here you were, I don't mean to denigrate, but the dregs of what the BBC hoped for.

HUGHES: Perhaps my message got through to some of the absentee ballot voters.

Q: This must have been a lot of fun.

HUGHES: It was. My Oxford life had its memorable moments.

Q: Did you find there at the university, as we were to find later in the cold war, there was rather a strong communist movement at Oxford which became very influential particularly in the spy field? Was there a disciplined communist group at Oxford?

HUGHES: Yes, a small one, but nothing to compare with the notorious prewar Cambridge spies (Philby, MacLean, Burgess, Blunt et al). Of course Oxford was a favorite place for members of the Cabinet and politicians of all types to come and speak. I was active in the Oxford Union and spoke there a number of times. I remember having dinner with Lady Astor one night when she came up to speak. She had just been to Moscow and had interviewed Stalin. She said: "I asked him when he was going to end the Czarist regime, and the translator fainted." Several of us also met Secretary of State George Marshall, of Marshall Plan fame, when he came to Oxford to get an honorary degree. And Eleanor Roosevelt visited Oxford during my time there as well.

Q: Did you get any feel for the strong socialist movement that translated itself into what I consider as much of a disaster out of England in the soon to be liberated colonial groups?

HUGHES: Socialism and anti-colonialism were both popular themes. Many Africans and Indians from the old British Empire had graduated from Oxford. Balliol especially had contingents of future politicians from the colonies in the interwar period. Gandhi himself visited Balliol in 1931. The two traditions-socialism and anti-colonialism-tended to merge in the postwar period when I was there. The Labour government took the lead in granting independence to India. Socialism as such was still very respectable.

So was a certain intellectual anti-Americanism. I attended the seminars of Professor G. D. H. Cole, a prominent socialist who had written books with titles like The Intelligent Woman's Guide to the Postwar World. He began by looking over the attendees at our first seminar and, noticing some Americans, he said: "Will any Americans here who believe in social science please raise their hands?" Two of my colleagues raised their hands, and Cole said, "Out! Out! We don't want anybody here who thinks there is anything scientific about this. It has nothing to do with science. It is social theory, not social science." Not having raised my hand, I stayed.

Q: By the time you left in '49, where were you bound for by that time? You mentioned law.

HUGHES: I came from a family of lawyers. My father, my grandfather, and all their brothers were lawyers, and so the easiest course of action was to go to law school. Having made that decision, I decided to go to Yale Law School. My father and his brother, both Harvard alumni, professed lifelong bewilderment at this choice. I told them that I had heard that if you were admitted to Yale, unlike Harvard, you would probably graduate. There was also the advantage that it postponed the career decision.

Q: Also Yale seems to have had a disproportionate number, considering the Yale-Harvard thing, of people who went into public service.

HUGHES: For those of us who didn't yet know what we wanted to do, but were interested in politics and international affairs, Yale was obviously the place to go. You could get a law degree but you didn't have to practice law. A lot of us were headed for government.

Of course, the Yale Law network was also very helpful later on. To an extent I continued to do some international work at Yale-for example taking Soviet law from John Hazard- in addition to the more normal Yale curriculum. My background in public speaking continued to produce results in venues like the Yale Moot Court competition. To tell the truth, I hadn't yet ruled out practicing law in Minnesota. For that reason I took my middle year at the University of Minnesota Law School in Minneapolis (I950-51). I returned to Yale to graduate in 1952.

Q: It's a three year course, so this would have been up to '52? What was the spirit of the time? Did you sense a change from the vibrant internationalism that was going on at Carleton when you came back to Yale?

HUGHES: Yes and no. The summer of 1950, after my first year at Yale, I went abroad again, this time with an international group to work three months as a volunteer at Ein Hashofet, a left-wing Israeli kibbutz. This was the first year after Israel's independence, and our task was to investigate whether the kibbutz concept was transplantable to Latin America and India. This was certainly still "vibrant internationalism".

On the other hand, a few months earlier, Alger Hiss went on trial. Nixon and Joe McCarthy were becoming active in Washington. I waited on tables at Yale Law School to help pay my way, and of course my law school classmates often discussed the Hiss trial. Simply from overhearing snippets of table conversations those first months at Yale, I concluded that the general sentiment was shifting, and that views of Hiss had changed. Without really studying the case at all, I began to assume that Alger was guilty of perjury and probably more. His early supporters were turning against him in the law school, which meant that the evidence against him had to be pretty strong.

Q: McCarthyism was kicking in at this time. Alger Hiss was in a way part of this. Did that impact at all at the law school?

HUGHES: It was only beginning to affect attitudes. At Yale in 1950 many of us were still basking in the Democratic successes of 1948-Stevenson and Bowles became governors, Humphrey and Paul Douglas entered the Senate, etc. Thomas Emerson, my professor of administrative law, had even run (unsuccessfully) in Connecticut on the Progressive Party ticket with Wallace in '48.

Q: Well, was there much support for the McCarthy side?

HUGHES: Very little at Yale in 1950, more by 1952. Conservatism grew, but there was little active support for McCarthy himself. Most people thought that he was overdoing it. Personally unattractive and crude as he was, the fact that he could create so much political furor obviously embarrassed a good many people.

Q: Talk about letting down one side, I think that people coming out of these schools of public service must have felt that Alger Hiss was both guilty and had let down society. He tainted that whole generation.

HUGHES: I think many felt that way. In contrast to Yale, I also had an opportunity to absorb the atmosphere at that time in Washington. The summer of 1951 I worked in the Senate on one of Humphrey's Labor subcommittee staffs. The politics surrounding the McCarthy phenomenon were already pronounced. Although I was writing a staff report on state court injunctions in labor disputes, I listened to enough rancorous anti-Communist talk to realize that some powerful, tidal emotions had been let loose. You mention the Hiss effect on our whole generation. Ironically, years later, I myself became president of the Carnegie Endowment. In that role I was a successor of Hiss. In a very personal sense, he was a shadow in the background during my twenty years at Carnegie.

Q: Did you find because of McCarthyism there was a diminution of interest in public service? Did this have much of an effect?

HUGHES: Perhaps there was even an increase in public service interest among conservatives. About this time Bill Buckley produced his "God and Man and Yale" and neo-conservatism was beginning to stir among faculty and students alike. But liberals at the law school were still determined to be public servants, one way or another, whether the public demanded it or not. For us McCarthyism was an obstacle, but not decisive.

Q: Did you get out in '52? Then what happened?

HUGHES: With graduation my military deferment ran out, and I therefore again tried to enlist. I was accepted this time by the Air Force, was commissioned a lieutenant, and served in the Judge Advocate's Department. I retired as a major in the reserve.

Q: Where were you stationed?

HUGHES: I was stationed first in Las Vegas at Nellis Air Force Base. This was comparatively light duty, consisting of courts-martial, legal assistance work, and document drafting. In our spare time, we were invited to observe atomic bomb blasts north of town. "You might want to wear your dark glasses."

There was also time to go down to the Desert Inn to watch Ronald Reagan on the stage with the Adorabelles. In early 1981, after Reagan became President, I went to some White House breakfast. We were all wandering around the East Room with big name tags. Mine read "Tom Hughes, President of the Carnegie Endowment". His read "Ronald Reagan, President." He came up to me saying, "Tom, it's been so long." I flubbed the opportunity to say "Yes, Mr. President, it has been a long time since Las Vegas in 1952, when you were on the stage with the Adorabelles. And by the way, I've just been to communist Cuba and you'll be glad to know that the very same costumes worn by the Adorabelles, kicking behind you on the stage of the Desert Inn, are still active at the Tropicana night club in Havana. Castro is proud of it and tells all the visitors." Reagan would have liked that actually, but I was not quick enough to recall it at the time.

Q: What type of Judge Advocates stuff were you doing?

HUGHES: Oh, whatever came along. I defended poor American Indians who had been drafted into the Air Force. They were having a heavy time of it, and the Air Force didn't really want them. I had considerable trial experience, sometimes prosecuting, sometimes defending. There were personnel questions, just a lot of humdrum normal base duty.

Q: What was your impression of military justice? Was it an oxymoron or how did you find it?

HUGHES: I respected it. I had no complaints about it. The lawyers in charge were serious people. I experienced military justice at its best. I made some speeches applauding it in public. Then one day I met the visiting commanding officer from Randolph Air Force Base in Texas. I suddenly found myself ordered out of Nellis in Nevada to report to Randolph Field in San Antonio. There I spent another year in what was then called Crew Training Air Force. This was the appellate headquarters of the Judge Advocate General's department for that particular branch of the service. Again it was a rewarding experience professionally. These were good lawyers and stimulating cases. I wrote a good many appellate opinions.

Q: Drugs and things like that had not really entered the service yet had they?

HUGHES: Well there are Texas border problems and Texas border problems. Today many people worry about immigrants coming across the border. Then we were more concerned about what US airmen were up to on weekends.

Q: I was at Lackland Air Force as an enlisted man around that time. Some of the guys would take a blanket off their beds and go down and have a good time across the border.

HUGHES: Unavoidably I became familiar with those excursions as well. Somehow they seem rather trivial compared with our current obsession about wall-building along the border.

Q: In those days it was pretty heavy stuff. Were you sort of working on your contacts when you were in the air force?

HUGHES: Well, in a way, I kept my oar in the academic community while I was in the Air Force. A couple of evenings a week I taught political science for the University of Southern California extension program in Las Vegas. Later on I did the same for Trinity University at San Antonio. Other contacts continued to play a big role. Just as my teen-age Student Federalist presidency jump-started much that followed, it providentially once again opened up a new opportunity in 1954. With the sudden end of hostilities in Korea, I was allowed to leave the Air Force early. My old Federalist friend Harris Wofford had meanwhile been attending Yale Law School. A book he and his wife had earlier written about India had brought him in touch with our celebrated ex-ambassador to India, Governor Chester Bowles of Connecticut. While in New Haven, Harris had worked with Bowles on his own book, Ambassador's Report, which became a best seller. Harris had now finished law school and was ready to leave Bowles. The latter was therefore looking for a new assistant.

Q: Chester Bowles was doing what at that time?

HUGHES: In the spring of 1954 Bowles was trying to decide whether to run for governor of Connecticut again that year's election. In 1950 he had narrowly lost re-election, and in 1951 he had been appointed ambassador to India by Truman. Through his books, articles, and speeches, Bowles' national reputation had steadily grown. Clearly he was positioned for high office in the next Democratic administration. We were now half way through Eisenhower's first term. When Harris heard that I was leaving the Air Force, he urged Bowles to hire me in his place. Bowles did so, and I drove directly from Texas back to Connecticut. I had known Bowles briefly at Yale Law School in 1949 when he was still governor, so this meant resuming a congenial relationship with him.

I promptly rented the Wofford's garage apartment in New Haven and began commuting to Essex, about an hour away. At the rather grand Bowles estate with its commodious house, ample lawns rolling down to the boathouse, and the yawl anchored at the dock on the Connecticut River, I embarked on several months of an idyllic, almost 18th century style, existence. I worked on draft chapters of the next Bowles book, The New Dimensions of Peace, helped prepare frequent foreign policy articles for the New York Times Magazine, organized a series of appearances for Connecticut TV, and, with secretarial help, drafted or answered much of the heavy Bowles correspondence.

In the mornings at eleven, there was milk punch out on the lawn with Chet and his charming wife, Steb. They often had visitors for lunch. It was a genteel existence with very interesting political and diplomatic company. People from Eleanor Roosevelt to Krishna Menon would pop in. Meanwhile I was also falling in love with Jean Reiman, a Vassar graduate and journalist from New Haven. We had the run of the Bowles estate when they were away, and we occasionally accompanied Chet and Steb on boat trips across Long Island Sound to places like Montauk. Eventually Bowles decided to sit out the election of 1954. Abraham Ribicoff ran for governor and narrowly won. My future wife ran for the state legislature on the Ribicoff ticket in Orange, her Republican district. She lost, but she ran ahead of Ribicoff there on her home ground.

In early 1955 I held the fort at Essex while Chet and Steb were in Africa. When they returned there was more writing and editing. In May Jean and I were married in a splendid wedding at Dwight Chapel at Yale, with Chet as best man, and with Harris Wofford and two Oxford colleagues, Tim Atkeson and Bill Emerson, as groomsmen. Yale chaplain Sidney Lovett officiated, and a large group of old friends attended.

Suddenly, in the summer of 1955, an attractive opportunity opened up in Washington. Max Kampelman, Humphrey's longtime legislative counsel, decided to leave government for private law practice. Max and I were old friends, and he proposed me as his successor. This post would give me a role on both foreign and domestic issues, and would keep me in touch with Minnesota. I promptly accepted Humphrey's offer. Actually, over the years, I alternated between Bowles and Humphrey, working for them both twice. They too were good friends, and, with some reluctance, they accepted my moves back and forth.

Q: At that point, what was your impression of Bowles and how he operated?

HUGHES: Anybody who ever worked for Bowles was a lifelong fan. This is partly because the ambience was so pleasant and the situation so stimulating intellectually. There were psychic fringe benefits. Bowles took the time to be a serious book writer. He was a rare kind of scholar-politician. He was then one of a handful of prominent Democrats who could plausibly hope for a high appointment in the next administration. That is probably the reason he decided against running again for governor in 1954. He thought that if Stevenson were to be elected in 1956 he would be appointed to a senior foreign policy post, and he didn't want to be committed to Connecticut.

In 1954-5 when I was with him, Chet was very much a part of the so-called Finletter group. In fact the group had first convened at the Bowles house in Essex. Thomas Finletter had been Secretary of the Air Force in the Truman administration. He also saw himself as a future Secretary of State. So did others in the group, especially Adlai Stevenson, Dean Acheson, George Kennan, Paul Nitze, and Bowles. By 1954 they were scheduling working lunches with one another once a month at Finletter's apartment in New York. Chet took me along to one of their meetings in mid-1954. (Acheson quickly explained that Bowles brought Hughes along to help him think his way through whatever problem they were discussing.)

For me, of course, it was an extraordinary experience. I remember Kennan at this particular meeting announcing that he was going to run for Congress in Pennsylvania. Acheson said, "You, George, are running for Congress?" And George said, "Well of course I still have to be assured that there will be no opposition." This evoked great hilarity all round. "Have you been so assured?" "Well, I'm working on it." Apparently the assurances were never forthcoming. At any rate Kennan never ran. The rivalries in the group were very thinly disguised: Stevenson vs. Acheson, Kennan vs. Nitze. Bowles vs. Acheson. The Finletter Group could not hide the divisions that beset hard-line and softer-line Democrats.

Q: It's rather interesting because Finletter comes across - I think he is later ambassador to NATO or something like that. But here is a man that was able to gather this group but never seems to have made an impact publicly.

HUGHES: Well, there was some money at Finletter's disposal. And he had more than his Air Force experience to point to. Once or twice, while I was at Oxford in 1950, I had seen him in action in his role as the Marshall Plan chief at the American Embassy in London. In planning for Finletter group meetings in 1954, I got to know some of the other staff assistants of the great men as well. By 1956 when Stevenson was running again for President, this familiarity proved to be useful for both Humphrey and Bowles.

I continued to keep in regular touch with Bowles from the Humphrey office in 1955-8. Later my wife and I, along with our two young sons (born in 1956 and 1959) frequently attended Bowles reunions at Essex and were often invited to make use of the Bowles house there when Chet and Steb were away. Chet continued to ask me to accompany him on various high level errands. During the 1956 campaign, for example, Stevenson asked Bowles to go to see General Douglas MacArthur at the Waldorf Astoria in New York. Implausibly enough, word had reached Stevenson headquarters that the General was so outraged at the first Eisenhower administration that he might even endorse Stevenson in the election. Bowles was supposed to check this out. So one day Chet and I went to the Waldorf and ascended to the MacArthur suite. We were ushered into the presence by General Willoughby, MacArthur's aide. It was like a visit to General de Gaulle. MacArthur sat on a little elevated dais at the opposite end of the room from the entrance. Bowles approached with due solemnity and said he was there at Stevenson's request to inquire how serious the General's disaffection from the Administration had become. "It couldn't be worse! What a shambles!" said MacArthur. "Why do you feel so strongly?" Chet asked. "It's the man at the top", the General replied. "He has never been worth anything, either as a general or a politician. I ought to know. He was on my staff in the Philippines. I watched him there, and he did nothing but play bridge." "Well under these circumstances, General, in the national interest, what do you think about endorsing Stevenson?" "Oh, that's another matter entirely. I could never vote for Stevenson, but you can tell him that he is certainly on the right track opposing this shambles." The interview was over, and we had nothing to show for it except an amusing view of one of our national icons.

Q: Did you get any feeling from Bowles about Stevenson? Many people said he had a difficult time making up his mind. Was this overplayed?

HUGHES: There was something of the poet about Adlai, as you could tell from the time he took refining his speeches. Of course, for a Democratic party that was as split as this one was on a lot of issues, a certain inability to make up one's mind was arguably a virtue. Senator Russell, whom he fondly called his Georgia cousin, was still there obstructing civil rights legislation. And Adlai himself, although a liberal in public, was uncomfortable both with "Negroes" and with feminism. This was, after all, the 1950's and he was visibly disturbed by these new forces in national politics. Four years later in 1960 Stevenson declined to talk to Mrs. Martin Luther King on the telephone because "we haven't been introduced." His idea of pacifying the feminists was to urge Jack Kennedy to appoint Katie Louchheim to be the head of Cultural Affairs in the State Department in 1960. That was all you needed to do to appease the women of America. This was in spite of the fact that so many of them over the years were reputedly in love with him and that millions more of them had cast their votes "madly for Adlai."

In that sense Stevenson was a transitional figure, as were both Humphrey and Bowles for that matter. They were then the leading liberals of the Democratic party, Bowles perhaps more than Stevenson. Chet was genuinely strong on civil rights and championed the newly independent African states. Nevertheless, the people they chose to spend their time with as private individuals, did not always reflect these positions. Then there were taboo subjects that were not considered permissible for discussion. In 1960, for example, questions about Kennedy's health were totally off limits. When my wife mentioned the possibility of his Addison's disease, it was clear that the subject was taboo. The culture that Bowles and Stevenson grew up in simply ruled out such topics. It is fascinating to look back at that era of liberal politics, not so long ago, and compare it with our current everything-is-permissible culture.

Q: You mentioned earlier that when you were working with Bowles, Krishna Menon came. He was sort of the Indian bï¿½te noire to Americans.

HUGHES: Yes, and he was the bï¿½te noire of Bowles, too, because Chet was working his heart out in favor of strengthening US-Indian relations and saw Krishna Menon as a major obstacle. On the other hand Krishna Menon was an important friend of Nehru, and Bowles never knew when he himself might be seriously involved with India again. Certainly as a potential Secretary of State he would have moved India higher up on the diplomatic agenda. So he couldn't ostracize Krishna Menon; he had to put up with him.

Chet and Steb had a wonderful Irish couple in the kitchen for whom adjusting to some of the Indian visitors was difficult. When Morarji Desai came and word reached the kitchen that he drank his own urine, this proved insurmountable for Faith and Harry. Faith said, "Well, if that is true, he can do it on his own. I'm not participating."

Q: I've put in here that you have done an extensive oral history at Yale University.

HUGHES: Yes, about my life with Bowles in the 1950's. You can find it in the Chester Bowles papers in the archives there at Yale's Harkness Library. I was interviewed by his talented former assistant, Jean Joyce, on my pre-Kennedy years with Bowles (1954-55 and 1959-60). Among other things in these interviews, I tried to compare Bowles and Humphrey as two leading liberal politicians of the '50's with whom I worked intimately. Their views were similar, but their personalities, backgrounds, and political styles were very different.

Perhaps I should also mention here that my early experience with Bowles had an immediate and direct effect on my writing style. Earlier in his career he had become a millionaire in the advertising world, and he had firm views about sentence structure and target audiences. "Always write for the editor with the green eye-shade at the Hartford Courant", Bowles would say. Ever afterwards I trimmed the length and complexity of my sentences. I also emulated Chet's habit of sending out what he thought were his best articles or speeches to a wide and influential mailing list. This practice produced surprisingly positive attention and benefits for me in the years to come-speaking invitations, adjunct university teaching, and articles in professional journals.

Q. And after Bowles in Connecticut you went to Washington?

HUGHES: On October I, 1955, I rejoined Hubert Humphrey, this time as his legislative counsel in the front office. There was a new division of labor in his Senate office. Herb Waters carried over as the administrative assistant, chief of staff, political henchman, and agriculture expert. Roughhewn but hardworking, Herb was indispensable for Humphrey's provincial politics. But Herb's lack of gravitas at a national level became something of a liability as Hubert graduated into Presidential contention.

On all non-agricultural matters, I was the chief substantive person in the office, handling the rest of the policy and legislative programs for Humphrey, foreign and domestic. I frequently accompanied him in his Senate Democratic cloakroom discussions and went with him to the Senate floor. I edited his remarks for the Congressional Record, especially his countless (and gifted) impromptu, spur-of-the-moment improvisations. I drafted speeches and press releases, and supervised the large staff that handled correspondence.

Lyndon Johnson had selected Humphrey for a seat on the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, and Hubert used that platform to become increasingly active on foreign policy.

When he was appointed a member of the US delegation to the United Nations, I accompanied him to New York. Humphrey was perhaps the most sought-after speaker in the Senate, and I often went with him for important speeches-a Harvard Law Review gala dinner, a California political fundraiser, the 1956 Democratic National Convention, or the funeral in Minnesota of the nation's last Union veteran of the Civil War.

With the help of its staff director, Betty Goetz, another of my Minnesota friends, Humphrey served as chairman of the newly created Senate subcommittee on disarmament. This was the first time the Foreign Relations committee had surrendered substantive control over such an important field to a subcommittee with its own staff, and the SFRCs future chairman, Bill Fulbright, among others, had jurisdictional reservations about it. It fell to me to smooth relations with the staff, especially with its director, Carl Marcy, with whom I had a close and friendly working relationship for many years thereafter.

The Humphrey subcommittee became a significant focal point in the 1950's for the growing national interest in arms control. Expert witnesses testified in subcommittee hearings across the country, and Humphrey as chairman gained recognition as a rising leader in the field. This activity prefigured later institutional arms control legislation like the creation of ACDA in the Kennedy administration. Humphrey's early Peace Corps proposals also set the stage for institutionalizing that concept too when the Democrats recaptured the White House in 1960. Incidentally, Jack Kennedy was also one of Hubert's colleagues on the Foreign Relations Committee. The prospective Presidential rivalry of the two men was also already considered likely, especially after their mutually unsuccessful efforts to obtain the Vice Presidential nomination with Stevenson in 1956.

Q: Those were also the days of John Foster Dulles...

HUGHES: Yes, and Hubert set himself up for toe-to-toe confrontations with the Secretary. After Dulles publicly claimed that his strategic objective was to take us to the "brink of war", Humphrey leaped into the fray. He was adept at reacting quickly to news tickers, and he ripped the news accounts of the Dulles statement off the teletype, instantly ready to make a name for himself in just that kind of situation. He and I briefly discussed substance and tactics in the Democratic cloakroom, and within thirty minutes he was on the floor, combating Dulles effectively with verbal hammer and tongs. Nobody else in the Senate had that kind of turnaround time. On such occasions Hubert was wonderful to work with. The only preparation he needed was to test two or three of his own instinctive themes, perhaps absorb two or three other suggestions, and off he would go. Of course he would sometimes misfire, but he scored repeatedly against Dulles.

It was Democratic policy to avoid attacking Eisenhower personally. Ike remained a father-figure, in spite of his butchered syntax and his embarrassing inattention to some of his own policies. But no one was in awe of his appointees, and Humphrey enjoyed pitting himself against members of the Eisenhower Cabinet. On domestic issues, the Secretary of the Treasury, also named Humphrey, was a favorite target. ("He's trickle down George. I'm percolate up Hubert.") The Secretary of Agriculture, Ezra Taft Benson, earned almost daily rebukes. And when it came to world affairs, Dulles was the perfect foil. All the Secretary had to say was "neutralism is immoral", and Humphrey would take the floor to respond. The two of them also had spirited altercations whenever Dulles testified personally at meetings of the Foreign Relations Committee.

Let me digress for a moment to record a nice John Foster Dulles story. Many years later, in the 1970's when I was President of the Carnegie Endowment, it fell to my lot to go to Princeton to celebrate the 100th birthday of Dulles, who was now deceased. He had been chairman of the Carnegie board of trustees in the late 1940's. The remains of the Dulles family-Eleanor, Avery, and others-were sitting in the front row with the remains of the Eisenhower cabinet and staff. I found myself sitting next to Herbert Brownell on one side and Burke Wilkinson, the former press spokesman, on the other. After looking at the printed program, I asked Wilkinson how it happened that George Kennan was making the opening remarks. Burke said "Oh, you know, George sends those friendly handwritten notes. He sent one to Eleanor a couple of years ago, saying that as far as he was concerned, bygones were bygones. On the strength of that, and since he lives here in Princeton, we invited him to start the proceedings." I said that I'd have my fingers crossed.

Kennan, obviously relishing the situation, began by saying that never in his wildest imagination could he have envisioned himself here on the platform for the 100th birthday celebration for John Foster Dulles. "Because, you see, the Secretary and I didn't get to know one another very well. His second day in office, he called me in to tell me that the United States Government would no longer need my services. Somewhat taken aback, I murmured 'Well, you are the Secretary', and started making my way to the exit. Suddenly I was summoned back and asked to sit at his desk to discuss Soviet-American relations. I thought to myself, this is the coldest fish you've ever met. But I later learned from my friend, John Stewart Service, that I'd only seen the tip of the iceberg!" By this time Eleanor's hearing trumpet was going through contortions, the Eisenhower cabinet was looking desperate, the students in the gallery were frantically applauding, and the audience was in hysterics. Recovery was difficult all around.

Perhaps I should add something else. Despite the persistent feuding of our principals, I had good relations with Bill Macomber, Dulles' chief assistant, even while I was working for Humphrey. Once, in the absence of his boss, Bill invited me over for lunch in Dulles' office. We talked beneath a framed colored cartoon, apparently prized by the Secretary. It showed him and a dozen covert operators, dressed in black, toppling the government of Guatemala. Bill Macomber remained a friend over the years. He was kept on by the Kennedy Administration and later, in the Nixon Administration, he played a role in sending me to London. Still later we invited him to become a Carnegie trustee.

Q: During this period you also saw Lyndon Johnson at close range

Yes, I regularly watched him at work both on and off the Senate floor. I remember my first glimpse of the famous "Johnson treatment" in the cloakroom, where he seemed to be simultaneously visiting with Senators, watching the television news, and talking on two telephones at once, one receiver in each ear. His talented assistant, Harry McPherson, arrived in the Senate about the same time I did, and we became and remain good friends. During those years Humphrey himself would tell memorable stories of Johnson's manipulations. The idea that Hubert didn't know what he was letting himself in for when he became Johnson's Vice President is nonsense. He had experienced Lyndon thoroughly for fifteen years before 1964.

One of Lyndon's chief motivations in appointing Hubert to the Foreign Relations Committee was to assure that there would be a quick Democratic response to Dulles. Already by 1956 Humphrey was over-achieving in this regard, so much so that Johnson saw no need for Humphrey to get all the mileage. Indeed he was somewhat piqued by Hubert's newspaper coverage on foreign affairs. So LBJ decided to get into foreign affairs himself, especially on the Middle East after Suez. This fit his effort to cast his net beyond Texas and the South and to emerge as a national figure of Presidential potential. He was also aware of Jewish unhappiness over the Eisenhower-Dulles Mideast policy at the time of Suez, and he hoped to enhance his own standing with what he called "the folks up North".

So Lyndon sent an ultimatum to Dulles in a letter warning him that if he didn't prevent sanctions against Israel at the UN, he could forget about any Congressional resolution supporting the "Eisenhower Doctrine". What followed was a typical Johnson performance. His letter to Dulles was leaked to the Washington Post. Then LBJ got on the phone to Dulles and railed against the State Department's leaking his "personal letter". Dulles was mortified. Johnson echoed his complaint to those around him. "Why can't he keep that State Department of his from leaking all the time?" Dulles sent his assistant secretary for congressional relations up to Johnson to beg forgiveness for the leak, which Dulles assumed did come from somewhere in State. For two hours Johnson kept the emissary waiting in the reception room, ultimately sending out the message: "The Majority Leader hasn't got time to see you today. Why don't you try again tomorrow?" Meanwhile Johnson was scoring handsomely with the group up north because of his intervention on behalf of Israel.

Eventually it turned out that the leaker was Johnson, not the State Department. LBJ had given a copy of his letter to Al Friendly of the Washington Post via Jim Rowe, Friendly's brother-in-law and Johnson's political advance man. That's where the leak occurred. But LBJ's smearing of the State Department played for a week. There was an apology from Dulles, who turned the Department upside down to find the leaker. Johnson had masterminded the whole thing, winning points all over the place. Anti-Dulles activities united Democrats of different stripes in the mid-50's.

Q: What was the Eisenhower doctrine?

HUGHES: It was the name given to an Administration-sponsored resolution that followed Ike's post-Suez speech to the Congress. It basically supported the Baghdad Pact and pledged US support for states in the Middle East that would stand up to the Communist threat. The Soviets, of course, were the hobgoblins in the whole picture. Meanwhile the Arabists in the State Department were busy explaining that supporters of Israel were jeopardizing our oil supplies, while politicians in both parties remained well aware of the political importance of Israel's friends in the United States.

Q: Also a good solid voting block in Miami and New York. How about on the Humphrey side, were there any cross-currents about saying the Arabs have a point too?

HUGHES: The Jewish community had always been a core constituency for Humphrey. No one was a more frequent or popular figure on their fund-raising circuit. For him labor union support was also indispensable. Sometimes that overlapped the Jewish constituency and sometimes it didn't. Apart from those strong Humphrey affinities, he was indeed affected by cross-currents from the Arab world. For instance, Hubert was torn over the Suez crisis. The United Nations and the Third World were important to him. Many of his statements in the Senate reflected those concerns, and consequently some of his usual supporters criticized what they thought was his lack of enthusiasm over the British, French, and Israeli attack at Suez. Later Humphrey actually went to Cairo and had an interview with Nasser. In sum, he tried to avoid being captured by special interests, or at least to avoid the appearance of being captured. On the whole, he balanced these conflicting relationships very successfully.

Q: What impression were you getting of Senator John Kennedy at the time. Was he considered sort of a lightweight?

HUGHES: Most people around the capitol thought he was a lightweight. He certainly did not take the Senate very seriously. But he was young, attractive, rich and charming. I saw him personally every now and then, at meetings in his office or in committees. Even during my Humphrey years, despite their implicit rivalry, I had good relations with the Kennedy staff-especially Ted Sorensen, Ralph Dungan, Mike Feldman, and Fred Holborn. And, of course, because of the New England tie, I worked closely with the Kennedy office after I rejoined Bowles in the House in 1959-60. Jack's impressive effort to obtain the Vice Presidential nomination in 1956 made it clear that he had ambitions for the national ticket. There was envy among the other prospective Presidential candidates over Kennedy's pipeline to Harvard, where a stable of writers was available at his beck and call. Probably the rarity of his big speeches in the Senate enhanced the attention given them when they did occur.

His colleagues had noted that Jack was the only Senator either not voting or not paired on the final McCarthy censure. McCarthy had been a close family friend of Joseph P. Kennedy and a committee employer of Bobby. When it came to Johnson's celebrated civil rights legislation, Humphrey, like Johnson, was determined to make sure that Kennedy joined in the vote. They thought Jack might be tempted to sit that one out too, because of his Presidential ambitions and Southern calculations. Humphrey also made a point of co-sponsoring bills with Kennedy when Kennedy was willing. I likewise helped arrange for Kennedy and Bowles to introduce companion measures in the Senate and the House in '59 and '60.

Q: Did George Ball enter into any of these things during this period during the '50s?

HUGHES: I first met Ball in the 1956 campaign. He was a friend of Stevenson's and an integral part of the Stevenson entourage. Although he had a law practice to maintain during this pre-1960 period, he was also closely associated with Jean Monnet and his European movement. Ball was well known to Acheson who shared the concentration on Europe-the Marshall Plan, NATO, the Coal and Steel Community, etc. Actually that was an important dividing line among the foreign policy Democrats- the nearly exclusively European orientation of Acheson, Nitze, and Ball compared to the broader worldwide interests of Stevenson, Humphrey, and Bowles.

Q: The Kennedy speech on Algeria had long legs, it lasted a long time. Part of the problem was that this was a challenge, not just to France, but also hit at the Europeans. If you did this you might be challenging NATO and the Europeans.

HUGHES: Kennedy's speech was an important signal that he was also interested in the Third World and anti-colonial independence movements. The speech amounted to a considerable ratcheting up of the Kennedy image in foreign policy generally. It was enough to assure, as LBJ told Humphrey that afternoon, that Madame Alphand, the wife of the French ambassador, "ain't goin' to play the zither for Jack no more, no way." It was an important speech. Were there more to come? Johnson, of course, often complained that Kennedy was never around when needed, had no follow-through, and couldn't be relied upon in a crunch.

There was another Kennedy in the picture, Jack's father. Most of the ranking national Democrats thoroughly disliked Joseph P. Kennedy and resented him for the money he put into his son's political career. Many in the New Deal generation had had negative experiences with Joe over the years. Averell Harriman, for example, was vitriolic about him-"the man who pulled his money out of Wall Street three days before the crash to put it into illegal whiskey". Joe Kennedy was a big obstacle in the way of other politicians trusting Jack. Moreover, until then, none of the top Protestant Democratic candidates had had to worry very much about their Catholic voters. Now they had to calculate Jack's effect on their Catholic base. This was something that Stevenson fretted over. In effect he affronted that base by accepting Kefauver over Kennedy as his running mate in 1956. As far as the general election was concerned, the presumed anti-Catholicism of most American voters was taken for granted in those days. In the mid-1950's none of the Democratic leaders-not Truman or Harriman or Stevenson or Humphrey for that matter-thought that a Catholic candidate could win a Presidential election. Hence the possibility of a Kennedy run was initially greeted with great wariness among holders of that conventional wisdom. But Jack Kennedy was a meteor on the horizon. He would upset many of the accepted political verities.

Q: Well when you were working with Humphrey what was his reaction to Kennedy?

HUGHES: Humphrey genuinely liked people. He was known for his affability and humor. His personal relations with Kennedy were cordial but not close. Still, they had been rivals for the vice-presidential nomination in 1956, and each of them therefore anticipated a probable collision in 1960. Having to scramble constantly for funds himself, Hubert was particularly apprehensive about the Kennedy money. This was a well-founded concern as the 1960 West Virginia primaries would demonstrate.

Q: Well you worked for Humphrey from when to when?

HUGHES: From the fall of 1955 to early 1959. My responsibilities in his office were by no means limited to foreign policy. Humphrey was enormously active on the domestic legislative front, undoubtedly putting more bills in the hopper than any other senator. His well-known interests in agriculture and labor were prominent, of course, and civil rights legislation in the mid-50's was also a preoccupying theme. But there were many others. We were involved in conservation and environmental matters with the Wilderness Society. There was the humane slaughter legislation promoted by animal rights activists. Health and minimum wages always attracted attention. We proposed legislation promoting arts and culture. I was Hubert's liaison with all the groups interested in these bills.

There were legislative proposals too that verged on foreign policy. Trade Adjustment legislation was proposed to provide federal aid for workers displaced by the impact of international trade. At the same time Humphrey promoted the latter. For instance, we requested annual statistical reports from the Library of Congress on "Minnesota's Stake in Trade" and put them to use in softening protectionist appeals in Hubert's home constituency. Working with the Congressional Reference Service also first put me in touch with Roger Hilsman, its foreign affairs director, who later was my colleague in the State Department. While in the Humphrey office I also taught a nighttime course at George Washington University on foreign policy and Capitol Hill. This was the subject of an article I wrote for the Reporter magazine in 1958 as well.

When we moved to the Washington area in 1955 to work with Humphrey, we first lived in an early 19th century "flounder house" in Old Alexandria. My wife and I were both interested in architecture and antiques, and my mother's cousin, Barrett Lowe, who had returned from being governor of Guam and Samoa, was a pioneer in the restoration of Old Town. He restored two of the beautiful old houses in the first block of Prince Street, and helped us find our rental property on South Lee Street.- as Southern-sounding as you can get. The atmosphere both there and in Washington itself was very Southern in those days. I even allowed myself to join a Confederate carpool that left Alexandria every morning for Capitol Hill. It consisted mostly of assistants to Senators like Byrd, Russell, and Thurmond, and it was a gracious example of Southern hospitality for them to include me, a conspicuous liberal from a notorious Northern office.

In 1958 with our eldest son approaching school age, we left Dixie and moved to Chevy Chase. We thought that the Maryland schools were better, and Hubert and Muriel Humphrey themselves lived in Chevy Chase at that time. My Confederate carpool was succeeded by a Humphrey carpool which consisted of Hubert himself and his next door neighbor and then protï¿½gï¿½, Congressman George McGovern of South Dakota. They would stop to pick me up at our Raymond Street house, and we would enjoy an extra half-hour chatting or doing business en route to the Hill. We also saw a good deal of another Humphrey protï¿½gï¿½ at that time, Minnesota Congressman Eugene McCarthy. Fate would have a good deal in store for all three of them and for their relationships with one another. Eventually each of them ran for President.

Q: And were you thinking about Humphrey as a presidential candidate?

HUGHES: Hubert certainly intended to run, but in the late 50's I had little or nothing to do with his forthcoming Presidential race. Bowles was elected to Congress in November, 1958. He invited me to rejoin him as his administrative assistant, and I agreed to do so, largely because it promised to be a more compatible working situation. After three years in the Humphrey office, I had tired of the unending late nights, the obligatory Saturdays, and the occasional Sundays. The treadmill was exhausting. Jean and I were beginning to raise a family, and I was in effect an absent father. I didn't make a conscious choice between Kennedy and Humphrey as Presidential candidates, although the move back to Bowles did move me from one camp to the other.

Nevertheless, my friendship with Humphrey continued. On the legislative front, I could promote collaboration between Bowles and Humphrey. Politically, although they were close friends, Humphrey knew he couldn't expect Bowles, a Connecticut congressman, to support him against Kennedy. No one was surprised when Chet publicly endorsed Kennedy and became his designated foreign policy adviser in early 1959. Bowles made it clear at the time that he was nevertheless unwilling to campaign in the primaries on Jack's behalf in opposition to Humphrey. Kennedy acquiesced in this condition, but was unhappy about it. I myself had not burned any bridges. If Humphrey had won the nomination and election in 1960, I almost certainly would have gone into a Humphrey administration.

Q: You were with Bowles in '59-'60 when he was in the House of Representatives. What were you doing for him?

HUGHES: I was his administrative assistant, in overall charge both of his office and of all substantive and legislative matters.

Q: Well this gave you a broader reach didn't it?

HUGHES: Yes, and in some ways it was a unique challenge. I was now working for a congressman of national stature, one of the few.

Q: I would have thought that Bowles having just been elected, even though he was a national figure, would tramp on many Congressional egos. I mean this was still a time when you had these dukedoms of long- serving chairmen, particularly in the House, and Bowles was a very junior member.

HUGHES: That was a predictable problem which we headed off. Among others, John Bailey, the Connecticut state chairman, soon to be the national chairman under Kennedy, helped assure that Chet would be a congressman out of the ordinary. He talked to John McCormack, the speaker, and helped arrange for the immediate appointment of Bowles to the House Foreign Affairs Committee. When Chet made a major speech, 100-200 congressmen would show up to listen. His presence was regarded as a sudden bonus for the House, almost an adornment. Ironically he benefited by not being in the Senate where several Presidential candidates were busy with their own games. So this wasn't a bad move on Bowles' part. He made it clear he was only going to serve one term, and he tried to find the right successor to run in his Connecticut district two years later. He himself wanted to be free to join a Democratic administration.

Q: How did you find working with Bowles this time?

HUGHES: It was again very enjoyable. Chet and Steb had a lovely house in Georgetown where we were regularly invited for meetings and meals. The pace was less hectic than the Humphrey office. Again there were trips abroad. Because Bowles was so identified with India and the third world generally, I had encouraged him to join the European subcommittee, which he did. I went with him to Europe, slightly expanded to include visits to Bourguiba in Tunisia and Tito in Yugoslavia in deference to Chet's third world interests.

Bowles was prepared to admire Tito in the mode of a non-aligned leader like Nehru, but the contrast proved to be a bit unsettling. We were allowed to fly in an air force plane from Belgrade to Pula, a port on the Adriatic, and then take a motor boat over to the island of Brioni where Tito held forth in an old Habsburg villa. We climbed into a jeep at the dock, and I remember winding our way through camels, giraffes, and elephants-gifts from Tito's non-allied friends. We made our way up to the villa, where amid turn-of-the-century potted palms, we were greeted by Madame Broz, Tito's forceful wife. When the great man appeared, he was wearing a baby blue uniform with lots of medals and carrying a field marshal's baton. I am afraid he looked faintly like Hermann Goering. The look on Bowles' face suggested that a quick reassessment was being made. I was given the privilege of lighting cigarette after cigarette which Tito placed in his silver cigarette holder before puffing away. The visit gave us a lengthy press release, but little else. We went on to western Europe, which included a talk with Willy Brandt in Berlin, dinner with Jean Monnet in Paris, and a speech by Chet at Oxford, which I arranged.

After their joint press conference in early 1960, when Kennedy announced that he had chosen Bowles as his foreign policy advisor for the forthcoming campaign, there was inevitable press speculation that Bowles would be chosen secretary of state if Kennedy won. These press stories in turn would be promptly and firmly denounced by Bobby Kennedy, Jack's campaign manager. "There are no commitments of any kind. We don't want to see any more stories like this"-implying that Bowles was responsible for the press speculation. In Chet's case, this was only the first of many demonstrations to come of Bobby's arrogance There was no love lost between these two men.

Q: What was your own impression of Robert Kennedy, the president's brother?

HUGHES: I saw him at close range and disliked him. I knew him as the bad Bobby, and I'm afraid I always had trouble changing my mind in favor of the later good Bobby. I watched him running his brother's campaign with the ruthlessness for which he was famous. Perhaps I saw him only in adverse circumstances.

Q: The kinder, gentler Bobby Kennedy I always found very difficult. The stories I've gotten from interviews are not kind to Bobby Kennedy.

HUGHES: My friend Harris Wofford has a different take. He came to admire Bobby and thought he had undergone a change of personality after Jack's assassination. Bobby was said to have felt remorse, and even some guilt, over his brother's death because of the blowback from RFK's own covert anti-Castro operations. In Wofford's book Of Kennedys and Kings Bobby comes off positively. But I'm afraid I will always fall short when it comes to admiring Bobby.

During the decisive West Virginia primary in 1960, Bobby was instrumental in bringing Franklin Roosevelt Jr. down to attack Humphrey for failing to fight in World War II. Hubert had been rejected for medical reasons, and as a politician he often regretted his lack of military service. In the 50's those of us in his office who, at least on the record, had some military background, tried hard to compensate for this liability by involving him, wherever possible, in security issues. In fact it was useful to both Humphrey and Bowles that I maintained my active military reserve status. I was a member of Capitol Hill's notorious 9999th Air Force Reserve squadron, composed of Congressional staff members and commanded by General Senator Barry Goldwater himself. We performed reserve duty at the Pentagon on Tuesday nights. Even better, we had two weeks of active duty annually, alternately in West Europe or East Asia. I continued these military connections-and benefits- until the reserve unit was abolished by McNamara in 1964.

Q: I thought we might stop at this point and I put at the end here where we are. I'd like to pick up in the 1960 election. Up to this point we've talked a bit about your impression of Bobby Kennedy and we'll go on from there.

HUGHES: I look forward to our next session.

Q: Today is the fourth of August 1999. Tom let's start with the election of 1960. What was your involvement in that?

HUGHES: Well the primaries were rather delicate for me because of my Humphrey connections. I remained close to Hubert. My wife Jean was enthusiastic about Humphrey, and she and our two young sons went occasionally to Humphrey rallies. But I was now working again with Bowles, and he was unavoidably in the Kennedy camp. So I was personally torn. Loyalty over the years meant that I retained at least a sentimental interest in the Humphrey campaign. On the other hand, my head told me that Hubert was not going to win.

Q: Why was that?

HUGHES: It was a contest between glamour, resources, and religion on one side and the absence of all three on the other. The Realpolitik of the period pointed to Kennedy. Bowles was a Unitarian Democrat from Connecticut, swimming in a huge sea of Irish and Italian voters, which meant that he himself had little choice. He rationalized his own support for Kennedy on the grounds that Kennedy needed liberal support. Bowles was Kennedy's visible captive liberal, valuable to Jack not least because he could help neutralize the anti-Kennedy sentiments elsewhere in the Democratic party. For both Jack and Chet their cooperation was a matter of mutual convenience.

As I mentioned earlier, at the beginning of 1960 Kennedy held a press conference where Bowles endorsed him for president and Kennedy announced that he had picked Bowles to be his foreign policy advisor in the campaign. This publicly pitted Bowles against Humphrey. Chet had previously made it clear to Jack just what he would be willing to do-consult, advise, speak himself, and write foreign policy speeches for the candidate. . What he would not do was campaign personally for Kennedy in primaries against Hubert. This restriction antagonized Kennedy staffers from the outset, especially Bobby.

Q: When you say Kennedy, was this more Bobby than Jack?

HUGHES: That distinction was always a hard one to make. The rough work was given to Bobby, or eagerly grasped by him. Jack sort of soared over any tactical controversies.

Q: He was sort of the executive officer, a son-of-a-bitch, while Jack was the commanding officer and could be more a benevolent Washington

HUGHES: Exactly. There is no doubt that having climbed up the hill positively to being Kennedy's foreign policy advisor, there was a certain downside when Bowles refused to campaign against Humphrey personally. From the beginning there was a tentative aspect to the Bowles-Kennedy relationship and, as a matter of fact, this tentativeness continued into the Kennedy administration. After Humphrey's defeat in West Virginia, the retrospective assessment wasn't that Humphrey was unwilling to pay the off the bribable local sheriffs, but that he could afford only a tenth of what the Kennedys were paying.

Still that winter and spring of 1960 was exciting, and Chet was playing a role on center stage throughout. For example, in January there was a huge dinner sponsored by the Democratic National Committee at a Washington hotel where all the prospective presidential candidates were on display, each given fifteen minute for remarks- Stevenson, Kennedy, Humphrey, Symington among others. Bowles was chosen as the chairman and toastmaster for the evening. He was watching his words carefully-I worked with him all the preceding afternoon-selecting the right nuances to introduce his old friends Humphrey and Stevenson, and his new friend Kennedy.

Q: While the primaries were going on, with Bowles as the foreign affairs advisor, did you get involved with Bowles in saying we should play this issue or that issue in foreign affairs?

HUGHES: Chet had his own strong preferences with which I mostly agreed. Yes, I worked constantly with him on issue selection and speech preparation. When Chet was especially satisfied with one of his own speeches, we would retool it for Kennedy's use. Bowles would have liked foreign affairs to have been more of a campaign issue. The problem was, as between Humphrey and Kennedy or even between Stevenson and Kennedy, there was not all that much difference on foreign policy in the primaries. Before his nomination Kennedy was moving slightly to his left and the others were moving slightly to their right. After the nomination it was a different matter. Kennedy was moving more to the right-indeed he outflanked Nixon from the right on US policy toward Cuba, Taiwan, and the alleged missile gap that later vanished. These were not the foreign policy issues that Bowles would have chosen and he was unhappy about them. They came up volitionally from Kennedy, often in the debates.

Q: What about New York? It seems like every primary we have there, the candidates, and they are still doing it, come out for extreme support of Israel. Did that get into the campaign at all?

HUGHES: The Democratic platform contained a plank about moving the Israeli capital to Jerusalem, but I don't remember Israel being highlighted in campaign speeches except pro forma. Kennedy was nervous about the Jewish community, especially because of the intense Jewish dislike of his isolationist father and concern about the Catholic question.

Q: What were you doing during this primary time?

HUGHES: I continued working for Bowles as his administrative assistant, attending to his congressional office business, and occasionally traveling with him for political appearances. His help was sought by several of his House colleagues in their congressional races. I remember going with him to Rapid City, South Dakota, where he spoke in George McGovern's reelection campaign, and in return we were introduced to our first buffalo burgers.

Bowles was sufficiently prominent in 1960 for there to emerge even a small Bowles-for-President movement. Without any stimulation from us, it sprang up in Pennsylvania and California among his admirers. They circulated literature and produced buttons. This was embarrassing too, and Bobby naturally and understandably sent out instructions to Bowles to cut these supporters off at the knees. Bowles dutifully issued a press release and sent out letters asking his supporters to desist. However, many of them continued, right up to the Los Angeles convention. That phenomenon was another one that did nothing to endear Chet to the Kennedys.

Q: Would an administrative assistant, such as you were, be involved in keeping the job going while your principal was off working on the campaign?

HUGHES: Sometimes, but I was usually with Bowles wherever he was. We had a competent Connecticut staffer who was responsible for keeping constituents happy during the campaign. Then suddenly that spring, in further testimony to Bowles' eminence in the party, he was appointed chairman of the platform committee for that summer's Democratic convention in Los Angeles. I thereupon became the staff director for the Democratic platform committee. From then on I was involved around the clock in platform negotiations.

This was a fascinating experience. It was probably the last time a Democratic platform will be developed quite that way. The question was the usual one of how to avoid a public display of arguments that might tear the party apart. Was there some way to pre-cook the platform and avoid controversy on the convention floor? We decided to have regional platform hearings in advance of the convention that could be pointed to as the plausible basis for the platform draft. The platform itself was largely put together by Bowles and his staff, including some Bowles old timers who were co-opted for the occasion, like Harris Wofford and Abe Chayes. Sam Rosenman, FDR's speech writer, was still alive and active with us behind the scenes. Hearings were held across the country with Bowles presiding, but the platform draft was put together in a smoke- filled room.

Moreover Chet wanted to present the platform in person on television at the convention. How could we do that without locking it up ahead of time? The solution was to have two platforms - a short, locked-up version which Chet would read on TV, and an "equally valid" longer version which would be printed. We prepared the short version for prime time TV with Bowles actually filming it before it was adopted. We explained to platform committee members that the TV presentation could not be altered because it had to be filmed in advance. Any changes would be reflected in the long version which would appear in print after its adoption by the convention.

This flim-flam was somehow dutifully accepted by the delegates and the press. It was really astonishing. No one could get away with anything like that today. Even Kennedy, the prospective candidate, had little opportunity to approve the final document before it was adopted. This was not inconsequential. Civil rights, for instance, was going to be a big issue, and the 1960 platform wove it into both foreign and domestic policy. We promised action on civil rights before the hundredth anniversary of the Emancipation Proclamation (1963). The night that the full platform was formally adopted, I personally took it to the printers. It had no title on it. At the print shop I simply added "The Rights of Man" as the platform's title, and had it printed on the front cover. Nobody gave permission or objected. Privately, I had the feeling that this was the last hurrah of the old politics, and that such permissiveness was not likely to be repeated.

Q: While you were preparing this platform, were you deliberately putting some raw meat into it which you could toss to people when they objected in order to keep the core document?

HUGHES: Not really. Jerusalem, Cuba, and communist China were all potentially hot button foreign policy issues that were successfully soft pedaled. Civil rights had more prominence in the short TV platform than in the longer version. In front of the full convention, Chet was presiding at the rostrum and I was physically huddled right underneath it, out of sight from the floor. There were a few attempts by delegates to remove our soft pedal and increase the sound effects. Most of them we managed to circumvent. Liberals of course liked the results enormously, and delegate after delegate told us it was the best platform the party had ever had.

Q: What about the Lyndon Johnson forces? Where did they stand on things or were they a factor?

HUGHES: I think they quietly helped us because they didn't want to become embroiled in a platform fight. This would have been counter-productive as far as Johnson was concerned. Assuming, as I do, that Johnson wanted to be vice president, any public argument over issues that would highlight his southern or conservative proclivities was to be avoided. So this absence of a platform fight actually made it easier for Kennedy to accept Johnson and for the northern liberals to swallow him as well.

Q: When you were putting together a platform was it essentially the delegates coming there or was it the delegates' assistants working at it?

HUGHES: Some delegates had testified earlier in our regional hearings. Others were members of the platform committee that met in Los Angeles. At the convention there weren't too many assistants, because most of the tickets were allotted to state delegations and they apportioned them among deserving local politicians.

Q: What about Sam Rayburn? This was almost his last hurrah wasn't it?

HUGHES: Yes, he was right there in Lyndon Johnson's suite working and conniving.

Q: Was he working on the platform?

HUGHES: No, he was working on the future of Lyndon Johnson, the Johnson-Kennedy relationship, and the vice presidential selection.

Q: By the time the convention got going, Kennedy was the obvious nominee wasn't he?

HUGHES: Yes, but there were many last ditch efforts to stop him. About a week before the convention Harry Truman made a television appearance begging Kennedy to stand down. Kennedy was a young man with a great future, said Truman, but it wasn't his time yet. He lacked experience, and meanwhile the party had so many other wonderful candidates for president. Truman specifically mentioned Symington and Bowles. Once again this pitch by Truman was a complete surprise for Bowles, but naturally Bobby Kennedy never believed that it was. At the same time Harriman was grumbling about Kennedy, and Stevenson was more than willing to be nominated for the third time.

Q: Did Kennedy and his attraction to the female sex come up at all?

HUGHES: The rumors were there, but in 1960 sex was still as unmentionable as Addison's Disease.

Q: What else do you remember about the convention?

HUGHES: Well, the platform committee was my main assignment and that was a two or three day affair just as the convention got underway. I remember being in the corridor outside Johnson's suite when Bobby Kennedy arrived and departed, having delivered Jack's vice presidential offer to Lyndon. And I remember having dinner at Chasen's restaurant the night after Kennedy announced his selection of Johnson as his running mate. I was with Harris Wofford and Abe Chayes. Eugene McCarthy and Mort Sahl were at the adjoining table, and Gene, who had nominated Stevenson, was enthusiastically praising Johnson. McCarthy entertained Sahl by mentioning that he himself was "a much better Catholic than Jack, and I don't have a brother Raul." This comparison of the Kennedy brothers with the Castro brothers spread quickly.

Q: Were you aware of Joe Kennedy hovering over things?

HUGHES: All the anti-Kennedy forces saw him as an ominous specter in the background at Los Angeles. Joe Kennedy in fact remained very active for the first year of his son's administration until disabled by his stroke.

Q: When the national campaign got started what did you do?

HUGHES: Chet was in great demand as a speaker. The success of the Bowles platform had further enhanced his reputation. He was now very actively working for Kennedy, pouring oil on troubled liberal waters. That job was now made easier because Nixon was the opponent. But you may remember that Eleanor Roosevelt and many others still had to be convinced that Kennedy deserved their support.

Q: It is hard to think of that time. Now Kennedy is sort of deified as a famous liberal, but at that point the liberal establishment was very dubious about him.

HUGHES: Of course, compared with Nixon, he was a liberal. But he was hardly in the liberal mainstream of the national Democratic party. He was a centrist nationally. And liberals were not the only ones troubled by his Catholicism. This wasn't just sheer philistine religious animosity. There were serious attitudinal overtones for foreign policy. The Catholic church was the most organized anti-communist element in the country. Consequently there were implications for arms control, US relations with the Soviet Union and China, as well as the US stake in South Vietnam. Such factors still made many non-Catholic foreign policy experts dubious about a Catholic president.

Kennedy turned these doubts to his own advantage. Elect me president, he said, and you won't have to worry about the Catholics. Leave them to me. This was new. It made the campaign different from any previous American political campaign- this combination of a young, attractive, Democrat who appealed to groups not normally Democratic and who at the same time arrested the Catholic drift that was otherwise moving toward the Republicans.

Q: Was there a beginning of a reaction against McCarthyism by this point? Was this a factor?

HUGHES: There was, and Kennedy utilized it both ways. On the one hand, with Joe McCarthy's censure and death, the salience of the issue had declined. On the other hand, Kennedy picked up many of McCarthy's voters. In the Wisconsin primary, for example, he collected thousands of votes from McCarthy's previous supporters.

Q: Bowles must have been quite adept at dealing with the Catholic issue, coming from a Catholic state.

HUGHES: Well, he should have been more adept than he was, particularly after his defeat for reelection as governor by John Davis Lodge. That should have sharpened his political antennae. To sustain himself in Connecticut politics, Chet obviously had to find ways to appeal to the Catholic community. By the time we got to 1960, the tiny little state of Connecticut was crowded with national political prospects. First of all there was Tom Dodd, the darling of the Irish Catholic community, and Bowles' successful rival for the Senate nomination at the Hartford convention of 1956. Never mind that Dodd was later censured by the Senate. Second there was Abe Ribicoff, the Jewish governor who, like Chet, had ambitions to be in the Kennedy cabinet. Third there was John Bailey, ready to operate on the national stage, another Connecticut Catholic whom Kennedy chose as Democratic national chairman. Then there was Bowles. All of them were trying to fit into the Kennedy scheme of things. Given these other players, Bowles should have been a more adept politician than he was. Maybe he was just too honest to play the normal ethnic game in Connecticut, or to come out on top in the heightened political struggle ahead in Washington.

Q: Were you asking as you traveled with him "Well we are going to Paducah, Kentucky, What are the issues there?"

HUGHES: No, not really. Bowles wasn't scheduled for Paducah in 1960. His targets were California and other liberal constituencies who were nervous about Kennedy and needed shoring up. He was sent to big cities like Los Angeles, Chicago, and New York. He targeted intellectuals and appeared frequently in friendly academic settings.

Q: The election was extremely close. Was there concern about Nixon and some of the issues he was raising?

HUGHES: Of course, and there were tactical differences about how to handle them. We talked earlier about Cuba. That subject came up in the TV debates. Nixon, despite his being privy to the secret preparations for the Bay of Pigs, adopted the opposite stance in public, thus allowing Kennedy to attack him for being soft on Cuba. This cynical politics of course made people like Bowles grind their teeth. I remember how appalled Chet was over Kennedy's speech at a rally of Cuban exiles in Florida. Bowles worried about the problems Kennedy was creating for himself if he was President later on. Similarly, when the issue of the Chinese off-shore islands came up in the debates, Kennedy was determined to be as pro-Taiwan as possible. He was not going to be accused of "losing China" again.

Q: Many of the Florida Cubans had been close to Batista and that whole corrupt crowd.

HUGHES: Some of them were among the Kennedys' Florida friends. Jack's militant Cuba stance ran contrary to Chet's whole approach of isolating Cuba in the hemisphere by promoting social democracy elsewhere. Actually Bowles and I both had begun discovering the Caribbean and Latin America in the 1950's. Chet had been invited to write the preface for Earl Parker Hanson's book, Transformation, the story of Operation Bootstrap in Puerto Rico. I drafted that preface for him, and in the process we both became fascinated with the new and promising Commonwealth of Puerto Rico.

In Chet's case this led to a serious focus on the non-Communist Caribbean. He became a close friend of Governor Luis Munoz Marin in San Juan, of Pepe Figueras in Costa Rica, and of Romulo Betancourt in Venezuela. In 1960 this trio personified social democracy in that part of the world. Bowles convinced Kennedy to pay attention to Puerto Rico and Kennedy did. There were very positive consequences later during the Kennedy Administration, such as visits to the White House by Munoz Marin and Pablo Casals, as well as the appointments of men like Morales Carrion to the State Department and Teodoro Moscoso to the Alliance for Progress.

HUGHES: Some of both. We were directly in touch with Archibald Cox, head of the speech writing unit for Kennedy. Sometimes there were direct requests for campaign appearances or speeches. Sometimes Bowles volunteered for certain assignments. Earlier that year when Chet announced that he would not run for re-election to the House, tensions with Bobby had risen again. He crisply informed Bowles, "We don't want to have to announce that you are not going to be secretary of state. We wouldn't want you to put us in that position."

Q: With the debates, what was your impression at the time?

HUGHES: A favorable emotional one. The Kennedy posture of being forceful, energetic, and positive was the image that came across. The attractive, cool Kennedy contrasted with the sweating, nervous Nixon. The contrasting pictures spoke louder than words.

Q: I take it that you yourself were not caught up in the Kennedy mystique. This was a very influential thing in American politics.

HUGHES: In strictly political terms, the Kennedy charisma was very impressive. I was acquainted with him during my years on Capitol Hill, but I never knew him well. Later when I saw him as President in the White House, at Rose garden events, in his occasional appearances in the State Department or at receptions for the diplomatic corps, he was always affable and charming. He personally appointed me director of Intelligence and Research in the State Department in April, 1963, and I was indebted to him for that. But I couldn't pretend to be one of his intimates.

Q: The election of course was a cliffhanger. What was your feeling about how the election went?

HUGHES: On election night most of the "Chet set" were in Connecticut at the Bowles estate watching the returns. Also there was Archibald Cox, who had headed the campaign speechwriting team and who many years later was a famous victim in Nixon's Watergate scandal. And Eugene Rostow was there. He was then dean of Yale Law School and later an undersecretary of state in the Johnson administration. I remember Gene leaving Essex about 9:15 p.m., having declared Kennedy's victory to be the biggest landslide in American history. Hardly, but Nixon did eventually concede the narrow election.

Bowles then had to decide how to position himself for appointment to high office. As Kennedy's foreign policy adviser, he moved quickly, seeking and receiving Kennedy's permission to represent him in talks with the outgoing Eisenhower administration. Early on, Chet went to see Secretary of State Christian Herter. Herter had been governor of Massachusetts and Bowles had been governor of Connecticut, so they had known one another previously. He told Chet that he might be amused to know that Paul Nitze, a close relative of Herter, had been in a few minutes earlier, claiming to represent the new Kennedy administration. Awkward as it was, Herter had had to tell Paul that the family tie was insufficient and that Kennedy had officially informed him that Bowles was to be the incoming administration's representative.

Q: What was Nitze's role at that time?

HUGHES: Paul was always available for patriotic service in any postwar administration, Democratic or Republican. He served with distinction in most of them, all except Eisenhower's, I believe. He was identified with the Acheson wing of the foreign policy establishment. Indeed he was synonymous with it, just below cabinet level-the level to which he always aspired but never reached. Nitze and Herter had each married Pratt women from the oil-rich family that gave Harold Pratt house on Park Avenue in New York to the Council on Foreign Relations for its headquarters.

(There was another connection of Paul's that no one talked about, which I stumbled across in pursuing my interest in German history. He was named for his uncle, Paul Hilken, a man of some notoriety in World War I. Uncle Paul was the Baltimore agent for the North German Lloyd steamship line and paymaster for the German spies and saboteurs involved in the Black Tom explosion of 1916. In Baltimore he was called "the Hindenburg of Roland Park.")

But Nitze was not the only one who became active the morning after Kennedy's election. Adlai Stevenson pulled out all the stops to become secretary of state. He assumed that this was his position as a matter of right, like an earlier defeated Presidential candidate, William Jennings Bryan, who had the job under Wilson in 1913. Of course that pitted him into a contest with Bowles, Nitze, Bill Fulbright, David Bruce, and others who presumably coveted that same post. As liberals, Stevenson and Bowles were both advantageous to Kennedy because of their eminence the Democratic party. They were also problematic for him because they were unlikely to be subservient. In the event, Kennedy's predicament of how to avoid choosing one of them was eased by the fact that the two of them were competing and in effect helped undermine one another.

Stevenson mounted a big campaign for the appointment by setting up a foreign policy task force of his own, headed by one of his loyalists, John Sharon, a lawyer here in Washington whom I had known in the campaign. George Ball was also deeply involved. After the election, Sharon was sent down to Florida to work in close proximity to Kennedy, and to deliver and discuss Stevenson's foreign policy position papers with the President-elect. Sharon in effect moved directly from the presidential campaign into the secretary of state campaign.

Meanwhile the fate of Bill Fulbright was instructive of the way Washington worked. Kennedy knew him from the Senate Foreign Relations Committee where he was now chairman, and he was rumored to be Jack's first choice for Secretary of State. This alarmed the friends of Israel, who considered Fulbright to be biased in favor of the Arabs. Si Kenen, founder of the American Israel Public Affairs Committee (AIPAC), quickly set out to help scuttle Fulbright's selection. Si, whom I had known from my Humphrey office days, soon arrived on my doorstep in Chevy Chase, as he did on the doorsteps of many other Washington staffers, with a carefully put together anti-Fulbright document. It did not mention the Middle East at all, but concentrated on Fulbright the signer of the Southern Manifesto who was therefore unacceptable on human rights grounds. The heat rose against Fulbright in the civil rights community and he was suddenly out of the running. (Fulbright later told friends that he didn't really want to become Secretary of State because the notorious Orville Faubus would have succeeded him in the Senate.)

As far as we knew, Bowles and Stevenson were still in the running in late November, early December, 1960. They were engaged in an elaborate duet competing for Kennedy's favorable attention. During this period I had a phone call from John Sharon in Florida. He had just come off the golf course with Kennedy and wanted to have lunch with me the following day in Washington to tell me about it. At lunch he had another delicious story for the history books.

A post-election golf game involving Kennedy and Nixon had been organized in Florida "to bind up the nation's wounds". Kennedy's pal, Senator Smathers, and Sharon himself had completed the foursome. On the second tee Nixon remarked: "Now Jack I know that you stole the election from me in Illinois, but I am not going to reopen the campaign and fight you for it. It wouldn't be right." Jack quietly absorbed that one. Then on the third tee Nixon said: "But I'll tell you one thing, Jack. If you make a certain appointment as secretary of state I will feel so strongly opposed to it that I will break off my vacation and barnstorm the country against it." Jack, now mildly amused, said: "Who has offended you so much, Dick, that you would do that?"

"Why, Chester Bowles, of course," Nixon replied. "Don't you read what he writes? He's supposed to be your foreign policy adviser." Kennedy, now even more amused, countered: "Oh, Chet sends me a lot of things. What are you referring to?" "Well, look at his Foreign Affairs article last spring, " said Nixon. "There Bowles says that at some point in our national interest we're going to have to recognize Red China. Now we can't have a man like that for secretary of state."

While this sparring between Bowles and Stevenson continued, Kennedy heard about Dean Rusk from Robert Lovett and Dean Acheson, There ensued some clever handling of the other would-be secretaries. Kennedy asked them all- Stevenson, Bowles, Fulbright, Bruce- whom they would choose as undersecretary to run the State Department if they were appointed secretary. They all said Dean Rusk. Since Kennedy intended to be his own secretary of state, Rusk seemed to be the perfect solution.

Q: Now was Dean Rusk somebody Bowles had run across before?

HUGHES: Yes, they had met perhaps briefly first in India. But more importantly, Rusk became president of the Rockefeller Foundation in the 50's and Bowles was a member of his board of trustees. In fact, in early December, 1960, while all this campaigning for secretary of state was going on, there was a Rockefeller trustees meeting in Williamsburg. A phone call for Rusk interrupted the session, and Rusk excused himself. When he came back he wrote a note to Bowles saying "That was your friend on the phone," meaning Kennedy. Bowles replied, "He wants to ask you to become secretary of state", and Rusk answered, "Nothing will come of it." A day or so later something did come of it. Kennedy called Bowles to say that Rusk was going to be secretary and he wanted Chet to be undersecretary. Chet agreed. Kennedy also notified Stevenson about Rusk and asked Adlai to be ambassador to the United Nations. Stevenson reluctantly accepted, and the three appointments were announced together.

Later that night, Rusk showed up at Chet's house in Georgetown and the three of us, Rusk, Bowles, and I, had dinner. (I remember that it happened to be December 11th, my 35th birthday.) That night Rusk even allowed himself to say that would not have taken the secretary's job if he hadn't been assured that Bowles would be his undersecretary! Rusk had been in the Burma theater during the war, so in a way they shared an interest in Asia. Rusk admired Bowles for his record as ambassador in India. They seemed to agree on foreign aid. Bowles was hopeful that Rusk would continue to be a supporter of liberal causes, as he was at the Rockefeller Foundation. And Chet told himself that Rusk would grow in office. Of course, Rusk was a southerner with a Pentagon background, and just what that might mean was unpredictable. Later on it turned out to be fateful in Vietnam.

No one seemed to know at the time that Rusk had also been close to John Foster Dulles. Indeed Dulles bequeathed his personal secretary to Rusk. Through critical years in the 50's and 60's Phyllis Bernau sat in the Secretary's outer office for both Dulles and Rusk. She had monitored countless phone conversations between the two of them when Dulles was in office. Who can say how the Dulles specter fortified Rusk's wariness about China, his concern about neutrals, his legalistic affection for treaties like CENTO and SEATO, his attitude toward Israel, etc. On the whole, Rusk was an unpredictable figure.

Rusk also had lines into the camp of Congressional hardliners. Dorothy Fosdick was the mystery woman here. A champion of Rusk, Dorothy was then a staff director for Senator Scoop Jackson's committee on government operations, I believe. She had once been closely associated with Adlai Stevenson, who had now been succeeded by Scoop. In the late '50's, her network bridged those two warring camps. By 1960 Dorothy had moved from a soft Stevensonian posture to a tough Jacksonian one. She was now a tough girl who believed in a tough foreign policy. In the late 60's she was still staying the course on Vietnam.

Ironically Dorothy was the daughter of Harry Emerson Fosdick , the famous pacifist minister of Riverside Church in New York. There was an unforgettable episode involving her, perhaps in early 1968, when the same John Sharon we talked about earlier had become a lay preacher at the Episcopal Church of All Souls, on Cathedral Avenue, off Connecticut Avenue, in Washington. By then John, the organizer of the event, had defected over Vietnam. He had contrived a kind of reconciliation service for hawks and doves. For some reason many prominent Washingtonians obediently attended. In the audience were Clark Clifford, George Ball, and Dorothy Fosdick among others.

Adam Yarmolinsky was an usher, and he had been separating the pro-Vietnam from the anti-Vietnam attendees, seating them on opposite sides of the church like the friends of the bride and groom at a wedding. The service opened with James Russell Lowell's 19th century hymn "Once to every man and nation comes the moment to decide, in the strife of truth with falsehood for the good or evil side." But that was only a foretaste of things to come. Dorothy Fosdick was sitting in the front row with the hawks. Just before Sharon's sermon came her father's (Harry Emerson Fosdick's) stirring hymn, "God of Grace and God of Glory". The opening lines of the second verse were "Cure thy children's warring madness-Bend our pride to Thy control". These lines were sung lustily from the dovish pews, with all faces turned toward his daughter Dorothy. Occasionally delicious touches like this provided private pleasure to lighten up the dismal Vietnam years.

Q: As the Kennedy administration was being put together, was it clear at the time that the Kennedy brothers would really take charge of foreign policy and run it from the White House like the Franklin Roosevelt administration?

HUGHES: Perhaps it should have been clear at the beginning. People knew that Jack preferred foreign affairs to domestic policy and that his personal role would be significant. Rusk in fact played to this expectation by writing a strategically timed article on "The President and Foreign Policy," published in Foreign Affairs during the 1960 campaign. Other people around Kennedy were grasping for roles. Unlike McNamara, for example, Rusk didn't grasp. Whether he would have been up to playing a larger role in other circumstances, I don't know. He seemed diffident and content with his relatively secondary, almost private position. McGeorge Bundy's role was not preordained either. As for Bobby, at first he wasn't thought of as a foreign policy person at all. But he, too, soon found it irresistible.

Q: What was your role when Bowles became undersecretary?

HUGHES: I helped him organize his office as undersecretary and remained as his administrative assistant the first couple of months. For weeks before and after the Inaugural, Bowles worked closely with Sargent Shriver in the selection of ambassadors and State Department officials. Curiously Kennedy came into office apparently knowing personally only one foreign service officer, Ed Gullion. Ed was quickly summoned back to Washington and we all assumed he was destined for a major appointment. (The Congo must have been a disappointment).

Kennedy also remembered Bill Macomber from the Hill. He had been assistant secretary for Congressional relations under Herter. There was a fear that he might run for Congress as a Republican in upstate New York. Partly to preempt such a move, Bill was asked to stay on in the New Frontier. Originally a CIA officer, he had been a personal gift from Allen Dulles to his brother John Foster. Suddenly we had this long-time associate of both Dulleses as the chief advisor to Bowles and Shriver, recommending which Eisenhower ambassadors to retain and which to retire. He penciled some in and penciled some out.

Beginning in December, I regularly spent evenings at Chet's house going over ambassadorial lists with him, Shriver, and Macomber. The latter did not hesitate to question some of Chet's new choices as well, but we went ahead anyway with Reischauer for Japan, Galbraith for India, Badeau for Egypt, Atwood for Guinea, Korry for Ethiopia, Stephansky for Bolivia, and recalling ex-FSO George Kennan for Yugoslavia. Occasionally our sessions would be interrupted by Adam Yarmolinsky, also a headhunter, who showed up one evening to announce that he had discovered a paragon at the Ford Motor Company named Robert McNamara, who would be perfect for secretary of defense.

Chet was also instrumental in several appointments inside the State Department at the assistant secretarial level. These included Phil Talbot for Near East and South Asia, Phil Coombs for Cultural Affairs, Abe Chayes for Legal Adviser, Harlan Cleveland for International Organization affairs, and Roger Hilsman for Intelligence and Research. These all happened to be friends or acquaintances of mine as well. Another of Chet's stellar choices was Edward R. Murrow to head USIA. Kennedy, I must say, accepted almost all of the Bowles recommendations, partly because Shriver also vouched for them. Bowles played a major role in central casting for the new administration.

Q: Looking back on it there seemed to be a certain amount of elegance to the ambassadorial appointments. But this was not Kennedy trying to set this gloss on the diplomatic, it was really Bowles?

HUGHES: It was both. Some of these people, like Reischauer and Galbraith were from Harvard, so perhaps any doubts were resolved in advance. I also had the responsibility of commiserating with a few disappointed would-be diplomats. During this period Walter Ridder of the German-language newspaper chain called me for lunch at the Metropolitan Club. He said he urgently needed to talk. It turned out that he had always aimed to be ambassador to Austria, and, to his great pleasure, his Yale friend Shriver had just arranged for him to be appointed to Vienna. Congratulations, I said, what's the problem? "My wife, Marie, won't go." "Now, Walter, what do you want me to do about that?" He finally agreed that being a marriage counselor was not part of my job description.

Shortly afterwards, Claiborne Pell phoned. He also urgently wanted to have lunch at the Metropolitan Club. We all knew that he had been lying in wait for Senator Theodore Francis Greene to retire so that he could run for his WASP Senatorial seat from Rhode Island. Greene was still holding on, so I assumed Claiborne wanted an embassy in the meantime. "No, it's not me, it's my father that I want to talk about," he said. I had once visited the Pell parents at their house at Hopewell Junction, New York, and I knew that the father, Herbert Pell, had been FDR's ambassador to Portugal in 1940. To my amazement Claiborne wanted to talk about a new embassy for his father. "I'm not thinking of London or Paris, but of course it would have to be a step up from Lisbon. Perhaps Stockholm or Rome?" "But, Claiborne, how old is your father now?" On being told he was "just ninety", I remonstrated: "But Claiborne, that means he is fifty years older than our new President. Everyone has had to recalculate these days. Scores of US Senators have now decided not to run for President after all. There is going to be a stress on youth in the new administration. I think you're going to have to discuss this directly with Jack." "Oh well, I thought I would just float a trial balloon, and see how you reacted."

Q: While you were going through this, what was the attitude of Kennedy's headhunters towards the foreign service?

HUGHES: Oh, the headhunters, and Bowles was one of them, were very skeptical about the foreign service, especially its oldest ranking officers. Chet thought that State needed big injections of younger, fresher blood. Shriver and Kennedy himself agreed with Bowles on this. They thought that in many cases the foreign service was part of the problem. Rusk, by contrast, admired the foreign service. If you looked at his favorite bureau, East Asia (FE), he surely regarded the U. Alexis Johnsons and Walter McConaughys of this world as eminent public servants. Elsewhere in the department, there was a certain sympathy for that part of the service which had suffered cleansings and expulsions as a result of McCarthy and Dulles, or had been left to wither on the vine, or sent to Latin America instead of to Asia because they were politically unacceptable. The fallout from the who-lost-China struggle left the East Asia Bureau in the hands of the Taiwan crowd, people who basically were going nowhere on China policy. On the other hand Chet wanted to appoint outsiders with positive reputations, which would make it easier for American policy to adjust to new opportunities.

Q: What about Shriver? He was later to be ambassador to France under Johnson.

HUGHES: Yes, but much more important was his early advisory role on appointments and then his organizing and energizing of the Peace Corps.

Q: What was your impression of how he operated at this time?

HUGHES: Very positive. Of all the Kennedy family, he was the easiest to deal with-thoughtful, helpful, and on the same wave length as Bowles. Before and after the election, Harris Wofford worked closely with Shriver and Harris was therefore a direct link between Shriver and Bowles. Bill Moyers, after he joined Shriver, was another important asset.

Q: Did Dean Rusk get into this at all?

HUGHES: Before Rusk became Secretary, Bowles was preeminent in proposing ambassadors and upper level State appointees. After Rusk's arrival on the scene, his only involvement that I can remember was his insistence that space be found at State for his two old friends U. Alexis Johnson and George McGhee, and that no space be found for Walt Rostow. He remembered Walt unpleasantly from somewhere, and didn't wish to have him around. So Walt went to the White House instead. At the end of the first year, for whatever reasons, Kennedy sent him back to State after all. Ironically, despite this background, Rusk and Rostow ended up in tandem as the two leading hawks of the late Johnson administration.

Q: Was there anything like a Rhodes Scholar mafia going on?

HUGHES: Yes, but I don't think that mafia is quite the right word. Walt Rostow and Dean Rusk were Rhodes Scholars, and early on they certainly weren't promoting one another. George McGhee was a Rhodes Scholar, but his connection with Rusk was more or less just a friendship. I think if you looked at the entire Rhodes Scholars story in the Kennedy and Johnson administrations-and someone should- you would find them deeply divided, especially on Vietnam. In the State Department Rusk, McGhee, Katzenbach, Cleveland, Dick Gardner, Bob Barnett, and others, were all Rhodes Scholars. But they held different views, sometimes strongly different ones. Rusk spent the most uncomfortable hours of his eight years in office being grilled at Senate Foreign Relations Committee hearings by Fulbright, another Rhodes man.

Still, you are right, a Rhodes network was there and it reached around town. In the Pentagon John McNaughton, for instance, played a vital role in McNamara's journey from hawk to dove. The CIA's George Carver, the optimistic briefer on Vietnam at the White House, was also a Rhodes Scholar. He was one of the courtiers around Walt Rostow, and, like Walt, he proudly remained a hawk to the end.

Q: Did being a Rhodes Scholar help you make connections?

HUGHES: Yes, personal connections, not policy connections. Some tried to convert their Oxford experience into policymaking. Thus Rusk and Rostow, who were both part of the prewar Rhodes group, used or overused their British legacy. The lessons of Munich and the appeasement of Hitler taught them to stand up to aggression. For them, this meant North Vietnam versus South Vietnam. Other Rhodes men disputed that analogy vigorously.

But when it came to personal connections, you are right. I suppose that subconsciously over time the Rhodes connection may even have played a protective role for me with Rusk as I delivered bad news to him year after year on Vietnam. But networks other than Oxford were also important. By 1961 my own included a diverse panoply-alumni from Carleton and Yale; old associates from Minnesota and Connecticut; friends from Student Federalists, the Air Force, and the Democratic platform; close contacts in Israel, India, the UK, Germany, and Puerto Rico; and staffers on both sides of Capitol Hill.

By then I had also begun an ever-expanding personal network by mail. During college years several of my speeches and articles had been published in the student press. But by the time I moved from Humphrey to Bowles, I had produced my first national magazine article which I mentioned earlier. Max Ascoli, editor of "The Reporter", had asked me to write a piece on "Foreign Policy and Capitol Hill". It was published in the spring of 1959, and I was supplied several dozen reprints. I thereupon started assembling a mailing list of influentials, a technique of attracting attention. I confess, which I picked up from my two political patrons. My Reporter article had been sent out from the Bowles office with copies rubber-stamped at the top "From the Desk of Thomas L. Hughes, Administrative Assistant to Chester Bowles." As speeches and articles were written in subsequent years, many other such mailings followed. This readership network was regularly replenished and updated.

Q: While you were helping put the administration together did Vietnam come up on your radar?

HUGHES: Not really in 1961. In the mid-to-late 50's, however, in a curious way Vietnam had already become a kind of liberal-Catholic alliance. The American Friends of Vietnam had been organized then in support of Diem, and it contained a roster of prominent American Catholics on its board including Jack Kennedy and various generals. Cardinal Spellman was the self-appointed "Vicar of Vietnam". Mike Mansfield was a champion of Diem in the 50's before he jumped ship in the 60's. But in the '50's. land reform and economic development in Vietnam were issues that appealed to liberals. This was a tie to people like Bowles. He realized that this wasn't exactly his crowd. On the other hand there were hopeful things to say about Diem in the early years.

When Kennedy entered the White House, Laos was the big issue in southeast Asia. Eisenhower had warned about dominoes there. Ultimately under Kennedy there was a trade off between Laos and Vietnam. He went for neutrality in Laos, giving it to Averell Harriman to see what he could work out, while he authorized 16,000 military advisers to bolster Vietnam.

Q: Was this balance between Laos and South Vietnam - fortify one-neutralize the other - was that made explicit? Was this coming from Kennedy?

HUGHES: No, but it was implicit. No one knew what the outcome in either place would be. Kennedy was going to be doing both at the same time- satisfying the hawks on Vietnam and satisfying the doves on Laos. The two policies were meant to be mutually reinforcing.

Q: I heard from somebody that Eisenhower had told Kennedy that he was going to support him in foreign policy but he shouldn't try to change our confrontation with communist China.

HUGHES: My impression of Eisenhower throughout the Kennedy administration was that he was unremittingly unhelpful on Asia policy. Kennedy in part appointed John McCone as CIA director because he was a Republican with good ties to Ike. He was often sent up to Gettysburg, and invariably came back from the general with hawkish responses on Vietnam and China. Eisenhower always proposed reinvesting in our military effort up to, and including, the use of nuclear weapons. Later Johnson dispatched General Goodpaster to Gettysburg, and the response was the same. I thought Eisenhower's advice to Kennedy and Johnson in the 1960's was deplorable. It contrasted sharply with his own non-intervention in Indochina in the 50's after the French debacle there.

Q: Still talking about the period when you are putting things together, what about the role of Averell Harriman at that time? And G. Mennen Williams, who was the first State Department appointee named by the Kennedy administration as Assistant Secretary for African Affairs. How about those two?

HUGHES: To take the second one first, "Soapy" Williams wanted a cabinet post (HEW, I think), but JFK convinced him that foreign policy was going to be more important and that he needed him at State. He was, as you say, Kennedy's first appointee there. Bowles had known Soapy well as governor of Michigan, and was pleased over the timing, the importance of Africa that it signaled, and the personal priority JFK seemed to attach to the newly independent African countries.

On the other hand, this was clearly a political payoff. Was Kennedy putting Williams out there as an early liberal hostage? Did he expect Acheson and Joe Alsop to start undermining G. Mennen Williams from day one, until bigger targets like Bowles himself came into view? Ultimately Bowles was forced out as Undersecretary in late 1961, with Williams still in office. . At that time a smiling Acheson actually accosted Soapy's deputy, Wayne Fredericks, in a State Department corridor. Pointing triumphantly to his belt, he said "See this scalp here? That's Bowles. Soapy is next."

Then there was Harriman. Instead of the image others held of him as a grand old man, he thought of himself as eternally young. He was also a wild card, and he was always available. At first Jack Kennedy had doubts about Harriman's loyalty, because Averell had been so disdainful of Joe Kennedy, his father. But you couldn't have had a more devoted Kennedy supporter than Averell the morning after the election. I think Kennedy thought he would give him an impossible assignment like Laos to see what he could do with it.

Harriman was quite willing to humble himself to do this, but he was not called "the crocodile" for nothing. He would cut people off with his sharp, quick tongue. He was irascible, rather unpredictable, and not necessarily always coherent. He would snap at this and snap at that. He turned off his hearing aid when people got boring. Kennedy was amused at that. I got to know Averell quite well during the Kennedy-Johnson years, and our friendship continued for years afterwards until his death. Jean and I often saw the Harrimans socially, both with his first wife Marie and later with Pamela. Occasionally we were guests for dinner at their house in Georgetown, or on weekends at their estate in Middleburg.

In April, 1963, Kennedy appointed the three of us to new positions at State-Harriman, Hilsman, and Hughes, "the three H's" Rusk called us, when swearing us in at the same ceremony on the seventh floor at State. On that occasion Harriman was elevated to an Undersecretary position, having just served as assistant secretary for East Asia. Hilsman succeeded him in East Asia, and I succeeded Hilsman in INR. By that time Laos was more or less behind us, and Vietnam was about to become a high priority problem.

Q: Wherever he sat, Harriman brought power with him.

HUGHES: Yes, power of a kind, but he also had ups and downs. His influence was episodic. After the Diem assassination controversy in late 1963, he played a lonely and lesser role. He chaired the Special Group (CI) on counter-insurgency, with mixed results. The significance of his assignments rose again in 1968 with the Vietnamese peace negotiations in Paris. Of course this is a man who thought throughout that he should have been president himself.

Q: Did you move into the State Department before Kennedy's inauguration January 20, 1961?

HUGHES: Yes, in fact Rusk, Bowles and I were the only New Frontiersmen to move into the State Department before the inaugural. We were given three little offices on the ground floor of the new building in the middle of December 1960, while Herter was still secretary. The really significant people, the A list, saw Rusk. The second most important people, the B list, saw Bowles. The rest saw me. For instance, my old Oxford friend and tutorial mate Nicholas Katzenbach came in one day wondering if there was a job for him in the Kennedy administration. I told him I didn't think there was anything at State but he might try Justice.

Frances Knight, the long-time head of the passport office, also came in one morning. She had gained an infamous reputation as a regular State Department link to Joe McCarthy and J. Edgar Hoover. She said, "Mr. Hughes I understand you are the person to see." I said, "Well, I don't know about that, Miss Knight. What is on your mind?" She said "Courtesy diplomatic passports. They are a scandal. We've got all these freeloaders like Robert Murphy. They sit on boards like the President's Intelligence Advisory Board, and get 40% price reductions on their Cadillacs from Saudi Arabia or wherever, just by waving their courtesy diplomatic passports. They get reductions here and rake-offs there. It's an outrage." "Courtesy diplomatic passports certainly sound dispensable," said I. "What's the downside in getting rid of them?"

"Here is the downside, Mr. Hughes." She handed me three passports. The first one read: "Joseph P. Kennedy. The bearer is the father of the President of the United States." The next one read: "Rose Fitzgerald Kennedy. The bearer is the mother of the President of the United States." Mrs. Fitzgerald Sr. was the third-"The bearer is the grandmother of the President of the United States." "And these are the only problems in abolishing courtesy diplomatic passports?" I asked. "Yes, only these three," she replied. "I understand that the rest of the family will all have positions in the government." I paused and then said, rather lamely, "I'm afraid this is a problem that is well above my pay grade, Miss Knight." "Oh", she said, "I was hoping we could settle it right here."

Q: I've never heard of those before. Courtesy diplomatic passports. She was probably the most politically attuned person around. She was very close to J. Edgar Hoover.

HUGHES: She was trying to get me in trouble before I took office.

Q: I take it all of a sudden people who had known you started calling in their chips

HUGHES: I remember two or three people whom I hadn't seen for several years who came in to remind me of our past friendship. Others were worried that they might be demoted or fired. Jim Fowler from AID (Agency for International Development), another old Oxford friend, was one of them. He had been close to Douglas Dillon in the outgoing administration and thought that his job might be in jeopardy. He was reassured when I was able to tell him that Dillon himself would be staying on in the Kennedy cabinet as secretary of the Treasury.

Q: What did Bowles see as his job and you as his assistant when he became undersecretary of state?

HUGHES: Of course he thought he should have been secretary. Traditionally the deputy's job was to administer the State Department, and Bowles certainly didn't have his heart in the daily routine of running the Department. He was interested in policymaking, high strategy, substantive issues - not in clearing outgoing telegrams from desk officers and making the place hum. So Bowles as Undersecretary was rather an ill-considered mismatch from the beginning. In a sense continuing to work as his assistant was also a mismatch for me. I had served as an assistant either with him or with Humphrey for the past six years, and I now yearned for larger personal responsibilities.

Q: Well how long were you with Bowles?

HUGHES: Just until the Bay of Pigs. In April when Roger Hilsman offered me the position as his deputy in INR, I seized the opportunity. Rusk and Bowles agreed that INR needed bolstering in the wake of that recent CIA disaster, although Chet was sorry to see me depart.

Q: So we are really only talking about three months.

HUGHES: Yet those months were not unproductive. During this period Bowles with my help drafted the now famous president's letter to ambassadors. Alex Johnson later took credit for the letter, but it was a Bowles initiative. The foreign service was an immediate beneficiary of that letter. Chet had come in determined to shore up the role of ambassadors and make it clear that they were in charge of their embassies. The CIA's secrecy before their Bay of Pigs fiasco helped make Kennedy's letter opportune.

Q: Could you explain for the record what the letter said?

HUGHES: It was a letter from the President, addressed to his ambassadors around the world, notifying them that they were to be fully in charge of their mission. They were to have access to all information in their embassies- to have copies, if they wished, of communications to and from their posts regardless of origin or agency. Basically it was a strong assertive Presidential letter confirming that the ambassador really was the chief of his mission, and that the behavior of all embassy personnel was subject to his authority, including the military and CIA.

This was also a deliberate effort to curb the mushrooming exploitation of embassies by other agencies. Indeed the foreign service element in some embassies was increasingly a minority segment with covert operators from the CIA, or with military, agricultural or commercial attachï¿½s, acting independently and without ambassadorial supervision. The new concept appealed to Kennedy because it reaffirmed Presidential authority. It appealed to the State Department and the foreign service because it asserted ambassadorial authority. The concept never worked perfectly in practice, but it was the high water mark of formal ambassadorial responsibility and in principle it is still in operation.

Q: It is still there. But there were posts that were still known as CIA Embassies and ones that were known as AID Embassies.

HUGHES: Bowles of course remembered his own embassy in India. Not that there were serious problems there. But Delhi would surely have been what you call an AID Embassy if there ever was one.

Q: How was Bowles perceived, from your perspective, by the State Department? He was the person to whom the professionals, both foreign service and civil service, reported.

HUGHES: At least in theory he was that person, but when U. Alexis Johnson came in as deputy undersecretary, he quickly assumed that role. Foreign Service officers in particular felt comfortable with Alex. Loy Henderson was still in the Department. As chief of administration, he undoubtedly resented an "outsider" like Bowles proposing the top appointments in the Department and abroad. He also may have disliked Bowles because of Chet's reputation as a successful ambassador to India who didn't have much regard for his foreign service predecessors there, one of whom was Loy Henderson.

Q: I think Henderson was sort of Mr. Foreign Service in addition to being head of administration.

HUGHES: Yes. I remember that he had an uneasy relationship with Bowles from the outset. He surely wanted to shift as much responsibility as possible to U. Alexis Johnson. Old line foreign service officers were clearly part of the Henderson lineup and many of them were unfriendly to Bowles. In his own memoirs Alex Johnson says kind things about Chet. He says he liked him personally, but that he was in the wrong job. Henderson also happened to have close relations with Acheson, which didn't help.

Generally speaking, younger foreign service officers who worked with Bowles liked him Some in fact, like Sam Lewis, become quite fond of him and are among his most loyal admirers. Even as undersecretary, and later on as a roving ambassador, when Bowles would go off to chair regional ambassadorial meetings abroad, the reports we got from the field were all very positive about personal reactions to Bowles.

The Bowles saga at State was a sad story. Ultimately the adverse factors all came together to do him in-the foreign service griping, the animosity from Acheson and Co., Bobby's animosity, and Kennedy's unhappiness with State in general. He could not fire Rusk, but had to blame someone. Whether all that would have happened if Bowles had played his cards better, or if he had lined up some of his foreign service supporters, is another question.

Q: Of course foreign service supporters are not worth very much in Washington. How did you see the relationship between Bowles and Alex Johnson. Was there a willing handing off of State Department details to Johnson?

HUGHES: I think so, and it was probably to Bowles disadvantage because the devil lies in the details. Unfortunately for Bowles, the old Rusk-Johnson relationship resumed and worked well. Chet was left isolated, high and dry.

Q: As a staff assistant were you seeing this or was this something you saw later?

HUGHES: Alex Johnson really came on board after I left the Bowles office, so it was something I saw later. But we did see early on, in the opening days of the administration, that George Ball, the Undersecretary for Economic Affairs, the third ranking officer at State, was going to be very important. This ranking, by the way, was a change. Under Herter the number two had been Dillon, the economic undersecretary. When Bowles agreed to take the number two job he insisted that it be political and not economic. This shifted economics to the number three post where Ball landed. Unlike Bowles, Ball was clever enough to surround himself with loyal foreign service and civil service officers who knew their way around the bureaucracy. Moreover because of Ball's interest in Europe, his office became a kind of Achesonian wing in the State Department as well as in effect being the economic side of EUR (Bureau of European and Canadian Affairs).

Q: Were you aware of these dukedoms. There was the Asian Dukedom and the European Dukedom? Then the sub-Dukedoms. The Latin American Dukedom?

HUGHES: In the Kennedy administration, they were increasingly dukedoms in name only. At the White House there were junior dukes like Adolph Berle and Richard Goodwin who considered Latin America their territory. That meant that life for assistant secretaries like Tom Mann and Ed Martin was complicated to say the least. When the Alliance for Progress came along, it had a White House stamp on it, and of course AID, USIA, ACDA and other large agencies helped diminish the dukedoms.

Q: Did Bowles try to reach out to these or was he above dealing with inter-bureau disputes and things of this nature?

HUGHES: Bowles was in fact very much involved in the Alliance for Progress. He was personally as responsible as anybody for Ted Moscoso's appointment as head of the Alliance. I mentioned earlier our deep involvement in Puerto Rico when Moscoso was earning his reputation as head of their economic development program. Bowles also had some good connections with other people in the administration outside State His relationship with Doug Dillon, for instance, went back many years and was generally positive. Ribicoff had gone to HEW, and while he always had a somewhat delicate relationship with Chet, it was a well established Connecticut one.

Q: You mentioned Richard Goodwin. During the short period you were with Bowles did the White House intrude much in policy matters?

HUGHES: They intruded a great deal, we later found out, in acquiescing in, if not cheering on, the Bay of Pigs. One of the supreme ironies was that one of Chet's old Connecticut friends, Dick Bissell, turned out to be the chief covert action officer planning this fiasco. Cuba was the final serious blow to the Bowles-Kennedy relationship. Chet found out about the prospective invasion of Cuba by accident, about a week ahead of time, when Rusk was away. Bowles immediately wrote a memorandum opposing the whole operation. To stay in channels, he gave the memo to Rusk asking him to deliver it to the President. He asked Rusk a day or so later if he had given Kennedy the memo, and Rusk said, "No, he hadn't actually given it to him. It wasn't necessary, because nothing was going to happen." Then it happened after all.

After Castro's victory over the exiles, the press got wind of the fact that Bowles had written a memo opposing the operation. Bobby rewarded Bowles by punching him in the stomach at a White House meeting, saying "You were for the invasion. Get it?" Bowles denied leaking his memo, but the incident reminded him that the Kennedys valued loyalty above any other virtue, not that that was a new discovery.

Q: Well, there is nothing worse than being right when the administration is wrong and have it known publicly.

HUGHES: No question about that.

Q: This is the 25th of August 1999. Tom, you said there was something you wanted to add about the Bay of Pigs.

HUGHES: Bowles used to know Richard Bissell at Yale. In fact he had originally wanted Bissell in the State Department as Undersecretary for Economic Affairs. This was before Ball's appointment. Chet knew that Bissell was working at the CIA, but he had no idea that he was organizing the Bay of Pigs. Chet innocently asked Dulles to release him, but Dulles said Bissell was indispensable to a highly secret project which he was not at liberty to disclose.

Q: Why did Richard Bissell have such a good reputation?

HUGHES: He was apparently a brilliant economics professor at Yale. I think Bill or Mac Bundy, perhaps both, studied under Bissell at Yale. He was widely known and widely respected. In addition he was very much a part of the Georgetown CIA set. Somehow he got into covert operations in the Eisenhower administration. Allen Dulles took a particular shine to him and had his eye on him as his own successor. The Kennedys' fondness for covert operations dovetailed with their early admiration for Bissell.

Q: While you were still with Bowles did Richard Goodwin appear anywhere?

HUGHES: Very much so. I think I mentioned earlier that Dick Goodwin was one of several young White House assistants who, in their first weeks in office in 1961, immediately upset the hierarchical values of the foreign service. Goodwin quickly arrogated to himself certain responsibilities for Latin America. He enjoyed a one-on-one talk with Che Guevara at Punta del Este early in the administration. Like others in the Kennedy White House, he too was devoted to covert operations but as a progressive idea. Dick thought they were perfectly compatible with his enthusiasm for the Alliance for Progress.

Then there were the new president's personal quirks on Latin America. One of the latter that vexed Bowles was Kennedy's inexplicable insistence on sending his unsavory Florida friend, Earl E. T. Smith, to Switzerland as ambassador. Smith's earlier connections with the pre-Castro Cuban dictator Batista were hardly a recommendation, and speculation grew that Kennedy's interest in having Mr. Smith out of the country had something to do with his own liking for Mrs. Smith. At any rate, the Swiss finally refused an agrï¿½ment for Smith on the grounds that his Batista background was incompatible with their ongoing role in handling Cuban interests for the US. So family values won out after all, the Smiths were not separated, and that was that.

Q: Was there any feeling that the Eisenhower administration had let them in for this?

HUGHES: Well the planning for the Bay of Pigs was certainly well advanced under Eisenhower. That fact later helped Democrats spread the blame. But JFK took personal responsibility, and ironically his popularity polls shot up immediately after the disaster. Still it was a demoralizing and inauspicious way for the young administration to begin.

Q: How much contact did you have at the upper echelons of the foreign service? Was there much effort on Bowles' part to reach out, or were things in such a state that it was the political appointees at the top who were in charge?

HUGHES: I think Bowles and the new Kennedy people generally could be faulted for not connecting more successfully with their potential sympathizers in the foreign service. The FSOs were not all old fogies, and many of them could have been of more genuine help than they turned out to be. Most of the assistant secretaries of the geographical bureaus (Europe, East Asia, Latin America) were foreign service officers, but they too were newly appointed to their positions and chosen by the administration. Yet Kennedy himself, privately but frequently, complained about the lack of responsiveness at State. I probably should have been more active myself in bringing Bowles together with promising younger FSOs, and in retrospect I regret not doing so.

The Bay of Pigs, the earliest disaster of the new administration, was produced and executed without foreign service participation. Neither Hilsman nor the INR bureauplayed any role in that mismanaged enterprise. In its wake, there was common agreement in State, however, that INR was the logical place for a more active liaison with CIA and defense intelligence (DIA).

Q: Well Hilsman was only in INR for a short time wasn't he?

HUGHES: A short time before the Bay of Pigs, yes. But he served as director of INR from January, 1961, through March, 1963, more than two years. He had strong support from the White House. Kennedy, like Bowles, had been favorably impressed with Roger on Capitol Hill when he was still at the Legislative Reference Service at the Library of Congress. Roger had considerable rapport with Jack Kennedy.

Q: How did you get moved to INR?

HUGHES: Roger invited me to be his deputy, and Rusk and Bowles agreed. Roger and I knew one another well. For us it was a mutually convenient arrangement.

Q: That would have been about April 1961. How long were you there?

HUGHES: Until August, 1969, seven months into the Nixon administration. Kennedy appointed me director of INR in April, 1963, when Hilsman was shifted to become assistant secretary for East Asia. I remained in INR under Johnson, so I was deputy in INR for two years, and director for over six.

Q: In the spring of 1961, how did you see the role of INR within the State Department apparatus?

HUGHES: The geographic bureaus had always had a somewhat jaundiced attitude toward the research and analysis side of intelligence as an independent commentator on developments in their regions. The question of how distant intelligence should be from policy; how relevant research should be for policy; whether it should be prioritized in any way to reflect the concerns of the White House rather than just those of the regional bureaus; how much independence INR should have- questions like these were still unresolved and perhaps unresolvable.

Moreover INR represented State in and to the so-called intelligence community, and that was also often a tender point with geographic bureaus who liked to maintain their own relationships with CIA and DOD. The anomaly that INR was independent of policy control inside the State Department, yet spoke for State at the meetings of the United States Intelligence Board (USIB) and in writing National Intelligence estimates (NIEs), remained an anomaly.

In 1961 briefing responsibilities by INR's regional office directors were also being enhanced with the regional bureaus. Personal briefings by the director of INR of the secretary of state and other top officers in the department were regularized. For eight years, every morning that the Secretary of State was in town, the director of INR or his deputy briefed Dean Rusk, either alone in his office or at his staff meetings in the presence of the other assistant secretaries. Obviously the latter occasionally found this frustrating because in their eyes we were trespassing on their territory, using cablegrams they thought were theirs, and melding them with other intelligence to come up with a unified product. We were often in the position of second guessing the regional bureaus.

INR also got a big surge of energy with Hilsman's appointment as director. Roger was a very energetic activist and he was determined to put INR on the map. I was happy to collaborate in that exercise, and I think we formed a pretty good team. Both of us had academic backgrounds, but Roger was a West Pointer and a war hero to boot. He was an OSS (Office of Strategic Services) parachutist who rescued his father from a prison camp in the Philippines in World War II. His own interests were in Asia, and mine in Europe so we complemented one another nicely. Roger's later book To Move a Nation contains a highly readable account of our INR years together.

From the beginning we shared the responsibility of briefing Rusk. That meant getting up at 5:00 a.m., driving to the State Department every morning for a staff meeting with INR briefers at 6:30, and briefing the Secretary at 7:30. At first we briefed him at 8:00 o'clock, but McNamara began phoning the President and others around town at 7:30, referring to intelligence matters, thereby forcing everybody else to get up that much earlier so as not to be upstaged. The pressure on the new frontier was to see who could get up the earliest and start the telephones ringing. We put in long hours and long days. Frequently we didn't get home until 8:00 or 9:00 p.m.

That pace continued throughout the 60's. There is a new volume on the Vietnam War by Bill Gibbons which has Lyndon Johnson ordering his staff to "get that fellow Hughes out of bed and tell him I want a memo by seven tomorrow morning. I want it masterfully written, the way Abe Fortas would write a Supreme Court decision. It's up to that fellow Hughes, him and his people over at State. Tell him their President insists on it."

Q: While you were working with Hilsman, how did you divide up your work?

HUGHES: Generally speaking, we overlapped so that I understudied him and was ready to take over when he was away. Kennedy had a habit of sending Roger to Vietnam or on other special errands, and I was in charge during his absences those first two years.

We were also given a fair amount of discretion, which Roger and I jointly exercised, in deciding whom to appoint as office directors in INR. Far more than any other unit in State, we recruited talent from outside, including many young academics who later went on to distinguished careers in government or academia-people like Robert Good for Africa, Granville Austin for the Near East and South Asia, John Plank and Gregory Wolfe for Latin America, and Allen Whiting and Fred Greene for East Asia. We were also at liberty to choose talent from inside the government like William Hitchcock, David Mark, and Helmut Sonnenfeldt for West Europe and the "Soviet Bloc". We were organized regionally and functionally, conforming to the rest of the department. Our office directors all had independent reputations in their field, and more than held their own in departmental and inter-agency discussions.

One of our most deliberate appointments was Allen Whiting for East Asia. With China and Indochina heaving into the foreground as looming policy problems in 1961, we wanted an office director who had been knowledgeable about, and sensitive to, the last major Chinese intervention. Whiting was the author of "China Crosses the Yalu", a definitive account of the Chinese intervention in the Korean War. Whiting proved to be a major influence on both Dean Rusk and George Ball in the 1960's as well as on Henry Kissinger and his opening to China in the 1970's.

In INR in 1961 Hilsman and I also deliberately decided to crossruff the expertise on West and East Europe by appointing a Soviet expert as office director for the west and a west European expert as office director for the east, including the Soviet Union. This gave us a certain flexibility of insight on the German question, for example, as the situation advanced from the Hallstein Doctrine's attempt to hold the line against international recognition of East Germany to Ostpolitik when Willy Brandt became foreign minister. We deliberately broke up rigidities of mindsets and thus prepared the way for a serious airing of new possibilities and trends.

Actually such anticipatory calculations became important soon enough. The crisis over the Berlin wall suddenly arose in August, 1961, during Kennedy's first summer as president. With my own long background in German affairs, I myself was quickly thrust into high level discussions in the State Department. I now had INR resources for backup. During the next two years I visited both Germanys on my own. I accompanied Rusk and Kennedy to Bonn and Berlin as well.

Before leaving this discussion about our division of labor in INR, let me mention one more thing. My legal background perhaps brought some additional rigor to the supervision of research and analysis in INR. We had considerable to and fro in our early morning briefings. My Yale Law background was later singled out by Ambassador Llewellyn Thompson and Dean Rusk when they recommended me for the Fleming award. for government service in 1965-an award which I shared with Pat Moynihan and Paul Volcker.

Incidentally, my INR experience left me with ambivalent views about lawyers in government. I just read an article in today's New York Times about how our current National Security Advisor, Sandy Berger, is a lawyer and therefore represents caution, presumably both tactical and strategic. By contrast, my experience of lawyers in the foreign policy world of the 50s and 60s was that, far from being cautious, they were among the most enthusiastic extra-legal interventionists around, starting with the two Dulles brothers, both international lawyers, one of whom stood for "massive retaliation" while the second specialized in covert operations-two very unlawyer-like notions.

Q: Well it depends on your definition of a lawyer. If you consider a lawyer to be essentially a shark looking for targets of opportunity.

HUGHES: Maybe it's a difference between international lawyers and trial lawyers. Still, it is a phenomenon that some of the nation's leading international lawyers reveled in secrecy and dirty tricks. I'm thinking not only of the Dulles brothers, but also of Dean Acheson, Clark Clifford, Cy Vance, Richard Nixon, Bill Casey, and their juniors like Bill Bundy and John McNaughton. All were trained lawyers. Instead of bringing their analytical skills to bear on the side of caution strategically, they brought these skills to bear only tactically, if at all. There were prominent lawyers on the President's Foreign Intelligence Advisory Board and in the CIA who regularly and comfortably encouraged covert operations. The American Bar Association's International Affairs Division remains uncritical of them.

Q: How did you feel about the split between the professional civil servants who gave the long term memory to INR and the essentially short term people? I was on the horn of Africa, came there in late 1960 and was on it for two years before I went to Yugoslavia. What I brought with me as a foreign service officer was the fact that I had an Eritrean house boy when I was in Saudi Arabia. The only connection I had. You have this split.

HUGHES: We benefited institutionally from the combination, although I agree it was an uneasy compromise. The civil servants regarded themselves as long term experts and as custodians of a certain tradition. They tolerated the foreign service adulteration that came into the bureau. On the other side, foreign service officers resented the fact a lot of slots in INR were occupied by civil servants that might otherwise be available for foreign service officers. We were always under pressure to take more foreign service officers. We tried to pick the best we could find, and we had some extremely good ones. Often we found they were in between ambassadorial assignments or otherwise accidentally available. We also made INR an attractive enough place in the 1960's so that FSOs did not resent being assigned to us. If you look at the total INR alumni list you will find several spectacular FSO alumni who went on to ambassadorial posts and other high governmental positions.

Q: You mentioned briefing the secretary and sometimes as far up as the president, what was the difference between the briefing you were giving and the briefing the European Bureau was giving?

HUGHES: EUR tended to concentrate on its own incoming and outgoing cablegrams. INR had EUR's cablegrams too, but in addition we were much more all-source. Inter-regional topics that overlapped the geographical bureaus and the worldwide context of INR's work generally also gave us an edge. By briefing early in the morning, INR had the advantage of first access both to incoming material and to top officials. We too were kept on our toes by the fact that the regional bureau assistant secretaries were also seated around the table during our mid-morning briefings at the Secretary's large staff meetings. Our early morning private briefings of Rusk also allowed him to consider what he wanted to pursue with the regional bureaus. We gave him a quick consolidated overview which in turn gave him a certain lead-time to think instead of being caught off guard.

Q: What was McNamara doing?

HUGHES: He was exuberantly intervening in just about everything with enormous self-assurance.

Q: He was basically meddling in foreign affairs when he was secretary of defense.

HUGHES: Yes, although I suppose everything was defense from his perspective. Of course, if you look at the crises that quickly confronted the Kennedy administration-the Soviet Union, Berlin, Laos, Vietnam, China, India, Pakistan, and Cuba-it is true that they all had big military components.

Q: After all there is quite a difference between seeing what the situation is and having the military seeing what they can do.

HUGHES: McNamara was busy doing both, unbothered by any jurisdictional qualms that others might have had. He had the advantage of being up against a taciturn and unassertive secretary of state who admired the military and put few roadblocks in his way. There was a take charge element in McNamara from the day he arrived from the Ford Motor Company. Before long, certainly by the third or fourth month of the administration, McNamara was recognized as the star performer at meetings with the President, the cabinet, and on Capitol Hill. He was confident, competent, and apparently authoritative. Rusk saved his advice for the President-perhaps even from him, some of us thought. Nevertheless Rusk was unfailingly pleasant to deal with. His sense of propriety and procedure benefited INR. He defended our independence and supported our right to call things as we saw them.

Q: When you say call it the way you see it - I think of INR in the traditional sense, describing turmoil here and there, reporting that such and such is happening. Then you have policy planning saying that we do something.

HUGHES: That's a theoretical difference, but one that was less accurate in the 1960's. For its part, Policy Planning went its own way, often devoting more time to writing speeches than planning policy. Its role also differed over time depending on its chairman-whether George McGhee, Walt Rostow, or Henry Owen.

Kennedy told INR that he was keen on "policy relevant research". We put that theme up on our bulletin board in large letters "No Research without Recommendations." That was an overstatement. We avoided recommendations. But we did want to produce research and analysis that would attract the attention of policy makers. While the batting average differed from time to time, analyst to analyst, and office to office, this was a change. The INR of the '60s was trying to produce policy-relevant research. Not only might a particular research memorandum convey policy implications, but it would often tend to force its readers to focus on serious policy options.

Moreover we would prioritize our own research tasks with a view toward the policy audience. That is to say, our knowing that worry about China, or a possible war on the subcontinent, was on presidential and secretarial desks meant that we would devote more effort to those topics. We were not going to neglect the rest of the world; indeed we would continue to write about most of it. But we were going to give priority to the policymakers' priorities.

Bear in mind that INR's role was almost entirely on the analytical side of intelligence.That was our main function, both in our own production and in our input to intelligence community deliberations. The first draft writing in INR was done by analysts under the supervision of their office directors. These drafts were then reviewed and edited, prior to publication, by INR's highly competent longtime Deputy Director Allan Evans and his staff. Hilsman and I would occasionally be directly involved in that reviewing process, and almost always prior to our signing off on the document for publication or release.

In the 1960's INR also had a small office for "coordination". It was headed by another Deputy Director-first Joe Scott, then Murat Williams, and finally Bill Trueheart, all foreign service officers. The mandate of this staff was to monitor CIA covert activities and thus avoid, where possible, adverse foreign policy consequences. The directors of INR also supervised these deputies whose activity was kept quite separate from the bureau's main analytical functions.

Q: What about the relationship with CIA? What was your impression of the analysis we were getting from CIA and how we used it?

HUGHES: That is a big and complicated question with many different aspects to it. When I joined INR, CIA was in something of a shambles, not because of deficiencies on the analytical side, but because its chief covert operation had boomeranged. The agency as a whole was discredited by the Bay of Pigs and Allen Dulles' head was on the block.

Covert operations in the 1950s had been a Dulles family enterprise. I don't think anyone yet has really put together the improbable story of the two Dulles brothers, operating in tandem, running the State Department and the CIA at the same time, and the forces that they set in motion in the Eisenhower administration. The institutionalization of the CIA in the '50s- the growth of an infant industry protected under the fraternal patronage of a big brother in the State Department-took an unlikely and privileged course.

The fact that John Foster Dulles was nobody's favorite social companion contrasted with the charm of his younger brother. Allen had friends strategically located around the world. He had an eye for talent and recruited analysts who were well recognized in their special fields. Incidentally, the CIA of Allen Dulles sociologically represented the last stronghold of the old WASP establishment, protected by secrecy, compartmentalization and camaraderie with the director. The eastern elite still thrived at CIA. They were gentlemanly and sure of themselves. They were also at the heart of the then thriving Georgetown salons that regularly brought journalists and secret agents together in the evenings- the Alsops with the Wisners, the Friendlys with the Barneses, the Restons with the Brosses, the Fritcheys with the Fitzgeralds.

I had already had a glimpse of the CIA's analytical side while working for Bowles in Connecticut. In the mid-1950's, as an eastern establishmentarian out of office, even he was befriended by Allen Dulles. Indeed Chet's connection to Washington during the Eisenhower administration was often a CIA connection. Thus the draft articles that Bowles and I wrote for the New York Times Magazine would, prior to publication, often be sent down to Bob Amory at CIA for a kind of final clearance. Facts were checked and our unorthodox opinions held within respectable bounds. Occasionally Amory and his friends would send back a suggested change here and a recommendation there. This was a convenient service, provided at no charge to a frequently published author from the opposition political party.

And there were subsurface ties that also helped smooth relations. For example, Sherman Kent, the CIA's legendary presider over national intelligence estimates, happened to be the brother of Roger Kent, the then chairman of the Democratic party in California and a friend of Bowles. I also had the impression that several of Chet's agency friends were on friendly terms with the editors of magazines and newspapers.

When Allen Dulles left, a lot of this noblesse oblige left with him. He was succeeded by John McCone, another kind of Republican-a big businessman, an ambitious anti-Communist, a Knight of Malta, and a bureaucratic infighter with a serious background in nuclear matters dating from his last government assignment with the Atomic Energy Commission. McCone took his new title literally. He was The Director of National Intelligence. Moreover, President Kennedy had unfortunately told him that he was to have expanded power, not only within the intelligence community, but as a policy adviser to the White House. Simultaneously Kennedy was telling us at INR that we too were to have a beefed up role. Like FDR before him, JFK enjoyed stimulating a certain amount of bureaucratic infighting among his subordinates.

With his grandiose view of his role, McCone set out to manage the entire intelligence community. But at INR we weren't interested in being managed by McCone. Kennedy in fact appointed me as INR director in the spring of 1963 without consulting McCone at all. If McCone was miffed about it, however, he quickly recovered. He and I worked amicably for his remaining two years in office.

The atmospherics around McCone were also self-enhancing. The CIA was an organization with no genuine tradition, but it had hastened to manufacture an artificial culture of its own. There was a sometimes comical stress on protocol. The Deputy Director, General Pat Carter, trumpeted McCone's "statutory authority" so often that the rest of us joked about it. At the weekly meetings of the United States Intelligence Board, the whole room was required to stand up when The Director entered. This bit of etiquette was never on display anywhere else outside the White House. In the State Department such honors were never rendered to the secretary of state. Many of us around the USIB table took only a grudging part in this obsequious performance. Rising to this occasion at CIA headquarters was very half-hearted on our part, and I am afraid we struggled to our feet rather unconvincingly.

Q: Did you have a feeling they were trying to ape the British and the British MI5? That is where they were getting their tradition in a way.

HUGHES: Well, I don't know, maybe it came from the Ivy League habit of saying "sir" in prep school. USIB was an entirely a male proposition, of course. Speaking of the British, they were still the objects of special affection in the CIA and the intelligence community generally. In fact intelligence sharing was at the heart of our so-called special relationship with Britain. This itself was ironical, considering that the famous scandals, from Philby, Burgess, and MacLean to Anthony Blunt were all British intelligence scandals. No one seemed to hold them against the British cousins.

Q: At this time did INR present the practical side and assemble all the information- CIA culling its intelligence, the military culling military intelligence, and INR putting it together?

HUGHES: Not really. The CIA thought that it was supposed to do the coordinating. But INR likewise produced so-called "all-source intelligence", albeit tailoring it for State Department consumption. So, like CIA, we too we were in the business of homogenizing a total product from many sources. To the degree that the policy implications of CIA's policy-relevant research differed from those of our policy-relevant research, we were at loggerheads. McCone wasn't in charge of the distribution of our product. Kennedy and other White House consumers insisted that INR's publications come over to them directly without any CIA clearance. So there we were, a kind of autonomous part of the intelligence community, not under the practical control of the director of central intelligence, no matter what his new prerogatives theoretically were.

However the CIA did in fact coordinate one major product-the national intelligence estimates which were finally amended and approved by the United States Intelligence Board. But USIB had its own organizational problems. In an effort to coordinate military intelligence, the Defense Intelligence Agency (DIA) had been created. Its director, General Carroll, sat at USIB, but so did the separate army, navy, and air force intelligence chiefs. The result often was that the national intelligence estimate, supposed to be the coordinated product of the whole intelligence community, became a document that exhibited the many disagreements in the intelligence community.

A number of NIEs on Vietnam in '64 and '65, for example, were replete with footnoted dissents. Sometimes INR and the Army would jointly dissent. At other times the air force or NSA would do so. McNamara got so upset about the multiplicity of these dissents that he started going over the heads of the military members to ask the CIA for special private estimates for his own use. Such circumventions tended made a mockery of the national intelligence process.

On the CIA's estimates side, Sherman Kent's pride and joy was his semantic calculus of favorite words denoting gradations ranging along a scale from the low end of "highly unlikely" and "possibly" to the high end of "probably" and "almost certainly". The trouble was that the policymakers never seemed to align their policies accordingly. This table of likelihoods appeared to have few operational consequences. (In the early 1970's after leaving the government, I wrote an article expanding on my INR experiences. It deals at some length with the estimative process. See "The Power to Speak and the Power to Listen", a chapter I wrote after leaving INR. It appears in "Secrecy", edited by Thomas Frank and Edward Weisband, 1973.)

Q: Did you find that games were played? Such as CIA would hold something back until the last minute and then say "oh this is just off the wire" or something like that?

HUGHES: The current intelligence people in the CIA and often in the armed services raced to satisfy the policymakers' "succulent taste for the hot poop." I think a look at how briefings were handled in the White House over the Kennedy and Johnson years would illustrate this phenomenon. How many actual hours were spent in the oval office briefing the President? Who brought the intelligence and how systematic was it?

On the covert operations side of the CIA, there was a more systematic procedure. I mentioned earlier that INR was given the responsibility, for the first time during the Kennedy administration, to monitor the CIA's covert operations. This function was narrowly compartmentalized and closely held. INR analysts, for example, were not privy to such information. The result was that they wrote at a considerable disadvantage on certain occasions like the Gulf of Tonkin episodes in August, 1964.

In the Kennedy, Johnson, and Nixon administrations, the ubiquitous U. Alexis Johnson was the chief State Department member of what in 1961 was called the "5412 Committee". Later it became the "Special Group", then the "303 Committee", and then the "40 Committee." It was the inter-agency committee that dealt with covert operations. In Alex Johnson's absence, either his occasional successors (Tommy Thompson and/or Foy Kohler) or Hilsman or I myself attended these meetings. The "coordination" unit in INR also handled the advance staff work in the State Department for these meetings. It was often handicapped by the sudden arrival of last minute proposals.

This committee usually met in the White House or the Executive Office Building and was presided over by Mac Bundy, or when it dealt with Cuba in 1962-4, by Bobby Kennedy. For many years Cy Vance represented the Pentagon. A lot of what went on was later aired in the Senate and House investigations in the 1970's by Senator Church and Congressman Pike, including discussion of the assassination plots against Lumumba, Trujillo, and Castro. These were eye openers for Hilsman and me on the few occasions we attended. We had glimpses of an approval process that combined Presidential awareness with a determination to avoid responsibility. The thirst for "plausible deniability" led to an effort, usually successful, not to have a Presidential paper trail.

"Plausible deniability" became distinctly less plausible with Operation Mongoose, the code name for Bobby Kennedy's covert operations against Castro and Cuba. When LBJ became President, he let it be known that his revered predecessor's brother had been "conducting murder incorporated" in the Caribbean, and that he, Johnson, was going to get out of that kind of thing. He was also prepared to use this poison cupboard ammunition against Bobby to dissuade him from some future contest for the Presidency.

Q: You say deniability. Was this quite apparent? Someone would go scuttling off to the White House to say it was all right?

HUGHES: "Plausible deniability" was something everybody pretended to believe in. It was supposed to protect Presidents from being implicated personally in covert actions. In 1960 when the Soviets shot down Gary Powers and the U-2, Eisenhower's admission that he had ordered the flight had torpedoed a summit meeting. Thereafter circumlocutions took the place of traceable Presidential orders. According to the new myth, somebody must have authorized it but not necessarily the president himself. Kennedy's famous Shakespearian allusion to the ancient murder of Thomas a Becket, the archbishop of Canterbury- "will no one rid me of this turbulent priest?"- was thought to be the model for future Presidential approvals. Such implicit instructions were thought to be sufficient marching orders for the multitude of covert operations against Castro for instance, including the assassination plots.

Dean Rusk's approach to covert operations was still different. He knew that covert operations were going on, but he preferred not to know about them. He used to tell me that if the Portuguese Foreign Minister was on the CIA payroll, he didn't want to know about it because he had to deal with him man to man. Never mind that the Portuguese Foreign Minister himself surely assumed that Rusk did know.

This was a built-in dilemma which I regularly mentioned to Rusk whenever he said he would prefer not to know. His kind of plausible deniability was to be able truthfully to say "To the best of my knowledge, nothing like this is going on." This satisfied Rusk somehow. I would say "But you are the secretary. Some US officials are engaging in secret foreign policy operations with unpredictable consequences. Your close associate and deputy undersecretary, Alex Johnson, is over there in weekly meetings, approving these operations. It's a little hard for people to believe that you don't know." "Well," Rusk would say, "I just prefer to leave it that way."

Q: People I've talked to say there was a widely held belief in the foreign service that most of the covert operations the CIA was engaged in ended up being quite counterproductive to our foreign policy. It became known; it wasn't done very well; short-term gains, long-term losses, that sort of thing. I would have thought it would have been the straight foreign service line to say "Hey wait a minute you cowboys over at the CIA are trying to do things, but will this really help?"

HUGHES: The CIA's answer was "It's not supposed to become known, and it is your fault if it does become known. That's why it has to be closely held, compartmentalized, preferably restricted just to ourselves." Never mind all the CIA connections with the press, like the quiet relationships between luminaries at the Washington Post and the CIA over the years. I mean the whole myth of guaranteed secrecy was a not only a will-o-the-wisp but a farce. Still you were regularly met with the standard CIA success story- - "Our successes are hidden, and you would be the first to applaud if you only knew what they were." This used to frustrate and annoy us.

Q: I had only one slight contact with Roger Hilsman, one time when I was briefing him about events in the Congo. This was when all hell was breaking loose there. He just seemed to swell up and enjoy the talk about columns coming through the Congolese jungle of rebel troops. He started talking about his Burma days. Owen Roberts, our analyst for the Congo, kept saying "These guys may be spotted. They are going to go home and have beer and lay their wives or girl friends and this is not going anywhere." There were big arrows pointed. I would have thought with this OSS (Office of Strategic Services) background that he would have reveled in this sort of thing.

HUGHES: Roger of course had a heroic wartime background in the Burma theater. But I don't think of his reveling too much in covert operations. He reveled in counter-insurgency like President Kennedy. Concepts like "strategic hamlets" and "ink blots" in Vietnam really absorbed his attention. He was an admirer of British General Thompson of Malaysian guerilla warfare fame. Roger agreed with him that the situation in South Vietnam required new, unconventional notions about how to pacify the countryside. President Kennedy was on that same wavelength

Q: One of the complaints I've heard again and again from political officers is that "Nine-tenths of what the CIA was getting was from the same sources that a political officer would use except it was stamped secret or top secret and therefore carried more weight." Of course, there was lots of money behind this and that made it automatically tainted.

HUGHES: At least it meant that the same source had the choice of being paid for his information by an American spy or giving it free to an American diplomat.

Q: How did you deal with this?

HUGHES: Fitfully. We lived with it. The CIA covert operators were still riding high despite their failures. The President still looked for covert solutions to overt problems. Evan Thomas has written his excellent book, The Very Best Men, about Barnes, Bissell, Fitzgerald, and Wisner. Their world was a social world of self-congratulation. They lived in a kind of extended house party from Choate or a frat party from Yale. They never grew up. The book is an account of one disaster after another. As they saw it, there were successful models to be emulated-the military coup in Guatemala and the restoration of the Shah in Iran were covert triumphs to be duplicated elsewhere. All this was heady stuff for the guys who were doing it, because they had great freedom to operate, mostly without restraints.

By 1961 the growth of the bureaucracy and the beginning of Xeroxing meant that the danger of leaks was going to multiply, thus arming the covert operators with further arguments for secrecy. The Kennedy administration still gave free rein to an entrenched group of covert operators who doubled as big-time elitists, congratulating themselves at night for what they had achieved during the day. Their wives all believed them. Many of the latter, now widows, are still playing bridge in Georgetown and reminiscing about the good old days.

Q: What were you picking up from your analysts, both foreign service and civil service? People say "That is some kind of crap we are getting from CIA. It's stuff that has been in the newspaper or it's regurgitated reporting that we've already had."

HUGHES: We heard such complaints and often made them ourselves. In defense, the CIA would always say, with self-satisfaction, that they had confirmed the rumors that were in the newspapers. There were always answers, but the complaints continued as well. And the covert operators continued to do things that the analysts didn't know about or could only surmise. So when events like the Gulf of Tonkin "attacks" happened, the analysts, without reliable knowledge of the covert context, were left with the lame explanation that the North Vietnamese inexplicably must have decided to start something.

One of the problems confronting the director of INR was to operate as a manager over compartmentalized sets of people who didn't know what some others knew. The "need-to-know" requirements were hard to handle. It was awkward to tell analysts that some things were going on that they weren't cleared for, that therefore their analysis was seriously deficient and/or should be hedged. Meanwhile the covert operators could claim that they were following presidential commands to get results. This dichotomy came back to haunt us in the Gulf of Tonkin and elsewhere.

Q: If you have analysts in CIA and analysts in INR and the analysts in INR are getting the product of CIA and also from the military intelligence, I assume the analysts in CIA are getting this same thing. They couldn't be analyzing exclusively from their own stuff.

HUGHES: Correct. Even more so. CIA officials regarded themselves as surrogate directors of Central Intelligence, and therefore responsible for coordinating everything. However INR also used basically the same incoming data.

Q: What was the difference? I can see where it is not a bad idea to have two organizations come up and both look at the same thing so you don't run into a straight line recommendation which may be wrong. Was this built in?

HUGHES: We tried to shape our analysis for State Department use, but redundancy was certainly very much a part of the rationale for our continuing existence. There were also historic reasons why we existed-the residue of the OSS was originally in the State Department, before the CIA was created. So institutionally we were in a strong position. We were also able to say that we knew better than the CIA what the daily requirements of policymakers were. We could say that we had been asked for a speedy analysis by policymaker X and were responding to a request. But ours was always a somewhat defensive role, and you can be sure that any self-respecting director of Central Intelligence had his eye on INR and thought that we were more or less superfluous and duplicating what CIA was doing.

Still, when it came to competition, we were small beer compared to the enormous Pentagon. The Department of Defense was the main bureaucratic problem facing every director of central intelligence, not INR.

Q: The Pentagon means the military with money. The military component of foreign policy is important but only when all hell breaks loose, and if all hell isn't breaking loose the military is essentially a passive force.

HUGHES: Well, yes, but take something like West Germany in the 60's- a playground of East German spies, Soviet spies, US spies, and allied spies. Our military had every excuse and every incentive to participate, and then some. DOD had both the money and the people. In Washington and overseas, the Pentagon's great advantage over the diplomats- and over the CIA, too, for that matter- was that it could outnumber everybody else. The military could dominate meetings just by sheer numbers. Annoyingly they could offer bodies to do jobs for other people who were suffering from small budgets. The military and DOD civilians were always there in greater numbers than the rest of us ever wanted, and they also had the money which the rest of us always wanted. What is more, overseas embassies often had capable and flattering defense attaches. Ambassadors enjoyed them. They had airplanes that could fly ambassadors around.

Most important of all, the Pentagon had the big intelligence budgets-NSA's code breaking budget and the scientific reconnaissance and photographic budgets. John McCone was the first to realize what he lacked, and more importantly, what he might have. McCone read his charter as director of Central Intelligence as putting him in charge of all these big budget intelligence operations in the event of a major war. He was always confronting McNamara saying "Well, in peacetime you may technically have budgetary responsibility for NSA, but in wartime it will all shift to me." You can imagine how McNamara reacted to that argument. Not on his watch! But McCone's reach exceeded his grasp. There was a huge stalemate over this theoretical argument. McCone made a big personal issue over who was going to be in charge of intelligence in World War III. He ultimately got frustrated and left office with the issue unresolved.

Q: I was in Greece for four years as a Consul General. The CIA station chief was pushing his own agenda. He had very close ties to the Greek colonels. That seemed to carry more weight than the political section because the CIA reports were secret. The impression was you may know this, but we know something sort of underneath, and we can't tell you everything that is going on. I saw that playing out in a rather pernicious way, I felt. Was that same thing happening within our government?

HUGHES: This was a typical story from embassies, especially where there had been a long-standing CIA role. The Greek royal family lost a lot when Allen Dulles retired. His personal liaison, shall I say, with Queen Frederika was well cultivated. There were high level CIA ties elsewhere. Ambassadors had their Presidential letter that we discussed before. It gave them full responsibility for their embassies, including access to all incoming and outgoing messages. They had a right to be fully briefed on what the CIA was up to. In practice, though, it was a mixed record. Maybe yes, maybe no. Some ambassadors, in spite of their Presidential letter, acted like Dean Rusk. They preferred not to know.

Q: Was there concern on the part of the State Department about the purchasing of intelligence? This is a two edged sword. Particularly if you go after officials. This is dangerous because intelligence becomes sort of suspect that you get and the knowledge thereof, and it may have long term effects. Were we getting any reports from the field saying "I understand that some CIA officers are sent out and they have to recruit X number of people and they really want to hire agents." Was this an issue?

HUGHES: Yes, it was an issue. Again, consider the German scene in the '60's. Adenauer, who himself was a somewhat tyrannical democrat, thought of his opposition, the Social Democrats, more or less as communists. He didn't want to countenance any official American diplomatic connection with his opposition. This automatically opened the door for the CIA to have covert connections with the Social Democrats. The CIA could say with some justification: "One of these days der Alte is going to go and there will be a new government, formed by the opposition. He has effectively forbidden foreign service access to the opposition. Somebody has to build this relationship and we in CIA are obviously the ones."

So the path was opened for CIA to be in touch covertly with Willy Brandt. Some day he was going to be important, and eventually he was. And of course eventually there was also a public disclosure of the CIA connection with Brandt, to everyone's embarrassment.

Years later, after the Berlin wall fell, and the former East German spymaster, Marcus Wolf, was free to travel, I told Bill Colby that the two of them would be perfect as a team for the American lecture circuit. They could command high prices. The kids would all come to their dog and pony show. They could exchange anecdotes about who tapped the most phones in West Germany and who had the most West Germans on the payroll.

London was another favorite spot where the door was open for the CIA to develop contacts that in a democratic society should have been perfectly normal diplomatic contacts. Again we are talking about the advantage of numbers. The CIA agents resident in London were not working against British targets. They were working against targets in Italy or Czechoslovakia, but out of London, because they liked to live in London. British society was left to speculate on what all these CIA people were doing in their midst. They were under light official cover, and so they were just as free as genuine American foreign service officers to gossip with the British about any subject they wished from Russia to China to what the US administration really had in mind.

Presidential letters to ambassadors could never control that behavior. Again it was a function of numbers. There was no way an American ambassador in London was going to tell a hundred Americans, who in the daytime claimed to be assigned to the BBC or whatever, that they couldn't dine with and talk to whomever they wished.

Q: Tom, I think this might be a good place to stop. I just want to put down that we have talked about the general relations of the CIA and the covert action committee. Then I'd like to come in and maybe talk about some specific issues such as the Berlin wall, Iran, Indo-China, the whole Vietnam thing, Africa during this time, India-Pakistan, the Arab-Israeli business. I can't think of anything in Latin America at that particular time. Maybe there are some other things. Also the change over when Johnson came in. What we did after the Kennedy assassination. Did INR get involved in figuring out who was doing what to whom? Why it happened? Also, I didn't bring up the subject of the national intelligence survey. Was that going on during your time?

HUGHES: Oh, yes.

Q: It was sort of an encyclopedic compilation of things on each country. It seemed like a tremendous effort. How did you feel about that? So we'll talk about those things. Okay?

HUGHES: Good.

Q: The first of September 1999. Tom, two of the topics that we have not covered are Germany and Israel. We might start there.

HUGHES: All right. Of course the two topics are related in many ways, but we might treat them separately starting with Germany. Curiously, today, September 1, 1999 is the 60th anniversary of Hitler's invasion of Poland.

Q: You never could start a war in August because everybody is on vacation.

HUGHES: Berlin was the first big crisis after the Bay of Pigs, and one that lasted through the Kennedy Administration. In the wake of the Bay of Pigs, Khrushchev was emboldened to brace Kennedy in their summit meeting in June, 1961, knowing that he was on the defensive. He was also trying to take the measure of the new young president. Even so, there is no doubt that Kennedy was taken aback by the brusqueness of Khrushchev's performance at Vienna. He was quite stunned by it. This early warning that Berlin was going to be a serious and looming crisis was both unexpected and unwelcomed by Kennedy. It forced him to become prematurely engaged with the German question when he would much rather have had other priorities.

Kennedy had been in Nazi Germany briefly before the war when his father was ambassador in London. Indeed because of his father's notoriety as an appeaser, Jack was aware he had to compensate. But, initially he had no positive interest in postwar Germany, and certainly no special sympathy for the Germans. As a Democratic politician there was nothing in the American political universe that made a German interest attractive or rewarding. Most of the domestic political pressures worked in the opposite direction from the foreign policy grand strategists for whom a focus on Germany was central.

As far as that focus was concerned, Kennedy fell heir to the legacy of a strong Truman-Acheson and Eisenhower-Dulles commitment to Bonn. Indeed the Dulles-Adenauer ascendancy in the '50s had grown into a close relationship. Kennedy inherited what he inherited. The Dulles family were all identified with Germany in a big way. John Foster's legal connections went back to the 1920's and '30's at Sullivan and Cromwell. If you go to his archives at Princeton and get on the computer and punch in the index list for Hjalmar Schacht, you will get the Dulles correspondence with Hitler's financial wizard. The cartel associations, the chemical firm connections, the Chamber of Commerce links, Tom Watson and the IBM role, were all part of it.

Allen Dulles, one of JFK's first announced appointments (retentions), also had a soft spot in his heart for the "good Germans", expansively defined. As CIA director in the 1950's he had moved quickly to rehabilitate General Reinhold Gehlen, Hitler's Eastern intelligence chief, in return for his wartime records and his supposed expertise on the Soviet Union. One of my first social events in the Kennedy administration's intelligence community was a dinner given by Allen Dulles one night at the Chevy Chase Club in honor of Gehlen who was visiting from his Munich headquarters. Gehlen led the discussion advising us how to deal with "the Bear", his term for the Soviet menace. J. Edgar Hoover, sitting next to me, kept murmuring "the bear, the bear. That's it. The bear."

It is curious, today, in the context of our current ubiquitous holocaust awareness, how absent this factor was in both official and unofficial thinking at the time. This awareness became much more acute three or four decades after the event. In the '50's and '60's there was no push for holocaust museums. Indeed that catastrophe was rarely even a subject of conversation in the Kennedy administration. On the contrary, the speedy transfer of American animosity from the Germans to the Russians had been remarkable. The political constellations that had been anti-fascist in this country during the war had quickly been succeeded by anti-communist ones. Americans were busy, literally and psychologically, converting bad Germans into good Germans. Anti-communism became a happy meeting ground between the two societies. Moreover many GIs had by now returned with highly positive personal impressions of occupied Germany and the Germans. The re-educators in the occupation were pleased with their success. In the late '40's and throughout the '50's, there was a friendly and growing bilateral relationship built on the experience of countless servicemen and occupation personnel.

Q. I think almost a third of our foreign service was in Germany at one point. The USIA (U.S. Information Agency) effort was tremendous.

HUGHES: Very much so. But at the official level there were new negative elements during the first year of the Kennedy administration. Jack personally had a falling out with the rather pedantic West German ambassador Grewe, whose legalistic view of life contrasted strongly with the bonhomie of Jack's ambassadorial favorite from London, David Ormsby-Gore. The fact that Adenauer himself had made no secret of his preference for the Republican ticket before the 1960 election did not help. These negative factors were already in place in 1961 before the June summit in Vienna and the August crisis over the Berlin wall.

Meanwhile the third Dulles sibling, sister Eleanor, who had worked on Berlin in the State Department, was now in INR. One of my first phone calls after joining INR in April, 1961, was from her brother Allen who was still CIA director at the time. "Tom, I know my sister is working for you over there", he said, "and if this ever becomes embarrassing for you in any way, just let me know and I'll put her someplace else." It was news to me that he had assigned her to us in the first place. This wasn't quite the way appointments were supposed to occur in the Kennedy administration, although she was a carry-over, of course, from the days her brother was secretary. Eleanor was indeed very active. She continued to carry the torch for both of her brothers after Foster's death and Allen's retirement. She also carried the torch for German-American relations in general and for Berlin in particular. On the weekend that the Berlin wall went up, Kennedy unfortunately was sailing at Hyannis Port. Eleanor immediately leaped to Berlin's defense and was harsh in her criticism of the new president for his absence and inaction.

Q: I'd like to put something in. I did an interview with Kempton Jenkins who was in Berlin at that time.. He was talking about the real disquiet that was felt at our mission in Berlin. He said they were picking up comments from within the Kennedy administration I don't know who, but people were saying that maybe we could give in a little here or a little there or make some compromises. In Berlin they felt the Kennedy administration was going to be soft. Of course these people had been dealing with the Berlin problem for years and were consumed with how much everything depended on whether you raised or lowered tail gates. There had been very set procedures. To have some new people come in and talk about compromising was scary to them.

HUGHES: Yes, it was scary to all the old hands who had been working on Berlin for years. Martin Hillenbrand's recent memoirs, for instance, cover this point very thoroughly. He basically presents a view that was commonly held at that time and not inaccurate: the Kennedy administration was staffed with academic amateurs, many of whom were engaged in frolics of their own. Some of the axes that were being ground included the possible neutralization of Germany and a consequent pull-back of troops. This was a time, of course, when the Mansfield resolution for troop reductions was introduced at every session of Congress, always ringing alarm bells in Bonn. Walter Lippmann played with the idea. Naturally Adenauer was agitated over reports of such tendencies in Washington. He wanted no change in the certainties and rigidities of the Dulles period, and he was made very nervous by every German reporter who filed stories after an interview in Washington that suggested anything new. All this began to be matched by a bureaucratic fascination in Washington with what was tormenting the Germans. There was a mutual suspicion of political trends in both capitals.

There was also nervousness in Washington about the Adenauer succession, coupled with a growing Presidential interest in the German Social-Democratic left. JFK was always fascinated with other people's politics, and it was clear that the aged German chancellor couldn't last much longer. Kennedy enjoyed speculating about the succession. When Ambassador Grewe displayed a distinct lack of humor about the whole situation, he was effectively declared persona non grata. Adenauer made matters worse by selectively releasing documents in Bonn that offended the Washington administration. The press would go back and forth between the two capitals exciting both places with the latest rumors, and in both capitals people were dining out on the rumors. Gone were the quiet certitudes of the Eisenhower-Dulles period in German-American relations.

The more intense the discussion became, the more it soured relationships. The Kennedy-Adenauer relationship, such as it was, wore thin. The Adenauer-de Gaulle collaboration created more strains in Washington. Kennedy, when he finally went to Berlin in 1963, wanted to speak to a labor union among other things. Adenauer couldn't understand that at all. It was totally off his wave length. Unions were part of his opposition. Why would an American president want to curry favor with his opposition?

Hence for two years or more, German-American relations were off to a bad start under Kennedy for all these reasons. When Khrushchev made Berlin his top priority at the Vienna summit and threatened war if the issue was not resolved, he clearly intended to exploit JFK's vulnerabilities. Against his inclinations, Kennedy was forced to become seriously interested in Germany. He began to see Berlin as his central foreign policy problem with surrogate issues elsewhere. If you read the Kennedy tapes on the Cuban missile crises in 1962, you will find JFK making this view explicit. Behind Cuba lay Berlin. The hawks might think that in Cuba we had all the advantages of proximity and troop strength, but this was shortsighted because the Soviets could retaliate in Berlin and take it any time they wished. The view of the Cuba Missile Crisis as basically a Berlin crisis comes through strongly in Kennedy's thinking.

In May, 1962, I accompanied Rusk on his first visit to Germany as Secretary. We had dinner with Adenauer at the Palais Schaumberg in Bonn. Afterwards, while Rusk and Adenauer were still talking, I was taken for a long walk in the garden by Baron von und zu Gutenberg, a Bavarian CSU leader close to Franz Joseph Strauss. Gutenberg was very much a part of the Abendland, Catholic, small Europe, Gaullist, German-French circle. He was at pains to tell me that the CDU-CSU coalition would soon have to confront the departure of the nearly indispensable Adenauer. Gutenberg was going to do everything possible to make sure that the successor would be a strong believer in the German-French relationship and not be tempted by "those foolish visions from Hamburg"-of a larger Northern Europe, international trade, and the Anglo-Saxon (American) NATO orientation. Later Hamburg won out, of course, with Erhard.

German officialdom knew that I would be reporting on the succession issue. Their interest was only whetted by a speculative story in the New York Times about my visit which lasted two weeks after Rusk returned to Washington. I had several fascinating conversations across the political spectrum at a pivotal point in postwar German-American relations.

After my return, I gave a two-hour debriefing in the State Department on the Adenauer succession problem and the future of German politics. A crowd of celebrities attended because Germany was by then becoming a more magnetic subject, and also, I suppose, because I was the rare New Frontiersman with an extensive German background. Among the attendees were Dean Rusk, George Ball, and George McGhee from State, Mac Bundy, Carl Kaysen, Arthur Schlesinger, and Fred Holborn from the White House, and Dick Helms from CIA. John McNaughton was there from the Pentagon-significantly, because McNamara was already further antagonizing the Bonn government with public demands for offset payments for US troops. Since Germans were the beneficiaries, he thought they should be defraying the costs. This offset question hung over US-German relations for much of the 1960's. It was a problem for the Erhard government all the way through, and ultimately helped lead to his downfall.

In 1963 the most fascinating development to watch was Kennedy's personal change on Berlin. Confronted with the fact he was probably going to have to deal with Berlin as the major crises of his administration, and also aware that a younger generation would be taking over politically there, Kennedy began to pay attention to aspirant leaders like the young mayor of Berlin, Willy Brandt, who in fact was trying to model himself on Kennedy. Brother Bobby was sent over to check out the Berlin scene, and JFK's interest grew when Bobby reported that Berlin was a potential venue for an historic Presidential speech. In due course came the famous visit to Berlin in June, 1963. For the President it was full circle on the German question. He had the largest mass audience of his entire career hearing him declare "Ich bin ein Berliner". At the end of the day, he thought it was the most memorable twenty four hours of his political life. He had endeared himself to the Germans in a way that was quite amazing, as was obvious to those of us there at the time. Later that year after Kennedy's assassination, I received grief-stricken letters from Germans who a few months earlier had been in his audience in Berlin. One was from a grandson of the former Kaiser.

Kennedy's public success in Berlin, like his diplomatic triumph in the Cuba missile crisis, was a foreign policy high point of his presidency. He became a kind of folkloric figure in German as well as American history. Had Kennedy survived, his triumph in Berlin would have constituted a major building block in German-American relations. CDU heirs-apparent like Ludwig Erhard and Gerhard Schroeder were friendly. Kennedy's nascent relationship with Willy Brandt also augured well for a contingent unfolding of a modernized social democratic affinity between the two men. With Kennedy leading, the Democratic party in the US would also have moved into a more favorable posture on things German. American labor leaders like Walter and Victor Reuther, for instance, had German connections that Kennedy thought would be productive in the overall relationship.

Ironically, of course, after the assassination, the fact that Kennedy had enjoyed such an enormous personal triumph in Germany turned Lyndon Johnson off. He actively avoided comparisons with his predecessor, and would never go to Berlin himself after he became president. The only time LBJ visited Germany as President was for Adenauer's funeral in Cologne. His subsequent effort to entertain Erhard in Texas was not regarded as a great success. Humphrey made a few efforts as Vice President, but on the whole something of a cloud reemerged over German-American relations for the rest of the Johnson presidency. The spectacular opportunities opened up by Kennedy were never fully exploited.

Q: During these early years, 1961, the Vienna-Kennedy-Khrushchev meeting, what was INR doing regarding Germany? Was there concern in your bureau about what these Kennedy people were up to, including maybe you too? Did you feel you were being tested to see whether, to put it in diplomatic terms - to see whether you had balls or not?

HUGHES: I suppose I could have been one factor among many others. Perhaps in some quarters it might have been hoped that I would deflect some of the adventurous viewpoints held elsewhere, including in the White House . I wouldn't make too much of that, however.

What was INR doing? We did have considerable continuity from the 1950's in research and analysis on Germany. We benefited from veteran analysts like Martha Mautner, who knew postwar Germany well. INR analysts, of course, were aware that the policymaker's attitudes towards Germany were often a function of their attitudes towards the Soviet Union. A committed interest in arms control, for instance, automatically involved certain assumptions about the potential for negotiations with the Soviet Union. By the same token, arms reduction proposals immediately involved policy toward Germany. The whole question of trade-offs and the consequences on the ground in Europe became problems for the analysts and the estimators. These issues were very much on the table, and they affected the lineup of forces in Washington, including those of the intelligence community, in the positions taken regarding Germany.

Q: During your three weeks in Germany, did you find that the people you were talking to were sounding you out and being nervous about what the Kennedyites were up to?

HUGHES: I talked mostly with sub-cabinet people, politicians, civil servants, and journalists. There is no doubt that my interest in talking to them crossed their interest in talking to me. There had been a parade of people coming in and out of Germany, dropping tidbits of this and that, many of them inconsistent with one another, fed and amplified by press reports. The head of USIA, the legendary Edward R. Murrow, had just been to Germany. He had reported to Kennedy that there really was a very big backlash in German opinion over his alleged non-response to the Berlin wall. Murrow had encouraged JFK to pay more attention to the sourness there that was growing up around this issue. Walter Lippmann's columns were endlessly examined and cross-examined in the German press. Marguerite Higgins would come back and feed the rumor-mill some more. Official Americans in Germany were sending back conflicting reports. The succession struggle was a wild card. Erhard was the most probable successor, but he himself was very apprehensive toward the end of the Adenauer regime because Adenauer kept undermining him at every possible opportunity.

The most interesting transformation was the one I mentioned-the migration Kennedy made from his early disinterest, even antagonism, to a kind of infatuation with Germany as an extension of his personal political reach. He clearly intended to use his enormous success in Germany to his own advantage in domestic politics in the United States. This was worth its weight in gold for Kennedy because Germany, historically speaking, was an object more of Republican than Democratic affection. He had made a big inroad in the Dulles heritage. Kennedy was conscious of all of these aspects and thrilled with his reception in Berlin. He regarded his visit as a really solid plus, a most rewarding day's work.

Q: In those early days when you came back how did Kennedy, being Democratic, associate with the SPD (German Social Democratic Party)? You know Democrats are more left than Republicans and the SPD was to the left.

HUGHES: As I said earlier, these were tendencies built into the historic situation. Kennedy was intrigued with social democracy as a movement. Others, like Hubert Humphrey, also played into the German Social Democratic scene. Brandt was emerging as a popular leader in Berlin and JFK was intrigued when people told him that Willy was consciously modeling his own career on Kennedy. New elements were at work in German politics. People were moving away from the conservative heritage of the Adenauer-Dulles period. Brandt provided an unusual extra ingredient to the political scene. He was the mayor of beleaguered Berlin and Berlin was now Kennedy's "outpost of freedom". The rapidity with which the city moved from being Hitler's redoubt into being the city of the liberty bell was really quite an astonishing story of psychological transformation both in Germany and the US.

Q: Thanks to the benevolence of the Soviet Union.

HUGHES: Yes, of course. The Germans were the Cold War's chief beneficiaries. The Berlin airlift had glamorized the city, and now Brandt was playing a catalytic and broadening role. Lacking the taint of a Nazi past, he had affiliations with the social democrats of Scandinavia and benefited from his own wartime experiences in the Norwegian underground. In addition to labor ties, there were other shared interests between the Kennedy Administration and the SPD like anti-nuclear issues and third world development.

Q: How about the labor business? What's his name Brown? There was very strong support for labor in Europe from CIA.

HUGHES: Irving Brown.

Q: Irving Brown and his labor ties to the AFL-CIO with CIA support in the background. Were you looking at our ties to labor?

HUGHES: Many of us were well aware of those trans-national labor ties. But the covert connections were discreetly glossed over when intelligence analysts wrote about the scene. One of the theological bug-a-boos of American intelligence was the so- called American factor, which was supposed to be off limits in our commentaries. In a curiously antiseptic view, US intelligence analysts were not supposed to consider or refer to the covert American role in situations they were analyzing. I am not sure how deleterious the consequences of this self-censorship actually were. Almost everyone knew, or assumed, that CIA money was behind the AFL-CIO-German labor connection.

Elusive semantics were used to avoid the American factor in obedience to this orthodox requirement. Dean Rusk used to say "When the great government of the United States puts its shoulder to the wheel something gives." But analysts weren't supposed to be aware of covert things. Policymakers didn't want to be crowded by intelligence people telling them they were succeeding or failing.

Q: What about Bobby Kennedy who was so important. Did he fix on Germany?

HUGHES: No, I don't think he fixed on Germany at all except for his scouting trip in advance of JFK's famous visit. Bobby's own German visit had its ups and downs. Thus there were reports that he went into the KPM porcelain outlet on the Kurfurstendamm in Berlin, selected various things, and reportedly took them away without paying, saying "We won the war, didn't we?" That didn't get the Kennedy image off to a good start, but his report to Washington was very favorable.

Q: The ultimate effect was the Germans won the war via porcelain.

HUGHES: Of course, in the Cuba missile crisis a few months earlier, Bobby had played a constructive personal role in his contact with the Soviet ambassador.

Q: Let's stick to the developments in Germany and American resolves on Germany.

HUGHES: Well, those developments also involved a Soviet angle. The Kennedy administration was interested in what tendencies were at work on the German political scene favoring bilateral connections with Russia. Dean Rusk was very concerned about Berlin and hoped that he could "hand over to my successor the same Berlin problem that I inherited." He didn't have a solution for Berlin, but he didn't want the situation there to deteriorate. Khrushchev put Berlin on the agenda and Rusk was trying to get it off the agenda, because he couldn't see any positive solution for it.

During the Kennedy years there was already nervousness in Washington about the Germans eventually taking matters into their own hands and negotiating with the Russians. Later on this actually happened during the Johnson administration when Brandt became German foreign minister and Ostpolitik emerged, thawing relations with both the East German regime and with Moscow. From 1961 on, the Russians were seen as persisting in their efforts to drive a wedge between the German government and the American government. The "Gaullist temptation" was regarded as a serious problem. Adenauer and de Gaulle had signed the Franco-German Friendship Treaty, which some in Washington regarded as unsettling- an affront deliberately designed in Paris to undermine NATO and the German-American relationship. It played into Adenauer's Rhineland view of the world-a small Germany in a small Europe.

I think at their first official meeting de Gaulle told Erhard that his statement supporting the US in Vietnam was a violation of his friendship treaty with Adenauer. Of course by 1964-5 we were always asking for support on Vietnam from our allies including Germany. This fed back into the controversy over offset payments with the US threatening to take troops out of Germany for use in Vietnam unless the Germans would pay to keep them. You can imagine with what enthusiasm some circles in Washington received the news from de Gaulle that Bonn's support for the US in Vietnam was inconsistent with Franco-German friendship. That was just about all the ammunition George Ball needed to press his multi-front war against de Gaulle.

Where were we before I started on this digression?

Q: Well, we talked about Bobby Kennedy's role and before that we were talking about the changing policy.

HUGHES: Oh yes, you had asked what we were focusing on. We were focusing on what changes in German policy there might be under a new German government. In the event, Erhard pleased the United States. He was an economist. He was interested in trade. He was interested in a larger Europe. He was interested in Britain. Erhard was part of the larger world, and came from the Protestant wing of his party. Many in Washington considered him a plausible partner.

Q: I think of him with his cherubic face and a big cigar and a ten gallon hat.

HUGHES: He was the veritable embodiment of the Wirtschaftswunder, the miraculous economic recovery of Germany which he had been instrumental in engineering before he became chancellor. But the Wirtschaftswunder declined a bit thereafter. In a way LBJ delivered the coup de grace to Erhard in 1966, by allowing McNamara to set the terms for the US relationship with Germany. Offset agreements or troop withdrawals was his summary of the situation.

McNamara would brace the German defense minister, Kai Uwe von Hassel, who would leave his presence quite shattered by the ultimatums. Some of the telephone tapes between Johnson and McNamara on the German offset issue have McNamara saying "Well, the Germans really want us to reduce our forces over there." "Yes," LBJ would say, "I think maybe that's what they are aiming for," "Well, I'm just going to tell them they are going to have to pay for it or they can invite us to reduce our troops". Never mind that this was a vulgarization of what the actual German attitude was. It was a curious irony. In Vietnam, our most dubious ally, we were pouring in financial support partly to keep them from asking us to leave, while in Germany, our most important ally, we were prepared to promote our own departure.

Q: Were analysts in the military or in INR looking to see if we took troops out of Germany this might precipitate a war? I come from the Korean experience when the Carter administration came in. We knew if we withdrew a significant number of our troops from there we would increase the possibility of war with North Korea.

HUGHES: That was certainly part of the argument for retaining troops in Europe and paying for them. Of course, nobody quite believed that the United States was either so poor or so incapable of figuring its own priorities. It was folly to think that there would be no significant psychological effects in Germany of a persistent troop withdrawal discussion.

Q: Was McNamara just counting beans rather than thinking about what this really meant?

HUGHES: He certainly came through as a bean counter. Very often McNamara projected a metallic, mathematical approach to complicated issues. The decisiveness of his often arbitrary decisions made many matters clearer than the truth. Johnson himself might normally have been more involved in German questions, and more sympathetic to them. But he tended to neglect Germany personally because he didn't want to be compared unfavorably with Kennedy. Johnson took Erhard around the little German Texas towns like Frederick and New Braunfels, introducing him in his funny German to the local inhabitants who couldn't understand either LBJ or his visitor. But before long Erhard saw his hopeful beginning with the new administration in Washington end in economic arguments and disappointment.

Erhard was eased out only to be succeeded by a grand coalition still headed by a Christian Democratic chancellor. Now, however, it was a reversion to a Catholic Christian Democrat who had once been a Nazi and in charge of public relations at the German Foreign Office. When the news first came in that Kiesinger had become chancellor, Rusk said sourly, "You might have thought they could find somebody without that background." When we flew to Berlin together in May, 1962, Rusk reminisced about his life in Berlin where he had studied for a few months in the mid-1930's. In 1962 there was a popular song called "I Left a Suitcase in Berlin," and I suggested that he use the phrase in his arrival remarks. He did. But as the plane was descending to land at Tempelhof, Rusk was in a reflective mood. When he looked out of the window and saw the crowd that had gathered to welcome him, he said "I wonder how many of them were here cheering Hitler the last time I was in Berlin?"

Later on when Rusk's friend George McGhee was ambassador in Bonn, McGhee told him "The Germans really want you to take an initiative on reunification." Rusk asked him what reunification meant, and McGhee answered "the borders of 1937". Rusk replied. "You know perfectly well, George, there is no country in the world that will support German reunification with the borders of 1937." Rusk always kept a certain distance from the German problem. He didn't let it get in the way, for instance, of his hopes for an improvement in US-Soviet relations.

I remember another incident from the McGhee ambassadorship. It was typical of the way much of official Washington reacted to the Nazi problem in the 1960's. One day McGhee was invited to go over to Essen to visit the newly revived Krupp industries. The head of the Krupp dynasty had been convicted as a war criminal at Nuremberg but had recently been released. After hosting a nice lunch, Krupp broached the subject of his forthcoming visit to America. Did he really have to have his US visa stamped with a statement that waived his guilty verdict from Nuremberg? McGhee explained that it was just a bureaucratic matter, and nobody would pay any attention to it. The press probably wouldn't even find out about it. "Just don't go to New York where it could be a problem. It's no problem in Washington where people are looking forward to having you come."

Q: Did you sense that after we learned to live with the Berlin wall and the Johnson administration came in and focus was on Vietnam, that the activity of your office diminished as far as Germany and Berlin were concerned?

HUGHES: Well, the Berlin crisis itself receded with the withdrawal of Khrushchev's ultimatum. The Johnson administration later did it's best to improve relations with Moscow via the Glassboro summit, only to be set back in 1968 with the Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia. Meanwhile the German question took on a new aspect since Brandt was now foreign minister in Kiesinger's grand coalition. There was intense concern in Washington over Brandt's Ostpolitik and his overtures to the East. Conservatives worried about what Brandt advisors like Egon Bahr were doing. The SPD leadership was no longer in opposition, but was now officially in charge of foreign affairs.

Q: Egan Bahr being?

HUGHES: Brandt's behind-the-scenes advisor on German-German relations. Hal Sonnenfeldt in INR and his mentor Henry Kissinger, still outside the government, worried that Brandt would go too far in his overtures to the east. They were suspicious about Egan Bahr's secret visits with members of the Honecker regime in East Berlin or, even worse, inside the Kremlin itself. They worried that Brandt & Company would settle for less than the US would settle for on the German question. Kissinger used to talk about the race to Moscow on which he felt naï¿½ve Westerners were engaged. Of course this is Professor Henry Kissinger in the 1960's, not yet in office, complaining from the sidelines, and preparing for his own ascendancy. Mind you, we are now in the last years of the Johnson administration when there is a real effort to have a peace policy with Moscow to balance the increasingly desperate war policy in Vietnam. A nuclear non-proliferation agreement with the Soviet Union had become a prime objective. We were trying to do business with Moscow and at the same time let them off the hook on Vietnam. The Washington-Moscow relationship was a major concern of Dean Rusk. He was personally deeply worried about the nuclear issue and the prospects for arms control -which in a way takes us back to the Israeli issue that we were going to talk about.

Q: Before we get to that, during this time was the Hallstein doctrine in full bloom and how did we feel about that?

HUGHES: It was in full bloom. The Hallstein Doctrine was adopted by the Germans under Adenauer in the '50s to discourage the rest of the world from recognizing the East German regime. The doctrine provided that Bonn itself would deny recognition to any government that formally recognized East Germany. You had to choose. This had become an issue because various middle and third world countries were tempted to try to recognize both Germanys. The east Germans naturally wanted to be recognized and tried to create incentives for it. Ultimately, in the Nixon years ironically, the two Germanys themselves recognized each other and were both admitted to the U.N.

Q: Were a lot of the third world countries doing this because of bribes from the Soviet Union or were they trying to show they were part of the active third world?

HUGHES: Both elements were in the picture. After all, the Hallstein Doctrine was one of the fixtures of the Cold War. The division of Germany was enshrined in the Hallstein Doctrine. Washington certainly wasn't in the forefront encouraging Bonn to change it. If the Cold War was to be moderated, we wanted to be in charge of the moderation. On the other hand many realists in Washington thought that the doctrine had outlived its usefulness and was no longer in the Federal Republic's own interest. Many assumed that Bonn was going to have to change its policy, as indeed it did.

Before we leave the subject, let me also say that the Kiesinger-Brandt coalition was a useful political contrivance for both men-a model marriage of convenience. The ex-Nazi CDU chancellor legitimized the anti-Nazi SPD foreign minister. Each of the coalition leaders thus had constituencies that were mollified by the combination. The joke was that Kiesinger wanted to be foreign minister and Brandt wanted to be chancellor, but they ended up occupying the other's preferred office. Kiesinger was certainly interested in foreign policy. He developed a good working relationship with Johnson, although he regularly complained about the "quality," as he put it, of the German-American connection. He wanted to develop it, but it remained more formal than he would have liked. He was perhaps more successful in restoring the German-French relationship which had been neglected a bit by Erhard. Kiesinger turned out to be a smoother of waters, and had a creditable record as chancellor.

Q: While we are still talking about the Johnson administration, did you find INR was playing a different role and Rusk was playing a different role in the Kennedy and Johnson administrations?

HUGHES: It's hard to say. Johnson certainly read some of our products and from time-to-time would refer to them. In the Kennedy administration there were many more direct requests to INR from the White House. Kennedy himself was a speed reader and would read papers himself. Undoubtedly Bundy, under both Kennedy and Johnson, sent more INR material into the Oval Office than Rostow did subsequently under Johnson. Whether the National Security Adviser was putting our papers in the President's reading file or keeping them out was always a subject of speculation in INR. All of our papers were sent over to the White House. But who got them, who wished to read them, and who actually read them, were persistent questions. Certainly the intellectual thirst that Kennedy had for new and different insights declined under Johnson, and Johnson's own open-mindedness declined during his years in office.

On the other hand I certainly couldn't say that there was any effort by the Johnson administration to impede INR in any way. Johnson left the State Department to Rusk. LBJ rarely interfered with the State Department's hierarchical protocol the way Kennedy did. Kennedy would call INR directly, just as he called the desk officers in the geographic bureaus. Johnson rarely did that, although some of his subordinates didn't hesitate to call and ask for quite preposterous things. So it's hard to generalize about the difference. Rusk remained very supportive of INR throughout his eight years. We briefed him the same way under Johnson as we did under Kennedy. I guess it is probably fair to say that the differences were minor.

Q: You said there was a connection between the German thing and Israel.

HUGHES: I don't mean the obvious connection. German reparations for the Nazi period were already set in motion. Adenauer had worked out his own arrangements with Israel. Nahum Goldmann had already been instrumental in negotiating the initial commitments for financial compensation. The German and Israeli constituencies in the United States were, of course, quite different-troubled and defensive on the German side and antagonistic and suspicious on the Israeli side. Naturally enough, the Israelis could not be expected to be leaders in the effort to improve German-American relations. On the other hand, the Germans were wary about attitudes in the American-Jewish community and what effect they might have on US presidents and US policies toward Germany.

What I had in mind was something else. From the outset the Kennedy administration tormented itself with the issue of nuclear weapons, particularly as this issue pertained to Germany and Israel. A State Department group played the dominant role on the German nuclear issue. The group centered on Undersecretary George Ball, his close collaborator Robert Schaetzel, Policy Planning Staff member Henry Owen, and a distinguished carryover from the Dulles days, Robert Bowie. This group conjured up a hypothetical German nuclear menace. They assumed an eventual German determination to obtain nuclear weapons and set about heading off this calamity. Their answer was the famous MLF-a multi-lateral seaborne force composed of NATO mix-manned, multi-national crews. The idea was that this would embed the Germans inextricably in a NATO controlled nuclear project and avert the prospect of a unilateral German finger on the nuclear trigger.

After great American pressure, the MLF proposal was widely agreed to within NATO, the Germans themselves awkwardly being brought aboard. It became the official policy of the Kennedy Administration. Its practicality was ridiculed from the beginning, however, and some of the leading players in the Kennedy administration were only half-heartedly supportive. I remember being summoned to the White House one day by Mac Bundy who was one of Ball's competitors for influence in the Kennedy Administration and potentially a rival for future appointment as secretary of state. "George just insists on being the piano player on this one (the MLF), doesn't he?"

Mac Bundy's thinly-veiled skepticism about Ball's MLF proposal quickly asserted itself after Kennedy's assassination. Johnson turned out to be skeptical as well, and with Presidential support withdrawn, the MLF collapsed before takeoff. Incidentally, throughout the MLF controversy INR's coverage of European attitudes in general and of De Gaulle's role in particular was seen by the MLF proponents as unhelpful. Here was a cameo insight into the plusses and minuses-the ups and downs- of bureaucratic coalitions. George Ball was already engaged in giving voice to his celebrated skepticism about Vietnam and he often used INR material. Ball therefore found INR simultaneously indispensable in the mornings on Vietnam and retrograde in the afternoons on the MLF, both enhancing and obstructing his own two driving interests.

But there was another counterpart to the MLF saga, one that also was predicated on the Kennedy administration's determination to avoid nuclear proliferation. Just as the MLF was contrived to obstruct a possible German nuclear weapon, so the entire Kennedy administration "set its face like flint toward Jerusalem" in trying to forestall an Israeli nuclear weapon.

I was reminded of this lately when I was reading a new book about Israel and the nuclear weapon by Avner Cohen, who has been working here at the U.S. Institute of Peace. It turns out that the Israelis started work on their Dimona nuclear reactor, excavating for it, in the late '50s. There were U-2 overflights of Dimona and subsequent briefings of President Eisenhower. Art Lundahl was already then the chief photo-interpreter at NPIC (National Photographic Interpretation Center), and he continued in that capacity under Kennedy.

According to Lundahl's account to Cohen, he briefed Eisenhower about Dimona in 1958 in the company of Admiral Strauss. The briefing elicited no reaction, leaving Lundahl with the impression that the White House accepted the development. After the photos were presented, Strauss had asked: "What conclusion do you draw from these pictures?" Lundahl had replied: "The only conclusion you can draw is that Israel is embarking on a nuclear weapons program. That is the only interpretation possible." To Lundahl's surprise, there was no Presidential response whatever to this statement. Eisenhower left the meeting without saying a word. Lundahl's conclusion at the time was clear: "I had the impression that he either knew about, or was acquiescent in, or wasn't particularly concerned about, what seemed to us to be a rather dramatic new development."

Hence the Israeli nuclear issue was another of the hot potatoes bequeathed by Eisenhower to Kennedy, in addition to the more familiar ones of Laos and Vietnam. In fact there was a national intelligence estimate the first week of December 1960, issued by then-DCI Allen Dulles, which concluded that Israel was building a nuclear weapon. Two days later on Meet the Press John McCone, still director of the Atomic Energy Commission, publicly leaked the conclusion of this classified NIE, by announcing on TV that Israel was building a nuclear weapon. Nasser reacted on the 23rd of December, 1960, stating that an Israeli nuclear weapon would inflame the Middle East and might well require Egypt to engage in a preventive war. That same month the possibility of the allegedly anti-Israeli Senator Fulbright becoming Kennedy's secretary of state was shot down by an organized lobbying effort.

In other words the subject of Israel and nuclear weapons was smack on the agenda during the Eisenhower-Kennedy transition December 1960 and January 1961. McCone's opposition to an Israeli nuclear weapon was public knowledge. Moreover, he was no particular friend of Israel to begin with. He was a prominent Catholic (indeed a Knight of Malta), an Eisenhower Republican, and still head of the Atomic Energy Commission. These attributes were well known to Kennedy four months later when he was casting around for a successor to Allen Dulles after the latter's firing. The Israeli nuclear issue itself had to be one of the factors in Kennedy's mind when he selected McCone as his Director of Central Intelligence. (McCone's unhappiness with Israeli nuclear developments also was a factor in his own resignation under LBJ in 1965.)

We then embarked on a tortuous saga in which Israel and the friends of Israel in two American administrations succeeded in outwitting and outlasting the combined forces of the president, secretary of state, secretary of defense, the National Security Advisor, the head of the arms control disarmament agency, and the CIA. For three years in the Kennedy administration all of these gentlemen were united on non-proliferation. They were determined to prevent an Israeli nuclear weapon. Kennedy told Rusk that his highest priority for US-Israeli relations was to curtail the nuclear program at Dimona. Rusk himself kept telling the Israelis that the chief threat to US-Israeli relations was the Dimona reactor. " You are not playing fair and square with us." McNamara was saying we are not going to allow the Israelis to get the bomb. "We are going down the road to a non-proliferation treaty, and we can't permit Israel, which the rest of the world regards as the 51st American state, to engage in this frolic on its own." And during their visits to Washington there were warning sessions at the White House with Ben Gurion and Eshkol about Israel's nuclear intentions.

Throughout the Kennedy administration, and later for years under Johnson, this sorry saga involved constant foot dragging on the Israeli side and repeated efforts in circles inside and outside the United States government to postpone and delay. Inside the Kennedy White House, Mac Bundy's assistant, Mike Feldman, handled relations with the Jewish community. Kennedy put Mike in charge of this issue. He ultimately convinced the Israelis that American inspections of Dimona had to be accepted. Then came the handicapping of the inspections-the arguments about appropriate dates and frequency, the severe time limits, the restrictions on numbers and equipment, and ultimately, at the end of each visit, the suspect results. The inspectors were hobbled and unhappy. McCone was equally unhappy with the inspectors. "Of course the Israelis are developing the bomb. Why do we keep putting out these tepid statements saying that we can't be sure?" INR's Granville Austin thought the benefit of the doubt should be on the US side. "We should assume that the Israelis are developing nuclear weapons, and it is up to them to disprove it, not on us to prove it." But that formulation was never operative.

Q: Was there a feeling that this was domestic politically?

HUGHES: The domestic sensitivity was obvious. But in the Kennedy administration you had a total lineup including the President and all his top advisors firmly supportive of the anti-nuclear policy- unlike Johnson who at the end, during the election year of 1968, pulled the rug out from under his subordinates on this issue and accepted the Israeli fait accompli. During the Kennedy years, when Presidential overtures to Nasser were also in the works, the whole question of reassuring the Egyptians became important. For a while the tepid inspection results from Dimona served the diplomatic purpose of allowing the State Department to reassure the Egyptians that "we have inspected and to the best of our knowledge" the Israelis do not have a nuclear weapon. But it was not very convincing.

Later on, for public use the Israelis developed the formula "we will not be the first to introduce nuclear weapons to the Middle East." But, we all thought, they will not be the second either. It depends on what "introduce" means. If you have all the components of the weapons in adjoining rooms and it only takes you 20 minutes to put them together, have you introduced or haven't you introduced? This lawyerly argument persisted for years and Paul Warnke and Rabin were still arguing around these semantics in 1968.

The Kennedy administration persisted to the end, but ineffectively, in its serious non-proliferation argument with Israel. McCone became increasingly frustrated because he took the flim-flam of the Dimona inspections personally. With his background at the AEC he considered himself an expert on nuclear matters. He knew he was being hoodwinked by the Israelis. By April, 1965, when he resigned, McCone may also have felt that Johnson was not reliable on this policy. Although Johnson allowed Rusk and McNamara to continue to push the Israelis on Dimona, McCone decided that the inspections were not serious. I think this was one of the factors in his resignation.

It is even possible that the Israeli nuclear weapon was funded by tax-exempt donations from the US. A key figure in this connection in the late 1960's was Abe Feinberg, one of LBJ's major fund raisers and political friends in New York. He was a prominent Democratic lawyer and a big friend of Israel who helped fund Dimona via contributions to the Weizmann Institute Whether or not private American donations are ultimately going to be traceable to the Dimona project is still unknown. But the story certainly has all the earmarks of verisimilitude-a picture of private American tax-exempt donations subverting official American policy on the hottest issue in U.S.-Israeli relations in the 1960's.

There was another related episode where I was involved. In August 1966, ten months before the Six Day War, Rusk called me in one morning and said "The White House is going to announce your appointment as assistant secretary for Near East and South Asia. at the noon briefing." I said, "Whoa, nobody has talked to me about this. I'm very happy where I am." Rusk asked if I had some hidden past they didn't know about, and I said "Well, come to think of it, I was a kibbutznik once in Israel, and that won't go over very well with your Arab clients. I was also chief assistant to Chester Bowles, who is back in India as ambassador now, and that won't go over very well in Pakistan. The Arabs and the Pakistanis are pretty important clients in NEA." Somehow I also had the feeling that Rusk himself was not the driving force behind my nomination. In any event we agreed that I would stay in INR.

A few days later I happened to have lunch with Eppie Evron of the Israeli Embassy. who said, "You know, you should have taken that NEA job." How he knew I had been offered it, I could only surmise. No one in the State Department knew about it ahead of time, but apparently the Israeli Embassy did. A year later in another conversation Eppie said "We wouldn't have had the Six Day War if you had taken that job." I replied, "Are you kidding?"

Q: Looking at this Dimona problem, did people including INR ever calculate "Yes we are against proliferation, but an Israeli nuclear weapon would be a trump card because none of the other countries around Israel were going to develop nuclear weapons in the foreseeable future. So if the Israelis have them, Israel won't go down the drain."

HUGHES: Of course this was the assumption that underlay the Israeli effort. While they themselves didn't admit they were pursuing the nuclear option, in the discussions with them the US negotiators operated on that assumption. Israel was beleaguered and Israeli nukes would be a major deterrent. Whenever the issue came up in conversations inside the American-Jewish community, or in media speculation, this constituted the main Israeli case. But I remember Rusk as early as 1961 upbraiding the Israelis on this proposition. Theirs was a very short-sighted view. Israel would stimulate others to follow in the Arab and Muslim world generally. There was no way that Israel could remain permanently the only nuclear power in the Middle East. Rusk would say that one day a successor of his would have to explain why an Israeli nuclear weapon was acceptable, but not a Libyan, Iranian, Iraqi or Pakistani one. "I do not envy him." For years we were trying to get Israel to sign the non- proliferation treaty as a quid pro quo for one thing or another. The story has not been fully exposed, to say the least. Why Senator Fulbright, chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, didn't hold effective executive hearings on this issue, about which he felt strongly and which would have put him on the same wave length as the Kennedy administration, has yet to be explained.

Q: To most people looking at this it seems to be one of those times when we have a definite double standard. Israel can get away with whatever it wants, mainly because of political, internal domestic clout. Other countries have to hew the line, but Israel can call its own tune and politicians are frightened to cross them.

HUGHES: Certainly the nuclear story has all of those earmarks. I think there is more to the story than we know now from Avner Cohen and others. I'd love to hear what Mike Feldman has to say. He is still around Washington. He was in the middle of this issue in the Kennedy White House.

Q: How can I find him?

HUGHES: He was a lawyer with the firm of Ginsberg, Feldman and Bress. That firm has disbanded, but David Ginsberg would know where to find him. (2007 note: he recently died.)

Later Bob Komer was the action man in the White House on Israeli nuclear issues. He is still with us (2000) but not in as good shape as he once was. He is as irascible as ever.(2007 note: he is since deceased.)

Q: Were you ever tasked with looking at this in INR?

HUGHES: Sporadically. This was another example of compartmentalization inside the intelligence community. The Dimona inspection project was highly classified. I knew about it, as did INR's office director for the Near East, Granville Austin. He was occasionally consulted and volunteered personal judgments. Others, although involved with the Middle East, remained officially ignorant about Dimona. Many analysts working on Arab-Israeli issues were not cleared for this information, at least not fully cleared. Occasionally they would write about the issue based on guesswork, press reports, or journalistic speculation. If they did write about it, they could be met with the riposte "Well, there is an inspection program, and you really don't know enough about it to write about it." Here again was an example of people with higher classifications telling lower level analysts that more was going on than they knew. The result was self-censorship to avoid embarrassment.

Q: I recall in my 30 years in the foreign service there would be a wink, a nod, a nudge, anything with Israel sort of saying "Well, the Israelis have us by the short hairs. They can do what they want." If you do write something it will be leaked to Senator Javits and the next thing you know you'll be crucified.

HUGHES: Still, that doesn't explain the Kennedy administration's complete unanimity on this issue at the top. They all agreed to brace the Israelis on the nuclear question, and dispatch inspection teams. The inspection teams had to be given some guidelines, of course, and apparently this is where the benefit of doubt went to the Israelis. Blandishments and restrictions on the ground at Dimona repeatedly made the inspections unsatisfactory.

Q: Did you feel in INR that anything that was written about Israel would probably be leaked? .Did you face up to a question that is often there in American operations? Did you feel there was sort of a dual allegiance of Jewish analysts and Jewish officers?

HUGHES: In the Dimona case, it was the reverse of what you suggest. Nobody wanted leaks. The Israelis surely didn't want stories in the American press about Israel developing nuclear weapons. Israeli Embassy guidance was certainly to keep as quiet as possible on the issue and keep it out of the newspapers. In December, 1960, John McCone had himself been a major leaker. When the head of the U.S. Atomic Energy Commission says on Meet the Press that Israel is developing nuclear weapons, this is fairly strong stuff. But as DCI he had no incentive to go public about the Dimona fiascos. They reflected on the adequacy of the US inspection system for which, presumably, he himself was formally responsible. When pressed, Israeli officials would occasionally say "Speculation about this may itself have a deterrent effect."

Q: I thought this might be a good time to stop. We have covered Germany and the Israeli nuclear issue, but let's continue with Israel and the '67 war and the role of INR in this. Then we will go on to do the whole Indo- China business. We've got Africa, India-Pakistan ,and Cuba. Then there was the National Intelligence Survey. Were there other tasks that were being done that were so encyclopedic or peripheral? How did you feel about those?

HUGHES: I can't say much about the National Intelligence Surveys. Soon after he became INR director in 1961, Roger Hilsman gave that responsibility back to the CIA, thereby also getting credit for reducing the number of INR personnel. Roger considered the Survey a waste of time for a serious, policy-oriented bureau, and he wanted to streamline INR to enhance the latter mission. The fact that we dispensed with the NIS shows that we considered it a comparatively unimportant and time-consuming proposition. For the marginal people who worked on it, it was considered almost a lifetime assignment.

Q: I was in INR for part of the time and I volunteered to go to Serbian training to make sure I didn't get involved in that.

Today is the 7th of September 1999. Again I want my time periods again. You were with INR from when to when?

HUGHES: I was Deputy Director from March '61 until April '63, and thereafter Director until September '69.

Q: Actually we had about reached the Six Day War in 1967. Where were we on that? Do you remember?

HUGHES: I think we had just about reached it. This was another intelligence problem-predicting when the Israelis would move. LBJ had been warning them "Israel won't be alone unless you go alone". But once more the analysts were not privy to all the high level US conversations with the Israelis, nor, for that matter, were many members of the US Intelligence Board.

I remember that Walter Mondale, then a Senator from Minnesota, had asked me to substitute for him in a speech in northern Minnesota on that Monday in June when the Israeli preemptive strike on the Egyptian air force actually occurred and when the war broke out. On Friday morning four days before, I told Rusk that I was planning to go to Minnesota to make a speech. He wanted to know then whether the intelligence community thought that the Israelis would strike that weekend. I had to tell him that I had just checked around town, and that the considered wisdom of the intelligence community was that they would probably not act quite yet. Embarrassingly enough, the Six Day War started when I was on the platform at Bemidji, Minnesota, making the speech.

Q: Well, what had been the feeling? Was it because the United Nations, under U Thant at that point, was pulling troops out of the Sinai and that this meant war, or that the Israelis were cocked and ready to go, but we hoped that our caution might prevail?

HUGHES: Well, we hoped they wouldn't. US credibility was at a low point. We had been warning the Israelis that we were adamant in our anti-nuclear stand. By then it was obvious to the Israelis that we had not succeeded in deterring them. It was probably pretty obvious to Nasser as well. There was press speculation that Israel already had a bomb in the basement. Indeed Nasser was publicly using the rumored existence of Israeli nuclear weapons as a rationale for an Egyptian attack on Dimona. So there had been threats of preemption from both sides.

The Israelis were complaining that the United States was not supporting Israel the way Dulles had promised to do - in writing, they said - over the closure of the Straits of Tiran. There was a big question about what Dulles had promised and what he hadn't. No one on the US side could find the text embodying the Dulles commitment. The lawyers also felt there were legal issues involved, and Eugene Rostow, former dean of Yale Law School and now an Undersecretary of State, could always be counted on to be a special friend of Israel on the seventh floor of the State Department. He was busy bringing his legal talents to bear on the issue.

Later after the crisis had passed, Louis Heren, a British correspondent in Washington, wrote a book that included an account about an official emissary going up to Gettysburg to try to find the Dulles commitment in the Eisenhower archives. He wrote that Thomas Hughes, the director of INR, was the emissary. This was total nonsense, and I promptly wrote Heren a letter telling him so. I asked him where he got his misinformation. He wrote back saying: "We are all getting older, so I forgive you for your failure of memory. You yourself were the source of this information." I wrote back again saying "I'm sorry, but I never went to Gettysburg and I never told you that I did." Anyway, that's the way history is made sometimes. It's in print, and as my Aunt Margaret used to say, "If it's in print, it must be true."

Q: As I recall, the U Thant move of withdrawing troops was done without the usual U.N. debating which would have given you some time.

HUGHES: I'm a little vague at this point about how precipitate U. Thant's actions were. But I am not vague at all about the consequences of the Israeli victory with the capture of Jerusalem and the West Bank. That meant that the problems we had before the war with Israel and its neighbors were intensified. Those consequences are still with us in spades. After the Israeli victory, of course, we were in the running- up stages for the 1968 US Presidential election, and it was pretty clear that the domestic political situation would inhibit any further American moves of a constructive nature.

Q: It sounds like the Israeli establishment called in all their chips.

HUGHES: I think so. Naturally there were degrees of rhetorical toughness. The ambassador, Abba Eban, was a comparatively gentle figure, suave and intellectual. But (later Prime Minister) Rabin was the negotiator on the nuclear issue and his equally astute counterpart was Paul Warnke at the Pentagon. I mentioned earlier that LBJ pulled the rug out from under Warnke as we approached the 1968 election. Even this did not preserve the normal Democratic vote in the Jewish community that year.

Nixon hoped to make inroads in that community. He did in fact indicate, via Henry Kissinger to Rabin, that a Nixon administration would not be as concerned as the previous Democratic administration had been over the Israeli nuclear question. This was a definite signal from the Nixon camp to the Israeli government, that a future Nixon administration would relax US policy toward Dimona. This led Rabin in turn to indicate to important American friends of Israel, that on the whole a Nixon victory would probably be better for Israel than a Humphrey one. This kind of treachery was bound to be hard for Humphrey to accept considering his decades-long support for Jewish and Israeli causes.

Q: How about Nasser?

HUGHES: Nasser had experienced his own ups and downs with Washington. The Kennedy Administration, as part of its interest in the Third World generally and in non-alignment, made a real effort to test the possibilities of a rapprochement with Nasser. A talented and friendly ambassador, John Badeau, was sent to Cairo. JFK and Nasser even had a personal correspondence. This interest and attention lapsed under Johnson, although I think it is fair to say that Kennedy toward the end also became skeptical about improving relations with Cairo. On his part Nasser was certainly disappointed with the new level of arms supplies for Israel which Kennedy authorized. Nasser's press chief in Cairo, all through the '60s, fretted publicly about Israeli nuclear weapons and the American role in giving false assurances and then looking the other way. You can argue that Nasser's preemptive temptations reflected a genuine concern on his part that we were at the end of the road on the nuclear question. That, as much as anything else, accounts for the Egyptian move to take advantage of the UN withdrawal in 1967 and to introduce Egyptian troops in their place.

Q: Did you find, because of this action, within the establishment, at least within the State Department, a change in attitude- a different feeling about the Arab world and Israel?.

HUGHES: There was certainly widespread recognition that the capture of Jerusalem, its emotional grip on Jewish feelings, and the probable Israeli determination to keep exclusive control of the city, added a whole new factor to the explosive Mideast agenda. This exclusiveness was bound to create huge problems for the Arab world and even the Vatican. Of course it also guaranteed that every US political platform from now on would be under pressure to endorse Jerusalem as the Israeli capital. The probability of Israeli settlements in Gaza and the West Bank predictably was another hornet's nest. Israel's attack on the USS Liberty also left a sour taste even with longtime American champions of Israel like Clark Clifford.

Q: Maybe we should skip now to Vietnam.

HUGHES: (TLH note in 2006: This Vietnam part of my 1999 interview has been amplified and deepened in a major way by subsequent publications. First, substantial material was published in 2004 by the National Security Archive at George Washington University. (http://www.gwu.edu/nsarchiv/NSAEBB/NSAEBB121/index.htm) This was the first release of INR's internal evaluation of its Vietnam estimates from 1961-69, I commissioned this study as INR director in late 1968. It was designed as a miniature Pentagon Papers exercise consisting of a chronological review with reprints of significant texts as well as thematic summaries of INR's basic output in the Kennedy and Johnson years. Interagency obstruction and bureaucratic inertia had kept the study hidden for decades, despite efforts to have it declassified.

(Second, to accompany the release of the study in 2004, I wrote a retrospective preface which is also available in the internet package above. "The INR analysis on Vietnam" stands out as tenaciously pessimistic from 1963 on, whether the question is the viability of the successive Saigon regimes, the Pentagon's statistical underestimation of enemy strength, the ultimate ineffectiveness of bombing the North, the persistence of the North Vietnamese and the Vietcong, or the danger of Chinese intervention. This 2004 preface includes extensive comments on my personal role on Vietnam under Kennedy and Johnson, as well as INR's position within the State Department, the intelligence community, and the wider foreign affairs bureaucracy in Washington.

(Finally the transcript of a conference on Vietnam held at St. Simon's Island, Georgia, on April 8-10, 2005, sponsored by the Watson Institute for International Studies, Brown University, is now available. This transcript contains considerable additional commentary by me about INR and my personal role on Vietnam. Taken together, the documents listed above amplify in a major way the responses I gave here in this 1999 interview below.)

During my eight years at INR, Vietnam was, of course, THE major issue. It constituted also a prime exhibit of the uneasy relationship between policy and intelligence. The saga began slowly with Laos and Vietnam in a kind of tradeoff early in the Kennedy administration. It was almost as though Kennedy consciously gave Laos, which happened to be militarily indefensible, to the doves in general- and to Harriman in particular- to produce some kind of modus vivendi. Vietnam by contrast was entrusted to the hawks to build up and fortify as our chosen protectorate. JFK compartmentalized the South East Asian crisis, letting the negotiators work on the Laos part of it and pointing to Laos when his policy was criticized for being too militarized. At the same time he gambled on a hoped-for success in Vietnam. Kennedy was rather pleasantly surprised that Harriman pulled off his Laos negotiation and came up with some compromises that at least might allow US policy to muddle through.

Q: This is actually where the Soviets were very much involved.

HUGHES: Not only the Soviets, but the international community as well in the form, for example, of the ICC (International Control Commission). In addition there were some storied individuals involved, like the Polish Ambassador in Washington in the late '60's- a fascinating character named Jerzy Michalowski. Poland was a member of the ICC, and he had early on been deeply involved behind the scenes as Director General of the Polish Foreign Ministry. I remember going more than once to Mikalowski's embassy residence in Washington, and being impressed with his ambidextrous approach. Previously he had been ambassador to the Court of St. James and also ambassador to Hanoi. On his desk he had autographed pictures of both King George VI and Ho Chi Minh.

I said earlier that Kennedy decided to negotiate his way out of Laos and, if necessary, militarize his way out of Vietnam by sending US military advisers for starters. I think it is futile to speculate over what Kennedy would have done about Vietnam if he had lived and won reelection in 1964. Some of his champions are sure that he would have withdrawn. Roger Hilsman thinks so. Others are convinced that the same predicaments that confronted Johnson would ultimately have forced Kennedy to escalate as well.

In terms of domestic politics, hypothetically it would have been somewhat easier for Kennedy to disengage from Vietnam than it was for Johnson because of JFK's Catholicism. The Catholic aspect of the Vietnam war has always been awkward to discuss, but it is there and bears further investigation. I am thinking of Diem's own background at Maryknoll, the dramatic Catholic refugee flow into South Vietnam, the role of luminaries like Cardinal Spellman, and the presence of prominent Catholic generals and politicians in the American Friends of Vietnam. Kennedy and Johnson were located at rather contrasting poles on the political spectrum. Kennedy used to tell his entourage that he was better able to manage the Catholic enthusiasm for Vietnam than anybody else. The opposite was true of Johnson who had to be more conscious of, deferential to, and solicitous of the Catholic vote.

Kennedy (rather diabolically?) had early on sent Johnson out to Vietnam as his personal representative. This was LBJ's first foreign assignment as Vice President. He came back with an autographed photograph of Diem which he proudly displayed in his house in Washington in 1962-3. Johnson had ingratiated himself with Diem and, with his customary extravagance, proclaimed that Diem was "the Churchill of Asia".

By the time I became INR director in the spring of 1963, there were already disputes inside the intelligence community over Vietnam. Views differed about the significance of the Buddhist uprisings, the role that Diem's brother Nhu played in suppressing them, and how seriously Washington should take the growing religious controversy. Kennedy was personally startled by the Buddhist protests, which perhaps for the first time made it clear that he was not dealing with a Catholic country but only with a Catholic regime. According to several accounts, INR's analysis of the serious potential dimensions of the Buddhist crisis certainly reached Kennedy's desk during this period.

Implicit in INR's analysis was a warning about possible consequences. Here was a minority Catholic government in a heavily Buddhist country representing a very strong interest group of ex-North Vietnamese Catholics who had fled south. Diem's sister-in-law, Madame Nhu, was gratuitously inflaming matters with her references to burning bonzes as "Buddhist barbeques." As a former friend and supporter of the organization, Kennedy took note when the American Friends of Vietnam began to take their distance from Diem and advocate a change in regime. JFK was also impressed with the resignation of the hapless Vietnamese Ambassador in Washington, Tran van Dong, Madame Nhu's father, who publicly denounced his daughter and told people that Vietnam was a looming catastrophe. Thus there were a number of negatives accumulating in the summer of 1963 commanding the attention of policymakers.

Q: I would like to talk about the intelligence side. I can't imagine that INR had a cadre of Buddhist experts. Was this a bunch of hotshot intellectuals making snap judgments or did you feel you were getting some in- depth understanding?

HUGHES: That's a good question. It always seemed to me that we were inadequately staffed in general on Southeast Asia when it came to quantity, but comparatively well staffed when it came to quality. People like Lou Sarris, Dorothy Avery, Dick Smyser, Paul Kreisberg, and Evelyn Colbert had considerable background on Vietnam, many of them with experience on the ground. When he was INR director, Hilsman made repeated trips to Vietnam. We sent Lou Sarris out there more than once as disputes arose with the Pentagon. Later on Bill Trueheart, former DCM in Saigon, also served in INR.

During this period we had to be aware that the press in Saigon as also playing an increasingly important role. David Halberstam so incensed Kennedy with his negative reporting that the President asked the New York Times to get rid of him. Halberstam's retaliation for that was his book The Best and the Brightest, where the best and the brightest don't come out very well.

Roger Hilsman, Mike Forrestal, Averell Harriman, George Ball, and Henry Cabot Lodge were later blamed for the sequence of events that led to the Diem assassination. This is unfair. History is written looking backward, but it evolves looking forward. Ultimately the fact of the Diem assassination colors the retrospective attitudes. At the time, those who signed off on the famous August 1963 telegram were reacting to the precipitously declining situation highlighted by the Buddhist problem with Diem. When Lodge asked for instructions on how to handle Diem, his family, and the Buddhist crisis, Washington was forced to confront a very disagreeable situation. The atmosphere was rather electric when the Hilsman telegram was drafted and approved in various quarters, including quarters that later said they hadn't quite approved, or done so conditionally, like Kennedy, Rusk, and McNamara. The telegram basically told Lodge to invite Diem to separate himself from his brother Nhu. Some, like Fritz Nolting, the outgoing American ambassador to Vietnam, thought this was a cockeyed idea and that there was no way you could separate the two brothers. But Nolting was on his leisurely sea voyage back to America which made him effectively a non-participant. It was unfortunate that the crisis came to a head during a change of ambassadors. Lodge had just arrived when he sent the inquiry to which Washington was responding.

Q: Was INR included in this?

HUGHES: INR was involved to the extent that we had written a sober paper earlier that week about the Buddhist crisis, a paper which Mac Bundy and Mike Forrestal, insisted that President Kennedy read. Moreover. By coincidence, it happened that for other reasons Forrestal had previously asked me to have lunch with him at the White House the day of the outgoing telegram. I had driven in to the State Department with Roger Hilsman that same Saturday morning, and Roger was clearly primed for an eventful day's work. As I say, I think he has been unfairly singled out for blame. He was part of a group that legitimately considered the Buddhist crisis to be very grave and of another group that worried about Nhu's reported tendencies toward neutralism. He found brother Nhu intolerable for both reasons. I recall that Forrestal at lunch, much to my surprise, said that Harriman "finally" had just come on board. "Finally" at least means that Averell was by no means the instigator of the August 23 telegram. It is true that he played an important part in legitimizing it, as did George Ball in the State Department. Alex Johnson later wrote that he was playing golf with Ball and was asked to stay under a tree and remain uninvolved while Ball considered Roger's draft telegram. That gives you a glimpse into the complicated personal maneuvering that went on that weekend. My impression is that President Kennedy's role remains in dispute. He was clearly deeply involved personally. I think he was more than acquiescent on Saturday, while his acquiescence turned to outrage two days later when the denunciations began.

If Diem had pushed his brother Nhu out of office and sent Madam Nhu off to Switzerland to calm down, things might have been very different. Ultimately the fact of Diem's assassination affects people's recollections retrospectively. Nowhere in the telegram is there anything about assassinating anybody. The question at the time was whether the proposed removal of brother Nhu from office was possible.

Q: It sounds to me like one of these Washington cables - just tell Diem to straighten out his family - and we told them what to do, so if anything happens we are covered. I got one of those, a couple of months later. Madam Nhu was in Belgrade at an international parliamentary union thing lobbying. I got a telegram saying "Try and persuade Madam Nhu not to go to the United States and raise hell." If she comes in for a visa I don't know what I'm supposed to say - the weather was bad? Did anybody think anything was going to happen with this or was this just to cover your ass?

HUGHES: Of course Kennedy himself had originally chosen to send Henry Cabot Lodge to Saigon partly for that reason-political protection. Lodge had been Nixon's running mate for vice president in Kennedy's recent 1960 Presidential campaign. He was also the Senator from Massachusetts whom Jack himself had defeated earlier in 1954. If Vietnam were later to become politically damaging, the blame would at least be shared on a bi-partisan basis with Lodge in Saigon.

Q: What was expected? Were you gathering anything at the time?

HUGHES: There was another element in the intelligence about brother Nhu to the effect that he was not only capable of butchering Buddhists but that he might work out a deal with Hanoi. The two-pronged thrust of the intelligence about Nhu tended to bring together otherwise opposing forces in Washington-those who waned to find an exit from Vietnam and those who wanted to stay and win. Hilsman and Harriman were both in the latter camp at the time of the August telegram.

Q: How were you feeling about the intelligence you were getting from Vietnam? How comfortable were you at that time?

HUGHES: We were very uncomfortable about official reporting from Vietnam. We had been critical of Nolting's reporting. We thought it was important to get people out there on the ground to talk widely, not only with the American military and other American officials in Saigon, but also out in the countryside with the troops, with the press, and with foreign observers. There were various INR visits to Vietnam, some of them celebrated. While Hilsman was INR director, President Kennedy sent him and Mike Forrestal on a joint mission to Vietnam. They came back already worried about official reporting. US military reporting became an increasingly difficult problem for INR analysts, culminating in a famous blowup with the JCS in the fall of 1963.

Complicating matters in 1961-3 was the fact that green berets and counter-insurgency had become part of the Kennedy mystique. He and Hilsman shared an enthusiasm for strategic hamlets. A new breed of Americans, right out of Kennedy's inaugural address, was being tested in Vietnam. These were people who didn't take no for an answer, and normally didn't accept skeptical intelligence very comfortably.

Q: I've interviewed a lot of people who served in Vietnam, particularly towards the latter part of the time you were in INR. The military reporting, just by definition, has to be "can do". Also you had a certain discrepancy between a lot of young men who were out in the field as province advisers or out in village hamlets who reported through the embassy's political section. The latter consisted of more senior officers who filtered it out to get away from the supposedly youthful enthusiasm. Thus there was a more rosy picture at the top of the embassy than maybe you were getting from the young people. Did you have lines into that province reporting level?

HUGHES: Yes, and we succeeded to a degree. The people we sent out to Vietnam tried to develop those lines. So did the rather small cadre of academic experts who were not in the government. Unfortunately the number of Vietnam specialists outside the government remained rather stable instead of growing exponentially as the war went on. In fact, this was one of the scandals of the war. The war itself went on and on, but the scholarly community on Vietnam didn't grow along with it. There were various reasons for that phenomenon, including the growing disinclination of the scholarly community to accept government contracts as the war grew more unpopular. In INR we did try to tap into the outside community of experts, such as it was.

Wesley Fishel, for instance, had been out in Vietnam in the late '50s with Wolf Ladejinsky working on land reform. He was a friend and admirer of Diem in the early days, but gave up on him by mid-'63. In late August 1963, I think it was over Labor Day weekend, we called a meeting in Washington at INR to discuss the contingency of a possible successor regime should Diem leave office. Allen Whiting our office director on East Asia, and Lou Sarris, one of our long- time analysts, were joined by Fishel who came in from Michigan for the occasion. Gilbert Jonas from New York also joined us, the one-time secretary of the American Committee on Vietnam. Jonas had had several years' experience as the public relations person for the American Committee and he knew the Saigon scene very well.

We brought them in one week after the August telegram crisis to brainstorm about what the best follow-on regime of generals might be if Diem were to depart. Their conclusions were passed on to Hilsman and Forrestal. Meanwhile, the generals did not in fact move against Diem for another two months. September and October passed with nothing happening. Some people think that Hilsman's famous telegram went out and Diem was promptly assassinated. The generals delayed for weeks, ample time for Kennedy and his top circle of advisers to have corrected their mistakes if they had serious second thoughts about them.

Q: Look a telegram goes to Ambassador Lodge to go and tell Diem that he has to separate himself from his brother or we don't think he is going to win. But that isn't an action thing. Wasn't more going on behind the scenes with the CIA station chief?

HUGHES: The CIA station chief was very definitely involved all through September and October. He was talking to the generals while Ambassador Lodge was talking to Diem. Near the end a rather desperate Diem asks Lodge "Is the government of the United States still backing me?" and he gets an answer which he had to interpret as negative. That leads to another story that so far has not been convincingly pieced together. Why, during the preceding weeks, were contingency arrangements not made for giving Diem refuge or for flying him out of Vietnam? The impression remains that American officialdom was content to leave Diem and his brother to the post-coup mercies of the plotters.

Within a month Washington became temporarily distracted because of Kennedy's own assassination. What stance would Johnson take toward his complicated Kennedy inheritance? Years earlier, I had watched him day after day in the Senate. I was somewhat surprised when Johnson, I thought uncharacteristically, decided that the Kennedy's team would basically continue in place in the Johnson administration. LBJ decided to keep Rusk, Bundy, McNamara, Rostow, and McCone. Here was a man who under normal circumstances would have fashioned a Johnson administration from the beginning. But because of the assassination and because of Johnson's own real insecurities, he retained the major Kennedy appointees with all their Vietnam baggage. A year later he found himself confronted with a unanimous recommendation from the Kennedy holdovers to expand the war and he expanded it. I have often thought that the chances of de-escalation in Vietnam might have been as good-not better, but as good-if Johnson had allowed most of the Kennedy crowd to leave in early 1964 and had appointed more run-of-the-mill Democratic politicians.

Probably Johnson would have gone the way he did anyway. "They would impeach me, wouldn't they, if I cut and run out of Vietnam?" This was a persistent worry of Johnson's in his telephone tapes in '64. But it might have been a closer call, I think, and the decision to escalate in a big way in 1965 might have been moderated, if not avoided, had Johnson surrounded himself with his own domestic political advisers. Confronted, as he was, with a solid phalanx of major Kennedy holdovers, whatever possibility there might have been for avoiding escalation in 1965 was lost.

Meanwhile there was also the 1964 Presidential election. Once more we saw the ubiquitous interplay of domestic politics and foreign policy with intelligence inextricably involved. As soon as Johnson became President he had to consider how he was going to get through 1964 without losing the war in Vietnam. The more the unknown generals toppled one another in Saigon, the more desperate this whole thing looked. At home Johnson was going to be confronted by Goldwater who was bound to accuse him of losing Vietnam at every plausible opportunity. Johnson wanted to go through the campaign as the responsible one, in contrast to the irresponsible Goldwater. The whole object was to tinker the Vietnam crisis over for the campaign year and the November election. Johnson was determined to come across as restrained, sensible, and incremental against the rash, nuclear-minded pilot from Arizona.

Johnson had suffered through the "who lost China?" debate in the '50s and was completely sensitized to Republican accusations about losing one more country to communism. Almost everything written in '64 was written in that context. Those who wrote intelligence papers knew that if the President was reading them he was going to be reading them in that context. Mind you, this was before we had firm evidence of North Vietnamese troop infiltration. Not until early '65 did we have real proof that the Ho Chi Minh Trail was being used to infiltrate North Vietnamese regulars.

Meanwhile, in the summer of 1964, because I had worked for Hubert Humphrey in the Senate and because he was about to be chosen as Johnson's running-mate, Rusk thought it would be a good idea for me to brief Humphrey regularly on Vietnam and other intelligence. So, in addition to my role as Director of Intelligence and Research, I was assigned to brief Humphrey. There was even some discussion about my briefing Goldwater, because he also knew me and I was still a member of his Air Force reserve unit. However he decided not to be briefed by anyone from the Johnson administration outside the Pentagon. I did brief Humphrey, meeting him frequently that summer. In fact I was at the Democratic convention in Atlantic City as his briefing officer. I was officially available to brief Hubert during the day, while I was unofficially helping draft his acceptance speech the night of his nomination as vice-president.

Q: Were you comfortable with this role?

HUGHES: Not entirely. On the other hand I didn't feel uncomfortable. In those days we thought we could compartmentalize. I tried to be meticulous and careful about which role I was performing. Meanwhile in the days before the Democratic convention that August, Johnson was playing his usual manipulative game-this time with Humphrey and the other Vice Presidential aspirants, including Gene McCarthy- keeping them guessing where, when, and on whom the VP lightning would strike. Johnson repeatedly made it clear to Humphrey, through his intermediary James Rowe, that being Vice President under Johnson would entail absolute loyalty. This applied to any possible substantive disagreement on Vietnam or on any other major policy matter.

Just before the Democratic Convention we had had the Gulf of Tonkin crisis. Sunday, August 2, occurred on another of those summer weekends when people were out of town. McNamara was climbing mountains in Wyoming. The Bundys were up in Massachusetts. I happened to be here, was awakened early in the morning, and summoned to Rusk's house for breakfast. There I found myself in the company of Rusk, Ball, Cy Vance (McNamara's deputy), General Wheeler, the newly appointed chairman of the JCS, and a couple of men from the CIA and the Navy. We were briefed about an attack on the USS Maddox. The evidence pointed clearly to North Vietnamese PT boats as the culprits. The Navy had sent the Maddox into the Gulf of Tonkin to show the flag and perhaps to be on the scene in case there was any intelligence to be gleaned from radar activity along the shore.

While Virginia Rusk cooked pancakes and served us breakfast, we sat on the floor looking at maps of the Gulf of Tonkin, noting the proximity of islands, speculating about 3-mile versus 10-mile off-shore claims, and guessing where our destroyer might have been. We were also aware that certain covert activities had been approved for this area, the so-called 34A operations. No one knew whether the captain of the Maddox knew about them, or whether the South Vietnamese involved in the 34A ops knew about the Maddox. The Pentagon seemed doubtful about both issues. The scene was reminiscent of the Versailles Peace Conference with Lloyd George and Clemenceau struggling to locate Trieste on their map of the Adriatic. Anyway after we brainstormed this for a couple of hours our small group first went off to our respective offices and then to the White House to brief Johnson.

It was a rollicking encounter, with Johnson at his funniest and most incisive. He asked all the right questions. He speculated correctly that the GVN maritime operations could have stimulated radar activity along the coast, which in turn could have allowed our destroyer to map the coast electronically. He allowed for possible North Vietnamese confusion linking the 34A operations and the presence of the Maddox. He decided that the circumstances were too murky for armed retaliation, and concluded that he would merely warn the North Vietnamese against a repeat performance. (2006 note: subsequent to this interview, TLH discovered contemporaneous notes written later that day about this LBJ briefing. He recounted them at length in session three of the Brown University Conference mentioned above, April 9, 2005.)

The missing leadership was back in town by August 4th in time to handle the so-called second attack at the Gulf of Tonkin. McNamara with his usual decisiveness took charge of verifying the authenticity of the whole event, after doubts had been raised and LBJ briefed about them. Johnson demanded certainty before acting, and the Pentagon rose to the occasion by resolving doubts in favor of certainty. Johnson arranged for McNamara to brief Capital Hill and without further ado, McNamara testified with assuredness about the second attack, misleading the Congress, and propelling more or less everybody into supporting the Gulf of Tonkin resolution. Not that Johnson didn't rather welcome the opportunity. Assistant Secretary Bill Bundy had drafted the resolution and had it on the shelf for just such an occasion. At the time, the resolution's supporters, including Fulbright the floor manager, were chiefly worried about Goldwater who was now the Republican nominee for President and eager to denounce Johnson for inaction.

The conventional wisdom now discounts any second attack. The North Vietnamese at the time and since have denied a second attack. Apparently readers of the intercepts at the Pentagon mixed up the times and dates on the telegrams. Those that they thought were referring to August 4 really referred to August 2. The certainty contained in the McNamara testimony was not corrected after contrary conclusions were reached.

Q: Was this of concern to you, that McNamara was such a take charge person? I would imagine by this time there would have been some concern about military intelligence.

HUGHES: Yes, I was concerned about both. When it suited his purposes, McNamara himself rose above the confines of military intelligence. He had his own intelligence. By 1965 he was deliberately seeking intelligence outside the military. He ultimately had some intelligence crafted for his own use at CIA without DIA involvement.

Q: Did he ever call INR?

HUGHES: No, but he tried to fire me once in the fall of 1963. INR had questioned MACV's own Vietnamese battle statistics as well as the Pentagon's interpretations of them. (I wrote this incident up at some length last year in a review of McNamara's new book. See Foreign Policy Magazine, Fall 1995, "Experiencing McNamara.") The joint chiefs were furious when INR produced a research memorandum based on the military's own statistics, reaching negative conclusions about the progress in Vietnam which contrasted with the Pentagon's own positive assessment. McNamara protested to Rusk. The latter called me in and told me that INR had made the JCS and McNamara very unhappy. He remarked "After all, they are the experts on this kind of thing." I said, "You have often made it very clear that INR is independent, and that we are to call the shots as we see them." "That's right" he replied, adding, as if to be helpful, "Would you like some military staffers?" I said, "No, I don't think so. We know what they think. We talk to them regularly. But we don't really need colonels over here helping us write." "I can understand that," said Rusk. So he sort of passed it off, concluding, "I'll tell them that any time the State Department gets involved in military analysis, we will of course check with Defense." I said, "We always do check, but we don't clear." "Well, let's just leave it at that," Rusk said.

Q: It doesn't sound like a very take charge person.

HUGHES: No, Rusk was always deferential. He was deferential to McNamara. He was deferential even to me. He made a career out of deference. That was a major characteristic in his rise to power and also a major ingredient in his staying power.

Vietnam also figured in a big way in the famous Johnson versus Bobby Kennedy rivalry.One reason Lyndon stayed in Vietnam and escalated was that he thought that Bobby might otherwise accuse him of jettisoning Jack's legacy on Vietnam. Bobby had been and could have remained a hawk on Vietnam. At one point he volunteered to become the ambassador in Saigon. Lyndon ran from that as fast as he possibly could, knowing that that prospect meant nothing but trouble, no matter how it worked out. It was never clear that Bobby would be a dove until Johnson himself was over-committed on Vietnam and the whole situation went sour domestically. Of course, Johnson had already annoyed Bobby by deliberately bypassing him for the vice presidential selection. Bobby always loomed large in Johnson's universe of possible opponents.

Johnson lucked out. Goldwater was blunted by the Gulf of Tonkin Resolution. LBJ looked resolute in responding to an attack on an American ship, but moderate in comparison to Goldwater who hinted that he might have bombed Hanoi in response to the Tonkin engagement. Johnson was able to be moderate, middle of the road, responsible. Goldwater looked like an extremist. The campaign ad with the little girl and the daisy countdown worked. The responsible Johnson won and the irresponsible Goldwater lost.

Lyndon Johnson also had always liked the other Senator from Minnesota, Humphrey's colleague, Eugene McCarthy. In '64 Johnson tantalized both men over the vice presidential nomination. He did the same with Chester Bowles' old rival from Connecticut, Senator Tom Dodd. In the running up stage, McCarthy finally got tired of being used and withdrew. The night before the nomination, LBJ had both Humphrey and Dodd fly down to Washington so they could twiddle their thumbs outside the oval office waiting for a decision. Humphrey fell asleep waiting for Johnson, but Dodd woke him up exclaiming, "Hubert, how can you sleep at a time like this?"

The Johnson-Humphrey ticket went on to a massive victory in the November election. Fortunately Vietnam hadn't fallen apart in the meantime. Bill Bundy was now producing an options paper about what to do next. Included was a surprise option which most of us were unaware of at the time. In retrospect it suggests that Bill was much more of a dove than anyone who knew him would ever have imagined. This is the paper that included a withdrawal option which so agitated Rusk and McNamara that it was withdrawn from circulation and shredded. There is a good discussion of it in the new book by Kai Bird on the Bundy brothers. Generally speaking, the daily Bill Bundy whom I saw and knew was an unrelenting, though thoughtful, hawk.

After the 1964 election, Humphrey visited LBJ at his Texas ranch. Shortly afterwards, Rusk and Mac Bundy, with Bill Moyers also present, met with LBJ also at the Texas ranch. A few days later I was having lunch with Moyers at the White House. "Did you hear about the discussion about you at the ranch?" Bill asked. I said, "No." "Well, Rusk proposed that you should become the deputy undersecretary of State for political affairs." This is the key job that U. Alexis Johnson had held in the Kennedy administration, with a direct policy pipeline to Rusk, by-passing first Bowles and then Ball, the undersecretaries. "Bundy liked the Hughes idea too, and Johnson said, 'That's fine. Let's do it.' Suddenly, at the end of the morning, Rusk said, "On second thought, I think I'll withdraw that suggestion about Tom Hughes. He is too valuable where he is'." Moyers asked me,, "Can you figure that one out?" I said "No, I can't figure that one out." He shook his head adding "I can't either."

That was a potentially fateful proposition, because, if implemented, it could have had a bearing on Vietnam policy right at the beginning of the Johnson-Humphrey administration. They needed a replacement for Alex Johnson who at that point was in Saigon as deputy ambassador. I would have accepted that post had it been offered. The change could have made some difference in the pre-escalation discussion, because I would have been superior to Bill Bundy in the State Department hierarchy. Had Bill Bundy's secret dovish instincts come to the surface, there would have been a skeptical Ball-Hughes-Bill Bundy lineup at State at a critical time. Instead of this theoretically possible de-escalation signal, the new administration opened with the opposite-with Mac Bundy's own trip to Vietnam in early '65, the Pleiku attack, and Mac's escalation recommendation which Rusk endorsed.

Here was Johnson at the outset of his second term- determined to accomplish a huge domestic agenda, fearful that Vietnam was going to undermine it; and yet deciding that the domestic political price for his Great Society was recommitting to Vietnam. The way to keep the military and the Republicans tolerant of his Great Society legislation on Capital Hill was to persevere in Vietnam. He was forced to confront the issue sharply just as 1965 opened, when the Viet Cong attacked an American base at Pleiku while Mac Bundy was personally in Vietnam. Of course Lyndon Johnson thought that CODELS (Congressional delegations) were the most important visitors in the world except perhaps for personal representatives of the President like Bundy. In LBJ's view every foreign government was totally attuned to US official travel. He immediately assumed that Hanoi had attacked Pleiku deliberately because Bundy was there in Vietnam at the time. There was no other possible explanation in the ethnocentric view of the former Senate Majority Leader. In fact there is no evidence that the Pleiku attack was authorized by Hanoi. It may well have been the work of a local commander. Of course it also pleased Mac Bundy to think that his visit was of such significance that the attack must have been timed to coincide with his presence in Vietnam.

Once more there was to be no second guessing. The President received a telegram from Bundy who had visited the hospital and seen wounded American troops. All of Mac's old heroes came back to haunt him. One was the ghost of the family idol, Colonel Henry Stinson, the former secretary of war- the man who told Roosevelt before Pearl Harbor that the way for America to get into a war was always to make sure that the other side struck first. As Mac put it, you wait for the streetcar and sooner or later one will come along. Here was a Pearl Harbor re-enactment right at Pleiku. So, fatefully at the outset of LBJ's first year as President in his own right, his (and Kennedy's) normally dispassionate national security adviser had become an undisguised hawk. Back in Washington Rolling Thunder became the favorite option, and we were about to embark on the bombing of North Vietnam in retaliation for Pleiku.

Last minute efforts to stave off the proposed escalation were then set in motion. George Ball was alarmed and fully realized that historic decisions were in train. On a weekend in mid-February, he urged me to call the Vice President and share our most recent Vietnam intelligence with him. I checked, and Humphrey was scheduled to be in Georgia for the weekend hunting quail with Minneapolis businessman Ford Bell. At that moment Jean and I happened to have a dinner party at our house in Chevy Chase, and by chance Ben Reed, the State Department's executive secretary and a close friend, was also there. The party was interrupted when Ball called on the White House phone which I had at home at that time. He talked to both Ben and myself. "Jesus. This thing is really bad. Tom, you better go down to Georgia, brief Hubert, and get him back here and involved." Rusk also gave his consent-for such important discussions, the new vice president should certainly be on hand.

By then INR had accumulated a considerable record of skepticism on the war. We had taken dissents in recent NIE's and SNIE's. Sometimes these reflected strange alliances within the intelligence community - dissents by INR and the army, both skeptical about bombing the North, or dissents by INR and the Air Force, both skeptical about chances on the ground in the South. So I called Humphrey who asked me to get on a plane to Georgia right away. He and I spent the weekend looking over the intelligence reports, discussing the options, and noting where matters seemed to be heading. The Vice President was convinced that he ought to make his own views known to the President, privately but forcefully.

So Humphrey decided to write a confidential memorandum to Johnson. The text of the remarkable document that resulted can be found in Humphrey memoirs, "The Education of a Public Man". Humphrey thought that the most acceptable framework for his memo would be a political one - American politics and the Vietnam Wan. He would write it as one politician to a fellow politician. Arguably he and Lyndon were in fact the country's two leading politicians at that point. After all they had just won a landslide national election together. It is a very prescient memo, and makes sad rereading now. Let me find it. (TLH gets Humphrey's book).

Q: I have just read this memo, dated February 15, 1965 from Humphrey to the president. It is contained on pages 320 through 324 in Hubert Humphrey's The Education of a Public Man. As you say, it's as though he sat and wrote it in the 1980's, about what the consequences would be- the lack of support for the war by the American public and the fact that the Johnson administration was really in a very strong position now having won the election by such an overwhelming number. How much did you take part in putting this together?

HUGHES: I wrote the first draft on a yellow legal pad, six or seven pages, following deep and lengthy discussions with Humphrey that weekend. They were his views that I put on paper. Then on the airplane that Sunday when we flew back to Washington together, he went over that draft word for word and made a few minor changes - nothing of substance. I still have the original document with his handwritten changes on it. Back in Washington, I put the memo in finished form and had my secretary type up a single copy. This I delivered to Humphrey personally in his office in the Executive Office Building, where I assume he had it retyped on his official stationery.

When the memo reached Johnson, all hell broke loose. Mac Bundy was called into the Oval Office to find an irate Johnson exclaiming "That Vice President of mine promised me his loyalty, and just look at this! Well, Humphrey is to have nothing further to do with Vietnam-no meetings, no visitors, no speeches, nothing. I am appointing you his nursemaid for the foreseeable future on foreign policy." The result was that Humphrey was cut out of all Vietnam meetings for several months. He paid for his return to Johnson's good graces only by becoming an exuberant supporter of the war-ironically in 1966 when the war had already gone so badly that even McNamara was privately defecting.

Q: You mentioned before that you had already been known as a dove. I mean this is pretty strong stuff coming at that time. What had brought you around to feeling that a heavy commitment towards the war would lose political support and that the Americans wouldn't understand?

HUGHES: I had been close to national politics and politicians for many years, and I was now immersed in official intelligence responsibilities. Putting the two together and assessing the probabilities was not very difficult. More important, however, was Humphrey's own similar assessment of the probable political reactions of the American public to the long inconclusive struggle that was implicit in, and predictable from, the intelligence estimates we discussed. INR was basically saying that we were in a no-win situation whether in the north or in the south. We could hold on, we could muddle through here and there with some luck, but ultimately it was not going to work. There weren't enough attractive targets in the North to make a bombing campaign decisive Pouring US ground troops into the South would inevitably produce casualties that would become intolerable. Expanding the war to China would be a disaster. These intelligence assessments led to some pretty obvious political conclusions. After long and serious discussions with Humphrey, these were his conclusions and I was pleased to find that mine were similar. But Humphrey was the political expert here, not I. It was his political antennae at work, and the resulting memo represented his views.

Washington newspapers had noted that I had gone to Georgia to meet with Humphrey that weekend. So I was presumably identified with his memo in the minds of its few readers. On the other hand, the whole episode was known only to a very few. The memo itself never leaked. Soon, of course, it was common knowledge that Humphrey had been frozen out of the Vietnam debate inside the administration. There was speculation about the cause. It was hardly the way Hubert had intended to begin his Vice Presidential career.

Another mystery from February, 1965, surrounds Mac Bundy. That same month he served both as Johnson's escalator in Vietnam and Humphrey's nursemaid in Washington. According to Kai Bird's new book on the Bundy brothers, McGeorge Bundy, on February 2, 1965, two days before he went to Vietnam, and pursuant to a request from LBJ, wrote a memorandum to Johnson about his contingent successor as National Security Advisor. Bundy said that he himself had no intention of quitting soon, but of course he would not be staying forever. His memo to LBJ was entitled "A Deputy or Potential Successor in My Office."

Bundy told LBJ that he would like to bring a deputy into his office who could succeed him when he eventually left. Bundy said the man he was looking for had to have an instinctive understanding of the job and had to protect the President's right to hear both sides of hard cases. Ironically this was five days before Pleiku, when Bundy himself strongly argued one side! His memo named three possibilities. Bill Moyers, Abram Chayes, and myself. I had no knowledge of this memo until many years later. Now there was a certain unreality, even otherworldliness, about Bundy informing Johnson of the virtues of Bill Moyers, who was practically LBJ's foster son. Johnson was likely to have his own ideas about Moyers' future. Abe Chayes was my old friend and colleague from the Bowles days, who had served brilliantly as legal counsel for the State Department under Kennedy. But Abe had returned to Harvard, and he would surely have been known to Johnson as a Kennedy veteran and a suspected Bobby supporter. As for me at the beginning of 1965. Johnson would have remembered the discussion that he had just had with Bundy and Rusk at the Texas ranch about my promotion to Alex Johnson's job in the State Department, the proposal that Rusk had made and then withdrawn. Moreover Johnson surely also knew about my Humphrey connection from our days in the Senate.

Perhaps not so coincidentally at about this time in early February, 1965, Rusk at one of our regular morning meetings had casually asked me if I had ever been interested in going over to the White House. He said "You should know that Mac Bundy has his eye on you". I said I had had plenty of experience in working as an assistant to great men, and that, by contrast, I was now very happy running a bureau on my own responsibility at INR. On balance I would rather stay put. Rusk said he was delighted I felt that way, but if the time came when there was an inquiry from Bundy, it would be best for me (rather than Rusk) to tell him that I preferred to remain at State!

Bundy apparently kept a copy of his 1965 memo in his desk drawer, because it reappeared in identical form in a second memo to Johnson when Mac was actually departing, a year later. In February, 1966, Bundy wrote that, as Johnson knew, he was about to leave to take the presidency of the Ford Foundation. Once more he recommended Moyers, Chayes or Hughes, this time not as his deputy, but as his successor. He repeated the same earlier descriptions of the three of us. Walt Rostow, who was actually given the job, was conspicuously not mentioned in the Bundy memo. Years later in the spring of 1991 I participated in a Vietnam roundtable at the LBJ Library in Texas. Two dozen of the foreign affairs alumni from the LBJ administration were there, including Mac Bundy and Rostow. Mac's 1966 succession memo had just been declassified and it was suddenly distributed to the group. It was news to all of us, including Walt. There was a rather dramatic scene. The librarian asked, "Any comments on the memo?" There was a dead silence, finally awkwardly broken by the librarian's suggestion that perhaps this was a good time for lunch. Riding down in the elevator with Mac Bundy, I said, "Well that was a surprise. This is the first time I ever heard about your memo." He replied, "Now you can see how determined I was to have a moderate successor - and how successful I was!" Incidentally transcripts of that LBJ Library conference have also been published. They omit the Bundy memo incident entirely, but include several interventions by me on Vietnam and life in the Johnson administration generally.

Q: I'd like to stop here. We have come up to 1965 and you have discussed events leading up to that, including this remarkable memo that you and Vice President Humphrey produced describing why we shouldn't escalate. Also about Mac Bundy's recommendation to the President that you might be one of his successors. So we will pick it up there on Vietnam. And I would like to ask you about the bombing, one of the remarkable things the Air Force could do according to the Air Force. Somehow, when in doubt, bombing seems to be an almost antiseptic solution. I was in the Air Force in Korea and was very dubious about what could be done. I think there were a lot of people in the strategic bombing survey who had doubts. So I wonder if you could comment on your thinking at that time. Then we will continue.

Today is the 20th of September 1999. Tom, we are at 1965 and the effectiveness of the start of the air campaign. How was this being portrayed from INR?

HUGHES: I think it is fair to say that, even at the beginning of 1965, there was an attempt to avoid or postpone the big troop decision. The more the Administration wanted to avoid a ground struggle with potentially large American casualties, the more plausible the Air Force sounded in arguing that bombing the North was the way to go. The one thing that the policy makers of 1965 were incapable of accepting was the idea that there was no positive way out. There had to be some road to victory. Almost everybody agreed that the great government of the United States could not be defeated.

Remember too that the men in charge in 1965 were still the heady victors of the Cuba Missile Crisis. They had successfully faced down the mighty Soviet Union. Compared to that, Vietnam was a pipsqueak problem. The question was which military option was most capable of producing positive results with the least cost. The difficult political and military situation on the ground in South Vietnam made people receptive to the air power argument. When the bombing failed to produce the desired results, the decision-makers had to turn back to the army.

So the ground was constantly shifting, with the US military very much divided. This is reflected across the board-in the policy discussions, in the arguments among the joint chiefs of staff, and also in the intelligence estimates. There were a succession of NIEs and SNIEs - national intelligence estimates from the United States Intelligence Board - with INR either joining shifting majorities or dissenting. They were published from the middle of '64 through the fall of '65, reflecting the major policy arguments on Vietnam. The public first glimpsed this bureaucratic saga with the release of the Pentagon papers years ago.

In 1968-9, as I mentioned earlier, I also commissioned an internal INR self-study of our Vietnam production over the entire Kennedy-Johnson period. To my chagrin this study is still classified. We've tried to get it released any number of times. Apparently the CIA is still refusing to clear the release. (Note: This study was finally released in 2004, five years after this interview. It is now on the internet. See TLH comments earlier.)

This study covers INR estimates on all the major themes: the possibility of stability in the south as governments were changing; the possibility of pacifying the countryside; the relative determination of the North Vietnamese to withstand bombing and to persist in their infiltration of the south; and the possibility of Chinese intervention. The study shows that INR was consistently pessimistic on the war. In retrospect most of INR's predictions look very prescient. Earlier than the CIA we were pessimistic about the bombing of the north. Earlier than the CIA we were pessimistic about stability in the south. But there was a bureaucratic downside to all this fratricide in the intelligence community. The number of slim and shifting majorities and of repeated dissents in a way discredited the intelligence community's role on Vietnam. By 1966 the policymakers got tired of the intelligence community's split decisions. They wanted analysis and estimates that would be useful in prosecuting the war.

Q: Did you find that in the intelligence community where you stand depends on where you sit?

HUGHES: Actually INR had less of an axe to grind than the others because we had no particular budgets or State Department operations that we had to defend. By contrast military intelligence tended to reflect the roles and missions of the particular military service involved. Likewise the analysts at CIA had to be aware that CIA had an important operational side that had big stakes in big budgets and covert activities. Therefore, it is no surprise that Air Force intelligence estimates tended to reflect their operational interests. Since they were the ones who would be bombing the north, they found that success lay in that direction. By the same token, the army, increasingly involved in South Vietnam, thought it only natural that army intelligence would find it essential to win on the ground in the south. This was a bit transparent. Similarly, during the Cold War, the positions taken by the armed services representatives in the annual national intelligence estimates on Soviet strength regularly looked like mirror images of what the services hoped for in their own budget requests.

Q: During the Kennedy administration, including your former boss Roger Hilsman, there was this infatuation with special forces and green berets- somehow you have bi-lingual people parachuted into the jungle, and this would turn things around. I probably am overstating. But did you find a diminution of that view as the Johnson people became more involved in the war?

HUGHES: Well, yes, in fact there was a diminution after Roger left the government in early 1964. But it is also fair to say that he wasn't alone in that enthusiasm. Bob Komer picked it up pretty quickly. Bobby Kennedy continued to treasure the concept as one of Jack's legacies. In addition Roger is probably still a better defender of strategic hamlets than I am. He should be interviewed on that subject to see what he thinks in retrospect. . Of course he left INR in March '63 and that was relatively early in the Vietnam saga. As assistant secretary for far eastern affairs, he was able to continue that interest for another year as the operational head of the geographical bureau into the first months of the Johnson administration.

So I don't think there was an abrupt change. Certainly the whole goal of strategic hamlets and pacifying the countryside remained a central objective for those who thought the war had to be won in the south. All that persisted. And then, perversely, the more troops that were dispatched, the more wedded we became to winning the war in the south. As Rolling Thunder and other air force operations failed to produce any dramatically positive results in the North, the policymakers again turned their attention to saving the South. There was a kind of trade-off-attacking the North for a while and when that proved to be unproductive, concentrating again on the South. That was the kind of mental process affecting the policymakers by 1966. There was no question that these contrasting arguments were on the table. The analysis that showed why you were unlikely to succeed here and also why you were unlikely to succeed there confronted the policymakers with a continuing dilemma. Almost all of them, of course, were also proud veterans of World War II. Kennedy supporters were still wearing his PT boat tie clasps left over from the 1960 Kennedy campaign. They weren't about to give up when it came to professional patriotism.

Johnson inherited all of that. He was proud of his own war record, such as it was. There was even a residual secessionist mentality from our own Civil War that identified with South Vietnam. Rusk and Johnson, for example, shared this historical memory in many ways. Both were poor boys with deep Southern backgrounds in rural Georgia and Texas. Both had grandfathers who fought for the Confederacy. In a way the South's revenge for Gettysburg ever since their defeat in 1865, was their subsequent takeover of the US army. Already in the Spanish-American War and the First World War, many US generals were coming out of Dixie. This was in a way the last bugle call for the Confederacy.I remember Harriman coming out of a meeting on Vietnam saying that he felt like the only Northerner in the room.

After World War II the Pentagon had also had a personal impact on the State Department. General Marshall moved in as Secretary of State. Colonel Dean Rusk who served in the Pentagon after the war, came over to State under Marshall. So there was not only a military-industrial complex but a diplomatic-military-industrial complex. Rusk's protï¿½gï¿½ U. Alexis Johnson at State had a direct pipeline to the Pentagon. A bureau of political-military affairs was established at State to assure constant contact. Folk memories from World War II were still present in many Washington corridors of power in the 1960's.

Dean Rusk idolized General Marshall. The latter's bitter experience with China also had a lasting influence on Rusk. He himself had been traumatized by the Chinese intervention in Korea. You couldn't have found a more sensitized audience than the Secretary of State over the possibility of Chinese intervention. Speaking of China, there was another curious development in our public diplomacy as the Vietnam war continued into 1967 and 1968. The student protests at home were accelerating and the country was obviously getting more and more deeply divided. The public rationale for the war needed upgrading because saving South Vietnam from communism was no longer quite adequate. There had to be a bigger rationale than that, not only from the public relations point of view, but also to buttress the internal confidence of the policy makers themselves. They had to convince themselves that the stakes were larger than they previously seemed. Suddenly the Chinese threat was magnified. Rusk spoke of a future haunted by a billion Chinese armed with nuclear weapons. McNamara announced that the reason we needed a missile defense was protection against China. Paradoxically, however, the more China became their rationale for the war, the more fixated Rusk, Johnson and others became on the possibility of Chinese intervention.

Rusk had come into office still believing in the Sino-Soviet bloc, and he was one of the last in the administration to accept the fact that there had been a real falling out between the two communist rivals. When INR changed the spelling of Peiping to Peking, from "Peip" to "Pek", we were pioneers in the State Department, well in advance of the Far East bureau and of the Secretary.

Q: Was it an acceptance of the communists?

HUGHES: Yes, it was a denial of the mythology of Taiwan and an acceptance of the undeniable fact of Communist rule in Peking. But the most significant point was a tactical one. In the mid-'60's, Rusk finally accepted the Sino-Soviet split when he realized that it would help let the Russians off the hook on Vietnam. This would enable him to conduct arms control negotiations with the Russians. The more the Johnson administration became embroiled in Vietnam, the more the policymakers became willing to recognize the Soviet-Chinese split. Gradually it became obvious that we were going to conduct a war policy with a China rationale in the morning and a peace policy with a Soviet rationale in the afternoon. By 1966 we have Kosygin and Johnson at their summit meeting at Glassboro. Our debacle in Vietnam had gradually let the Russians off the hook, leaving the Chinese as the main rationale for the war. The US policymakers' chagrin over the unexpected Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia in 1968 was therefore all the greater.

Q: I want to return to the role of INR and your role. Were you in the State Department responding to this in subtle ways? Were you suggesting how we should look at this split?

HUGHES: As I said, we were convinced of the split long before the secretary of state was willing to admit it. He was briefed about it when he came into office, and details of the deteriorating Sino-Soviet relationship were a staple in his normal daily briefings. INR and the intelligence community in general also produced more substantial estimates on the split from time to time. Rusk resisted accepting the seriousness of the split, let alone its implications, for quite some time. I came to think that he had a special problem if China was going to become the major rationale for the Vietnam war. It was the Chinese intervention in Korea that had burned him once before, and it was the possibility of a repeat performance in Vietnam that underlay his incrementalism when it came to escalation.

Setting up China as the major culprit also enhanced Whiting's role in INR as the watcher and warner about every move that the Chinese might be making. So Rusk became ever more attentive to the Chinese threat. His first question at my morning briefings always used to be "Any sign of Chinese movement? Any sign of Chinese reaction?" If Rusk had not been so sensitive about possible Chinese intervention, the rapidity and breadth of our air attack on the north would probably have increased. .

Q: Whiting was your man, but was there any disquiet on your part or on the part of other China watchers? Did they feel he belonged to the old school and there was a new school looking at the cultural revolution?

HUGHES: We were quite happy with Whiting in the 1964-6 time frame when he was still with us. After he departed for Hong Kong, and John Holdridge joined INR, there was some shift in attitude. Arguably the cultural revolution did put a brake on Chinese interventionist impulses, in turn enabling US policy to be more venturesome. How assertive Rusk actually was with Johnson on the China issue remains unclear. Johnson himself was deeply worried about China. Rusk continued with his mysterious posture: "I don't speak out at the cabinet meetings. I reserve my advice for the president." We never knew exactly what that was. He clearly saw nuclear non -proliferation as a place where the U.S. and the Soviet Union had a common interest. He was very enthusiastic about pursuing this and undoubtedly thought it could take some of the curse off the Johnson administration's Vietnam predicament. The worse that predicament became, the more Rusk redoubled his efforts with Moscow. That certainly was true right up to the Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia in 1968 which of course necessitated another policy U-turn. Thereafter we were back stopping both Chinese and Russian communism again.

Q: One of the things McNamara said in his book which seems to outrage people from the State Department was that we lacked experts about what was happening in Vietnam and he was misinformed. How would you reply to that, since you were part of the cadre of people supplying the experts.

HUGHES: Well, one can reasonably complain about the continuing small number of experts on Southeast Asia that persisted over the years despite our national concentration on Vietnam. Growing academic disenchantment with the war itself was one explanation. Another was the ham-handedness of McNamara's own Pentagon in embarrassing the scholarly community with fiascos like the Army's Project Camelot in 1965. I'll return to that later when we discuss Latin America.

But as far as the quality of expertise actually available to McNamara is concerned, I am just as outraged as others have been over his statements. For example, Allen Whiting from INR personally briefed him whenever he was asked. We certainly had McNamara on the distribution list for every paper that INR produced on Vietnam. Rusk frequently had meetings in the State Department involving McNamara, where INR and other State Department officers would engage him on a particular issue. (I have summarized my own views on this matter in the article I referred to earlier, "Experiencing McNamara", which appeared in Foreign Policy Magazine, Fall 1995) It is indeed noteworthy what a no-growth or slow-growth industry all this was-I am referring to the whole universe of experts inside and outside the government on issues involving the Vietnam war. But to say that there were no experts, or to say McNamara lacked access to those that were there, is certainly not true. The fact that he didn't act on the implications of their analysis was his fault, not theirs. .

Q: It would seem that moving up towards '68 that the number of experts on Vietnam should have increased. You had all these young people who were on the ground out in the paddy fields of Vietnam.

HUGHES: Yes, but many of the young foreign service officers moved on to careers other than Vietnam. Journalists and other civilians outside the government needed funding if they were to continue in the area. It became a catch-22. The chief dispenser of funds was McNamara's Pentagon, but would-be experts were increasingly reticent to take money from that source. I don't know how hard McNamara tried. To me it remains a mystery. How can you conduct a war for 10 to 15 years and not produce a cadre of serious Vietnamese scholars with committed careers in this area? America didn't produce them. We had a handful of scholars on Vietnam at the beginning of the war and a handful at the end. .

Q: Is there anything else we should cover on Vietnam?

HUGHES: Perhaps another vignette should be put on the record illustrating how Vietnam consumed the relationships at the top of the US Government. As the situation in Vietnam continued to erode, the Johnson-Humphrey relationship remained wary on both sides. After licking his wounds throughout 1965, the Vice President had gradually been readmitted to foreign policy meetings. In the process he had been made to pay penance by being sent off to Australia and New Zealand to rally support there for the Vietnam war. He also went to Europe where he was the target of strident student protests, just as he was at home.

About this time-perhaps it was early 1967- I went out to meet Humphrey at his house to drive in to work, as we had done so often in past years. We got into his official limousine with the secret service before and behind us. He stopped the procession in Rock Creek Park, got out of his car, and said, "Let's jog down the pathway here." When we were about a block away from the secret service and their walkie-talkies, he said rather off-handedly, "You know, this is the only time during the day that I am not being listened to." (He knew he was being tapped by the president. The new Dallek book on Lyndon Johnson explains how Johnson loved to listen to Humphrey's telephone conversations.) Passing casually over that remark, I said something like "Apart from that, my friend, what else is new?" He said, "Well, as you know, Muriel and I are leaving Chevy Chase to move into our new apartment at Harbor Square in southwest Washington. We had a little house-warming there last night. As our first guests, we asked Lyndon and Lady Bird to come over and join us, and they did."

"Oh" I said, "that must have been quite a family reunion." "Yeah, some family reunion. Lyndon came right in and stretched out on my new sofa. He started scratching himself, and then he said, "Now Hubert, I understand you make the best speech on Vietnam of anyone in the entire country. I mean the President can't leave the White House without storms of student protests, the Secretary of Defense gets stoned at Harvard, but the Vice President, that's another story. Everyone says that you make the best speech on Vietnam. I want to hear it." Getting increasingly uncomfortable, Humphrey countered with "Oh, I just try to make the usual points." "No, I don't want to hear the points, Hubert, I want to hear the speech." "So I tried again. 'I just say this and this'." "No, no, Hubert, I want to hear the speech." So poor Hubert is about to declaim on demand, standing up in his new living room. Then Johnson gets up to go to the bathroom, saying, "Keep talkin', Hubert, I'm listnin'." "Fortunately, the girls had finished in the kitchen, just in time, and the steaks were ready."

Johnson also enjoyed his role as chief wire-tapper and was fairly transparent about it. He used to call Humphrey to report on the whereabouts of Humphrey's staff. "I'll bet I know more about that staff of yours than you do, Hubert. Do you know where that John Reilly is right now? Over at the Soviet Embassy, that's where, talkin' to the communists ..."

Q: Did you feel that you were in the Humphrey camp and maybe a target of suspicion on the part of the Johnson loyalists?

HUGHES: Perhaps I was, but I have no evidence of it. Rusk, for example, who was surely one of the chief LBJ loyalists, asked me early in 1968, before Johnson's withdrawal from the Presidential race, whether I might want to go over to the White House to work actively in the campaign. I told him I wasn't tempted. Later, with Humphrey en route to the Presidential nomination, Hubert's own interest in my keeping him up to date on intelligence was redoubled. Vietnam had emerged as a huge crisis for the Democratic party. Bobby had gradually decided that his interests lay in opposing the war, rather than promoting it. Humphrey's old friend Gene McCarthy, the junior senator from Minnesota, was leading the opposition to Humphrey and Johnson.

I remember briefing Humphrey in his office on Capital Hill the day after the New Hampshire primary, when McCarthy scored so heavily against Johnson. Humphrey had the television on and McCarthy was on glowing over his 40% showing. Always charitable to a fault, and even though McCarthy at this point was obviously a threat to the Johnson administration. Humphrey looked at his fellow Minnesotan on the TV, shook his head, and said, "I still can't help liking that guy." Hubert added "I'm going off to Mexico City. Lyndon is speaking tomorrow night. Do you know what he is going to say?' I said, "How would I know what he is going to say if you don't?" I think Humphrey already had an inkling that Johnson was going to withdraw. Johnson had told him to be sure to listen. This turned out to be Johnson's public announcement that he wouldn't run again.

I remember another delicious story from Johnson's pre-withdrawal days in 1968. After McCarthy's showing in New Hampshire, Bobby had decided to enter the race and challenge LBJ for the Presidential nomination. He sought and got an appointment at the White House to tell Lyndon he was going to run. Lyndon took him into the room with the tape recorder and surreptitiously turned it on. Led on by Johnson, Bobby said one thing after another that LBJ thought would be hugely embarrassing for Bobby in his forthcoming campaign. The President couldn't believe his good luck in having it all on tape. As soon as Bobby left, Lyndon eagerly asked for the transcript. His staff assistant came back with a crestfallen look a few minutes later, saying: "Mr. President, I'm sorry. There's nothing on the tape but a whirling sound." Bobby had brought a scrambler along and wrecked the precious recording!

After LBJ's withdrawal, everyone's attention shifted to the looming contest at the Democratic convention and the fight over the Vietnam platform plank. Leading the contesting forces were two of my old friends - Ted Sorenson, who was now spearheading the opposition, and David Ginsberg, who was in charge of shepherding the platform language for Humphrey.

The 1968 platform fight and the subsequent campaign painted the Johnson-Humphrey relationship in a lurid new light. Johnson was still President and naturally preoccupied with his own role in history. Vietnam remained the centerpiece in that endeavor. Johnson obviously decided that one way to keep Humphrey undeviatingly on board on Vietnam was to hint that maybe Nixon might be able to continue his Vietnam policy better than Humphrey. Part of this tactic was to engage in those surreal three-way telephone conversations with Nixon and Humphrey on one end and Johnson on the other telling them about the war.

Meanwhile the Paris negotiations were proceeding. Harriman and Vance, the negotiators, had a considerable interest in what Humphrey might and might not say about Vietnam. They were hoping to pull off a bombing halt in time to be of some help to Humphrey. I must say that some of us had real doubts about Johnson at that point-about whether he actually wanted Humphrey to win. There was no doubt, however, that Harriman and Vance hoped for a Humphrey victory. As usual, Johnson was sufficiently complicated and ambiguous to make life unsettling for everyone. Nixon diagnosed the situation correctly and played up to LBJ on Vietnam. He would tell Johnson that when he, Nixon, became President he would make it a point to give Johnson full credit for all he had done. Nixon was in a position where he could play that game, but Humphrey with his party in shambles over Vietnam could not.

Toward the end of the campaign, another one of Johnson's famous wiretaps disclosed the Anna Chennault Thieu scandal. This one did upset Johnson. Nixon's devious intervention in foreign policy in this instance may have helped bring Johnson back to being at least a lukewarm Humphrey supporter. Wiretaps on the Vietnamese embassy divulged that the Republican activist and old China hand, Anna Chennault, was hard at work delivering messages from the Nixon camp to Saigon. Thieu was being told by this Nixon emissary not to cooperate with the negotiations in Paris but to drag his feet. Thieu was promised a better deal under a future Nixon administration if he held off.

Here was specific, direct, interference in an official diplomatic negotiation. Johnson was genuinely furious about this one. He correctly saw Nixon behind it, supported by John Mitchell as middleman, and with Henry Kissinger playing a supporting role inside both campaigns at the time. Overruling many of his advisors, including Max Kampelman and myself, Humphrey decided not to disclose the perfidy for security reasons. Publicity would have divulged the fact of the wiretapping. It was a fateful decision, and Humphrey has been praised for his patriotism and self-sacrifice. Disclosure of the Anna Chennault scandal could conceivably have changed the close election result and given Humphrey the Presidency.

Q: You have been personally involved with many of these people in the political arena for a long time. What was your impression about McCarthy and, Kennedy? Were they figuring out what was best politically or was it a matter of belief?

HUGHES: Their roads into opposition were similar. McCarthy's friendship with Johnson waned, of course, after he was passed over for Vice President in 1964. Before that time, they had been very close. His talented wife Abigail also happened to be a close friend of Lady Bird. McCarthy had supported the Gulf of Tonkin resolution like all of his fellow senators but two. Gene's disillusionment with the war coincided with the shift in attitudes in the country in 1965 after the escalation. By 1968 the anti-war leadership- Al Lowenstein and others- convinced McCarthy to lead the anti-Vietnam movement, and he did it very successfully. I'm sure Gene has written about his progressive disillusionment on Vietnam. I just haven't read it. I give him credit for longer term opposition and probably more genuine opposition than the rival who upstaged him, Bobby Kennedy.

Until the mid-'60's Bobby supported the war, enthusiastically championing counter-insurgency, and putting himself forward as a possible US ambassador to Saigon under Johnson whom he personally loathed. During his 1964 campaign for the Senate, running with Johnson at the head of the ticket, Bobby continued to support the war. As the unpopularity of the war increased, Bobby's unhappiness with the war, like Gene McCarthy's, increased as well. When political opportunism and a genuine change in conviction happen to coincide, it is probably futile to assess motives. For a Democratic politician, hoping to succeed a vulnerable president who might possibly retire leaving you an open chance for the White House, the Vietnam war was made to order.

Q: Did you find as the opposition to Vietnam grew, particularly in the academic community and with students, that the foreign service and the civil servants were affected? They come from the same class, you might say, of educated people. Did you find this was having any effect on INR and how it was beginning to treat things?

HUGHES: You mean did the disaffection in the academic community affect recruitment?

Q: I was wondering whether, particularly with younger analysts, this was reflecting itself.

HUGHES: I'm not sure what the statistics would show about how many younger people were brought into the State Department at this particular time. I suspect there was a disinclination to join the government on the part of many young people.

Q: I'm really thinking more about serving officers or civil servant analysts, particularly younger ones. Were you seeing them coming up more with dissident opinions?

HUGHES: INR, as I've indicated, was skeptical about most aspects of the war from the beginning. Did that skepticism increase as general unhappiness over the war increased? Probably. For example, in INR we had an office for external research. This office had charge of relations with the academic community, with visiting scholars, with bringing people in on short term assignments. Dissent outside in the academic community may well have complicated some of these relationships. It was also a hard time for "public diplomacy". Some State Department people were sent out to try to man the barricades intellectually. I don't think that they found such assignments very congenial. Some were prevented from speaking on college campuses. Many got tired of the abuse. Probably some retired, resigned, or otherwise left the government.

Q: Going back to January 1968 how did the Tet offensive hit INR?

HUGHES: Well Tet became an argument. The Pentagon was quick to say that the Tet offensive was in fact a military victory. Walt Rostow enthusiastically agreed. But most of the civilian side of the government concluded that Tet was an intolerable psychological defeat. You couldn't have such a broad attack on American forces after all these years of effort without suffering a major slump in morale. So Tet became an argument. Despite Rostow and Westmoreland, observers outside the government thought that Tet was disastrous. Again INR and the intelligence community were not supposed to be reporting on U.S. domestic reactions. We weren't supposed to be covering student protests in this country. But we read the newspapers like everybody else.

Q: Well did you ratchet up your look at Vietnam to ask "What did this offensive mean internally in Vietnam?"

HUGHES: Oh yes, of course INR persisted in analyzing and estimating the consequences for domestic trends in South Vietnam, and those trends continued to be dismal. Toward the end of the Johnson administration, people were sick of the whole situation. Yet Johnson's deep commitment to his policy seemed unshakeable. Partly for that reason the intelligence community in effect stopped making overall strategic estimates. They settled for producing daily or weekly intelligence reports about developments on the ground. On their part, the policymakers were long since accustomed to taking the bad news tactically, not strategically. If it was bad news today from this quarter, they would place their false hopes somewhere else. In the discussions back and forth between analysts and policymakers, the latter somehow satisfied themselves that the bad news was only tactical and perhaps temporary.

Q: Again, going back a bit but moving off Vietnam onto China. Were you able to get a pretty good fix on China and what was happening? You mentioned there were more China experts than Vietnam experts.

HUGHES: Yes, but they all labored under the cloud of McCarthyism and were scarred by the "who lost China" controversy. There were academic experts within easy reach in Washington, like the distinguished Doak Barnett at Brookings. There were people in the State Department who were more or less exiled from Chinese affairs like Doak's brother Bob Barnett, who worked in State in another capacity on the economics side. Many ranking foreign service officers with China careers had been burned by the McCarthy experience and had left the government or transferred to other geographic areas. But there was a cadre of younger foreign service officers like Charles Cross, incidentally a classmate of mine from Carleton College, who has just written some stimulating new memoirs. They were serving in Taiwan, Hong Kong, or elsewhere on the periphery of China.

Some of the veterans from the 1950s were still around like U. Alexis Johnson. But they had learned to be gun-shy on China. They knew which way the wind was blowing. There wasn't anything very exciting about the China analysis coming from the senior foreign service officers who had escaped controversy for one reason or another. So we are really talking about younger foreign service officers or academics. The brilliant young James C. Thompson, another political appointee, was a conspicuous exception. He too had emerged from the Chester Bowles stable. He eventually worked either in the State Department or White House for everyone across the spectrum from Bowles to the Bundy brothers to Walt Rostow. Jim never ceased to speak truth to power. He even accompanied Humphrey on his famous trip to Southeast Asia, and along the way he memorably tangled with the Vice President on China (see the Humphrey memoirs).

Thinking back on it, I'm not sure that at the time we appreciated the real depth of the Chinese cultural revolution. The careful incrementalism of the US air strikes on North Vietnam were designed to avoid provoking China. But the Chinese Cultural Revolution may have dampened any Chinese interventionist temptations then as well. This combination of factors may explain the external caution displayed by the Chinese. You could argue that the regime was so concerned about its internal convulsion that it wasn't going to be venturesome outside. But our official and public view was more ominous.

The earlier Sino-Indian war also illustrated the manipulative way Washington utilized its anti-Chinese point of departure both for policy thinking and policy explanation. The war gave the Indian lobby, such as it was, a positive way to exploit the prevailing anti-Chinese atmosphere in Washington. Here was one more proof of Chinese aggression, never mind the facts. (Allen Whiting, for example, argued that China hadn't really triggered the war with India.) Once more you had an overriding political reaction. This time it separated the supporters of India from the specialists on China. Those few who had worked for better relations with India were not going to miss this sudden and welcome opportunity. India could now get serious attention from the U.S. government since it was engaged in a struggle with China. This was enough to produce yet another Harriman mission. And since we were always good at pressing weapons on people, there were rush proposals for US military assistance to India. Naturally pressure for US intelligence collaboration with Delhi quickly followed, especially since Washington was eager for information about Chinese preparations for their nuclear tests at Lop Nor. The Chinese "attack" was of course a calamity for Nehru and non-alignment, and Nehru's carefully cultivated relationship with Chou en Lai lay in tatters. Washington was eager to exploit that development.

Conversely the Sino-Indian war also confronted the American champions of Pakistan with an awkward readjustment. Our U-2 base for the famous over-flights of the USSR was not the only stake we had in Pakistan. For a long time our covert intelligence operators had also used Peshawar as a listening post aimed at Russia. We liked to kid ourselves that the Pakistanis shared our interest in collecting electronic intelligence from the USSR. But as soon as American inspectors would leave for the day, the Paks would switch the antennae from north to east, in order to train them on their favorite Indian targets. We were interested in the USSR, while they were interested in India, and not surprisingly both interests were accommodated.

I spent some time in early 1964 in India and Pakistan, and again debriefed at some length on my return. A contemporary transcript of that debriefing about South Asia is available in the Bowles collection at Yale.

Q: Did you find from the intelligence perspective, having a very vocal public figure like John Kenneth Galbraith sitting in our New Delhi Embassy sort of skewed things at all?

HUGHES: Galbraith of course was only there for a couple of years under Kennedy. He returned to Harvard by the spring of 1963 when Chet Bowles was sent back to Delhi for his second term as ambassador. Ken never confined himself to reporting or advising on India. He felt free to comment on world affairs in general. His cables and letters to JFK always provided much intellectual merriment in the Oval Office. Those of us who worried about Vietnam under Kennedy enjoyed Galbraith's fearless weighing in on what we thought was the sensible side. But Ken was by no means Kennedy's only extra-curricular advisor. Others had no government base at all. Joe Alsop, for instance, was equally close to Kennedy. He kept promoting a gung- ho policy on Vietnam for years, and was located right here in town.

Q: How about looking at the Soviet Union? I would have thought we would have had a very sophisticated INR cadre dealing with that by the '60s.

HUGHES: We did. Throughout the decade, INR had several Kremlinologists with strong credentials, both foreign service officers and civil servants. Our Soviet analysts probably had mixed views about how much could be accomplished with the Russians at that point in the Cold War. Hal Sonnenfeldt, then one of our INR office directors, was a hard liner, if that is the right word. He was a realist, as befits a man who later became known as "Kissinger's Kissinger". There were plenty of warnings about the dangers and limits in US-Soviet collaboration. In 1966-7. however, despite the view of the Soviet Union as a continuing danger, there seemed to be new possible policy opportunities with Moscow. They recurred a few years later with the Nixon-Kissinger decision to turn our anti-China policy upside down and to drive a bigger wedge between the two Communist powers.

Throughout the '60's, INR analysts, like others elsewhere in the government, were busy being Kremlinologists, trying to pick who was in and out of favor. Much time and effort was spent looking at the lineup of Soviet leaders on the May Day reviewing stand and guessing who was next in the pecking order.

Q: Looking on it in retrospect, it was almost peripheral, wasn't it? For a long time there wasn't that much deviation between these Soviet leaders and how their apparatus worked was there?

HUGHES: Especially for those policymakers who hoped for better relations with the Soviet Union, there was always a fascination over how much daylight there might be between this Soviet leader and that Soviet leader. In retrospect it is also easy to say that deterrence was working; and that our cautious, hands off relationship with Moscow was succeeding. Henry Kissinger then and now has always been professionally against "personalism." He believes we must always deal objectively with the government in power. Nevertheless in the 1970s Henry personally enjoyed his rendezvous shooting wild boar with Leonid Brezhnev at his hunting lodge, even though he (Henry) claimed he didn't like blood sports. Hal Sonnenfeldt likewise never denied his pleasure over exchanging pocket watches with the Soviet leader.

Q: On your watch in August of '68 there was the Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia. How did INR play the Prague spring?

HUGHES: The Prague spring was given a lot of attention in INR, and we contributed our share to the speculation about Soviet counter-measures. I think we ultimately estimated that there was about a 40% chance of a Soviet invasion. That didn't mollify the chagrin of the policymakers over the invasion once it happened, but it was certainly a clear warning of serious possibilities ahead of time. The invasion coincided with the US Presidential campaign, and it naturally had the effect of hardening attitudes toward the USSR and helping Nixon as the more conservative candidate. Everybody recognized that the new administration, whatever it was, would have to deal with the consequences of this new Soviet use of force.

Q: Before we leave INR, is there any other area we might discuss? We've talked about Germany, Vietnam, China, the Soviet Union.

HUGHES: Except when covert action (usually CIA initiated) became a prominent factor in crisis situations like the Congo, Angola, British Guiana, and the Dominican Republic, INR played uneventful but nevertheless insightful roles on African and Latin American issues. We had gifted office directors covering both continents- Robert Good and Oliver Troxel for Africa, and John Plank and Gregory Wolfe for Latin America. All these men went on to noted careers in diplomacy, academia, or business. As INR director I myself also made occasional trips to Africa (Ethiopia, Nigeria, Kenya and Zambia) and to Latin America (Argentina, Uruguay, Chile, Venezuela, Columbia, Panama, Guatemala, Mexico, and the Caribbean.)

Throughout the 1960's, Cuba remained an obsession for US policy, and INR's analysis on Cuban subjects illustrated another bureaucratic advantage we had inside the State Department. Since we combined worldwide capacities within a single bureau, we enjoyed a built-in capability for cross-regional analysis. INR was conveniently able to bring divergent perspectives together in analyzing the Cuban-Soviet relationship, the motivations of Cuban foreign policy, Castro's third world connections, Cuba's involvement in the Angolan rebel movement, etc. Critics who have examined the INR analytical product on Cuba for the 1960 decade have concluded that INR 's analysis stands out as particularly noteworthy. (See, for example, "Conflicting Missions" by Piero Gleijeses, University of North Carolina Press, 2002.)

One of the curious aspects of intelligence coverage of Africa and Latin America in the 1960's was the relative prominence of products from the National Security Agency (NSA). Electronic collection capabilities excelled against targets on these two continents. Neither continent otherwise commanded consistent or high priority attention from the top policymakers. They were normally consumed with the Cold War in Europe and Asia. But one way the State Department's African and Latin American bureaus claimed attention from the Secretary and undersecretaries on the seventh floor was by way of the fortuitous entry of NSA's production.

Offices dealing with low priority countries benefited by exploiting the policymakers' compulsion to look at codeword material. The bearers of intercepts got favored treatment. The texts were placed between special covers, handled under lock and key, and hand delivered by special carriers. The latter enjoyed almost immediate access to the highest levels of the government, and these policymakers, in turn, often found NSA tidbits dramatic, entertaining, and juicy. Personal items about the quirks of their counterparts-heads of state, foreign ministers, and ambassadors-were irresistible. Presidents Kennedy, Johnson, and Nixon were all avid NSA consumers.

Of course NSA was supposed give highest priority to the Soviet Union and China. Apart from occasional lucky breaks, however, NSA collected warehouses full of communist intercepts which, generally speaking, they couldn't read. So NSA's actual ultimate production capabilities amounted to a reversal of priorities. Africa, Latin America, and occasionally the Middle East, were the beneficiaries.

Q. What was INR's role when it came to covert operations in these areas?

For better or worse, these regions also happened to be the proving grounds for extensive covert operations by the CIA in the 1960's, just as they had been under the Dulles brothers in the 1950's. The extraordinary extent of all this political action, para-military activity, and economic skullduggery was hinted at in the 1970's in the Church and Pike Committee investigations. Considerably more has been disclosed in recent decades. (See the latest encyclopedic account in "Safe for Democracy" by John Prados, 2007.)

INR housed the small office in the State Department which was the official entry point for covert proposals headed for consideration by the Special Group, sequentially called the 5412, 303, and 40 committee. A convenient combination of initiatives from the White House and CIA continued to spur covert action throughout the Kennedy and Johnson administrations. Both Presidents as well as their White House advisers were fascinated with covert action as an instrument of foreign policy. State Department policy makers were often willing adherents and were occasionally initiators themselves. Normally State was represented at the special group meetings by U. Alexis Johnson or his temporary successors, Tommy Thompson and Foy Kohler, who served as "G", the Deputy Undersecretary for Political Affairs. Only sporadically, when "G" was unavailable to attend a special group meeting, did I attend as a substitute. This meant that I had very little continuity as a participant in covert programmatic discussions. To my regret as INR director my knowledge of and involvement in covert operations was marginal at best. For example, while I occasionally attended meetings of the orthodox Special Group when "G" himself was absent, I do not remember ever attending the Special Group CI (counter-insurgency) for instance, or the Special Group "Augmented", Bobby Kennedy's agitprop committee for covert operations against Cuba and Castro.

Occasionally in 1961 while Bowles was Undersecretary, I would hear from him about something he had discovered at a meeting when Rusk was out of town-like the Trujillo assassination plot. Here was an example of the kind of covert action aimed at a right-wing tyranny which had the effect of mollifying liberals in the Kennedy administration (Arthur Schlesinger and Richard Goodwin certainly knew about the delivery to US intermediaries of the assassination weapons in advance.).

Although he minimized his covert operations role in his memoirs, Rusk himself definitely participated in many high level meetings that approved covert actions. For example, he personally pressed British foreign Secretary Hume repeatedly for regime chance in British Guiana, making it clear that the US would not tolerate Cheddi Jagan as Prime Minister. In his own mind, Rusk distinguished between covert programs, which he knew of and approved, and the operational details of these programs , where he "preferred not to know."

On at least two dramatic occasions, Rusk found himself personally on the griddle before Congressional committees after embarrassing operations mounted by the military or by CIA resulted in considerable damage to US foreign policy interests. The first involved Chile in 1963-5, culminating in the famous Project Camelot scandal. INR was given new duties in the fallout.

President Kennedy's brother Bobby and, I believe, his brother-in-law, Sargent Shriver, were prominent among the supporters of this venture into Chilean politics. So was my old friend from the Kennedy office on Capitol Hill, Ralph Dungan, who was now an assistant to the President. Ralph's sympathies were known to be enthusiastically with the Christian Democrats. Indeed soon after Frei was elected President, Ralph became the US ambassador to Chile.

Meanwhile also in 1964, and presumably independently of all the above, the US Army's Special Operations Research Office (SORO) got to work on the largest single grant ever provided for a social science project. They named it "Project Camelot", one hopes not mocking Jackie Kennedy's contemporaneous effort to memorialize the Kennedy administration. It turned out to be the biggest public relations disaster for government-academic relations in American history up to that time. 140 man years of work were contemplated with on- site investigations in Latin America to assess the "potential for internal war". Publicly supported by the US army with the "cooperation of other agencies", it was announced as a 3-4 year effort funded at $1.5 million annually.

Project Camelot's timing in the spring of 1965 could not have been improved upon to guarantee a maximum uproar. President Kennedy's interest in counter-insurgency had been well known, President Johnson had just unleashed Rolling Thunder in Vietnam, the US had just intervened with troops in the Dominican Republic, and Latin Americans had been sensitized once more to Yankee imperialism.

Suddenly, in May, the Camelot story broke in Chile. The press was full of accusations of US spying, possibly hidden US and Chilean army collaboration, and academics exploring a potential coup. There were howls of protest from the Chilean academic community, the legislature, and ultimately from President Frei himself. Ralph Dungan, now ambassador, fired off a protest to Washington demanding Camelot's immediate cancellation. He must have had his own private thoughts, "witting" as he was of other recent US covert activity in Chile.

Dean Rusk found the uproar particularly unsettling. The US Army sponsorship of the project had been proclaimed to scholars around the world as though it was the most normal and accepted behavior. This was a personal embarrassment for Rusk. As an old army man himself, he had always given the army the benefit of the doubt. This time he had to admit the adverse effects on US foreign policy. The perception of the US army paying for a gigantic study on potential internal war, possibly governed by a "know your enemy" mentality, to be pursued by scholars on the ground in Latin America, invited some obviously adverse political repercussions abroad. Ironically this Chilean fiasco proved to be a precursor of the real thing a decade later when Nixon, Kissinger, and the CIA were instrumental in toppling Salvador Allende who meanwhile had taken the presidential office in a democratic election.

Q. What finally happened to Camelot?

HUGHES: After official protests from both Frei and Dungan, McNamara cancelled the program. In August, 1965, LBJ ordered the State Department to review US government sponsored research abroad for its possible negative effects on US foreign policy. Rusk then asked INR to create a board of review which I was to chair. We set up a "Foreign Research Council" with fifteen members, supported by a review staff of six professionals in INR working full time. We concentrated on examining research proposals for foreign work, travel, and contacts sponsored by military and foreign affairs agencies-chiefly Defense, USIA, AID, ACDA, CIA, and State. Subsequently in 1966-68 a good many proposals were vetoed or modified.

Rusk himself had to testify on the Hill. Federal budgetary anomalies again came to the fore. He stressed that $30 million was then being spent each year by the US government on research in behavioral and social sciences, but that the State Department accounted for less than 1% of this annual outlay.

Q: Earlier you mentioned a second dramatic episode when covert operations embarrassed Rusk.

HUGHES: Yes, this was the disclosure in 1967 of the CIA's covert funding and use of foundations (both as recipients and conduits), international conferences, student organizations, labor unions, academic magazines, and journalists. The Asia Foundation and the National Student Association were exposed with considerable publicity. As a former president of the Rockefeller Foundation, Rusk feared that he would be personally compromised. He insisted that he had always steadfastly refused all overtures from the CIA to have any relationship whatever with Rockefeller, but he was clearly nervous that a discrediting of the major foundations like Ford, Carnegie, and Rockefeller might follow the initial disclosures. He thought his own reputation was somehow at stake. Once more the solution, however half-hearted, was to set up a reviewing committee with narrow terms of reference and chaired by Undersecretary Katzenbach. It mitigated some of the damage.

Nick Katzenbach, a classmate and old friend of mine from Oxford, was both a lawyer and a liberal. So was I. In retrospect the role of lawyers and liberals in proposing, accepting, or applauding covert operations is perhaps worthy of further comment. As a participant/observer I was struck at the time by the apparent ease with which these two groups of officials joined in supporting activities which their fellow citizens would probably instinctively regard as illegal and illiberal. The Dulles-Dulles combination of lawyer brothers had laid the groundwork by masterminding the covert action "successes" of Iran and Guatemala in the 1950s, as well as the enormous fiascos in Indonesia and the Bay of Pigs.

The foreign policy lawyers in the Kennedy-Johnson administrations continued this tradition almost unblinkingly. At the State Department the lawyers who were steeped in covert proposals and approvals included Rusk who had legal training, Ball who had been a practicing lawyer, Katzenbach a former law professor, and Eugene Rostow, a former law school dean. Bill Bundy who moved from CIA to Defense to State also had a legal background. For years the Pentagon's representative on the special group that vetted covert proposals was McNamara's secretary of the army and later deputy secretary of defense, the New York lawyer Cyrus Vance. McNamara's closest policy adviser was the lawyer John McNaughton.

Their legal backgrounds were no bar whatever to their enthusiasm for covert operations as long as the U.S. hand was not showing. They did feel keenly about being discovered, however, and they all relied, unsuccessfully for the most part, on "plausible deniability" to protect their public reputations. Later the lawyer-President Richard Nixon was the biggest covert enthusiast of them all.

Most egregious was the in-your-face appointment by presidents of their attorneys general as members and even chairmen of covert action committees. Bobby Kennedy and John Mitchell were the worst cases in point. Bobby's enthusiasms on the covert side were well known, and so were his conflicts-the nation's leading law enforcer, the chairman of the anti-Cuban covert committee, the pursuit of the Mafia, his brother's political campaign chief, and the use of FBI targets as CIA instruments. Equally flagrant were Mitchell's multiple roles as anti-trust enforcer, political fund raiser, member of the special group, and manipulator of businesses like ITT for campaign contributions, investment guarantees, and use as a CIA covert instrument in Chile.

The co-option of foreign policy liberals in the 1960s was also noteworthy. I myself was enough of a participant/observer to be struck by the accommodation liberals quickly made to covert operations. I am thinking particularly of the Kennedy White House liberals like Arthur Schlesinger, Carl Kaysen, Ralph Dungan, Mike Feldman, Ted Sorensen, and Dick Goodwin, each of whom was aware of, and often actively urged, one covert operation or another. This co-option of the liberals in support of the occasional liberal covert proposition also helped assure grudging liberal support for covert operations in general. Like Maria Theresa and the partition of Poland, the liberals wept but they took their share. The acceptance of covert activity was part of the ethos of the times.

No one better represented this accommodation than Cord Meyer, another old associate of mine. It was the same Cord Meyer who had once, in 1947-8, been president of United World Federalists. In the 1960s he was at the CIA in charge of the whole subsidy program for foundations, academia, labor, veterans, etc. He has written his own book on this transformation entitled Facing Reality: From World Federalism to the CIA. Our paths intersected strangely over the years. We narrowly missed overlapping in London. He became the CIA station chief in the embassy there a year or so after I returned to the states. In 1977 there might have been an even more awkward testing of our friendship. After the 1976 elections the incoming Carter administration wanted me to head the CIA, an overture which I'll discuss later. After I turned that proposition down, Admiral Turner took the job. One of his first duties as incoming DCI in 1977 was the forced retirement of scores of covert CIA officers, including Cord Meyer.

Instead I apparently remained in Cord's good graces. When he started a new career as a university professor, he assigned my farewell lectures at INR as required reading. They had been published in 1976 in a Foreign Policy Association pamphlet, "The Fate of Facts in a World of Men." Cord comments favorably on this piece in his own book.

Finally, that reminds me of something else. While at the State Department I continued to do considerable public speaking and article writing. Thus four articles were published in Foreign Affairs: "Policy Making in a World Turned Upside Down" (1967), "Relativity in Foreign Policy" (1967), "On the Causes of our Discontents" (1969), and "Whose Century?" (1972). Other published speeches were also given considerable distribution from the INR front office including: "Making the World Safe for Diversity" (State Department, 1964), "Varieties of Research Experience" (State Department, 1965), a Centennial Anniversary address (Carleton College, 1967), "The Odyssey of Counter-Insurgency" (West Point, 1967), and "Expecting the Main Things from You" (American Oxonian, 1968).

Q: Did you also have much government-related social outreach in Washington during your time in INR?

HUGHES: Yes indeed. I suppose the Kennedy Administration was one of the century's high points socially in Washington and my wife and I were involved both in daytime obligations and in a rather hectic schedule after hours. There were still remnants of old fashioned social requirements for the wives of public officials. Jean found herself obliged to attend meetings organized by Virginia Rusk and Mildred Talbot, the wives of the Secretary of State and the Assistant Secretary for Near East and South Asia. There she was instructed on the protocols of card dropping in the diplomatic community and the consequent mandatory courtesy calls on the wives of the diplomatic corps. Jean also inaugurated a series of 11 a.m. coffees at our house in Chevy Chase for her counterparts whose husbands worked on the 6th and 7th floors of the State Department.

In compensation, there was also the glamour of Kennedy White House dinners, receptions in the glittering State Department reception rooms, and a steady stream of dinner invitations at foreign embassies. Jean particularly remembered a white-tie gala diplomatic reception held at the Pan American Union building where lots were drawn prior to ascending the enormous staircase from the ground floor to the dinner. Each American wife had two male escorts, while each American husband had two females to escort. Jean drew British Ambassador Ormsby-Gore and Soviet Ambassador Dobrynin as her escorts, while I drew the wives of two African ambassadors. We had frequent dinner invitations to the British, German, and Indian embassies for visiting celebrities or friends, as well as informal get-togethers like Sunday lunch with the Rusk family, for example, at the British embassy. Over the years we had more than our share of invitations from a worldwide variety of embassies for official visits or "national days".

Q: You left the government with the Johnson administration?

HUGHES: No I was kept on, curiously enough, much to my surprise. For half a year I remained in INR against my own expectations and desires, waiting for the Nixon administration to appoint my successor. Meanwhile I was briefing the new Secretary of State, William Rogers, and the new Undersecretary, Elliot Richardson, picking up where I left off with Rusk. Briefing them together during the opening weeks of the new administration was somewhat amusing, because it was soon very obvious that the attention span of the new Secretary was severely limited. His receptivity for intelligence briefings was something like five minutes, ten at the most. In contrast to Rogers, Richardson was fascinated by intelligence and liked extended meetings of a half hour or more. So they quickly came to a division of labor with Rogers saying, " Elliot, if you want to pursue that, you can do it on your own time." I continued to brief them both, but separately.

For some reason neither of them seemed eager for me to leave. When Rogers would saunter down to visit INR, I would ask "How are you doing finding a successor for me?" He would say, "Oh we are not in any hurry about that." Then I would protest: "But I should be leaving. I'm supposed to show up at the Brookings Institution to be vice president over there." Rogers would respond, "Why would anyone want to go to Brookings? Why don't you stay here?" Astonished at that inquiry, I replied "Of course it is time for me to leave INR. You must know about my background." "What's that?" Rogers asked. "I am well known as a Democratic appointee. Even worse, for some years I worked closely with Hubert Humphrey." "Hubert", said Bill Rogers, Nixon's new appointee, "he's a swell guy." "Be that as it may,' I replied, "please get busy and find a successor for me here in INR."

More time elapsed, and then one day in June, 1969, when I was in his office, Rogers asked me whether I was still supposed to go to Brookings. I said, "Yes, but I'm not sure they are going to want me much longer, you're taking such a long time finding my successor here." "Wait" he said, "I've got a better idea. How would you like to go to England as deputy to our new ambassador at the Court of St. James?" This was Walter Annenberg, who had already made a few false starts in London and was getting a bad press there. I said, "You can't be serious. The Nixon Administration doesn't really want to send me to London." "Why not?" asked Rogers. "They've got a Labor government over there, and I understand that you once worked for the Senate Labor Committee." "This is the first time I've made that connection." I replied. "Well," Rogers continued, "Dean Rusk tells me you are too good a man to lose."

(TLH note in 2007: Unknown to me at the time, this appointment quickly became a cause celebre at the White House. Henry Kissinger's telephone tapes have recently been released at the National Archives, and they disclose a frantic effort by Nixon himself to stop my going to London. Kissinger tells Richardson: "The President is firm about this. Hughes is not to go. He will not sign any appointment." "But it's not a Presidential appointment". "We need a loyal man there." "But Peter Flanigan has checked his security file, and there's nothing adverse in it." "We'll have a meeting at the White House on the Hughes matter this afternoon at 3:00 p.m. with the President, Rogers, and you." Richard Allen, who also attended the meeting. tells me (TLH) that the meeting was a memorable encounter, a great story, but that he is saving it for his own memoirs. Apparently I may have been innocently providing early ammunition to Kissinger for use in his ultimately successful campaign to unseat Rogers.)

Nixon apparently remained on the alert. There was another Kissinger phone call in September, this time to Annenberg, warning him that "the President still has his eye on Tom Hughes." Annenberg said everything was going along smoothly. Kissinger replied: "Well, if anything untoward should happen, you will want to report it immediately." "Of course, Henry, I would call you at once, if anything untoward..." "No, Walter, on a matter of this importance, don't call me. Call the President direct."

Q: Did you get the feeling that Rogers was not in charge of foreign policy? How did the power grab from Kissinger manifest itself from your perspective in INR?

HUGHES: I always looked, usually in vain, for Rogers' strength. Nixon had an old relationship with Rogers, who had been attorney general in the Eisenhower Administration. But oddly enough, here was a replay of the Kennedy-Rusk appointment. Nixon, like Kennedy, intended to be his own secretary of state, and the blandness of his choice for secretary gave assurance that there would be no doubt who was in charge of foreign policy. Kissinger of course shared Nixon's commitment to White House supremacy, by which he meant his own, and he lost little time in undermining Rogers.

It was pretty obvious from the beginning that Rogers was a very weak competitor for Henry. Nixon, moreover, could play the two of them against each other. Richardson, on the other hand, was a fresh and open-minded intellectual who had an appetite for facts and arguments. Moreover he was versatile, a quality that Nixon obviously appreciated. He appointed Richardson to the largest number of cabinet posts in history, before Elliot ultimately balked and resigned over Watergate. Together with George Ball, Richardson was probably the most impressive person at the top of the State Department that I came across in my eight-and-a-half years there.

Q: You were deputy chief of mission in London with Walter Annenberg from when to when?

HUGHES: During the last years of Harold Wilson, l969-70. When we went, we assumed that the Nixon administration and the Labor government were not naturally destined to be very congenial. Unpredictably it turned out that the British ambassador in Washington, John Freeman, the former editor of the New Statesman, ingratiated himself with Henry Kissinger. Nixon himself, in a rare burst of humor, referred to "the new Nixon and the new statesman." The downside of this collegiality for us in London was that serious bi-lateral diplomacy was handled in Washington among Nixon, Kissinger, Richardson, and Freeman. That was a much more powerful lineup than Annenberg and the Queen.

Q: Was there any attempt to educate Annenberg about the Queen? The protocol side was nice but it really wasn't of the essence.

HUGHES: No, everyone wanted to humor the ambassador. The BBC's film of his famous presentation of credentials to the Queen had already securely entered British history. But Annenberg was not put off by being made a figure of fun. Protocol was his forte. He liked dealing at the Buckingham Palace level. He wanted to be a social ambassador and to spend his way into British high life. The Annenbergs lavishly redid the embassy residence, they entertained frequently and elaborately, and they looked for opportunities to show their affection for Britain. The Ambassador found one outlet after another for his charitable impulses. His splendid art collection was put on public display. He hired on impulse an Austrian photographer whom he had met in Vienna, and he brought him to London to photograph Westminster Abbey. He subsidized the splendid book that resulted, and induced Sir Kenneth Clark among others to write a chapter.

One day he saw Sir Francis Drake's sword at the Inner Temple and he promptly had a copy struck for Lincoln's Inn. The finer things in life appealed to him. Chalices in memory of his ambassadorship were given to English cathedrals. He built a "non-partisan" swimming pool at Checkers "for the prime ministers of either party." The Annenbergs supported the American textile museum at Bath.

My wife and I were the beneficiaries of life with an American tycoon, and the experience was an enjoyable social grace note to my State Department career. Of course it was a personal pleasure for me to be back in England, and there were opportunities to revisit Oxford and renew acquaintances from twenty years earlier. The Annenbergs themselves could not have been nicer to us. On arrival, we were welcomed by an intimate embassy party at Annabelle's, one of London's celebrated night clubs. Later they organized a glittering reception for us at Claridge's with Nureyev and Fonteyn among the guests. When the Ambassador discovered that my eldest son had slightly crossed eyes, he insisted on arranging for an operation by a leading Harley Street surgeon.

I myself did a fair amount of public speaking in England, representing the Ambassador at a large Thanksgiving dinner n London, for example, or at Plymouth on the occasion of the 350th anniversary of the Pilgrims' voyage. Sir Dennis Greenhill, then Permanent Undersecretary of the Foreign Office, hosted a lunch at Lancaster House for me to speak to an assemblage of Foreign Office noteworthies. A year or so after we returned to Washington, I lampooned our British adventure at the annual Oxford-Cambridge dinner, but we always looked back with affection on our stay at our diplomatic residence, Wychwood House in Kensington.

There was a serious side to this adventure, as well. I was the Ambassador's designated detail man. When the then Foreign Secretary Michael Stewart would summon the ambassador, I would be taken along. After the introductory niceties, the Foreign Secretary would say: "Ambassador, tell me, are you seriously going to allow the Israelis to have these airplanes? It will upset the whole strategic balance." Annenberg would reply: "My minister, Mr. Hughes, will now explain that to you."

My wife and I rather enjoyed the extra responsibilities that fell to us in dealing with Cabinet ministers, other MP's, and the Foreign Office. We got to know several politicians quite well-from Dennis Healey and Roy Hattersley to David Owen and Tony Benn. I resumed earlier acquaintances with Sir Kenneth Strong and Sir Dick White. We frequently had dinners of our own revolving around either visiting Americans or prominent British government figures.

Actually since most of the substantive work was done in Washington, the Embassy tended to concentrate on those areas or problems where our being located in London gave us a comparative advantage. Rhodesia was an example. The Wilson Government's policy toward lain Smith and his unilateral declaration of independence was bitterly contested by the Tory opposition. The result was that we witnessed a replay of Anna Chennault's Vietnam caper in Washington a year earlier. Once again an opposition party undercut an elected government's diplomatic position by intriguing directly with a foreign leader.

In this case it was Edward Heath, leader of the opposition in the UK, using a back channel to Kissinger and Nixon to undermine official British policy. This gambit of Heath's complicated our chain of command in the embassy. While the ambassador formally, and I more practically, were working with the Labor Government, Bill Galloway, a foreign service officer who headed the Embassy's political section, was assigned to work with the conservatives. He got to know them very well, perhaps too well. Through Galloway's good offices as intermediary, Heath set up a back channel communication to Nixon. Galloway facilitated the delivery of secret messages from Her Majesties "Loyal Opposition," urging the President of the United States to ignore the British Prime Minister of the day on Rhodesia. The Tory leader in effect told the US president that the conservatives were going to be in office the following year, and that they had their own plans for Rhodesia. They didn't want the U.S. to help Wilson muck it up in the meantime.

Q: Was there any disquiet on the part of the Labor government over this Tory relationship with the Nixon administration?

HUGHES: There certainly would have been if they had known about it.

Q: I was just wondering whether they were picking up the anti-Labor vibes?

HUGHES: The US administration wasn't overtly anti-Labor. Nixon was decent to Wilson when he visited Washington. And, as I mentioned, Wilson's ambassador Freeman was enjoying a rather comfortable relationship with Kissinger.

The Heath-Nixon back channel was only one example of the complications in managing our London embassy. It was the largest American embassy in the world, full of people doing all kinds of things that were not really high level diplomacy. Departmental interests in Washington had exploded, and consequently we had sections devoted to agriculture, commerce, labor, the treasury, and public relations, not to speak of intelligence and the military. The President's official letter still told the ambassador that he was in charge of his embassy, but the London embassy was conspicuous proof that formal authority was one thing, and actual control something else.

In the first place, for the President's letter to be effective, the ambassador had to be interested in being in charge. Annenberg really wasn't. There was a controversy over parking rights for cars in the embassy which I had to referee. When the foreign service tried to take a parking space away from the navy, the ranking admiral flew back to Washington to arrange Navy Department resistance. Americans liked living in London so we had many CIA residents even though they were not working on targets in Britain but rather in continental Europe or beyond. There were protocol disputes over who was being invited to British functions and in what pecking order.

Then there was the anti-American demonstration in front of the embassy at Grosvenor Square. Annenberg had had a lunch that day for the Prime Minister at Winfield House. We were outside on the terrace and Wilson said merrily, "Well, Ambassador, you will be glad to know that the Cabinet this morning approved the agrï¿½ment for your successor." Annenberg was taken aback by this and sort of slumped backwards into a garden chair. I went over to him and said, "I'm sure that the Prime Minister is joking, Ambassador. It is a joke, of sorts."

After lunch the chauffeur who was driving me back to work said he would have to take a different route from his normal one because of a demonstration. When I returned to my office and looked out of my window, it was obvious that many children of embassy officials were massing in Grosvenor Square. Along with many others, they had been let out of the American School to come and demonstrate against American policies in Southeast Asia. The British Bobbies were lined up on their horses with their billy clubs, protecting the embassy from a howling group of youngsters marching around and gesticulating.

We didn't know until later that Bill Clinton, the future US president, was there with the crowd. At Oxford among the Americans he was known as "the brightest man at Univ" (University College, Oxford). Harold Wilson himself, when he was up at Oxford, had also been called "the brightest man at Univ". So in the space of few hours we had been in the presence of two of the brightest men of Univ. In front of the crowd facing the embassy was my 13- year- old son Evan. As the lightest member of his class at school, he was being tossed skyward from a blanket to the cheers of the crowd.

Meanwhile the high-jinks from Washington continued to provide amusement. One day Kissinger phoned me about the Annenberg's palatial residence in Palm Springs, California, which Nixon loved to use, especially if the Annenbergs were not there. "Tom, this is a non-conversation." "Of course, Henry, all your conversations are non-conversations. What is it this time?" "Ve (we) might go to Palm Springs this weekend, but vould (would) they come?" "Impossible," I replied, "they are already in Baden-Baden unpacking for the weekend, and there is no way the jetstar can get them back to California by tomorrow' "Good, ve vill go."

Q: What feeling did you have for the UK foreign service?

HUGHES: The British foreign service excelled in self-confidence, gentility, and in their ability to speak the Queen's English. Time and again I have watched these attributes intimidate their American counterparts. In their attitude toward the U.S., they cast themselves in the role of experienced advisors-the posture ancient Greeks once took towards ancient Rome. The "special relationship" was essentially built on those assumptions, although the pull toward Europe was beginning to modify that connection. Ted Heath, who turned out to be pro-Europe, was already calling it "the dread phrase."

Q: October 5, 1999. When did you leave London as DCM?

HUGHES: When Labour lost the election to Heath in 1970, we took advantage of the change in government to say goodbye to the Annenbergs and return to Washington. I spent some intervening months with the Policy Planning Council in the State Department, but was soon offered the presidency of the Carnegie Endowment.

Q: Well, could we talk about policy planning at that time? How did policy planning change per administration. How did it seem to fit in at that particular time?

HUGHES: I was just parking there for the interim between London and Carnegie and I didn't plan much policy. If policy was being planned anywhere, it was not in the State Department and certainly not by the Policy Planning staff. As usual, people were writing speeches for their superiors. Nominally, Bill Rogers was still Secretary, but Henry Kissinger's star was clearly ascendant. The State Department was feeling sorry for itself, as it so often does. My mind was on my next job. INR had finished the internal Pentagon Papers type of review of INR's Vietnam role, 1961-69, which I had commissioned while Director. This was still locked up in the State Department, the CIA refusing clearance. I unsuccessfully tried to get this 400-500 page self-study released when I was in Policy Planning. (Note: As mentioned previously, this study was finally freed up in 2005 through the efforts of the National Security Archive. It is now available on their website.)

Q: Well, maybe it takes one more war.

HUGHES: I think the CIA was not eager to show that there was another part of the intelligence community that was consistently ahead of them on Vietnam.

Q: Tell me about how the Carnegie people came to you or how you came to them and could you talk about what the Carnegie Endowment was at that time in 1970?

HUGHES: I was contacted first by Professor Milton Katz of Harvard Law School, who was the new chairman of the Carnegie board. Possibly David Rockefeller, another trustee, may also have been involved. (David had come to see me earlier to sound me out about taking the editorship of Foreign Affairs in New York. However I had told him that I wanted to stay in Washington and had declined. Despite protests and controversy over his Vietnam role, Bill Bundy was subsequently appointed.)

The Carnegie Endowment for International Peace is the oldest foreign policy and international affairs foundation in the country. It was founded in 1910 by Andrew Carnegie, then the richest man in America. He thought that to die rich was to die disgraced. He embarrassed the Rockefellers and other tycoons of his day into giving much of their money away as well. After his libraries, the Peace Endowment was the first of Carnegie's major philanthropies. In 1910 World War I was still over the horizon. Carnegie turned to his advisor, Elihu Root, the former Secretary of State and Secretary of War, inquiring in effect whether $10 million would be enough to buy peace. Root said he thought that was enough. Carnegie reminded him that he could easily triple or quadruple that figure. "Well," said Root, "if you want second opinions, why not check with your friends Theodore Roosevelt and Kaiser Wilhelm and see what they think about $10 million."

So Carnegie checked with those two well-known peaceniks. Roosevelt, then in the White House, thought that a foundation for peace was just about the funniest thing imaginable, but that $10 million was about right. Then Carnegie went to Germany where the Kaiser invited him to board the royal yacht, the Hohenzollern, at the Kiel regatta. Wilhelm agreed with TR that this was a very funny proposition, but he too thought that $10 million was about right. The Endowment could have started with $100 million, but it got $10 million The blame could be apportioned among this triumvirate of high level advisors. By 1913 the Endowment had set up offices in Washington across from the White House, in that corner building which is now part of Blair House. The location was chosen for the convenience of President Taft, so that he could walk over for tea to discuss his enthusiasm for compulsory arbitration with the then leaders of the Endowment- Elihu Root, Nicholas Murray Butler, and James Brown Scott.

At the same time the Endowment opened an office in Paris in a beautiful building on the Boulevard St. Germain, which we gave some years later to the University of Paris. Anyway, a year before the guns of August started booming and World War I began, the Endowment's Washington and Paris offices were going full tilt, mostly under the auspices of international lawyers. The preferred emphasis of the Endowment from the beginning, and continuing into the '20s and '30s, was international law, as opposed to international organization. The leaders were almost all establishment Republicans. They failed to stop World War I, but they helped stop Wilson with his League of Nations. They were for the World Court.

Q: How did they get into the Balkan issue?

HUGHES: They commissioned a report at the time - I think in 1913- about the then-recent Balkan wars. It makes wonderful re-reading today. In fact the Endowment reprinted it, with a new introduction by George Kennan, when the Balkans again came into the news in the 1990's. It reads like a contemporary account-the same names, the same towns, the same bridges being blown up. One gets the vivid impression that the Balkans are an unsettled part of the world and that there is such a thing as enduring ethnic diversity.

As patriots, the Endowment's early leaders more or less handed their premises over to the war effort in 1917-18. George Creel was in charge of war propaganda, and I think some of his offices were given space with the Endowment on Lafayette Square. The slogan "Peace Through Victory" graced the foundation's wartime stationery. In the 1920s the Endowment engaged in a tremendous publishing project on the origins of the war. German professors did the German side, Austrians the Austrian side, and Russians the Russian side. It is a huge and famous compendium. Also in the 1920's, beautiful volumes of classics in international law were reprinted, featuring Renaissance and 17th century scholars on international law. They are now collector's items.

The interwar Endowment also sponsored international conferences. I am afraid that Nicholas Murray Butler, who was simultaneously president of both Columbia University and the Endowment, used Endowment's funds and contacts as well as its Paris office to extend his personal international reach. In 1939 he was caught in Europe when war broke out, and he hired a ship to bring himself back. Subsequently, when John Foster Dulles was chairman of the board, he too would summer in Paris with his headquarters in the Endowment building. Those gentlemen were unacquainted with the later notion of conflicts of interest. Private, public, and government affairs were effortlessly intertwined.

Publications by the Endowment in the '20s and '30s already included reports in Spanish. Years later in the late '70s I happened to be in Havana and was visiting one night with Carlos Raphael Rodriguez, Castro's chief ideologue. He complained that we had ceased our Spanish language publications which he had grown up reading. I said, "That must give us a certain pride of place in the ideological history of Cuba. Did you get all of your ideas from us?" He replied, "No we also got help from others."

Through the '20s and '30s, especially under Root and Butler, the Endowment's board was largely lawyer-ridden and almost totally Republican. Thus when Butler retired as chairman, John Foster Dulles took his place. Dulles had the misfortune of sharing the limelight with Alger Hiss. The board that hired Hiss included such luminaries as John Foster Dulles (chairman); Dwight D. Eisenhower (then president of Columbia); Harvey Bundy (father of the Bundy brothers); David Rockefeller (chairman of the finance committee); Thomas J. Watson (the IBM magnate), and John W. Davis (Wall Street lawyer and Democratic candidate for president in 1924). It was John Foster Dulles himself who suggested Alger Hiss to the Endowment's search committee in 1946. Indeed Dulles had personally asked Hiss if he would be interested in the Carnegie presidency when they talked en route to England for a UN meeting in January, 1946. Later on, when Dulles was testifying in the Hiss trial, he had trouble remembering his role in the Hiss fiasco. This memory lapse so upset John W. Davis that he devoted a whole chapter in his own autobiography excoriating the perfidy of Dulles.

The Dulles-Hiss saga also provides another cameo glimpse into the establishment's mid-century workings. The more one pieces it together, the richer the story becomes. Hiss was already suspect in the Truman administration. He was under surveillance. His phone was being tapped. In 1946 J. Edgar Hoover was constantly reporting anti-Hiss allegations "from the Hill" to President Truman and Secretary Byrnes. These allegations were certainly also known to Dean Acheson who ultimately advised Hiss to accept the Endowment offer. They had somehow muddled through the year 1946, running the risk that an untimely public disclosure about Hiss could easily have torpedoed Truman's hopes for the 1948 Presidential election. Acheson must have privately enjoyed enabling such an historic transfer- delivering this hot potato to the Republicans. Dulles at that time was the once-and-future foreign policy advisor to Thomas E. Dewey, and was the secretary of state in waiting. Were Acheson and Truman lucky or clever or both?

No sooner did Hiss arrive at the Endowment in January, 1947, than the rumors and allegations began to swell. The Endowment had to figure out how to adjust to its new president who was being attacked by Joe McCarthy, Richard Nixon, Walter Judd, and Whitaker Chambers, and who was soon being summoned to Washington to testify. Some astute handling was required behind the scenes. Should Alger resign? Should he be replaced? Put on leave? With pay or without? As if to take his attention away from such problems, Dulles suddenly caught cold and went to the hospital. Alger sent him flowers and commiserated with him. It was a wonderfully delicate period. Hiss was put on leave shortly after his arrival at Carnegie, but the Endowment inevitably suffered the turmoil of adverse publicity during both his first and second trials, and even after his hoped-for resignation came through. All this led to the Endowment's determination to find someone very different from Alger as his successor. Ultimately this turned out to be Joe Johnson. You know him. He was indeed no Alger Hiss.

Q: He was my professor at Williams. Had Hiss really had a chance to do anything?

HUGHES: No, not really. Hiss was there for two or three months before his crisis hit the press. Of course he probably knew much earlier than anybody else that he was in trouble. He was involved in the plans for the Endowment's new building in New York. David Rockefeller had decided to help fund a new headquarters for the Endowment across from the United Nations. It was designed not only to house the Endowment but also to allow for sub-leasing space to like-minded UN-oriented organizations. There were maybe a dozen- and- a half of these other non-profit groups that soon enjoyed the relatively low rents that the tax-exempt Endowment charged. There were other mutual conveniences- a conference center, library facilities, and a book store.

Joe Johnson was president of the Endowment for 20 years, all through the '50s and '60s. The Washington and Paris offices were closed, and the Endowment opened in New York and Geneva to be near the United Nations. In those years the foundation was heavily UN- related. It produced a monthly called "Issues Before the General Assembly". The staff was assigned to cover UN activities. The Endowment subsidized graduate school training for young diplomats from newly independent countries. An active operation in Geneva was more or less autonomous. That was the situation when Joe Johnson was ready to retire in 1970. His vice-president, Charles Bolte, had hoped to succeed him. Bolte and I had been Rhodes Scholars together at Oxford, and we were old friends. It was only after it became clear that Charles would not become President, that I agreed to be interviewed for the job. Nevertheless, the situation was a little awkward.

My arrival meant quite a change. We also had a new board chairman, Milton Katz, the former ambassador to the Marshall Plan who was now a professor of law at Harvard. We both thought it made sense for the Endowment to return to its origins in Washington, where we could become more centrally involved with major U.S. foreign policy problems. Meanwhile the exchange rate had made Geneva very costly, and New York in turn was more expensive than Washington. One thing led to another. In the end, not without some headaches, we closed both Geneva and New York and concentrated our activities in Washington.

Q: Was your thinking at the time that the U.N. was not that effective, and that Washington was where the game was being played?

HUGHES: Yes, those were certainly my views. There were a few U.N. oriented holdouts on the staff and on the board who did not share those views and who didn't like the change.

Q: Of course Joe Johnson was so intimately concerned with the formation of the United Nations that he must have given that UN thrust to it as president.

HUGHES: No question about that. So we made a rather obvious move away from his orientation. In the early 1970s we sold the Endowment building on the East River, but we remained in New York for a few more years at Rockefeller Center at the same time as we reopened in Washington. This enabled us to jettison our hotel management role and to stress more substance, even in New York. The move was a two or three step operation. By the 1980s we were wholly in Washington, setting our own agenda as a think-tank with a much more issue-oriented foreign policy slant.

Shortly after my arrival, we decided to join in publishing Foreign Policy Magazine, a sprightly new quarterly edited by Warren Manshel and Sam Huntington. I served as chairman of the magazine's board for the next twenty years. The magazine was a self-consciously bright young alternative to Foreign Affairs. We deliberately tried to bring together some of the leading younger commentators who had opposed one another on the Vietnam war. In the late 1970s the Endowment became Foreign Policy's sole owner and publisher, and the former Assistant Secretary or State for International Organization Affairs, Bill Maynes, began his memorable career as editor. We gave the magazine first refusal rights for articles written by Carnegie associates, but they competed with outside writers, of course. Maynes and the magazine became an integral part of the new public face of the Endowment in Washington.

There were other new developments. The Endowment became an "operating foundation" rather than a grant making one. We had been troubled by tenure and lifetime appointments over the years, so we decided to encourage some early retirements. We began to emphasize short term hiring- for one or two years- of people ready to write about an important international conflict in which they had had some recent intense personal experience. All associates were to be Washington-based to promote the camaraderie that we hoped would result from working together on the premises. Everybody, including the president and the rest of the Endowment's officers were placed on one-year renewable appointments.

Congressional hearings on foundations had also focused attention on conflicts of interest. So we set about ending some old Endowment practices like the mysterious move of our portfolio from bank to bank conforming to the business interests of the finance committee chairmen.

We were in the middle of a cultural change in the foundation community. Trustees who were carried over from an earlier period began to adjust to new rules and regulations. For instance, we disengaged ourselves from the Bilderberg meetings. Under the auspices of Joe Johnson, David Rockefeller, and Prince Bernhard of the Netherlands, these gatherings had been set up as private off-the-record meetings mixing government officials, businessmen, academics, and other eminent movers and shakers who cherished their invitations to an annual conference usually in Europe. We asked ourselves whether, as an operating foundation, we could really defend our involvement with Bilderberg. We were not running it, not operating it. We appeared to be a conduit. Our contribution had been to facilitate these meetings by offering our tax exempt status to American donors. They qualified for tax deductible donations by writing checks to the Endowment, but their contributions were really designed to support a rather exclusive group of establishmentarians.

For similar reasons, we withdrew from the so-called Middle East Commission. This was another organization which the Endowment had "sponsored" in the 1960's, featuring the Crown Prince of Jordan, Joe Johnson, and US Senators Jacob Javits and Ted Kennedy. Again we decided that our new status as an operating foundation required us to exercise more operational authority than basically providing a legal umbrella covering the Middle East interests of two powerful Senators. Here too there was a certain amount of broken crockery as we disengaged.

The Endowment's new posture was to hire the future rather than the past. So we looked for rising stars who were likely to play significant roles affecting American foreign policies. If you look over the 100-150 people who worked at the Carnegie Endowment over the 20 years when I was president, it is obvious that we picked promising people. Tony Lake, Les Gelb, Fred Bergsten, Don McHenry, Richard Holbrooke, and Bill Maynes, for example, all emerged later as important office holders in U.S. administrations. Bill Hyland became editor of Foreign Affairs. Peter Bell became the head of CARE. Larry Fabian became director of the American University in Cairo.

The Endowment itself took no institutional positions. We thought of ourselves as a neutral umbrella over a variety of viewpoints. We made a point of hiring people who differed with one another. In the case of an ongoing crisis like El Salvador, for example, we had three or four associates at the Endowment who often testified against one another on Capitol Hill.

Women began to play a more important role. Barbara Newell (President of Wellesley), Shirley Hufstedler (former Secretary of HEW), Marion Fremont-Smith (prominent Boston lawyer), and Jean Kennedy Smith (later ambassador to Ireland) joined the board. Jenonne Walker, Pauline Baker, and Doris Meissner were staffers who later went on to major posts in diplomacy, philanthropy, and government. We founded the Women's Foreign Policy Group, the first Washington-based women's organization devoted to international affairs.

In the 1970's and 1980's the Endowment also made a point of incubating other new organizations by providing space during their institutional infancy. The Arms Control Association, the Institute for International Economics, and the German Marshall Fund were prime examples. They were given space at the Endowment, and each of them provided synergism and expanded Carnegie's outreach.

We were small and non-bureaucratic, so we could move quickly to hire new associates on a target-of-opportunity basis. We wanted people who were rising stars, who had already done their basic research, who had had recent experience abroad, and who were ready to write. We were cream skimming. We were ideal for foreign service officers on leave for a year, coming back from Russia or Africa. We could offer to help place the results of their work. We could organize meetings around them in Washington. Our Face-to-Face program with its dinner programs, our Mid-Atlantic Club lunches, our Foreign Policy magazine breakfasts provided ready-made platforms for presentations. Our associates were sufficiently mobile people for us to assume reasonably that they would have no problem in moving on from us. We could have them for a year or two without further responsibility.

Selig Harrison was an exception to this rule of thumb. He was a prime example of the scholar-journalist that we sought. We kept Sig on the staff for years, longer than others, because he was such a virtuoso on Asia-whether India, Pakistan, Afghanistan, Japan, China or Korea. Very versatile, he excelled in policy-relevant research.

As a general rule we wanted no research without recommendations. We promoted television appearances and urged our associates to write op-ed pieces for major newspapers. The result was that an ever wider audience became aware of the Endowment for the first time. We were suddenly much in the news. When we reestablished ourselves in Washington in 1971, we were at the crest of the wave of new think tanks in the capital city. Many more would follow. We were at the cutting edge of the think tank industry that grew by leaps and bounds in subsequent decades.

Q: You say you came in at a time when other organizations had a sort of ideological bent. Were you trying to make a place for yourself that was not on an ideological part of the spectrum?

HUGHES: Very definitely. We deliberately wanted to hire people to give us a spectrum of attitudes, but we also wanted to create a neutral image for the Endowment. We were well aware of Washington's right- wing ideological outposts at the Heritage Foundation and the American Enterprise Institute. During the Reagan administration they were writing position papers outside the government, but they were really as much a part of the Reagan administration as, say, the energy department. We were very conscious of all that.

Of course we were also well aware of Brookings, which had been a kind of sister organization for us since our earliest years in Washington. Robert S. Brookings and Andrew Carnegie were close friends, and Brookings himself had once been a Carnegie trustee. Ever since the 1930's, Brookings had had an important economic emphasis, and we saw no need to compete with that. We had had a kind of symbiotic relationship with Brookings historically, and when we reopened in Washington our offices were again nearby. Today they are next door. We occasionally had joint programs. For instance we produced a monthly video program with Brookings for some years in the '70s and '80s. I was occasionally the moderator. The videos were designed for use in schools across the country.

In our effort to be non-partisan, we hired some alumni from the Nixon administration. We invited Reagan administration officials to speak. Later on one of our distinguished senior associates, Dmitri Simes, went on to head the Nixon Center where he was joined by three other Carnegie alumni. There was more diversity on the Carnegie board, as well, with new trustees like Wilbert LeMelle (former ambassador to Kenya) and Rafael Hernandez-Colon (Governor of Puerto Rico).

We also wanted to hire non-Americans, and over the years several distinguished Europeans, Asians, and Latin-Americans worked at the Endowment. Our staff included future foreign ministers of the Philippines and Mexico. We hired a former TASS correspondent from the Soviet Union, Melor Sturua. The board of advisers for Foreign Policy magazine included talented young foreign policy specialists from France, Germany, and Britain.

Q: How did you recruit? In particular foreigners, but also within the American community?

HUGHES: All of us had networks, and we tried to hire people who also had networks. In my own case my background on Capitol Hill, the Air Force, the State Department, and several universities Oxford, Yale, Georgetown, Harvard, Princeton, Denver, Minnesota-gave me useful connections. The board of advisers of Foreign Policy Magazine was often helpful in spotting new talent. Anybody who had served at the Endowment was put to work suggesting others.

Recruitment was made easier because fund-raising was not a daily headache. When I became president, we had an endowment worth around one hundred million dollars, and an annual budget of two to three million. Over the years, that budget rose to around five million. Although we accepted grants from outside foundations for certain projects, we had a considerable advantage when it came to finances. If necessary, we could pay for our own operations. I also benefited from having a permissive board. Indeed its very diversity helped to promote permissiveness for me. A variety of views on the board helped assure the freedom of the president in choosing personnel and making appointments.

Q: You look at the various Foundations around here and they seem to be sort of a parking place while waiting for a new administration to come in, which gets a little bit tricky. You begin to look like a shadow government.

HUGHES: We were determined to avoid being pigeonholed. It is quite true that several people who served at the Carnegie Endowment in the early 1970s went into the Carter administration in 1977. Holbrooke, Lake, Maynes, and McHenry are good examples.

At the same time Richard Nixon's great friend (and later executor of his will), Dimitri Simes, was running our Russian program. He would travel to Russia with Nixon. Incidentally we became aware that one of Nixon's cherished objectives in his rehabilitation years was to appear at the Carnegie Endowment, precisely because it had once been presided over by his bete noire, Alger Hiss. While I was never all that keen about falling in with Nixon's scheme, a dinner for him was in fact arranged. His cherished new role of foreign policy-elder statesman was thereby enhanced, and our reputation for non-partisanship likewise.

Incidentally, that was the evening when Dan Schorr was in the audience. He had once been prominent on Nixon's enemies list. On the way out, he went up to Nixon and said "You probably don't remember me, Mr. President, I'm Dan Schorr." "The hell I don't. remember you," Nixon replied. "Damn near hired you once." This was the cover story for the telephone taps that Nixon had once ordered-wiretapping his enemies before their appointment! Some cover stories have long lives.

Q: Did you make a conscious effort to balance the practitioners, the Holbrookes and Lakes, with the academics? I find that often these two groups don't talk the same language.

HUGHES: We tried whenever possible to find people who combined these roles. We were interested in foreign service officers who were academically respectable. Thus we wanted people like Pete Vaky, a distinguished ambassador with an intellectual bent. He had served in a variety of posts in the hemisphere and in several different administrations in Washington. He was widely esteemed in the Latin American community. Because of his background and contacts, we put him in charge of organizing a regular monthly luncheon for some sixty Washington-based diplomats from Latin America-all of the OAS (Organization of American States) ambassadors as well as the ambassadors accredited to the U.S. government. It was a flourishing operation. It brought stimulating speakers on hemisphere problems to a very high level group. Here was another way we promoted the Endowment as an active intellectual operation in Washington.

We also had a "Face-to-Face" program, led annually by a different foreign service officer on leave. This was a collaborative venture with the American Foreign Service Association. We would pay the FSO's salary for a year. He or she would be in charge of an intensive four-hour discussion before, during, and after dinner, with an eminent foreigner or a visiting American of some prominence. "Face to Face" was designed to bring a high decibel guest together with a high decibel audience. We also liked to cross-ruff hierarchies-confronting a foreign visitor of some distinction with lower ranking officials in Washington, or pitting an American undersecretary of state against staffers from the Hill. We wanted to upset the normal hierarchical structures governing which people met which other people in official Washington.

Q: Did you work with staff members of Congress of the foreign relations committee?

HUGHES: Yes, but perhaps more importantly, we recruited some people who had had staff experience on the Hill. In fact many of us at the Endowment had had prior Hill experience.

Q: During the time you were there were there times when things really went your way and other times when you stepped on the wrong thing? You know, controversies?

HUGHES: Mostly things went our way. Of course when I joined the Endowment in 1971 there was no way for us to know that we would be spending most of the next twenty years with Nixon, Ford, Reagan, and Bush, four Republican administrations. We might have behaved differently if the overall tendencies of these administrations had been different. Still we seemed to get along well enough with most of them and occasionally they reciprocated. For example, when George H. W. Bush returned from his Malta meeting with Gorbachev, I was invited to the White House with a few other NGO leaders, for a personal debriefing. I myself had known Bush earlier in New York when he was ambassador to the UN. We had a fairly comfortable relationship.

Q: From 1971-91, did you run into the increasing isolationism on the right and in labor unions too? Was this something you had to deal with?

HUGHES: Yes, that was a growing phenomenon over the years. I remember writing an article called "The Flight from Foreign Policy" during this period. We tried to do something about it in our appointments of both trustees and staff. One of our trustees was Lane Kirkland, the president of the AFL- CIO. He was a cantankerous character, but he cooperated in organizing a Carnegie conference on labor and foreign affairs. We tried to bring union representatives together with international economists to discuss organized labor's position on NAFTA, for instance. We didn't make great inroads on the union mindset, or on labor's protectionist tendencies, but we did make an effort.

Q: Did you get involved at all in promoting the study of foreign relations or diplomacy at the college and high school level? I'm sort of plugged in to the discussion among diplomatic scholars. They say they are losing positions at universities.

HUGHES: That problem has become more intense in the last ten years than it was in the '70s and '80s. We weren't making grants, so we weren't funding the academic community directly. We tried of course to promote Endowment products for use at universities and even high schools. Our hour-long filmed recordings with Brookings focused on foreign policy issues and produced cassettes which were widely distributed at the high school and college level. They were used in classrooms around the country. We had a good response to the program. Often we hired foreign service officers who had themselves been diplomats-in-residence at colleges or universities, and we benefited from feedback from them about their academic experiences. We encouraged our staff to accept invitations to speak in academic settings. Foreign Policy Magazine became important in a good many classrooms around the country.

Q: After 1991 what did you do?

HUGHES: Most importantly, after the death in 1993 of my first wife, Jean, I was very happily remarried-to the former Jane Casey Kuczynski. I remained at the Endowment as President Emeritus for a few years, while continuing to chair certain programs there like the Mid-Atlantic Club. I still serve on a few boards like the BMW Center for German and European Studies at Georgetown University, the American Institute for Contemporary German Studies, and the Social Science Foundation at the University of Denver. Since 1995 I have been writing articles on German history as a senior research scholar at the German Historical Institute. I have also been president of the Washington Institute of Foreign Affairs.

Q: Some NGOs are now instruments of foreign policy dealing with refugees, setting up new governments, and monitoring election. Was that something you were dealing with?

HUGHES: Not really. But the NGO explosion did become enormous by the '90s, and today it has almost reached a saturation point. I didn't have the problem which my successors have to confront which is how to find a niche and maintain it in a field that is growing by leaps and bounds, augmented constantly by new technology. The whole e-mail phenomenon has given the NGOs a worldwide role as non-state actors. We now have a Nobel prize given to a woman who organized a landmines treaty over the objection of the United States government. This is an e-mail phenomenon. The winner herself would be the first to admit that the internet is a tiger that everybody now has to ride The new NGO role is made to order for the Canadian-Scandinavian view of the world. Governments in Oslo, Stockholm, Ottawa. and even British Labor Party governments in London are receptive to help from American NGOs. They are all receptive to NGO e-mail activity. They tell their own foreign offices "you can continue to write, but you should be aware that we are receiving helpful advice now on a daily basis from NGO such-and-such from Washington or wherever."

An NGO disappointed in a lack of receptivity in the American government on landmines simply goes to Ottawa or Oslo and finds a ready market. But this golden age for NGOs may not last. I can imagine a Congressional backlash to this non-accountable freelance self-initiated activity. There will probably be a legislative reaction one of these days. How much international freewheeling will politicians tolerate? As part of the e-mailized and globalized sectors of society, NGOs with a worldwide reach are bound to breed resentments in some quarters.

I should add a personal note/ While at Carnegie I also naturally enjoyed the side benefits of being associated with a foreign policy think tank. Extensive opportunities for international travel came with the job, and, in addition, my own membership in many internationally oriented institutions amplified those opportunities. At various points during my twenty-years at the Endowment, I was a trustee or board member of the International Institute of Strategic Studies, the German Marshall Fund, the Ditchley Foundation, the Atlantic Council, the Institute of Current World Affairs, and the American Academy in Berlin, to mention a few. Those board responsibilities, as well as my membership in other organizations like the Trilateral Commission, took me to many international destinations. Beyond the personal pleasure that came with this travel, such gatherings afforded valuable opportunities for networking, recruitment, and institutional advertisement. At one time or another during my years at Carnegie I traveled to five continents, to some of them repeatedly.

Incidentally, I have written at length about my Carnegie years-in several published reports from the Endowment during the 70s and 80s, but especially in a chapter called "Two Decades in the Front Office: Reflections on How the Carnegie Endowment Operated in Cold War Washington." This article appeared in 1995 in their book Beyond Government by Craufurd D. Goodwin and Michael Nacht.

While at Carnegie, I was also able to continue writing and publishing on international issues. Between 1973 and 1995, nine articles on a variety of subjects appeared in Foreign Policy Magazine. Others appeared in the Atlantic, the New York Times Magazine, the Washington Post, and the New Republic. My introductions of eminent foreign and domestic speakers at various Carnegie functions were numerous, especially at our monthly Mid-Atlantic Club luncheons over a period of years.

I was happy at Carnegie and not tempted to leave. From time to time college presidencies were proffered, but I declined. In 1976 Vice-President-elect, Walter Mondale, as headhunter for the incoming Carter administration, twice asked me to head the CIA, both before and after Ted Sorenson's rejection. But I had had enough of intelligence, and turned the job down both times. I recommended Stan Turner, Carter's Annapolis classmate, and he accepted the appointment, serving for a tumultuous four years.

Q: If you are an NGO, you are presumably tax free. You have to show some responsibility for that status.

HUGHES: That's right and of course there are people in Congress who look at the NGOs, not necessarily only the NGOs in the foreign policy area but the NGOs in the domestic field as well, and find scandals with misused funds. There are plenty of cases to investigate, and some legislators could plausibly target NGO's "abuses", even if the latter are incidental or unpremeditated.

Q: As one looks at this growth of NGOs I can't help feeling this is sort of a subsidy of the well educated middle class. It gives people like myself, maybe like yourself, a place to occupy and organize It is a tremendous outlet for people who are college graduates.

HUGHES: Yes, it empowers many individuals in many ways. In particular, the whole internet explosion enables you to play a self-initiated world role. It is a great equalizer but also a great threat to "higher authority". It may become the enemy of governments. This huge e-mail world out there is a new global phenomenon. The new internationalism is not what traditional internationalists liked and wanted. It is not necessarily government-based. The whole relationship of states and authorities and elected representatives and democratic officialdom to this phenomenon is yet to be worked out. Governments may not disappear, but they could become the custodians of anti-global interests.

Q: Also there is a proliferation of conspiracy theories. Somehow or other governments are all conspiring to do things. Those of us who work in the government know how difficult it is to conspire.

HUGHES: Anti-globalists can use the new global technologies as well as globalists. We are on the threshold of a totally new situation. The old assumptions of internationalism are disappearing.

Q: We are very close to getting these transcripts of our talks typed up out into the Internet of one form or another and there we are looking at the leader in how to market things. I'm referring now to the pornographic industry. They have broken ground and we will probably be following in their footsteps. How you market your product? How do you get some money back from the expense we have put into this program?

HUGHES: I'm not sure how many of the people you are interviewing are going to be able to compete effectively with the pornographers.

Q: We'll be on a different channel but we will have to use some of the same techniques, like ticklers, to get people to come to us. There the pornographers are the leaders.

HUGHES: Maybe you will surprise them. The customer may be seeking pornography, but instead he will find himself on the oral history network of the Association for Diplomatic Studies and Training.

Q: Well, I think this is a good point to stop this.

HUGHES: I think so too. I've enjoyed talking with you. You're a good interviewer.

End of interview