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DEPARTMENT OF THE AIR FORCE
HEADQUARTERS AIR FORCE INSTALLATION AND MISSION SUPPORT CENTER
JOINT BASE SAN ANTONIO – LACKLAND, TEXAS

24-Sep-18

Charles J. Shedrick, GS14, DAF
Chief, Information Access Branch
Installation Support Directorate
2261 Hughes Avenue, Suite 133
JBSA-Lackland TX 78236-9853

Mr. John Greenwald
The Black Vault
27305 W Live Oak Road, Suite 1203
Castaic, CA 91384-4520

Dear Mr. Greenwald,

This is in response to your April 24, 2018 Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) request. Your request was received on April 25, 2016, assigned case 2018-02134-F and seeks the following:

- *IRIS 1033730 (U.S. Air Force Oral History Review, Gen. John W. Vogt – Date 08-08-1978)*

The Air Force Historical Research Agency (AFHRA) provided 439 pages of document for review and release determination.

A thorough line by line review was conducted and it was determined the 439 pages are fully releasable. The *best available copy* is provided.

If you disagree and interpret this response as an adverse action, you may write to the Secretary of the Air Force, Thru: AFIMSC/IZSI (FOIA), 2261 Hughes Avenue, Suite 133, JBSA-Lackland TX 78236-9853 within 90 calendar days from the date of this letter. Include in the appeal your reasons for reconsideration, and attach a copy of this letter. You may also submit your appeal on line at the Air Force's Public Access Link: <https://www.foia.af.mil/palMain.aspx>.

You may contact the Air Force FOIA Public Liaison Officer, Ms. Anh Trinh, concerning this final response at Air Force FOIA Public Liaison Office, 1800 Air Force Pentagon, Washington, DC 20330-1800, or usaf.pentagon.saf-cio-a6.mbx.af-foia@mail.mil / (703) 614-8500. You may also seek dispute resolution services from the Office of Government Information Services, and can find information on this Office at

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<https://ogis.archives.gov/mediation-program/request-assistance.htm>. Using the dispute resolution services will not affect your appeal rights.

The FOIA provides for the collection of fees based on the costs of processing a FOIA request and your fee category. We have determined your fee category to be "Other." Normally, under this category, fees would be collected to recover the full direct cost of searching for and duplicating records, except that the first two hours of search time and the first 100 pages of duplication shall be furnished without charge. In this case, any fees incurred for processing this request have been waived.

Direct questions to AFIMSC/IZSI at afimsc.foia.workflow@us.af.mil or call 210-395-8231 and reference FOIA case number.

Sincerely,

Charles J. Shedrick
CHARLES J. SHEDRICK, GS14, DAF
Chief, Information Access Branch

Attachment:
Responsive Records (439 pages)

FOIA Case 2018-02134-F

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**U. S. Air Force
Oral History Interview**

K239.0512-1093

Gen John W. Vogt

8-9 August 1978

AFSHRC MAXWELL AFB AL 36063	RETURN TO G.L.	K239.0512-1093 08/08/78 - 09/08/78
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**ALBERT F. SIMPSON
HISTORICAL RESEARCH CENTER
Air University**

**OFFICE OF AIR FORCE HISTORY
Headquarters USAF**

Classified By: AFSHRC/CC
Review on: 9 August 1984

1033730

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UNITED STATES AIR FORCE
ORAL HISTORY PROGRAM

Interview
of
Gen John W. Vogt

by
Lt Col Arthur W. McCants, Jr.
and
Dr. James C. Hasdorff

Classified by: AFSHRC/CC
Review on: 9 August 1984

Date: 8-9 August 1978
Location: Annapolis MD

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FOREWORD

The following is the transcript of an oral history interview recorded on magnetic tape. Since only minor emendations have been made, the reader should consistently bear in mind that he is reading a transcript of the spoken rather than the written word. Additionally, no attempt to confirm the historical accuracy of the statements has been made. As a result, the transcript reflects the interviewee's personal recollections of a situation as he remembered it at the time of the interview.

Editorial notes and additions made by USAF historians are enclosed in brackets. If feasible, first names, ranks, or titles are also provided. Any additions, deletions and changes subsequently made to the transcript by the interviewee are not indicated. Researchers may wish to listen to the actual interview tape prior to citing the transcript.

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KNOW ALL MEN BY THESE PRESENTS:

That I, Gen John W. Vogt, have this day participated in an oral-magnetic-taped interview with Dr. James C. Hasdorff, covering my best recollection of events and experiences which may be of historical significance to the United States Air Force.

Understanding that the tape(s) and the transcribed manuscript resulting therefrom will be accessioned into the Archives of the Air Force to be used, as the security classification permits, by qualified historical researchers whose access has been determined to be in the best interest of the United States Air Force, I do hereby voluntarily give, transfer, convey, and assign all right, title, and interest in the ^{text of} memoirs and remembrances contained in the aforementioned magnetic tapes and manuscript to the Office of Air Force History, acting on behalf of the United States of America, to have and to hold the same forever, hereby relinquishing for myself, my executors, administrators, heirs, and assigns all ownership, right, title, and interest therein to the donee subject only to the following restrictions: _____

John

John W. Vogt DONOR
DATED *9 Aug 1975*

Accepted on behalf of the Office of Air Force History by *James C. Hasdorff*

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DATED 11

9 Aug 1978

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PERSONAL FACT SHEET - General John H. West

A. Personal Data

1. Family - Born 15 Feb 1923, Ellington, Tex.; father, John H. West; mother - Ruth Edna West.
2. Married - April 27, 1949; wife - Mary Ann; children - Leslie Ann.
3. Hometown - Ellington, Tex.

B. Education

1. Graduate, Thomas Jefferson High School, 1940.
2. Graduate, Yale University, B.A., Industrial Relations, 1947.
3. Graduate, Columbia University, M.A., International Relations, 1951.
4. Graduate, Flying School, Ellington Field, Tex., 1952.
5. Fellow, Harvard School for International Affairs, Harvard University (AFIT), 1958-1959.

C. Service

1. Sept 1941 - Apr 1942 Fly. sch., Randolph & Ellington Flds., Tex.
2. Apr 1942 - Dec 1942 Flt. pltr., 63d Flt. Sq., 35th Ftr. Gr., Mitchell Fld., N.Y.
3. Jun 1943 - Apr 1944 Flt. comdr., England.
4. May 1944 - Oct 1944 Comdr., 300th Flt. Sq., 35th Ftr. Gr., England.
5. Nov 1945 - July 1946 Comdr., 1st Air Base Sq., 7th Air Force, Recife, Brazil.
6. July 1946 - Sept 1946 Intl. aff. off., HQ - Mitchel Fld., N.Y.
7. Sept 1946 - June 1951 Grad. Stud., Columbia Univ., N.Y.
8. June 1951 - Aug 1953 Cir. of Sec. Aff., to Asst. Sec. of Air, Washington, D.C.
9. Aug 1953 - Oct 1956 Asst. Dep. for Ops., Lt. Col., USAF, Japan.
10. Oct 1956 - Aug 1958 Sp. Asst. to Chiefs & Staff Secy., CINCPAC, Hickam AFB, Hawaii.
11. Aug 1958 - July 1959 Fellow, Harvard Cen. for Intl. Aff., Harvard Univ., Cambridge, Mass.
12. July 1959 - Sept 1959 Ch., Africa, Middle East & Western Europe Br., Intl. Aff. Div., HQ USAF, Washington, D.C.
13. Sept 1959 - Feb 1963 Dep. Asst. Dir. & later Asst. Dir. of Plans for Jt. Matters, OCS, Plans & Programs, HQ USAF, Washington, D.C.
14. Feb 1963 - Aug 1965 Dir. Policy Planning, Sec., OASD, (ISA), Washington, D.C.
15. Aug 1965 - June 1968 Dep. for Plans & Ops., Lt. Col., PACAF, Hickam AFB, Hawaii.

O V E R

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16. June 1963 - July 1969 484th AFS, 91st AS, 10 USAF, Washington, D.C.
17. Aug 1969 - July 1970 Dir. for Ops. (J3), Jr. Staff, AFCS, Washington, D.C.
18. July 1970 - Apr. 1972 Dir. for Ops. (J3), Jr. Staff, AFCS, Washington, D.C.
19. Apr 1972 - June 1972 Asst. Comdr. for Air Ops., 13th AF, 7th AF, Tan Son Nhut AB, RVN.
20. June 1972 - Feb 1973 Asst. Comdr., MACV, Tan Son Nhut AB, RVN.
21. Feb 1973 - Sept 1973 Comdr., 484th AFS, 7th AF, Nakhon Phanom RTAFB, Thailand.
22. Oct 1973 - June 1974 GIKKADAP, Hickam AFB, Hawaii.
23. June 1974 - Present Commander, Allied Air Forces Central Europe; and Commander in Chief, United States Air Forces in Europe, Ramstein Air Base, Germany.

D. Decorations and Service Awards

- | | |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------|
| Distinguished Service Medal w/2 oak leaf clusters (Air Force design) | Croix de Guerre w/Etoile de Vietnam (France) |
| Distinguished Service Medal (Army design) | Republic of Vietnam Air Service Medal |
| Silver Star | Republic of Vietnam Cross of Gallantry w/3 oak leaf clusters |
| Legion of Merit | Republic of Vietnam National Order of Vietnam (Commander) |
| Distinguished Flying Cross w/4 oak leaf clusters | Republic of Vietnam Order of Military Merit |
| Bronze Star Medal | |
| Air Medal w/2 oak leaf clusters | |
| Joint Service Commendation Medal | |
| Purple Heart | |

E. Promotion Dates of Grade Changes

1st Lt	Feb 20, 1951	Feb 20, 1951
Capt	Mar 14, 1953	Mar 14, 1953
Maj	Feb 20, 1954	Feb 20, 1954
Lt Col	Feb 20, 1954	Aug 3, 1958
Col	Apr 14, 1955	Aug 3, 1958
Brig Gen	Aug 1, 1962	Dec 1, 1960
Maj Gen	June 10, 1965	Feb 27, 1964
Lt Gen	Aug 1, 1969	Feb 10, 1966
Gen	Apr 7, 1972	

(Date of rank April 7, 1972)

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SUMMARY OF CONTENTS

General John W. Vogt had the rare distinction of serving as both Commander of PACAF and USAFE, opportunities which allowed him to have a much broader perspective of the world military situation than the usual career officer. General Vogt's interview reflects this global view which was reinforced by his experiences at the top levels of Government as well as an enviable academic background from Yale and Columbia Universities and the Harvard School for International Affairs. The interview covers all aspects of General Vogt's diversified career and includes such topics as: combat experiences in World War II, his working relationship with Secretary McNamara, the Cuban missile crisis, the political debacle in Southeast Asia, and the USAF need for an all-weather capability.

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Guide to Contents

Gen John W. Vogt

Page(s)

- 1 Early life in New Jersey.
- 2 Grandparents came from Germany.
- 3 Enrolled in civilian pilot training program while in college.
- 4 Received flying training at Randolph and Ellington Fields.
- 6 Assigned to Mitchel Field and the 56th Fighter Group.
- 8 Group was shipped to England on the Queen Elizabeth.
- 9 Initial combat with Luftwaffe was difficult.
- 10 Several leaders in the group shot down an impressive number of German aircraft.
- 13 Morale was extremely high in outfit.
- 15 Achieved eight enemy kills during World War II.
- 16 Aircraft was damaged and crash-landed in England.
- 18 Volunteered for assignment in Brazil.
- 20 U-boat captains fled to Argentina after the war in Europe.
- 21 Assigned to Mitchel Field as an intelligence staff officer.
- 22 Attended Yale University and received degree.
- 23 Was the first UFO officer in the Air Force.
- 24 No credibility in UFOs.
- 26 Applied for and was accepted for graduate school at Columbia University.

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Page(s)

- 26 Became an assistant to the JCS representative on the senior staff of the NSC.
- 27 Early involvement with Vietnam situation.
- 32 Sent to PACAF as the assistant to the Deputy for Plans and Operations.
- 33 Received 1-year fellowship to Harvard Center for International Affairs.
- 36 Became an Air Force planner on the JCS.
- 38 Was involved in the Cuban Crisis.
- 39 Paul Nitze did country a tremendous service during Cuban Crisis.
- 42 Robert Kennedy persuaded President Kennedy to withdraw air cover for Bay of Pigs operation.
- 43 President Kennedy was first to abandon traditional machinery for decision making.
- 45 JCS was bypassed in planning the Cuban invasion.
- 46 Did not testify on Hill while Chief of Policy Planning Staff.
- 48 McNamara was a believer in the computer.
- 49 Past Secretaries of Defense have always gotten into the personnel business.
- 51 McNamara went further than previous Secretaries of Defense.
- 53 Administration selected targets to preclude indiscriminate bombing charges.
- 57 Personal acquaintanceship with Administration members later helped while Seventh Air Force Commander.
- 58 President was concerned over bad press reports on cross-border operation.

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60 "Pipe" incident caused uproar with the media.

63 Why free hand was given in conducting air war in SEA.

64 Completely different operating policies between Secretaries McNamara and Laird.

66 McNamara spent billion on electronic defense line in Vietnam.

67 Should not have become involved in ground war in SEA.

70 Went to PACAF as Chief of Plans and Operations.

72 LORAN acquired for all-weather capability in SEA.

75 Navy is the only service producing all-weather aircraft.

76 Intimately involved with initial F-111 problems in SEA.

77 McNamara pushed for commonality.

79 F-111 was a good aircraft after bugs were removed.

81 F-111s used to support Meo tribesmen in Laos.

84 F-111s successfully defended Phnom Penh.

88 Protested Kissinger's order to stop bombing Hanoi.

90 Six B-52s were lost over Hanoi to SAMs.

92 LORAN-equipped F-4s destroyed missile assembly plant in Hanoi.

94 LORAN-equipped F-4s guide B-52s over the target in Cambodia.

95 No all-weather capability in Europe except for one wing of F-111s.

96 McClellan Committee was critical of McNamara and the F-111 program.

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- 100 Transferred back to Washington following Rolling Thunder campaign.
- 101 Gen J. P. McConnell had great rapport, unlike General Ryan, with people on the Hill.
- 103 Initially did not get along with Gen Earle Wheeler.
- 104 General Wheeler requested report of everything said during a 2-year period.
- 105 Secretary had fortunately retained all previous records.
- 107 Worked very effectively with Admiral Moorer.
- 109 Received report from Navy that a mutiny had taken place on a munitions ship on the way to Thailand.
- 114 Worked together with the Navy on a number of occasions.
- 115 Navy likes to operate independently.
- 117 Authority to conduct air war in SEA was never put in writing by the President.
- 119 Assignment of Route Packs created interservice problems in North Vietnam.
- 125 CINCPAC was remote from war but was trying to conduct affairs.
- 126 Newspaper reporter printed distorted story about bombing dams and dikes in North Vietnam.
- 129 Reporter claimed 10 Cambodian cities were bombed by B-52s.
- 135 Was given authority to bomb powerplant turbines but not dam in North Vietnam.
- 137 Pilot bombed Communist Party Headquarters in Hanoi by mistake.
- 139 Modern constraints on commanders are ridiculous.

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- 140 Jane Fonda thought North Vietnamese were patriotic people interested in the welfare of their country.
- 142 Visiting Senator slept through briefing on bombing of Cambodia.
- 144 Bella Abzug visited SEA to see why Cambodia and Laos were being bombed.
- 148 Gen John D. Lavelle was immediate predecessor.
- 153 Inspector General was sent to SEA to investigate Lavelle affair.
- 155 General Lavelle felt rules of engagement were implied.
- 159 US airpower had to do what 500,000 ground troops had done previously.
- 163 Effort made to destroy 130-millimeter guns in Quang Tri province.
- 166 Army does not have a gun as effective as Russian 130-millimeter type.
- 167 Recollections of the Pueblo incident.
- 174 Navy did not notify anyone of impending Pueblo mission.
- 180 The United States, unlike North Korea, observes international rules.
- 182 Maverick weapon system was ineffective in SEA and Europe.
- 186 One-on-one system is not at all cost effective.
- 189 Germans were developing a system called STREBO.
- 192 The use of Agent Orange as a defoliant in SEA.
- 197 Air/Sea Rescue played an absolutely essential role in SEA.
- 200 Son Tay raid was conceived while J-3 in Washington.

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- 205 Son Tay Raid precluded any further effort.
- 206 Comments on the book, The Air War in Indochina.
- 209 Communists were constantly fielding improved weapon systems.
- 212 Vietnamese general denied laser-guided bomb support because it was not cost effective.
- 214 High cost of modern weapon systems.
- 215 Was first Commander of Allied Forces Central Europe.
- 216 F-16s lack, of all-weather capability made it unsuitable for Europe.
- 217 Was impressed with Swedish Viggen aircraft.
- 218 Flew European aircraft but was denied authority to test fly F-16.
- 221 Kissinger killed effort to bring F-111s to Europe.
- 223 Area commander has little say-so over which weapon systems are procured.
- 226 Selection of A-10 was bad decision for USAF in Europe.
- 227 Suggestions for lowering weapon systems costs in the tactical and strategic areas.
- 231 Was not a strong advocate of the B-1 bomber.
- 232 Cruise missile has some potential.
- 233 Opposed to expensive developments in the strategic area that drive costs up unnecessarily.
- 235 Additional modifications after weapon systems have gone into production cause cost overruns.
- 237 Excessive civilian control of field commanders should be avoided in the future.

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- 238 Was not too optimistic in assessing North Vietnamese at the time.
- 239 Terms of peace treaty were not observed by North Vietnamese.
- 240 Watergate paralyzed US reaction to treaty violations.
- 241 Accused of crying wolf when alerting Washington of treaty violations.
- 245 US failure to react to treaty violations was a sellout of the South Vietnamese.
- 248 Pathet Lao forces attacked in violation of cease-fire in Laos.
- 255 Informed by Ambassador Graham Martin that further visits to corps commanders were prohibited.
- 256 Unwillingness to enforce agreement allowed the military victory to be given away.
- 258 Airpower played decisive role in Vietnam.
- 261 General Hollingsworth exerted heroic effort to save city of An Loc.
- 266 General Hollingsworth was unaware that his Army cohorts had initially denied him air support.
- 268 MACV staff was rooted to the scene in Saigon.
- 270 Army commanders traditionally depend heavily on their staffs.
- 272 Air commander was widely separated from ground commander in Germany.
- 274 Good working relationship with General Weyand.
- 275 Europeans have doubts of US sincerity following fall of South Vietnam.
- 276 Urged by Washington officials to reassure South Vietnamese generals.

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- 281 Downgrading of PACAF Commander and possible ramifications.
- 283 Changes made after becoming USAFE Commander.
- 289 Attacked operational problems while General Poe took care of "housekeeping" duties.
- 292 German General Ferber was assured by US officials that West would have 30-day warning of Soviet attack.
- 294 Computers were a bad word in NATO.
- 299 USAF aircraft losses were initially heavy over North Vietnam.
- 301 With fusion of intelligence with operations ratios changed 4 to 1 in USAF favor.
- 303 Could talk immediately by secure phone to Thailand but could not talk to German commander 250 kilometers away.
- 304 Doctrinal problems existed between air forces of NATO countries.
- 309 US no longer enjoys tactical nuclear superiority in Europe.
- 313 Security leaks were great within NATO.
- 315 New emphasis is being placed on NATO.
- 318 Senate and House Committee decided to cut all-weather Navy A-6 aircraft program.
- 320 Effort being made in NATO to standardize weapon systems.
- 323 LORAN net is still operational in Europe.
- 324 Shortcomings of Harrier aircraft.
- 328 Campaigned for improved version of F-4 Wild Weasel.

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- 330 US Army has fallen behind in electronic warfare.
- 331 Soviets are active in chemical warfare exercises.
- 334 Concerned about mismatch of US and Soviet strategic forces.
- 337 Soviets have cleverly kept strategic Backfire bomber out of SALT negotiations.
- 341 Soviet weapons advances over US are disturbing.
- 343 Soviets will not be content with parity.
- 344 No nuclear protected facilities in all of NATO.
- 347 Gen George Keegan has been accurate in forecasting Soviet developments.
- 349 Europeans have a large role in the deployment of nuclear weapons.
- 356 McNamara was insensitive in his dealings with the European allies.
- 358 French military participation in NATO is essential.
- 361 Communist influence in Western Europe has started to subside.
- 364 Soviets will try to exploit situation in Yugoslavia upon Tito's death.
- 368 Gen Robert J. Dixon's pessimism regarding the declining US airpower.
- 371 Infringement of roles and missions by the various services.
- 374 One-uniform concept is not desirable solution.
- 377 Army priorities must be considered by USAF.
- 378 Helicopters and A-10 aircraft will not be survivable in European combat environment.

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- 381 Loss of USAF pilots to the airlines.
- 385 Modern airman is more concerned with creature comforts.
- 387 Lack of integrity in senior Air Force leaders.
- 390 Problems with the OER system.
- 397 Commanded both PACAF and USAFE.
- 400 Retirement laws need some modification.
- 404 Dissatisfied with USAF choice of weapon systems.

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Oral History Interview #K239.0512-1093
8-9 August 1978

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Taped Interview with Gen John W. Vogt, USAF (Ret)
Conducted by Lt Col Arthur W. McCants, Jr. and
Dr. James C. Hasdorff

H: To begin the interview, General Vogt, I'd like to ask you a few questions about your early life. How large a family did you come from? And what kind of profession was your father in?

V: I was one of three children. I have another brother who is 4 years younger than I am, who is living up in New York at the present time in the pleasure boating business, and I have an older sister, 2 years older than I am, who is living up in New Jersey.

My father was an accountant for the Union Carbide Company. The plant was located in north New Jersey. We lived most of my early life in the Elizabeth, New Jersey, area because of the proximity to the office that he worked in. But he was the accountant for the Union Carbide Company.

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H: All right. I take it from what you are telling me that there was no military tradition in your family at all?

V: None whatsoever. I'm the first, as far as I know, career professional military guy in the entire Vogt family.

H: How long has your family been in this country, do you have any idea?

V: My grandparents came over from Germany when they were young, in their late teens or early twenties, and they settled in the Elizabeth, New Jersey, area. Both my parents, of course, were born here in this country. My mother was born in Pennsylvania; my father right in New Jersey.

H: You don't have any idea when it was that they came to this country?

V: Well, let's see, we'll have to count back. Say, maybe 100 years ago, somewhere around there.

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H: When did you first have an interest in anything to do with aviation?

V: When I was in college I enrolled in the civilian pilot training program and actually had a private license before I went to flying school. I did a little flying in private aircraft prior to my going into the Air Force.

H: What triggered this interest? Was there any particular event or person that made you . . .

V: Well, I'll tell you quite frankly what my interest was in being prepared for military service, which I knew was going to be inevitable at that point. I'll never forget; this was back in the early forties; the war was on in Europe; US [United States] involvement was becoming apparent, and I knew that sooner or later we would be in the war. I much preferred to be in it in a professional capacity as a pilot than doing it the hard way on the ground and that really motivated my drive to get into the flying business. And my civilian pilot training was more or less in preparation for making a career in the Air Force, ultimately. I say Air Force,

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it was actually the Air Corps of the Army back in those days.

H: According to your biography, you went to both Randolph and Ellington Fields in Texas for your flying training. Who were some of your instructors back then? Can you remember anybody in particular that stood out?

V: I couldn't recall the name of anybody back in those days. They have all been completely erased from my memory. I have no idea. I actually went to primary flying school at Ballinger, Texas, which was a civilian contract school. We flew the old PT-19s at Ballinger. Then I went on to Randolph, and from there I was selected for multi-engine training. This didn't sit too well with me. I was actually anxious to get into fighters, but they made their selections on a rather arbitrary basis back in those days, and I was sent to twin-engine flying school. Ironically, some of the boys who were selected for single-engine schools wound up later in bombers over skies of Europe, and I wound up in fighters. (laughter) The reason for that is that timing being what it was I got out of the multi-engine school at Ellington at precisely the time they needed some pilots

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to fly P-38s, which were entering the inventory in increasing numbers, so they needed multi-engine people. I was sent up to Mitchel Field to the old 56th Fighter Group, which was scheduled to get P-38s, to be one of their pilots. Once again, fate entered into it and the decision was made somewhere along the line to convert the P-38s into P-47s, so I wound up in a single-engine fighter after all, and that's actually the airplane that we went overseas with, the old P-47 Thunderbolt.

H: How was the washout rate during the period that you went through? Was it pretty high then yet?

V: No. The washout rate, I would say, was relatively low. There was great urgency about getting pilots into the cockpit, and I think the process that was employed at the time was a pretty good one. If the guy was a reasonably good pilot and showed a lot of potential, he was put into high performance aviation. If he was the kind of guy that had to have a lot of support and help, he wound up in less critical areas. He may have been in the Ferry Command or transports or something of that sort. So, unlike today where they are pretty stringent in their requirements, in those days we were anxious to

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VOGT

get pilots. Remember we were going into a dramatic expansion in the Air Corps back in those days from practically no airplanes at all, just 1,000 or more, up to 25,000 or 30,000 in a period of a couple of years--vast expansion required.

H: Was there ever any doubt in your mind that you wouldn't get through? Or were you pretty sure of yourself?

V: Well, I think everybody in flying school had their moments of doubt. All it takes is one bad check ride, you know, at the wrong time, and you are in trouble. I was, of course, helped by the fact that I had a private license before, and the earlier phases of training were rather simple for me because it was much of what I had already learned. When we started getting into the advanced categories, it got more difficult, and I think, like everybody else, I had a few moments of doubt. But basically I think I knew that I could fly airplanes.

H: You went up to Mitchel Field, you said. This was another training assignment?

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V: This was right after graduation from flying school, and I reported into the 56th Fighter Group, which was preparing to go overseas. They had P-38s assigned to them, but P-38s were split off from the main group early in the game and had formed another group. I think they wound up in the Far East somewhere. And those who remained were put in the P-47 Thunderbolt, which was just coming into production, out at Farmingdale, Long Island. We actually went to Farmingdale to get the first few airplanes to fly to work on and to train with. I was with the first squadron ever to get P-47s; we were the first ones to fly it.

B: You were one of the fortunate few that got to go directly over because so many of them, in the early days, were put in training assignments and had a rough time getting out of it for the rest of the war.

V: I have talked to many a guy who sweated the war out back here trying like the devil to get out of the country, but good fortune was mine and I just happened to move in the right direction so that actually within a year I was overseas and in combat.

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H: How were you ferried overseas? Did you go by ship or did you fly? How did they move you at that time?

V: They picked the entire group up and loaded it on board the Queen Elizabeth, and we sailed over. The airplanes were brought over on decks of Navy ships, as I recall, Navy carriers. We were reunited with our airplanes in England.

H: Where did you wind up in England?

V: The first base was called Wittering. It was an RAF [Royal Air Force] field, and it was flying Mosquito bombers. It was a great, big old sod field, and we were actually flying the old Thunderbolt out of sod fields, originally.

H: What were some of the first missions that you were on?

V: The first year of our active work over there was escort work, primarily. We were mounting the massive air campaign with B-24s and B-17s, and they were going deeper and deeper every day. The P-47 had considerably more range than the old Spitfires, Hurricanes, which

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had been used previously. So we were elected to do most of the escort work. We were going well inside of Germany very early on, escorting bombers. And as I say, for the first year virtually all of our work was at high altitudes--30,000, 35,000, 40,000, 45,000 feet--unpressurized back in those days, trying to protect B-17s from enemy fighters, Messerschmitts and Focke-Wulfs.

H: Could you describe one of your particular combat missions? What were things like back then? Were things so unsure, or did you feel that you had an early grasp on things?

V: No. We were, you know, a fledgling Air Force with new equipment going into a theater that had been active several years in combat. The British were very dubious about the abilities of an airplane like the Thunderbolt to stay alive in Europe, because it had none of the maneuverability of the old Spitfire. And they told us early after we arrived with our airplanes that it was going to be tough going for us. And it really was for awhile, because we were up against combat pilots who were experienced in the Luftwaffe, and we were a bunch of neophytes, so we had to go through a learning phase. I was fortunate being with one of the original groups

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with good leadership; Hub Zemke [Col Hubert] was the group commander at the time. He was a very competent, natural combat leader, and we all learned together. We had lots of combat. We had lots of engagements with the enemy. Virtually every mission resulted in combat of one kind or another. We weren't all lucky in shooting an airplane down every time, but some of the leaders in the group, the Jerry Johnsons [Lt Gen Gerald W.], Bud Mahurins [Col Walker M.], and Hub Zemkes, people of that kind, were running up very impressive scores.

The typical mission you ask, well, to give you a typical mission: We were on a mission one day escorting bombers [which] were on their way to Berlin, and there were some preliminary engagements before they got into the Berlin area. The Germans sent up the Messerschmitt 110s, which normally were used only in areas where there was no escort because it was a twin-engine, rather slow fighter plane that was no match, really, for other fighters. And we got into a scrap with them because they thought we had broken off our escort, and they came up to attack the bombers thinking the bombers would be unescorted at that point. But we had

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really loaded our planes that day with all this extra fuel, so we were still there when they arrived, and we had quite a turkey shoot knocking down 110s. But on the way back we were all disbanded, and I heard one of my fellow pilots calling that he was in trouble. He said he was at 15,000 feet over Dümmer Lake. Dümmer Lake is a prominent landmark on the way to Berlin. He said he was in a turning circle or a Lufbery with a Focke-Wulf 190. So I told him I was nearing that spot on my way out and to keep turning, and I would be there in a few minutes. I finally arrived on the scene, and sure enough here's this airplane, another Thunderbolt, in a tight turning circle. Only the Focke-Wulf was now turning inside of him and was beginning to score hits on his rudder. He was chipping off pieces from the tail end. I told this fellow to keep turning, and I'd watch when he was head-on to me, and then I would make a head-on pass at the Focke-Wulf. It worked out fine, and I came diving in with all these 50-caliber machine-guns blazing head-on. This caused the Focke-Wulf to break out of the turning circle, and the guy who was in trouble took off for England, and I leisurely turned around to see where the Focke-Wulf had gone and discovered that he had turned into a turning circle with

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me and was now on my tail. (laughter) The other fellow left, and I had found myself in a turning circle 15,000 feet over Dümmer Lake. (laughter) But the Thunderbolt, if it was properly handled, could stay in a turn, in a tight turn, with an airplane like that. It had one great virtue, and that was it carried a hell of a lot of fuel and could stay up pretty long. You know, time was on my side even though I had a long way back to the base in England; I probably had considerably more endurance than he did. And he had already been in a tight turning circle for awhile, so he must have gotten to a bingo fuel situation, had to leave, and he sort of split "S" out and left. I was never so glad to see anybody leave as I was that fellow. That's more or less a typical mission. We always ran into Germans. We always had combat of one kind or another, and virtually every mission that we went on resulted in a shoot-down by at least one guy in the squadron of an enemy airplane.

H: How was your loss ratio in comparison to other outfits?

V: We did exceptionally well in terms of victories to losses. I think we had as good a ratio as anybody.

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That escort duty, of course, permitted us to match airplane against airplane, which is I think a better test of how the German planes were doing versus ours. If you did a lot of groundwork, which we did later when the invasion came along, why, most of your losses were to ground fire and flak and that sort of thing. But we were holding our own very well, I think, better than breaking even, probably something on the order of 2 to 1 in our favor, maybe even 3 to 1 for periods of time in our favor.

H: How was morale in general?

V: Extremely high. Morale was no problem at all back in those days. Motivation was keen, plenty of public support for what you were doing. Kids in the cockpits felt that they were heroes, unlike the Vietnam war later where one-half the population--not one-half but big elements of it--were calling you war criminals. Back in those days you could do no wrong, and morale was exceedingly high. This, incidentally, you know is an important thing with a fighter outfit. If a fellow feels that his country is with him, people are with him, he is willing to go out and stick his neck out and

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do the job. It is extremely difficult to do it when you get a lot of dissent.

H: As you probably know, some of the early bomber outfits had real problems when they had such tremendous losses.

V: Well, the bombers were really toughing it out. They had to stay in that formation despite repeated enemy attacks. While the gunners were good, the losses were extremely high, and some of them were virtually wiped out on some of the missions.

H: You didn't have any problems of young fighter pilots never being able to adapt to a combat situation?

V: One or two cases over the couple of years I was over there where the doctor would see that the fellows didn't have the mental attitude that would enable them to hang in there. And he would usually be quietly whisked away with an assignment back in the States or something, or to a ground job, but by and large, no problems.

H: What was behind your various moves while you were in

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Europe? You started out as a flight commander, according to your biography, and moved to Commander of the 360th Fighter Squadron of the 356th Fighter Group.

V: Actually, I started out as a wingman in the 56th Fighter Group, and then I became a Flight Commander in the 63d Squadron of the 56th Fighter Group. Groups in those days were roughly comparable to the wings of today. We had three squadrons and a group organization. I completed a combat tour with the 56th, and I went to wing headquarters. A wing normally had three to five groups assigned to it. I worked at wing headquarters for about 3 months, getting a little rest, and then I went back into the second combat tour, this time as a Squadron Commander in the 356th Fighter Group, which was also a Thunderbolt group. And I commanded the 360th Squadron of that group for my second tour.

H: How many enemy kills did you achieve during your tour in World War II?

V: I had eight confirmed victories in aerial combat.

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M: Were there any additional that perhaps weren't confirmed that you felt were actually taken?

V: Yes. We have some probables on the records, but confirmed were the ones where your fellow pilots actually saw the airplane disintegrate, or the pilot bail out, or your gun camera film demonstrated this. We had gun camera film, of course, on all our missions, and if you got a confirmed kill on your film, that was fine. But every now and then the film would come out blank or the gun camera would jam, and you would come back swearing you had shot somebody down, but you had no proof. Nobody had seen it. But, you know, we really weren't out to run up scores; we were out to get the war won.

H: Did you, personally, suffer any aircraft damage?

V: Oh, yes. I was bounced once while we were escorting bombers by a squadron of Focke-Wulfs when I was with the 56th Group. This fellow got a very lucky 90° deflection shot at me. I was the number four man in the flight at the time, and he scored some hits on the turbosupercharger section, the ducting leading back to

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the turbo which was in the rear. This caused all the supercharging to evaporate, and since we were at 40,000 feet at the time, you know, I had no manifold pressure, and the only way I could go was straight down. This fellow followed me all the way to the Channel, blazing away with his guns all the time. My whole electrical system was out. I couldn't even shoot the guns. But when I got back down to low altitude, the engine built up almost its full power again. It didn't need the supercharging down there, and I was able to fly very low and fast, sort of around trees and over barns, to keep him busy flying the airplane. But he scored several hits on the airplane, and I was wounded in the process. The airplane was pretty well shot up, and I made a crash landing back in England on a British bomber field. But we got back all right, and the airplane was later repaired, and we used it again. It was flying again later.

H: That's when you were awarded the Purple Heart, I assume.

V: Yes.

H: All right. What was behind your move back to the States,

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then to Brazil?

V: Well, I came back and took over a training squadron at Suffolk County Airport out on Long Island, but the war in Europe was ending now, and the war in Japan didn't require the numbers of pilots that we had once required in both wars. We were phasing down, and the activity was dwindling. I was getting a little bored with my training activity up there, and they were asking for volunteers at that time for somebody to take over an airbase in South America. Since I was young and unattached, I thought it would be a worthwhile thing to do, and I volunteered for this assignment. So I went down to Brazil and became the commander of our airbase in Brazil and stayed there until the Japanese war ended.

H: How did you enjoy that kind of duty?

V: Very interesting. We had a worthwhile mission there. We were one of the major stops on the southern route. You know, when they ferry airplanes or equipment over to Europe, you go down through the Azores route and frequently stop at Recife. I ran a transport squadron

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for the headquarters down there; there was an Army command in South America, and we had a transport squadron. I was the commander of that transport squadron as well as the airbase commander. That was interesting duty for several years; a good chance to see South America. I had my own little B-25 bomber that we had converted for use flying around South America, and I got to see quite a bit of it.

H: How was our relationship with the Brazilian Government at that time?

V: It was excellent. The Brazilians actually had a squadron of Thunderbolts fighting in Italy at the time, and the Brazilian Government, I think, was fully in support of everything that we were doing in our war effort. That Brazilian squadron leader came back from overseas and flew a whole batch of brandnew P-47s from the factory on down to Recife where they landed. Quite a celebration when they were home for the first time after having been in combat in Italy. They just taxied the airplane to a stop, threw back the canopy, got out, and all the relatives were there to greet them, you know, and that was the last that we saw of them. The airplanes

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sat there for months (laughter) exactly in the same position they had been left when the pilots landed!

H: Well, I take it that Brazil was a little different than Argentina? In Argentina, I understand that they had a pretty strong pro-Nazi sentiment during the war.

V: Yes. An incident happened while I was there that may be of interest in the light of what you are saying. Some of the U-boat captains, after the war ended in Europe, fled to Argentina and surrendered down there where they were given asylum. The Brazilians had a large ship--I believe it was a cruiser, I can't recall the name of it now--but it disappeared one day. It didn't check in. It was out on patrol off the Brazilian coast, and it never showed up or it didn't report in that day. The Brazilians asked me if I could go out and reconnoiter for it. So we took some of our transport airplanes and conducted a sea search for several days. We ultimately found some wreckage and floating debris and oil slicks. The assumption was that it had been torpedoed by one of these Nazi submarines on its way to Argentina. Just several days after the incident, a submarine actually did give itself up in Argentina.

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and there was quite a furor. The Brazilian Government wanted the return of the submarine crew and, of course, Argentina said, "No way!" So there were strained relations at that time. But I believe the story was probably a creditable one because this thing went down obviously very precipitously, probably due to an explosion, and the coincidence of the sub giving up a very short time after is probably more than just coincidence.

H: Okay. What prompted your return from this tour then? You were only there for less than 1 year.

V: Well, the war ended completely. The war in Japan ended, and the Brazilian Government said we now had to vacate our bases within 90 days. So I was given the job of disposing of our equipment down there and closing up the base. We were out within 90 days following the end of the war. I reported back to the States at that point.

H: Then after that you became an intelligence staff officer out at Mitchel Field. How did you happen to get that?

V: Well, when the war ended, you see I had not completed

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my college. I had gone into the Army Air Corps with 2 years of college. That was a requirement back in those days. And I had gone into the Air Corps actually just before Pearl Harbor. I was at Randolph when Pearl Harbor occurred. Now that the war was over, I decided I really had to have that education again, so I went back to school. I went up to Yale and spent a couple of years there getting my degree. When I was in the last couple of months at Yale, I had a telegram from the Army Air Corps saying they had begun the integration of 10,000 people into the Regular service, and I had been one of the 10,000 selected. Would I accept the commission? Well, I had a tough decision to make because I had actually taken exams for the Foreign Service. I had been studying at Yale in the foreign affairs field, and was interested in a career in diplomacy. But all things considered, the fact that I had come out of the service as a major and I would get my old rank back, and if I started in the Foreign Service I would start at the very bottom as a lowly ranking Foreign Service officer, probably scheduled for some remote post somewhere; I decided this was a better deal, so I accepted the commission. The first assignment I was given was as an intelligence officer at

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Mitchel Field.

H: Did you particularly want that kind of an assignment?

V: I didn't ask for it. I think they probably looked at my recent education and saw that I was in that related area, knew something about foreign affairs and that, in turn--I guess to some assignment officer--implied some knowledge of intelligence. (laughter) Anyway, I wound up in intelligence. I rather enjoyed that intelligence tour because, among other things, I was--and the records will probably confirm this--the first UFO [unidentified flying object] officer in the Air Force. Back in those days unidentified flying objects were being reported for the first time. I was at Mitchel Field, which was the headquarters of the Interceptor Command, and they gave the job of identifying some of these early scurries of flying objects to the intelligence people.

[End Tape 1, Side 1]

And since I was Chief of the Estimates Division, they gave the job of estimating what these unidentified objects were to me. I had an interesting time with

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some of the early sightings. I remember one day I was out flying an airplane. It was an old C-45 Beechcraft twin-engine. We were on our way back one night from a trip somewhere in the South. We were down in the Richmond area when the copilot who was with me looked out and said, "Hey, there is something flying on our wing." I looked over there and here is this bright, purple light sitting off the wing. We looked at it and couldn't identify it. It seemed to be going at exactly the same speed, and all of a sudden it veered around and sat off our left wing. We watched this thing for, oh, maybe an hour, unable to identify it. I called on the radio and got no response, then I asked the controllers in the area if they had traffic reported in the area of our airplane, and no results. So we came back, and I filed an unidentified flying object report, and it came back to me at my desk for disposition. (laughter) So I guess I was one of the first to get into this business which has caused so much speculation in recent years.

H: How do you feel about unidentified flying objects? Do you think there is any credibility to it at all?

V: No. I really don't. I think there is some explanation

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for everything that has been seen. I certainly don't believe that we're being visited by people from outer space.

H: Your period at Yale, you were out of the Air Force?

V: Yes. I was out of the Air Force.

H: Completely, then. I was assuming at first that you were on some kind of a bootstrap deal, but you weren't.

After you finished at Yale is when you moved over to Mitchel then?

V: After I graduated from Yale, my first assignment back in the Air Force was at Mitchel.

H: And then after your Mitchel Field assignment, you wound up in the Office of Special Assistant to JCS [Joint Chiefs of Staff] for the NSC [National Security Council]. What kind of a position was this?

V: Well, once again, there was a gap in there. I was interested in taking advantage of the advanced degree

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courses being offered by the Air Force, and I applied and was accepted for graduate training at Columbia University. I went to Columbia from Mitchel Field, and I spent 2 years at Columbia in the Columbia School of International Affairs. In fact, I was a graduate of the School of International Affairs at Columbia. I graduated with a master's of international affairs degree.

When I got out of that, I was assigned, unbelievably, in an area which had something to do with my training. I was sent down to the JCS. I was now a lieutenant colonel. And I became an assistant to the JCS representative on the senior staff of the National Security Council.

The National Security Council was the White House staff that did all the spade work on the development of national policy papers. JCS was represented on that group by a two-star admiral, a fellow named Admiral Wooldridge [Adm Edmund T.], and I was one of his assistants. I attended virtually all of the senior staff meetings of the Security Council for several years. He was later replaced by an Air Force two-star general

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who turned out to be John K. Gerhart [Gen], who later, as you know, became head of the Air Defense Command and NORAD [North American Air Defense Command], and retired as a four-star officer. I served 2 more years under him and, incidentally, under two presidents in that job, initially under Truman [President Harry S.], and then, of course, under Eisenhower [President Dwight D.]. We did work in all national security areas where policy was being made.

Some of my early assignments were early involvement in the Vietnam situation. I remember I was a member of a two-man team, a State Department man and myself, who were sent over to Paris right after the fall of Dien Bien Phu to see if the French were going to continue their involvement in the Indochina war, and what arrangements could be made to continue military support for the non-Communist elements down there. So I was deeply involved, even in those days, in what later turned out to be a very great involvement of the United States in Vietnam.

I was exposed at an early age as a lieutenant colonel to very top-level decision making. It was very

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intriguing, a fascinating business.

H: While we are on the subject, in retrospect, what do you feel the United States failed to perceive at that particular time that they should have in regard to Southeast Asia?

V: Well, I think people always felt that with a little more effort the war could be ended. In the early days we thought if we could keep the French active down there and then support them with material and other assistance that they could probably persevere. After the disaster at Dien Bien Phu, it became apparent they were getting out. We then felt a necessity, because of the security situation in that part of the world, to sort of fill the gap. I think the hope always was that with a little more of this or a little more of that the elements we were supporting would be successful. And over a period of years the involvement grew and grew and grew until we were finally down there with one-half million men. Always the assumption was: Just a little more will bring this thing to a halt. I guess that's how a lot of us get involved in a lot of things. We start out in a small way and then

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increase our commitment. Once we had started expending men and materiel, it was extremely difficult to write it off and get out. So, once involved your commitment is made. There were several turning points where decisions could have been made one way or the other that would have had a possibly different outcome, but always the decision was we were too deeply involved, too much committed; the security requirements demanded that we stay in there. I don't quarrel with this. You know, I was part of this decision making process at the lower levels back in those days, but I think, on balance, the decision was a right one. I think we finally, in 1972, brought the war to a successful conclusion with a treaty and agreement that we could live with which would have insured the continued success of the South Vietnamese Government, but in the light of Watergate and everything else that happened, we didn't enforce the agreement. And everything that had been won by the hard fighting of our military people and our allies went down the drain in 6 months when we failed to enforce the agreement. That's another story; I'm not sure we want to go on that one right now.

B: We'll get into it later. From what I've read about

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that early period, it seems that the United States failed to understand the nationalism that was arising at that time, plus the fact we got mixed up with failing to understand the nationalism vis-a-vis communism at the same time. And that these two were so tightly interwoven that you couldn't simply separate them like we wanted to do, plus as you know, they hated the French with a passion. So it was really a much more complex issue than what we understood it to be at the time.

V: Yes. But I think, if you look at it in perspective and in the light of what has happened since, you will find there is more to it than that. We find, for example, right now the war is still going on in Vietnam and Cambodia. Vietnamese are still involved in what I consider aggression. They are involved in Laos and Cambodia. They are involved certainly in a big way today in aircraft bombing raids and everything else, incidentally using American equipment, against Cambodia. So you have the ambitions and the aspirations of a Communist regime which is like any dictatorial outfit bent on achieving certain objectives. I don't think they've quit yet. I think the ultimate objective of the

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Vietnamese Communists is to control the whole peninsula. People who talked about "The Domino" theory being disproved had better look again because right now it is once again in effect. As unbelievable as it may seem, we now find North Vietnamese in control of all of Indochina. Everyone would assume they would be at peace with their former allies, the Cambodians and the Pathet Lao, and that peace would have been brought to the continent down there. It hasn't worked. They are back at it again. So it is something more than just a question of the aspirations of a people who wanted their own country, and wanted control of their own country, who wanted to be left alone and wanted the French to be out of there--and the United States. All those things are happening; they are still fighting. There is some other element, and I submit that element is the nature of a Communist regime which by its very essence and philosophy has to have involvement in foreign adventures. Aggrandizement is part of its structure whether it's the Communists over in Europe or the Communists in Southeast Asia. It's part of the same pattern.

H: We will, of course, get back to more of that later.

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But in the meantime, you spent quite a lengthy tour in the Washington area at that time, a little over 4 years, according to your biography. Again, what prompted your move to the Far East at that time?

T: Well, when I finished my tour with the Planning Board of the National Security Council, I was sent over to PACAF [Pacific Air Forces], and I became the assistant to the Deputy for Plans and Operations. The Deputy for Plans and Operations at the time was General Hunter Harris [Hunter, Jr.], and I worked with him. We were actually the Far East Air Forces, initially, and we were over in Japan in the Tokyo area and then at Fuchu. Then they consolidated. They eliminated the Far East Command and consolidated everything under Pacific Command, so we went back and became part of PACAF, and I continued my duties for awhile in PACAF. Then I became an assistant to the Chief of Staff of the Pacific Command, which was now enlarging, assuming all the duties of the old Far Eastern Command. The Chief of Staff at the time was Admiral George Anderson, who later became CNO [Chief, Naval Operations], and I worked for him as an assistant, reorganizing the whole command and subordinate command structure in the Pacific.

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So a lot of the command structure that evolved probably is traceable to some of the early work that we did back in those days when they expanded PACOM [Pacific Command] this far. I was there, I think, for about 3 years, and when that tour ended I was on orders to go to the Air War College.

Before I could get there, I had a wire from Washington saying that the Air Force was participating, for the first time, in a program up at Harvard. Harvard Center for International Affairs had just been formed, and they were creating fellowships, and they wanted somebody from the Air Force. The fellowships would include foreign students, personnel mostly from Government, from major countries--France, Britain, Germany and the United States--and they wanted people who were midway in their careers. They wanted to bring them up there for 1 year and expose them to Harvard's views on international politics. I thought this was a one-time chance and an intriguing possibility, so I accepted that, and I wound up at Harvard for 1 year. That's where I first met Henry Kissinger [Henry A.], who was the deputy director of the Harvard Center at the time. It was an extremely interesting year. A real good

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chance to meet people of comparable levels all over the world and sit there for 1 year and look at world problems.

We had these unique opportunities in the Air Force. The Air Force has been very farsighted in providing fellowships and scholarships for people in the service who really want to make the effort. There's no limit to what you can do or where you can go if you take advantage of these programs. It's very farsighted.

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H: Besides Kissinger, who were some of the other prominent people at Harvard at that time?

V: Well, the director of the school was Bob Bowie [Robert], who later became head of the Policy Planning Staff of the State Department and who, at the moment, is the Deputy Director of CIA [Central Intelligence Agency]. He's Turner's [Stanfield] Deputy at Washington. Zbigniew Brzezinski was up there at the time, an associate of the school. It was a very distinguished bunch who made quite a mark on the world.

H: That must have been a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity

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for you to rub shoulders with people like that.

V: It was a very good chance to meet interesting people with far-reaching views on worldwide problems.

H: Do you feel that this was a much better opportunity than than the War College would have afforded you?

V: I thought I would get another crack at the War College. I thought this was a one-time thing, and I had better take advantage of that. It turned out that I never did get back on the Air War College list and probably lost out as a result of it, but I had to make a decision, and I made that one. I don't regret it. I'm one of the few, I guess, general officers who has never been to a senior service school. I've been on the list of the Air War College and on the list for going to the National War College and never got to either of them because of some assignment priority.

H: That identical thing happened to General Jack Catton, by the way. He never did make it to any of the professional military schools.

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After you left Harvard then, what was your next assignment?

V: I went back to Washington, and I now became the Air Force planner on the JCS. I was assigned to Plans and Operations, and my duty was to go down to the planners' meetings and represent the Air Force and the development of Air Force positions on the JCS. I spent several years doing this.

H: According to your biography, you were Chief, Africa, Middle East and Western Europe Intelligence Affairs Division.

V: No. I came into Plans and was assigned initially to that job, not in Intelligence, but in the Plans shop, very briefly. I had an assignment there a couple of months, then they transferred me to the planners' job.

H: Okay. In February 1963, you became associated with the OASD [Office of the Assistant Secretary of Defense]. What kind of position was this?

V: The Office of the Secretary of Defense was divided up

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into several assistant secretaries, you know, and one of them is ISA, International Security Affairs. The Assistant Secretary of Defense for International Security Affairs, who at the time was Paul Nitze [Paul H.], needed a man to replace a Navy admiral as Chief of the Policy Planning Staff of ISA. Now the policy planning group was a group of civilians and military personnel who did studies for the Secretary of Defense in the International Security Affairs area. The man I was replacing was a fellow named "Squige" Lee, Admiral "Squige" Lee, who was very active in a program at that time called "The Multilateral Force," the MLP. It was a program designed to give an independent nuclear capability to a group of European nations, and they were talking in terms of putting mixed crews on submarines or vessels and equipping them with nuclear capability. So his tour had come to an end, and it was the Air Force's turn to supply a man down there, since ISA was trying to rotate it between the services. It wasn't necessary that they do it, but they interviewed several candidates, and since I had the educational background and planning experience in Washington in the JCS, I was given the job. I actually became the head of this planning staff, and I worked

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there for 3 or 4 years and was involved in a lot of the NATO [North Atlantic Treaty Organization] planning, the rework of NATO documents and of all Military Committee documents. For example, the MC-14-2 series on NATO strategy was being revised. MC-14-3, which is current NATO doctrine, for example, was worked up in those early days largely on the initiative of Secretary McNamara [Robert S.], who was trying to introduce more conventional capability into Europe. He was trying to get away from the immediate use of nuclear weapons under all conditions and circumstances. He was anxious to build a firebreak between conventional/nuclear, and we were revising the documents. A lot of my time went to that particular job.

But I was also involved in the Cuban Crisis, working up positions for President Kennedy [John F.] and the Secretary of Defense in the Cuban Missile Crisis, and once again in the Vietnam situation. We did a lot of the planning work in that staff before our involvement in Vietnam--a very active business. I found myself in McNamara's office almost every day for an hour or more trying to translate some of his thinking and do studies and policy papers. A fascinating period, a difficult one. McNamara was a very abrasive guy with

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the military, and I had some of the most uncomfortable moments of my life standing in front of that big desk and being told what a damned fool I was. (laughter) But I think we had mutual respect for each other over the years, and I wound up in some interesting assignments as a result of that. Of course, being in that job, I had occasion to deal with the State Department on a daily basis and with the staff in the White House, the National Security Council, and it was an ever-enlarging circle of involvement because of the high-level activities of that particular shop. I think I served there for 3 years and I left there, I think, as a two-star.

H: You mentioned Paul Nitze awhile ago. What was your impression of this gentleman?

V: Paul did the country a tremendous service during the Cuban Crisis. I don't think the role that he played in the Cuban Missile Crisis is generally known or acknowledged. We tend to think that President Kennedy was a tough guy who made tough decisions, but actually during this period he needed a lot of handholding, and I think vacillated for a period there, and Nitze was one of the strong men. Back in those days he said,

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"Stand firm and hold their feet to the fire." That decision was finally made by the President, largely because of Nitze. And the outcome was a very successful one for the President. As you know, the Russians backed down, and the missiles were removed, and the crisis was removed, and the diplomacy of a tough nature proved itself in dealing with the Russians back in those days. Paul was the main architect of this tough policy at that time. Later he became associated with the disarmament program. As you know, he was chief negotiator for the United States, ultimately. He resigned from that position later. People thought he had gotten soft because he was in the disarmament business. I think the record will show that he has been a pretty tough guy all through all this. I have a great respect for him. I see him quite a bit today, and I have professional relationships with him today. I think he resigned because he couldn't condone some of the things that were happening and the way negotiations were going. I think he felt we were being taken in by the Soviets. A lot of the writing that he has done since then bears out this view. He was very much concerned about our giving away our security position in negotiating with the Russians, and indeed I am, too.

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M: Jim, I have a question at this point. I don't know, last year at the War College, they showed us a movie, The Missiles of October, that tended to lead us to believe that Robert Kennedy was the man behind the scenes in that. Could you shed your knowledge on any of it, whether that lends any credibility to the movie?

V: Well, the President was relying on his brother, Robert, who I guess was the Attorney General at the time, for a lot of policy advice in areas well beyond that of the Attorney General job. At all these National Security Council meetings involving the Cuban Crisis, Robert was always there offering advice, but he was by no means a tough man. In fact, he was advocating toward the end that the President knuckle under and not really blockade those ships. I think if somebody makes a study of this someday, they'll find that Robert was not the strong, determined guy that stiffened his brother's back. The final decision was probably made as much over Robert's objections as anything else.

H: Along that line, when I interviewed General Breitweiser [Lt Gen Robert A.] a couple of years ago, he was at DIA [Defense Intelligence Agency] at the time, and he

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mentioned it was primarily Bobby Kennedy that withdrew the air cover for the Bay of Pigs operation. He feels that that was directly responsible for the Cubans being pinned down on the beach and, therefore, not being able to succeed. Are you aware of any of this?

V: I was, of course, involved, as I say, all during this Cuban Crisis period. And I was with the JCS when the Cuban incursion was being planned, which incidentally wasn't very much participated in by the JCS. They had very little to do with the activity. We were sort of being told about it after the fact, and they were certainly never offered the chance to do the actual military thinking and planning or recommending. But I would say that Breitweiser's view is probably an accurate one, because it fits the picture I just mentioned of Bobby, who was the softie on the scene rather than the tough guy. I think he probably, at that time when a critical decision had to be made, reminded the President of the horrible public opinion possibilities involved and everything else and may very well have been the force that caused him to change his mind. I know he was very active in those days in advising the President and always from the soft side, never from

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the tough, determined side.

H: While we are in the period, could you summarize your impressions of the Kennedy Administration?

V: I thought the President, when the chips were down, was making the right decisions. He, I think, was the first President to more or less abandon the old, traditional machinery for decision making that had been established by the National Security Act of 1947 and which created the National Security Council and, of course, the various departments. It created the Defense Department as we know it today. He decided to go into smaller, more intimate advisor type of relationship, and the work of the National Security Council staff and the machinery that had been set up was nominal as a result. The real decisions and the real deliberations were being taken in this very select group. Of course, as I say, some people who traditionally had no role in national security, like the Attorney General, was very much a part of it. In other words, he relied more on people he had confidence in and knew personally than on the machinery and the formal structure, unlike Truman and Eisenhower, who leaned very heavily on the machinery

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of the National Security Council. So I found things a little difficult to grasp back in those days, because you never knew who had the ball or who was going to make the final decision or the final recommendation, and the role of a Bobby Kennedy could be very pervasive in that kind of an environment because normal machinery and normal staff work wasn't filtering through to the President. But basically, the President always seemed finally to make the proper decision, in my judgment, back in those days, which I think says an awful lot for him, because there were a lot of people giving him advice, and I think he was accepting that which was best. I applaud what he did, of course, during the missile crisis and the way he stood firm in the face of Soviet persistence and demand. It took a lot of guts. Of course, back in those days the strategic situation was very much better. We really had strategic superiority, and if he was willing to stand up and assert that we were to the point where we would be willing to use it, which he finally did, the other guy was almost certain to back down. But you never know. He had to make that tough decision, and he did. So I admire the man for his staunchness and firmness and his ability to make tough decisions.

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H: You mentioned awhile ago, the JCS office felt that they were being bypassed. I know in an earlier interview with General LeMay [Gen Curtis E.] he mentioned the fact that he didn't have any idea what was going on in relation to the Cuban issue while it was going on. It was always an afterthought . . .

[End Tape 1, Side 2]

H: We can resume if you like.

V: I think I was on the point that for some reason or the other the public has been led to believe, by and large, that the JCS were the masterminds of the Cuban invasion. Nothing could be farther from the truth. JCS were periodically told or briefed on what the plans were and never really had a chance to get into the planning of that at all. Nobody asked for their advice on whether or not they ought to do it. It was a decision that was made by a different element of the Government, and I can guarantee you that JCS involvement in that debacle was a remote one. That's true both for the planning for additional involvement and for their subsequent disastrous events that occurred, including

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the withdrawal of air cover. It was not a decision by the Chiefs, nor were they asked, as far as I know, for their views on this.

H: You already mentioned the controversial Mr. McNamara. But, as you know, he came under heavy criticism not only from the military end of it but Congress. In fact, there was so much enmity there before it was all over that there was almost no dialogue any more. Were you involved in any of this to any extent?

V: I didn't have too much to do with appearances on the Hill back in those days. When I was Chief of this Policy Planning Staff for McNamara, my work involved dealing with the other executive agencies of the Government, but I never had to appear over on the Hill to justify what we were doing. I did have, of course, involvement with foreigners, the Military Committee Standing Group back in those days of NATO, and we were involved in European policy matters as well as things that were happening in Southeast Asia. But I had a lot of personal dealings with McNamara, and he was a very abrasive guy. You had this feeling that he felt he had a superior intellect, that he didn't need military advice,

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and he had, I think, a certain manner of demeaning the military. He would take people like LeMay and others, who were very famous and who had established a tremendous military record, and give them the back of his hand. That's the kind of guy he was. A great superiority complex.

But, having said all that, I must also say that he had a good mind, a brilliant thinker. And I think in his efforts to build a firebreak in Europe, he was on the right track. I think he appreciated that nuclear war was a different order of magnitude from conventional war, that you ought to be able to hang in with the conventional as long as you possibly can before you have to make the great, tough decision to go to the other way. It's still a very great problem today. We've come a long way since those days in giving ourselves much more of a conventional capability in Europe. I think we have, as a result, bought time so that we don't inevitably, from the very first moment, have to use nuclear weapons.

B: As you know, he was also heavily criticized for getting directly involved with military matters, such as how

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promotions were given out and what type of promotions.

In other words, a well-rounded experience no longer entered the picture. He was looking for specialists in, particularly, systems analysis or certain areas. In some fields he went way overboard in this respect.

V: Yes. Those were the days, of course, when Alain Enthoven [Alain C.], who headed up this analysis shop, really ruled supreme. McNamara was a believer in the computer, and he was a believer in subjecting everything to detailed analysis. He thought there was always an empirical answer. The subjective stuff like "military view" or somebody's experience didn't mean very much to him. He thought you could sit down and analyze all of the factors and inevitably come out with the right answer. I think as a result he was missing a great deal. I think he suffered from that, because as we discovered in all our lives not everything is subject to positive analysis with a positive answer coming out of a computer run. I think a lot of the criticism you just mentioned which is going around of him is fair and accurate. He had no real military experience of his own, but he was going to substitute analysis for that. So he made decisions and did things that I think

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were wrong. I think he did get into the personnel business, but, make no mistake about it, so had every other Secretary of Defense. They are all in the personnel business. They all have strong likes and dislikes. They pick people who they think will support them, and one of the chief attributes for getting ahead today is being well received up on the third floor around the Secretary of Defense.

H: Do you think that bodes ill for the long range picture of the military?

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V: Well, it has its good and its bad side. If the military were permitted to select all the people who were going to ultimately wind up in the higher ranks and higher positions, they would probably select those types of people who were oriented to the service mission. The man with a line background who had the various command and responsibilities would be rewarded with the jobs that called for the three and four stars. But when a guy gets to be a three-star and gets called back to Washington, he is interfacing with the other services and the Secretary's staff in OSD [Office of the Secretary of Defense]. He's interfacing with other agencies of the Government, and

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some of the training he may have had in the Air Force will be of very little use to him in that kind of an assignment. The Secretary of Defense, for example, when he wants a three-star to come up and serve in one of his key slots on the Defense staff, doesn't want a guy who only knows airplanes and how to conduct bombing missions. He wants somebody who will go over and represent his views or present some original and dynamic thoughts on national security issues. He wants a man to go over and represent him over in State or in National Security Council, so he has a different requirement. I think he's got to have some influence and some say in that category of jobs. In other words, he can't simply say to the service, "Give me your Seventh Air Force Commander or your Thirteenth Air Force Commander. He's three-stars; I want him to go represent me in the NSC." The man may know nothing about it. But if he has worked with somebody over the years that he has confidence in; he's observed this man; he has seen him in assignments like that which he now has a requirement for, he may ask for him by name and say, "I want that guy." Many an occasion I have seen the Secretary reject nominations from the service and the JCS for joint jobs and select the man whom he had personal knowledge of

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because that's the guy he wanted. In some situations it amounted to a promotion for that man, too. He may not have been the guy the service wanted to promote but, at that particular point in time, the Secretary wanted him, and he was selected, and he wound up as a four-star because of the direct involvement of the Secretary of Defense. McNamara wasn't the only one that did this. They've all done it.

H: I understand that he was unique, though, in respect to the Southeast Asia conflict in that he was one of the first Secretaries that ever went so far as target selection on a day-to-day basis.

V: Well, I know that role intimately, because I was part of the process back in those days. The JCS would sit down and compile a list of targets, maybe 350, 395 things, that they wanted to hit--this is during the old "Rolling Thunder" days. That list would come up to my shop, Policy Plans shop of ISA, and I would then go over it, then take to my boss, who was Paul Nitze, what I thought were the reasonable choices based on the original Chiefs' selection, plus what I knew to be the policy objectives of the Secretary of

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Defense and my boss, Nitze, and the President. Nitze would then take it to McNamara, and they'd hash it over, and he would make his own selection, then he would go over to the White House and sit down with the President, and the two of them would select the targets to be hit the next week. And that was the process.

When I later had the chance to get down there and run the air war, Linebacker, the first thing I did was to insist that that procedure be abandoned. I said, "I can't run an air war based on the restrictions that poor Spike Momyer [Gen William W.] had imposed on him." They often made picks of certain types of targets in parts of the country which were wiped out by weather, and other areas which were wide open couldn't be hit because they were not on the list that day. It was crazy, but that's the way they did it. They were exercising very tight control, you see, from the top on the very targets to be hit. I didn't have that problem. I had an understanding when I went down there that this would not happen, and it didn't. I picked the targets myself. Now, there were certain targets that were off limits. It

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was a different approach. They said you can't hit this, this, this, or this, but everything else is up to you, when you hit it, and what you hit.

H: How did you feel about that limitation?

V: Well, the kinds of things that were off limits were very few in number, and they had strong political overtones. For example, they didn't want us striking right in the heart of Hanoi itself. There was a lot of criticism of the Administration for indiscriminate bombing, and civilian casualties were always matters of great interest in the press. Unlike in World War II when you could go out and bomb a whole city and be applauded the next day for having bombed Dresden or Hamburg or some other place, 30,000 people killed, that was a war objective. Now, if you went out and killed 150 people accidentally in a bombing raid, why, this was criminal. So the Administration was very conscious of this attitude on the part of the press and public opinion, and they wanted to insure that targets which would result in these kinds of casualties were off limits. We were not permitted, until Linebacker II, to bomb the powerplant in the

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heart of Hanoi, for example, nor were we permitted to bomb their military transmitters and overseas communications sites in Hanoi for this very reason until Linebacker II. That was the real reason for the handpicking--the attempt to steer a course between a very hostile press and a public which was influenced by the press about things like indiscriminate bombing and casualties and so forth. A totally different war, and I think that's why the President felt he had to be in the act. He didn't want to turn it over to the military and have, you know, debacle and chaos and then the whole thing turn to worms in regard to the public.

H: I guess it was a matter² that it boiled down to the President never really having full faith in his commanders.

V: I think, in the first place, the President rarely knew the commander involved. In the second place, he didn't want to leave anything to chance. He may have felt that the guy was a good professional and all that, but he may have thought that that guy down there was more concerned about winning a war than

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with public opinion back in the States and might look at things a little differently, so he exercised control.

H: I guess you'd call that the scourge of modern communications where in the old days a President couldn't have known what was going on.

V: No. He had to issue general guidance and let his commanders do the job. But I must say, when I got down there and ran Linebacker the last 18 months of the war, I didn't have those kinds of restrictions. I still had restrictions. When we get to that phase of it later, I'll talk about some of these that were very real and very troublesome and very difficult for a commander, but nothing like poor Momyer had in trying to live with Rolling Thunder where things were handicapped by McNamara and the President usually at a breakfast meeting over in the White House.

H: I understand the way that scenario would normally go, the President would come in and then after a little bit turn things over to Mr. McNamara, and he would walk out, and Mr. McNamara would pull out a little

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book and assign the targets for that day.

V: The President would generally discuss with McNamara the way things were going, all the concerns that we talked about, and the need to put some pressure on as counterbalanced by the public uproar that might result, and so they'd carefully weed their way through this target list to find targets that satisfied the requirements of both extremes. It was a torturous process. As I say, for the guy who was trying to run the war, it was very frustrating because many, many times the targets would be targets that couldn't be hit at that time of the year. If you had a northeast monsoon, for example, and visibility was down and you were asked to hit a precise target of small dimensions in bad weather, you simply couldn't do it. And then they would get impatient in Washington and demand to know why we hadn't hit those targets that had been scheduled, you see, for that period.

M: Jim, this brings up a question that I had. I originally had a question about an article that I read. It said Linebacker did more in 3 months than Rolling Thunder did in 3 years. You answered that question

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really, but it generated a second question, sir. This trust that the Administration had, do you think that was related to knowing you personally from your previous assignments? Or do you think that was generated from within the Administration, a different Administration?

V: Well, I think the personal relationship, part of it, had a lot to do with it. I had been Director of the Joint Staff prior to going to Southeast Asia, and I had been involved in many of the WASAG meetings. This is the Washington Special Activities Group which was sort of the miniature arm of the NSC that was doing most of the planning for Cambodian operations and the various things that were happening in Southeast Asia and crises all over the world, for that matter. And I was personally known to all these people. I had been asked by the President on a number of occasions to brief important people. For example, I recall one day when I was sitting in my office, and the phone rang, and it was Henry Kissinger who said, "The President would like you to give a briefing." I said, "Fine." He said, "It's for the Governors. He has all the Governors in and he's having a lunch for

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them, and he wants you to come over and brief them on the whole situation in Southeast Asia, where we are and what's happening." I said, "Fine. I'll be willing to do that. When is this going to be?" He says, "This morning at 11:30." This was about 9 o'clock in the morning when I got the call. This happened on a number of occasions. I would have about 1 hour to get a major speech ready for all the Governors.

One other notorious occasion, I came in one morning and I was summoned up to Secretary Laird's [Melvin R.] office. He was sitting there at his desk with Dan Henken, who was his advisor for public affairs. He said, "The President called over; he is concerned about the public image of our involvement in this Laotian cross-border operation." You may recall we were conducting an operation to pinch off the Ho Chi Minh Trail, using South Vietnamese troops and some American helicopter support, and the thing was getting a bad press, and the President got concerned. He wanted the whole thing discussed publicly and aired, either on radio or in front of television cameras, and he called over to Laird the evening before. So I find myself up in his office now at 9 o'clock in

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the morning. I'm sitting there and Tom Moorer [Adm Thomas A.], who was the Chairman, and Laird said, "Well, we've got to put on some kind of briefing. It's got to have wide media coverage. The President is concerned about the way this thing is going in the press. He thinks we are doing much better, militarily, than the press is depicting, and he wants the whole story told. What do you guys think we ought to cover?" So I'm sitting there chipping in ideas: "Well, we ought to cover this." And Tom Moorer is sitting there chipping in some thoughts. Finally, I said, "When is this going to occur?" He said, "Well, it will occur this morning." I said, "Fine! Who is going to give it, you, Dan?" Laird said, "No, we thought you would give it." (laughter) I said, "What time is it going to be?" He said, "Eleven o'clock." And it is now about 9:30. I said, "What's it going to be?" He said, "Well, we'll have all the media there. It will be on the air, and we'll have some television in there. We'll have it broadcast live, and you'll be up there briefing all these guys." I said, "That's an hour from now." "That's right!" (laughter) That was the famous pipe incident, incidentally, where I was accused of misleading the

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American public by producing a pipe.

One of the things I had said in my briefing was that we had reached the oil or petroleum pipeline which had been built by the North Vietnamese, down the Ho Chi Minh, and which was supplying petroleum products down at the southern end for its fighting forces, and we had gotten a report the day before that the troops in the operation had finally reached the pipe and had severed it. Then I produced a piece of this pipe and I said, "Here's a piece of pipe like that used on the pipeline." I had never seen that pipe before in my life. It was sitting on Laird's desk that morning when I was called up to his office. It had been gotten through Special Operations Forces who had gone in there some time before. You know, we had certain highly classified operations. I wasn't even privy to these as Director of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. They had been in there and grabbed a piece of this pipe some months before; either Henken or Laird thought it would be a great idea to show them the kind of pipe that was used, and I was asked at the proper time to produce this piece of pipe during the course of the briefing and say, "Here's a piece of pipe like that

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which we captured yesterday," and those were my words. I used exactly those words. Well, I went off on a trip to the British Joint Staff. We had a Joint Planning Staff meeting over in London, and I was gone for 4 or 5 days. During that period, the press said somebody had revealed to them that this wasn't a piece of pipe taken from the pipeline at all. It was a piece of pipe taken by Special Forces many months before and that I was misleading the American public in believing that was pipe from the pipeline, and they were casting great doubts upon my statement that we had actually taken or captured the pipeline.

Well, I got back, of course, and the Hill was all excited about it and we had to actually take a verbatim text, which we fortunately had, from the tapes of what I had actually said. And I had not said that, of course. I said it was a piece of pipe like that. I was unable to tell them where it came from because it was from this highly classified project, you see, that I wasn't even privy to at the time. It was produced that morning in Laird's office. But I took an awful beating in the press for many months about having misled the American public. I got letters,

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irate letters, from liberals all over the country.

I remember one doctor wrote me and said he was disgraced by the fact that military people in responsible positions like mine would mislead the American public. I sent him a letter back with a transcript of the actual briefing so he could see for himself that I didn't in fact say that that pipe had come from that raid. And I said two things: First, there is no question in anybody's mind that we actually got to the pipeline, or the fact that we severed it and we will have actual pieces of pipe from the raid itself shortly. The pipe was from a highly classified operation that I was not even privy to so I couldn't disclose the source; therefore, all I could say was that it was a piece of pipe like that which we now had taken in the pipeline. I said, third, the only reason I would want to deceive the public would be if we really hadn't taken the pipeline and I was trying to mislead them into believing we had, and there was no question that we had as subsequent evidence demonstrated. So this guy wrote me a nice letter back later and said he was reading the paper, and he thought that everything he read in the paper was credible, and he had to believe it.

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Now that he had a chance to read the actual text and to know the facts, he appreciated the fact that I had been a victim of what many a man in public life has been. The press will latch on to something, you know, and really blow it up out of all proportions.

I was to have this happen many times later. I'll tell you some stories during the Vietnam phase of things that happened to me that were absolutely unbelievable, but which in this free country of ours with its free press, they can get away with, which they do all the time. So that pipeline thing was quite a thing.

But to get back to the basic question: Why did I wind up with more of a free hand? I had been working over in the White House; I was known to the President through these various briefings. I had been called over on a couple of occasions to talk to him about military matters that I was intimately familiar with. First, as the J-3, I was the Chief of Operations for the Joint Chiefs, and then the Director. I had been involved, for example, in the planning for the Son Tay Raid, and the President had been aware of

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my involvement in that. I think he had confidence in me. But before I went to Vietnam, he called me to the White House, and we had a long session that lasted over an hour where we discussed what had to be done.

You recall, there was a major invasion underway now and the enemy was taking Quang Tri and advancing south, and the forces were collapsing all over the place. Our ground involvement had about ended with the Vietnamization program, and we had to do it all with airpower now. He had asked me, "What do you need to do the job?" And some of the things we discussed were these very things. I said, "I can't have people telling me what targets to hit. I've got to get the command arrangement squared away so I'm not answering to 14 bosses on matters of that kind. I've got to be able to run the war." And he said, "You've got all that authority. You go down there now. I send you down with that authority to do all this." Incidentally, he never put it in writing, and I had problems later as a result.

H: Did you see quite a transition between Secretary McNamara and Secretary Laird in modes of operation and so forth?

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V: Oh, yes. Totally different types. Laird was a consummate politician. He knew the Hill intimately, and he was very much at home over there having been on the Hill for many years. His relationship with the Hill was good. He had a much better feel for public opinion. McNamara spurned all that. He didn't want to be bothered with those guys over there. They were thorns in his side. He was above all that, and he was very abrasive with Congress. A totally different approach, totally different.

B: From the military end of it, did things take a different outlook altogether then?

V: Well, I think Laird had a far better relationship with the military and with the military leaders. I think he listened to their judgment far more than McNamara had. Of course, it was a different situation now. We were involved in a shooting war, and it's kind of hard for a Secretary to say to the military guys, "You don't know what you are doing." I think even McNamara had some difficulty trying to interject himself into that arena.

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You know, he came up with this bright idea of conducting a line--a defense line, electronic defense line--across the northern tier which turned out to be a total bust. He spent billions doing that. We all told him it was a nonstarter, but he wanted to do it, and he did it. The man could never understand the dynamics of military operations. He thought if he just cleared a path across that jungle, X meters wide, and put some guard towers there and then put these listening devices in, the enemy could never come across.

What he doesn't understand is if you don't control that part of the jungle, the guard tower won't last 2 days. If you don't have sufficient military force in there to defeat their main forces that are moved into that area to knock that tower down, you are dead, and the enemy could pick his time and place, and that line became a series of holes after awhile through which they poured. The whole thing was improbable from the very beginning. There wasn't a man in the JCS who wanted that concept and thought it was worth putting all the money into it. Yet he put, I think, \$2 billion into the whole thing. A total loss, as

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far as I could see.

- H: General O. P. Weyland [Gen Otto P.] likened our operation in Vietnam to trying to dam up a waterfall from the bottom. (laughter) How do you view that?
- V: Well, the war initially, and back in Monyer's day when he was running it and the days when Lou Clay [Gen Lucius D.] ran it and George Brown [Gen George S.], it was a different type of war. You see, it wasn't main force operations which it came to be after the invasion of 1972. After the Easter invasion, we were faced for the first time with modern forces, modern equipment. You know, T-54 tanks came rolling in, and the Sagger-wire guided missiles, and the SA-7 surface-to-air missiles, and the Su-23, -24s in great numbers. All kinds of new equipment--the 130-millimeter guns, long-range heavy artillery, and with forces trained for conventional operations on a large scale. So the whole nature of the war changed at that point. It wasn't the guerrilla activity and the kind of thing that my predecessors had to deal with.

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[End Tape 2, Side 1]

H: General Vogt, would you like to continue with what we were speaking about on the other side?

V: Yes. I think I was saying at that point that in many ways my predecessor's job of running an air war was more difficult because of the nature of the earlier war. Finding targets has always been a difficult task in the jungles of Southeast Asia, but when they were fighting a guerrilla war, it was even more difficult. When they started main force operations, there were more of them; they would come in in conventional style, and we could find them and work them over much more effectively. So the targeting problem was somewhat less complex for us than it was for my predecessors.

H: Should we have become involved in a land war in Vietnam to begin with, or should we have limited our intervention to naval and air assaults as several people advocated?

V: Well, you know, it's very difficult to analyze what would have happened if we hadn't become involved on

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the ground. It may be that the ground war would have been lost, that the enemy would have overrun most of the major areas, and there would have been very little left to work with. I remember when I was back in Defense, back in the days when this was being debated-- whether we ought to get involved more on the ground, or in the air, and on the sea--I took the position that we should not get involved on the ground, that we ought to put more air capability in there and be more decisive in our air activities. You know, finally, it was air action that brought the war to a halt. The decisive campaigns of Linebacker I and II, I think, finally convinced the North Vietnamese that they couldn't go on; they had better negotiate. And it brought them to the conference table with a feeling that they had to bring this thing to a conclusion. Conceivably, this could have been done earlier by the effective use of air if we had taken some of the restraints off of it and used it effectively, say, back in 1968. But we didn't.

Once again, we are Monday morning quarterbacking. It may be that the whole ground position would have collapsed in the meantime, and the war would have

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been lost on the ground and, therefore, lost in its entirety. I really don't know. But I was one of the advocates of no intervention on the ground and considerably stepped up activity in the air.

H: When you moved over to PACAF, after spending a considerable amount of time in Washington, did you feel you had an understanding of the overall picture better in Southeast Asia than the average commander at that time?

V: I think I had a feel for what they were hoping to achieve at the political levels with our military activity down there, and this time when I went back to PACAF, I was a two-star general, and I was Chief of Plans and Operations for PACAF with a very large responsibility for our activities in Southeast Asia. Back in those days, the war was being largely run from Honolulu by Admiral Oley Sharp [Adm U. S. Grant]. Oley Sharp was Commander in Chief, Pacific, and he was part of this process of selecting targets. He was trying very hard to carry out the intent of the decisions that were being made in Washington, but he was being frustrated by a number of things, including

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the weather. It was there that I got an early feel for the need for all-weather air capability, which, incidentally, we still don't have today in the United States Air Force. But I would be called in along with my counterpart in the fleet, Admiral Bush Bringle [Adm William Floyd], who was Chief of Operations for the Pacific Fleet. We would be called into Oley Sharp's office, and he would demand to know why we hadn't destroyed the target list that had been selected by Washington the previous week. It got a little old to keep telling him, "The weather was bad, the weather was bad, the weather was bad." I knew then that we had to do something more than just offer excuses. I tried very hard to get Washington interested in all-weather capability, but it's hard to beat the system. There are a lot of people advocating a lot of things in Washington. They all have their pet projects, and one of them wasn't all-weather capability, unfortunately.

But I talked the Chief of Staff of the Air Force into putting some money into the LORAN [long-range navigation] system. As a matter of fact, we did put about \$25 million of Air Force money into creating those Coast Guard-equipped LORAN stations. They were

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run by the Coast Guard in Southeast Asia. Then I asked for the development of the system in any airplane that could use the system for precise bombing. We never did get it out of the Air Force, per se, but McNamara, who was interested in this electronics barrier that we talked about earlier, had to have the means of delivering electronic devices regardless of weather to keep the field active, and he said to the Air Force, "By golly, I want an all-weather capability for delivering these things." Well, the only thing that was advanced enough, which I had known of course earlier in the game, was LORAN. So with some of OSD money that McNamara coughed up and with a great deal of hammering on them by OSD, the Air Force finally developed a LORAN bombing capability in a few airplanes. This LORAN system was put into the F-4s, and I used them later during Linebacker, with very great effect. I'll tell you the story later about Linebacker II where we literally saved the B-52 effort with some LORAN bombing that was done by some F-4s.

I was to learn even after I got down to Southeast Asia the importance of being able to bomb when the weather was bad. The whole Easter offensive had

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begin under the cover of the northeast monsoon. The enemy had deliberately kicked it off during the bad weather period of the northeast monsoon. And air was pretty much precluded from effectively supporting the ground forces. So they were being defeated and pushed back. Then they tried to use naval gunfire support. That didn't work too well, because they had no way of spotting for the gunfire. They had to have air up there in order to spot the fire and bring the fire down on the targets, and without air up there to do that, the fire was ineffective. Besides, the Navy had to back offshore because the shore batteries, the 130-millimeter guns of the North Vietnamese, were beginning to hit the destroyers. So they had to back out of range.

But this all-weather problem is with us today even. We have it in Europe, in NATO. We have never really come to grips with it. It is the greatest single deficiency I see in our tactical aviation today. As we discovered in Linebacker II, the bombing accuracy of even our strategic forces is not all that good, and we had lots of problems in using B-52s in bad weather for the very same reason. The equipment was

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designed for nuclear weapons, where it didn't make much difference if you were 1,500 feet off the target. you were still in the blast area. But with conventional bombs, trying to drop them to do some damage and effectively hit a target with accuracies less than 500 feet simply couldn't be done. You would think we would have learned our lesson and would have fixed all those problems, but we are in the same boat today. We still haven't really gone to work and come to grips with being able to fight wars when the weather is bad with airpower.

H: Where do you see the problem as lying? Is it with the Air Force, or the fault of Congress not appropriating funds for it?

V: It's a combination of things. First, there are people who say they advocate all kinds of systems which are pets of theirs, and they push those. There are people in OSD who want to get the cost of the force down to the point where they think it is manageable. They, for the last several years, have contrived this high/low force mix that you can only buy so many high-cost fighters; the bulk of the force has to be

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made up of low-cost fighters. The low-cost fighters are things like the F-16s and A-10s that don't have this all-weather capability. And this puts a very great burden, when the weather is bad, on the few airplanes that do have some capability. The F-111 is a great all-weather bombing airplane with lots of capability, but it's out of production now and, presumably, it is an asset that is dwindling. You see, as the years go on, we won't be able to replace it.

The Navy is the only outfit today that's building an airplane, still coming off production lines, that has an all-weather capability. They invited me about 1 1/2 months ago to go down and fly their A-6E TRAM [tracking radar automatic monitoring] equipped airplane, and I went down and flew a trainer for 1 day and actually flew the airplane on a bombing range. I had bombing accuracies of better than 100 feet with my practice bombs for 2 days work, training. They are very good systems. We don't seem to be that interested in the Air Force for some reason or the other. But I do know that if a war ever came in Europe, during the many, many months of bad weather

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over there, we'd be hard-pressed to find targets and destroy them in bad weather. So, it's a lesson that we really haven't learned yet, but I learned it in Southeast Asia.

H: You mentioned the F-111. As you probably are very much aware, they had a lot of initial problems with it when it was first brought into Southeast Asia. Are you familiar with that?

V: Intimately. The airplanes were brought over in the late sixties in small numbers, and they were introduced into operations with disastrous results. The airplane wasn't ready for combat deployment. We lost four or five of them, never even knew what happened to them. They just disappeared off the face of the earth. The airplane itself had a lot of bugs in it which had not been ironed out, and it had been moved in too early. But if it had been moved in for the reasons that I have just described, you know, the need to be able to do something about the bad weather situation. Now, I asked for them when Linebacker came along. I wanted them back over. We had had a lot of experience with them now, and they were

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brought back over. We had some problems with them initially, and we had a lot of growing pains, but when the airplane settled down over there, it did a tremendous job. It was fantastic. We ultimately flew literally thousands of sorties in close support of friendly troops through terrible weather, in the middle of the night, through monsoon seasons, dropping bombs in close support using a beacon. We were bombing off beacons which we gave to the troops on the ground. And we were bombing within, in some cases, 200 meters of friendly forces, totally blind. So the airplane has great capabilities. A lot of the bugs are out of it now.

H: I assume you were in Washington during the early years of the F-111 and all the problems that arose at the time.

V: Yes.

H: Would you like to discuss any of that?

V: Well, the F-111, you see, was conceived of, originally, as a multiservice airplane, or multipurpose

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airplane. It was supposed to do the job for the Navy and Air Force, and McNamara was pushing a single airframe for the two services in hopes of gaining economies thereby.

H: Commonality.

V: Commonality was what he was talking about. Now the things that make an airplane fine for land-based operations aren't necessarily the things that are good on a carrier. You take the extra stress needed on landing gears and all for carrier airplanes. It just adds an awful lot of unnecessary weight to land-based air and places limitations on our range and payload which we shouldn't have to have. On the other hand, the Navy needs it to work off their decks. So, in trying to force a single airplane, the inevitable result came about; namely, it wouldn't work. The Navy bugged out of the program, and I think for good and sufficient reasons.

Also, there was some question about whether or not the right manufacturer had been picked to build the airplane. Remember, there had been a competition

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between Boeing and General Dynamics that had built this airplane. A lot of people felt that the Boeing airplane was clearly the better airplane, and politics dictated the selection of the airplane. I don't know if that's the case or not, but I do know that the selection was made, not by the military per se, but by the political levels above the military and the decision to go to Texas. As a matter of fact, it probably did have some foundation in politics.

But the airplane has been an excellent airplane now that we got the bugs out of it. I have great confidence in it. I have flown in it, and the job it did for me in Cambodia and Laos when nothing else could fly was just unbelievable. I used it again over in Europe. I was instrumental in bringing a second wing of F-111s over to Europe because of the weather problems over there. I remember in Reforger 1974, during the Reforger exercises following the deployment of the Reforger divisions over to Europe, the weather was bad for about 14 days in a row, and only 5 percent of the tactical air that had been scheduled to go in in support of the exercise could fly. The rest of the air was grounded, but the

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...ills flew 97 percent of their scheduled time.

Pointing out this thing that I am talking about--the importance of having an airplane that can work, and find targets, and hit targets in that kind of weather.

Unfortunately, we are putting a lot of money into things like A-10s and F-16s which can't do any of this. They have no capability whatsoever of flying in bad weather and finding targets. Further, they are going to be the bulk of our force in Europe, and it causes me great concern.

H: As you mentioned, several previous interviewees mentioned the fact that they, too, felt that the F-111 proved to be ultimately a fine aircraft, but the stigma that was early attached to it was never overcome.

V: Well, overcome in whose minds? That's the question. Certainly in the minds of the guys who had to fight with it, and in my mind, it proved itself. I would loved to have had many more of them over there to do that kind of job that we had to do.

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I'll give you an example, in 1972 I had a call from Ambassador Godley [G. McMurtrie], who was our Ambassador in Laos. He said, "I wish you would come up here to Laos immediately. We are having great problems with General Vang Pao [Maj Gen], who is conducting the campaign up here. He is threatening to quit the war. He's going to pull all his Meo tribesmen out of the war, and he is going to leave the Plaine de Jarres to the enemy." This would have disastrous effects. I said, "What's the problem?" He said, "Well, he said he isn't getting the air support that's been promised." So I flew up the next day and picked up Godley, and we went up to Vang Pao's headquarters up in Long Tieng, which is on the Plaine de Jarres, on the ridge above the Plaine, and Vang Pao laid it on the line. He said, "You know, your Assistant Secretaries came over here, your Deputy Secretary of Defense, people from the State Department, and they guarantee me all this air support, and we don't get it. Where is it?" I said, "Well, you have this terrible season of the year called the slash-and-burn season when the visibility drops to zero and airplanes can't fly." He said, "I know, but I have to fight in that kind of weather. And no air support here." I said, "Well,

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Two of my airplanes ran together this last week trying to support you up here in this terrible visibility." He said, "Well, I'm quitting the war if I don't get this air support."

Well, right then and there I created, in my own mind, something that we had never done before with the F-111 in actual combat, the beacon bombing system. I said, "Well, General, I am going to give you a new airplane and a new system." And I didn't even know if I could do it, but I knew I had to keep him in the war. I said, "We are going to give you little beacons which your people can carry around, and all you have to do is give the enemy's range and bearing from those beacons, and we'll drop bombs anywhere you want them." Well, he didn't believe it, and Godley didn't believe it. Nobody believed it up there; I wasn't sure myself. I didn't even have the beacons. The Air Force had never bought the beacons even though the airplane had the capability.

I went all over the Pacific to scrounge beacons from the Marine units which they themselves weren't using but which they had bought initially to use with

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their A-6s. Nobody ever quite brought all these things together to use in the operation. I picked these things up at Iwakuni and got some at the Marine Kaneohe station in Hawaii, and finally got enough beacons together and brought them out there and worked out a system so that the little fellow on the ground--in this case the Laotian--who was under attack by mortars or artillery, or about to be invaded or overrun, could turn on this little handheld battery-operated beacon, which would put out a radar signal to be picked up by the F-111 radars, and the airplane would come in, and then they would bomb on a bearing and at a range given to him by the guy on the ground. He would say the enemy is 320° at so many meters, and they could just crank this offset into the radar. They'd pick up this pinpoint beacon, which was coded and would show up clearly, and then offset bomb on that with great precision. We were every day bringing the bombs to within 400 meters in the Laotian campaign.

Later in Cambodia, where I used it down there, we brought it to within 200 meters. You know this is quite an achievement when you consider the Army itself

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usually likes to have about 600 to 800 meters clearance for their artillery fire in support of their own troops. Here we were, it was solid overcast all around the clock; many of these things would happen in the middle of the night; the rains would occur, and we would have to go in; these airplanes were delivering. It literally saved Long Tieng and a place called Bom Long which had been under attack. It literally saved these bastions for Vang Pao, and he was a totally different man after that F-111 was brought to bear and supported him. The bombing job we did there was, I daresay, one almost nobody knows about. Very few people, even within the military, know all about that Laotian campaign and the precision bombing, and how it literally saved the Plaine de Jarres.

The same thing happened later in Cambodia when Phnom Penh was surrounded by 25,000 troops closing in within 3 miles of the main airfield there. We did the same thing, gave the Cambodian forces a beacon and bombed around the clock in close support of them and saved the city of Phnom Penh. It caused so much destruction of the Cambodian enemy forces that even 1 1/2 years later after our bombing stopped the Cambodians were

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still holding their own because of the great decimation of the attacking forces essentially with the F-111 system and its great accuracy.

I took the airplane to Europe when I became the commander over there and demonstrated our capability to do this in support of the ground forces by staging a live bombing on the Grafenwohr Range. I took the corps commanders from all the corps and assembled them out there--German, Belgian, Dutch, US, Canadian--put them out there in the grandstand. We had a beacon there; we had some old tanks assembled out in the middle of the range, and our F-111s came in and bombed off that beacon and rolled over four of those tanks that were sitting out there in the field, bombing through solid overcast. These guys were astounded. This is the kind of capability that you really need.

The Battle of the Bulge in World War II, when all the air support ceased for 2 weeks during bad weather, resulted in a tremendous bulge in the friendly lines. The Germans almost pushed us into the ocean because of lack of air support. Today, in the face of fast-moving Soviet armor, which has a capability to stage

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a breakthrough and go to the channel in 2 weeks, if you get 2 weeks of bad weather and there is no air, the whole war could be lost. And yet people calmly sit back and say, "What do we need all-weather for? We'll wait till the weather is good and fly." We find people, sincerely, in the planning business in Washington today making assertions like that. How they can do it, I don't know. My history and experience has been one of great dismay.

I recall several Presidents literally pulling their hair out because of our inability to use air when the weather was bad. President Johnson [Lyndon B.], when he was working the Rolling Thunder campaign, was trying to put some pressure on at one period of time, couldn't understand why tactical air, naval- and ground-based, couldn't bomb when the weather was bad. He wanted these targets killed; he wanted the objectives achieved that week. And we couldn't do it.

Later, I saw President Nixon [Richard M.], during the Easter campaign--which I mentioned earlier--which was conducted under the cover of the northeast monsoon, literally going nuts over the fact that tactical air

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couldn't be in there to stem those tides of ground forces. And when people went over and said, "The weather is bad." He said, "My God, we put people on the moon. Why can't we attack targets with tactical air?" The question is: "Why?" I don't know. I showed that we could do it with certain systems, but then, not the systems we are equipping the Air Force with today. It's not the stuff we are buying.

For example, when I left Southeast Asia and went to Europe, there wasn't any LORAN capability in all of Europe. It was 2 years after the war had ended down there, and LORAN proved to be absolutely vital to us. I'll tell you a story about LORAN here now that we are at this point and while we are on the all-weather subject.

H: Go right ahead.

V: The President ordered Linebacker II. He ordered Linebacker II because of a tactical error that was made by our diplomats. After Linebacker I, the enemy was suing for peace. They were hurt real bad. Most of the major targets had been obliterated in the

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North. All the powerplants were out except the one right in Hanoi, and they were hurting very badly, and they were ready to conclude an agreement. Kissinger and Le Duc Tho got together and the indications were that the agreement was imminent. Kissinger then informed me that he was going to order the bombing stopped in the Hanoi area as a gesture of goodwill to speed up the signing of the agreement. This was now in October 1972. I protested and said, "You know our history with Communists is one of having to keep the heat on them in order to get them to do anything. If you take the heat off them, they may never sign."

Kissinger left Al Haig [Alexander] down there to work on me. Haig said, "You know, you are out of your head, John. You don't know anything about these negotiations. Le Duc Tho and Henry are just like this, and this agreement is imminent, and we are going to stop the bombing." Well, we stopped the bombing and within 1 week all the things that had previously been negotiated and agreed to became stuck again. The whole agreement was now up for grabs; items that had been resolved were now issues again. The heat was off them, so they weren't negotiating in

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earnest any more.

I sent reconnaissance planes up there and I could see them rebuilding the powerplants; Soviet airplanes were landing and unloading equipment. Electronic stuff was coming in. The railroads were being rebuilt with China and trains were coming back down. They didn't want an agreement at this point. They thought that, politically, it would be impossible, having stopped the bombing, for the President to do it again, and they were sitting there thinking they had it made. Then the President had to make the very, very tough decision to go to the use of B-52s which incurred some risks and which, of course, aroused public opinion against him all over the world, and especially in this country.

Now, the B-52s went in to hit the same targets that we had destroyed in the tactical campaign of Linebacker I. The only additional targets we were now permitted to hit were the ones in Hanoi that I talked about earlier, the powerplant in Hanoi and the transmitter facilities. They were the additional targets now put on the list. Incidentally, both those targets

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were hit by tactical air and not by the B-52s. B-52s couldn't be used because of their inaccuracies on targets of that kind.

After 3 days of bombing, in 1 night we lost six B-52s, and the SAC [Strategic Air Command] Commander called me. It was J. C. Meyer [Gen John C.] at the time and said, "God, we've got to do something. These guys are getting to us with missiles. We have got to do something." He and I both agreed that the problem was that the enemy was assembling these missiles. They were coming in off Soviet ships, on lighters, being trucked to an assembly plant in southeast Hanoi, assembled during the day, and then they would be out on the sites for firing that night when the B-52s came in. All our electronic capability couldn't screen those B-52s from these missiles. They were burning through, and they were homing on the bombers.

So J. C. Meyer said, "The only thing we can do is hit this missile assembly plant and destroy it so they can't fire the missiles at me." He tried to get authority from Washington to do this and was denied that authority. He was denied the authority, because

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during that whole 11-day Linebacker II campaign there was only about 4 hours of visible bombing weather. The rest of the time it was all bad weather which required radar bombing systems or all-weather bombing systems. SAC's miss distances, using their all-weather systems capability, was 1,400 feet or something like that. Somebody did a quick calculation in Washington and decided if you put the SAC bombers on this little missile assembly plant, which was right in the city, that they'd kill 24,000 civilians just from the misses, and he was denied the authority to do it as a result of this.

He called me and asked me to do it with my LORAN airplanes, the history of which we have described earlier in the briefing. I said, "You know, this is quite a task you are asking me to do because I might miss, too, and kill a lot of civilians." He said, "Well, you are always bragging about your LORAN capability. Here's a chance to prove it. In any case, you've got to do it. I've been denied the authority. For God's sake, you've got to try to get it." So I called up the Chairman of the JCS, with whom I had worked, of course, in Washington and with whom I

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talked almost every day when I was running the war down there on secure telephone, and said, "Can you get me the authority?" Tom Moore got the authority for me to do it with LORAN-equipped F-4s.

Those guys went in there in broad daylight and bombed through a solid overcast from 20,000 feet, with missiles being fired at them I might add--48 missiles were fired at that little 16-ship formation--and they were in tight bombing formation as they went over the target, right over the heart of Hanoi, but they destroyed that missile assembly plant. SAC losses went down to very manageable levels for the rest of the campaign as the result of this. So it was the all-weather capability of these few tactical airplanes that we had over there, LORAN-equipped, and the limited experience that I had gained with them in bombing up around Hanoi that enabled us to do that. So that's a little lesson in airpower that's forgotten, too.

For example, I was talking to Russ Dougherty [Gen Russell E.], the former SAC Commander, a few months ago. He had never heard the story I've just told

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you that the SAC bombers were literally saved by tactical application of all-weather bombing.

H: These were F-4s with this LORAN?

V: Yes. Another thing he had never heard; during the campaign in Cambodia, we were using these B-52s in support--and this was after the war had stopped in Vietnam--and we were trying desperately to save Phnom Penh. We were bringing B-52s in. The B-52s, while operating in Vietnam, were being directed by Skyspot, ground-based radar, which would direct them over the target to a release point, and they would be told when to release because the internal systems on the SAC bomber wasn't capable of doing the job with enough accuracy.

Now, when we were forced out of Vietnam, the Skyspot, ground-based radars were disbanded, and we were not permitted to put them in Cambodia because the Congress had now ruled that there would be no US personnel on the ground in Cambodia. Everything had to be done from the air. Without any Skyspot, the B-52s couldn't be guided with any accuracy, and it was

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very risky to take a B-52 in and have it bomb off its own system in close proximity of the ground forces, because you might wipe out a whole friendly element. We were bringing those B-52s in during this bad monsoon weather, leading them in with F-4 LORAN-equipped airplanes--another airpower lesson few people have remembered--but these airplanes were picked up 100 miles out from the target by my LORAN F-4s and guided in with great accuracy.

[End Tape 2, Side 2]

I was telling the story of how we were guiding B-52s in with LORAN-equipped F-4s. The B-52s would fall in line behind a Pathfinder F-4; they would keep a fixed distance behind, using their own internal radars to station keep on the F-4, one behind the other. The F-4 would lead them over the target and start their computer going at the release point, and that's how the B-52s were bombing in Cambodia, because their own internal systems were incapable of that kind of accuracy.

Here we have tactical airplanes leading strategic bombers in on all-weather bombing missions, which I

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think tells a little story in itself. This fact, that we had done this, was unknown to a great many people back at SAC. Over the years I have run into lots of people who questioned whether or not it ever happened. And as I say, I ran into General Dougherty a few months ago, and I was telling him this story. He had never heard the story before that SAC did its bombing in Cambodia led in by tactical airplanes equipped with LORAN. And I think there is a tendency in the Air Force to forget many of these hard lessons that we learned in actual combat and dismiss them from our minds and do nothing about them, consequently, So when the next situation arises where we need all-weather capability, nothing has been done to supply it.

When I was made commander in Europe and I got over to Europe, I discovered there wasn't any of this capability in Europe. Nobody had put any LORAN in over there, and there was no all-weather capability except for one wing of F-111s that, incidentally, had never done any beacon bombing. And there weren't any beacons over in Europe despite this long history of it in Southeast Asia. It's almost as though all the experience we had learned over there had been denied

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to the people in Europe who were doing something entirely different. You ask me how this can happen? I don't know except that one guy runs that part of the world, and one guy runs the other and never the twain shall meet.

M: That brings up an interesting point I noticed in the biography there. You are the one who has been Commander of both PACAF and USAFE (United States Air Forces in Europe). Maybe this is an area that should be looked at in the future. I think, as you pointed out, it's kind of two separate things, and each does it his own way.

V: It very well bears looking into. I think it could stand a review.

H: One final thing before we break. This stigma against the F-111 that I mentioned earlier. I, particularly, think that it stems from Congress. As you know, during the formative years of the F-111, the McClellan [Sen John L., Appropriations] Committee, particularly, was a very big critic of the way the F-111 was being produced and, particularly, of Mr. McNamara. I wonder if you could add anything to that.

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V: Well, there was a lot of concern about, as I say, the selection process, whether or not the right manufacturer had been picked to do it, whether or not the airplane really had a valid mission. Most people didn't understand what the mission was. The Air Force itself had some doubt as to how it was going to use the airplane. I think it took actual combat experience to demonstrate the capabilities of the airplane. You know, if we hadn't had that experience with it over there in Southeast Asia, a lot of people could probably still be maintaining that it was a worthless airplane. My problem with the F-111 was not the airplane itself but with the ordnance that we had to use to bomb with. That's another subject we may want to spend some time on later, but I have been constantly crying for better, improved conventional ordnance. We still dropped 500-pound bombs, primarily, which you know are very ineffective. Unless you get direct hits with them, you don't have anything. People are amazed, for example, when I tell them that a 500-pound bomb has to hit within 9 feet of a tank in order to do any damage to it. If it falls more than 9 feet away, the tank rattles on oblivious to what has been happening. To get 9-foot accuracies

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with any kind of a system is extremely difficult, even with your guided weapons, and to do it on a regular basis with the bulk of your airplanes is extremely difficult. I used to decry the fact that we would send an airplane out, like an F-111, which would consistently get CEPs (circular error probable) of 150 feet and then drop bombs which couldn't hurt anything unless they were within 9 feet. We needed ordnance that had area capability. And only now is the Air Force really getting to work on this.

They have a new program called the WAAM program, the Wide Area Antitank Munitions, which shows a lot of promise, but it's been a long, difficult process trying to get people interested into putting any money or effort into this kind of capability. An F-111 drops a string of twenty-four 500-pound bombs with a 40- to 50-foot interval between each one of them. If tanks are in there, the chance of hitting a single tank when they deploy in battle formation is virtually nil. So we have got to get on with improved munitions for these airplanes. Now if it is nuclear war, that's something else. Anybody can hit anything with a nuclear bomb, but the kind of constrained wars which

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we are apt to find ourselves fighting, like Southeast Asia, Korea, or limited operations elsewhere around the world, you've got to have aerial-type weapons that'll kill armor and hit targets and destroy them over wide areas, and then combine it with a capability to do it under all-weather conditions. That's the lesson I learned the years I've been involved in fighting wars in Southeast Asia. And I might add in World War II, you know.

As a squadron commander, I was flubbing around over there trying to find targets in that lousy European weather. We were having great difficulty. I said back in those days, "There must be a better way than stooging along and breaking through a cloud somewhere to find you are over a flak trap that's shooting at you." The accuracy of our bombers, even in those days, was fine during daylight hours with the Norden bombsight, but tell them to do it when the weather was bad or at night and, you know, they couldn't do it. Unless it was a whole city, they couldn't hit it. The navigation capability was crude. I have had B-17s, which I encountered during World War II deep inside of Europe, ask me on the radio what the heading

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was back to England. So we really haven't put the emphasis on these programs that we should have, and we've got to do it.

Like I mentioned earlier, if a campaign starts in Europe with that tremendous Soviet armor capability to move very fast, and you've got several days of bad weather, the war could be over. The breakthrough could occur. And without air, the ground forces will not hold in Europe. They depend very heavily on tremendous firepower support from the air forces. And if they are not flying, God help us! Do you want to break at this point? (pause)

With the termination of the Rolling Thunder campaign in 1968, I was transferred back to Washington, and I became Assistant Deputy for Plans and Operations for the Air Staff. My job, at that time, involved working with the Chief and for all of his appearances over on the Hill. I had to get him ready for his budget review process, committee hearings. The Chief at the time was McConnell [Gen John P.], and I found he was a very easy man to work with because he was known and very well liked over on the Hill. That has a lot of

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bearing on how successful your appearance is. If they like you, that's one thing; if they don't like you, that's something else. McConnell could walk in, and he would have four or five old cronies jump up, come over and shake his hand, and ask him when they were going duck hunting again and that sort of thing. It was much easier during the process of getting the testimony out on the table, because it was a free and easy flow. If he didn't have something right in the top of his head, instead of badgering him about it, they would say, "Well, J. P., get that for us, and we'll put it in the record later," you see. That made it fine. You didn't have to worry too much about all these details and cramming his head with a lot of irrelevant data, because he knew that he could always supply it for the record later. I found working with him over on the Hill to be a very pleasant experience, and I made a number of contacts in that job. That was my first real exposure to the Hill, how the committees worked, and how the staffs operated, and so forth. He was a veteran at that sort of thing. He could really effectively operate over on the Hill. Unlike his successor, Jack Ryan [Gen John D.], who, you know, didn't like to be over there on the Hill

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and felt very uncomfortable about it and was sort of caustic with the people. Ryan had a great grasp of detail and a great grasp for what was going on in the Air Force and knew, essentially, the answer to all the questions that were asked him, but his manner was one of giving the most curt and short answer that he could possibly come up with, which made them a little unhappy over there. But he was a totally different type of guy.

Well, that was a little digression, but let me say that when I got back and was made the Assistant Deputy of Plans and Ops, I did find myself spending a lot of time in this area of the Chief's relationship with the Hill and his appearances over there. And, of course, I got involved in the planning process for the Air Staff and some of the JCS activity.

Shortly thereafter, I was selected to go down and be the J-3. It was the Air Force's turn to supply a J-3 for the JCS, and I was picked by McConnell to do this and went on down and became the J-3. This was a very interesting period, of course. A lot of things were going on. The war in Southeast Asia was heating up.

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And we went through the interesting things that I described from my earlier testimony, some of the tough decisions that had to be made with regard to Southeast Asia, and there were all kinds of crises happening all over the world, and I found being the J-3 to be a sporty proposition.

I had a secure phone in my quarters. I lived at Bolling at the time. And it rang three times, at least, every night, 7 days a week, for the whole year I was a J-3. I would wake up in the middle of the night and have, you know, to resolve a problem, or decide whether or not to get the Chairman out of bed or take whatever action had to be taken. It is a very demanding assignment, or it was back in those days. I guess now that we are in a more peaceful environment, it has relaxed somewhat, but I would suspect that even today the J-3 is an awfully busy man.

I was the J-3 under Buzz Wheeler [Gen Earle G.], who was the Chairman at the time. Initially, I had problems with General Wheeler. He and I didn't seem to hit it off, initially. This was all turned

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around ultimately, and we became very good friends and very close colleagues. I think I became a very trusted confidant of his and accompanied him on almost all his appearances, briefings over on the Hill and over in the White House and supported him on many occasions. He was an excellent briefing officer and did a really good job in the higher echelons in selling the military view. I was privileged to be in on a lot of those sessions with him.

I remember in 1973 I was sitting down in Southeast Asia. The war was over in Vietnam, and I think we had just concluded our bombing in Cambodia, and I was on a little base at Nakhom Phanom, and I was heading up the US Support Activities Group, USSAG. That was a command that was created after the war ended in Vietnam. I had an Army deputy, and a joint staff--Navy, Marines and everything else--on it. We were finishing the war up in Southeast Asia, Cambodia, and Laos. General Wheeler sent me a message. He said he had been asked to appear over on the Hill, and he had to report on everything he had said during a 2-year period in briefings to the Congress, the issue being whether or not the Congress had been previously

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notified about this secret bombing that was going on in Cambodia. He had to remember everything that had been said and done. Here I am sitting out in this remote part of the world with access to virtually nothing in the way of records, and I get this message: "Please tell me, can you remember what we said at these various briefings? Or what briefings we actually gave? And what we said at them?" I had to sit down there and try to piece all of this together, and it was really something. I had a first-class secretary who had been with me back in those days and who had gone to Southeast Asia with me, a girl named Nancy Collins, and she saved stuff. She had hauled stuff down to Southeast Asia that had no bearing at all on my new job, but we had packing cases full of that stuff. She pulled all this stuff out, and I had almost a complete record of all the briefings we had given over on the Hill when I was J-3. We put together a 14-page telegram back to General Wheeler which, I understand, he later used as the basis for his testimony over in Congress. This sort of thing happens.

But working with Wheeler was a good experience. He

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is a very capable guy and a very smooth man in relations with the higher echelons over there. Then he, of course, retired. Admiral Moorer [Adm Thomas H.] came in, and I now became the Director of the Joint Staff.

But during that J-3 period, we were working on a number of things like command and control. How would the National Command Authority be able to make a decision in the face of an imminent nuclear attack? And I think I probably had as much to do as anybody with the creation of these new airborne command post airplanes, the choice of the -747 to do this particular job. Because I perceived a very great need to have a survivable platform in case nuclear war was imminent. You know, you have to have someplace to go with your decision makers.

The Soviets, of course, have dug a lot of big underground shelters, and they put their top echelon in them every year and conduct exercises from them. We've never done anything like that, and there's really no place to hide in this country. Our so-called secure command posts really aren't very secure. Even the Cheyenne Mountain, by nuclear war standards,

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is not very survivable. So the airborne command post was a great project of mine. I used to command several Navy ships in my capacity as J-3. I had operational control over the cruiser, Northampton, and a baby carrier, and one other vessel, which were alternate command posts. In case of nuclear war, we dispatched the command authorities out to these vessels. They were all yanked out from under me by a budget cut one day between the Secretary of the Navy and Secretary of Defense. They got to cutting forces one day and, without telling any of us, eliminated these vital command vessels. But that's another story in itself on how decisions are made on important matters like this. Frequently over issues like, where are you going to save some money?

When I became the Director and Admiral Moorer became the Chairman, we worked together very effectively for a couple of years as a team. I attended all the meetings over in the White House with him on all major crisis matters, and he and I would go over and sit at the WASAG and give the military views on any decision on any crisis that was occurring anywhere in the world. It was a very unique experience.

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I discovered then that the JCS as a body was pretty much out of the chain of command. These decisions were happening and being made very, very fast; there was no time for the corporate body to meet, and most of the Chiefs, themselves, were finding out what had happened the day after it happened when we would give them the debriefing of what had happened the night before. I think it was just a revelation to me that the decision making process within the Pentagon is a cumbersome one, particularly as it involves JCS machinery. The committee system of sitting down and arguing everything out and getting a common position is all right in the planning phase when you've got lots of time, but during crisis situations when you have to react immediately, it doesn't work. You can't sit there and get a service position together and have it hammered and hassled and worked over for 3 or 4 days when you need to take action in the next hour or two.

So what evolved was essentially the system I have described, the Washington Special Activities Group, consisting of CIA, Defense Department, State Department and JCS representatives, and the White House man--

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who was Kissinger--and we'd meet in crash session at anytime of the day or night to deal with problems. Then if it involved military forces, as it most usually did, we'd have to go back and prepare all the execution messages and the directives to the commanders in the field. So that covers pretty generally my period back in Washington; I then left for Southeast Asia during the Easter spring offensive in April 1972.

B: I have a couple of questions. You mentioned that while you were J-3 there were any number of crises that developed. What were the nature of these when you were called in the middle of the night?

V: I'll tell you one. This one is a little far out, but it was typical of the kind of problems that I ran into.

The phone rang one night in the middle of the night, and it was the duty officer at the National Military Command Center, which is under the J-3. And he said that the Navy had reported through their Navy communications channels that there had been a mutiny on a

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munitions ship on its way to Thailand with bombs for some of our airplanes. There were some 5,000 bombs on this thing. The mutineering members of the crew had seized control and had locked the captain and the first mate in his cabin and were now in control of the ship, and they were taking it into a Cambodian port. They were concerned because the guy who had captured the ship was threatening to blow the ship up unless the Cambodian authorities came out and took him ashore and listened to his grievances. The Navy had intercepted these communications, which were radio calls from the ship, describing the situation on board, and they had filtered through Commander, Pacific Fleet. He was now calling National Military Command Authority in Washington saying, "What are we going to do?"

Well, I'm awakened in the middle of the night with "What are we going to do?" "Well," I said, "the first thing we have to do is get ahold of the US Ambassador. First notify Defense and State, then get ahold of our US Ambassador down there and tell him of this situation and tell him to go to the Cambodian Government and advise them that this ship is putting

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into one of their ports and that they should go out and meet it. And tell them that it's a dangerous situation because it's loaded with 5,000 bombs on its way to the war in Thailand, and we've got sort of a crazy guy who is threatening to blow it up. So it has got to be handled delicately." Well, then, the problems began to arise. First, we discovered there were no communications at night with the Embassy in Cambodia. The Embassy maintained communications through its own comm [communication] system with the State Department only during working hours, and at 5 o'clock they shut the place up and went home or went to their respective quarters. So there was nobody on duty, and there was no way of getting word to this guy. So I said to the duty officer, "There must be some way. We'll have to try commercial phone calls." We discovered now that we have to go through Tokyo exchange in order to get to Cambodia on a commercial line call, and there's a waiting list and we are number 11 on the list. We have no priority; the fact that we are military, US, urgently trying to get to an Ambassador didn't make any difference to the Japanese phone company. You get on the list like everybody else. (laughter)

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They've got other clients. We were sweating out a priority to get a phone call through to the Ambassador on a commercial system to tell him to go down and open up his communications so he can find out what we want to do.

This thing grew into a real cliffhanger because the captain, who was permitted to talk over the radio, was urgently broadcasting the threats of this madman to blow the ship up. He said, "It's going to happen in the next hour unless somebody gets out here." They had now gone into the port, and nobody was bothering to come out. The Cambodians didn't have the notice that the ship was out there. The anchor had been dropped, and the ship was sitting in the harbor, and this nut thinks they are conspiring against him, and the Cambodians aren't coming out deliberately, and he is going to blow the ship up. Well, it's a long story, but we finally get through on the commercial line, and the Ambassador rushes down to the Cambodian Government, and they finally get somebody out there, and this guy is taken ashore, and the ship is saved, et cetera. But there's a typical crisis. You see, it probably never got in the newspapers which happens ad nauseam all through

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the year. All these little things are happening in the evening, and then the guy who is the J-3 has got to do something about these things that are happening.

H: Well, did the tempo of this sort of thing pick up with the press' hostility toward the war? These types of incidents?

V: I don't know if you can directly relate them one with the other, but there were terrorist incidents and things of that sort that, I think, in part were stimulated by the whole Vietnam era and the feeling against the Vietnamese war. There were riots and crises situations that were occurring many, many times, threats to some of our installations and so forth. But it was a constant crisis atmosphere all during that period. It really took a lot of time and attention and work.

H: This difference you mentioned you had earlier with General Wheeler, initially. Did this stem mainly from an Army versus Air Force view, or what was the nature of it?

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V: No. I think it was a personality problem more than anything else. I think Wheeler and I sort of looked each other over and decided, "Hell, I don't like him, and he doesn't like me." (laughter) We just had to work together for awhile to appreciate each other's virtues and qualities. But I must say, he is a very big-minded guy, and our initial differences evaporated when we got together on a few crises and had to get the job done. Later on, you know, we had a very, very close relationship.

H: While we are on this subject, any number of interviewees that I have talked to in the past has voiced the opinion that of the various services the Navy was always the most intransigent on practically any view. Did you experience any of that?

V: Well, I had a lot of service with the Navy, and I worked for a number of Navy people. When I was first in the JCS doing that NSC work, I worked for Admiral Radford [Adm William Arthur], and I had a very close relationship with him. And this Admiral Wooldridge that I talked about earlier was my immediate boss. When I was in the Pacific in CINCPAC, I worked with

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Admiral Anderson [Adm George] and Admiral Felix Stump [Adm Felix Budwell]. I had a good relationship with them. I think I have been associated with Navy guys more than any other man I can think of in the Air Force probably. And of course, when I was the Director for a couple of years there, I worked with a Chairman who was Admiral Moorer. I found that I could get along with the Navy very well. I think the feeling that you often hear expressed is that the Navy likes to do it their own way, and they aren't as apt to join in on the joint aspects as the other services. I think that's true. They do have this tendency to want to operate independently, but it's the nature of the Navy's mission. You see, they have their own ground forces in the Marines, and they have their own Air Force. They like to keep the unity of that organization separate and distinct from the Army and the Air Force. But I found them real professionals.

In the war in Southeast Asia, I had a Navy admiral assigned to my headquarters, when I was the commander down there, who did a fine job for me. In fact, there were some 80 Navy people on my staff when I was conducting the air war in Southeast Asia. We had

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close liaison with Fleet Operations. The Fleet Commander or the Task Force Commander who was conducting the Navy bombing operations worked very closely with me. He was a fellow named Cooper, Admiral Hutch Cooper, a real professional airman who did a very fine job, and I found that I could work with him very well. Now, I would much have preferred, of course, to have control of the whole air situation myself. Anybody would have.

Incidentally, that was one of the things I thought the President and I had agreed on when I went to Southeast Asia, that I would, in fact, be able to run all operations involving air. The President thought he had given me that authority because very recently, when he was writing his memoirs, he contacted me through another party and prepared a paragraph for his book, which never appeared in his book, which got to the point of the authorities he had given me. He had gone way beyond what I thought he had given me in writing this paragraph, and I sent that word back. So we sort of agreed to drop the whole thing from the book until we could get it straightened out. In actuality, what he said was that he had told me I

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had full responsibility for running the whole war, not only the air portion of it, but in actuality, he told me I had full responsibility for the air war but then never followed through and had the directives written that gave me that authority. So when I went down there, I ran into the same problems that all my predecessors had run into. I had bosses all over the place. If I was working in Laos, the man who thought he was my boss was the Ambassador in Laos, Mac Godley at the time. A hell of a fine guy. He and I worked together very well, but he let it be known very clearly that when I was fighting in his country, he was the boss.

[End Tape 3, Side 1]

In Cambodia the same thing applied. Whenever I planned any new activity in Cambodia, I would have to go down to the Embassy and square it away with the Ambassador and tell him what I was planning to do and get his authority to do it. They were my bosses, in essence, of the campaigns I was conducting in Laos and Cambodia.

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When I was bombing in South Vietnam, everything had to be okayed, of course, by my immediate boss, who was MACV [Military Assistance Command Vietnam]. When I was bombing up in the North, I had two bosses to contend with, the CINCPACAF [Commander in Chief, Pacific Air Forces] Commander, who was Lou Clay, fortunately, a guy who had been in Vietnam and knew my problems and was very helpful as a result, because he'd been there, and he knew what the trouble was. I found his help to be very constructive, and he was a fine guy to have as an immediate boss. But he was a boss.

Then I had the CINCPAC Commander sitting up there in Hawaii. In this case, Admiral Gayler [Adm Noel Arthur Meredyth], who was less sympathetic and was more difficult to work with, but who felt that he was running the war in the North and was issuing directives on that. So you see, I had a different boss for each area of the world in which I was conducting my military operations.

On top of that, I had the Chief of Staff of the Air Force sending me messages from Washington, and I had the Chairman of the JCS calling me almost every day on

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the telephone telling me what I could or couldn't do. But that was helpful, too, because Moorer was an extremely able guy who had a good feel for the political requirements, and he knew what the traffic would bear, and he was sort of a buffer between those of us fighting the war down there and the policy makers and decision makers in the higher levels. I thanked my lucky stars many times that he was the guy up there running interference for us, because it made our job so much easier in running the campaigns, particularly the Linebacker campaigns.

I don't know if you want to get on the war in Southeast Asia now. We had gotten through my duties, I guess, as J-3 and some of my work as Director.

H: One other thing related to the Navy. As you are well aware, when things were set up in Southeast Asia, particularly in North Vietnam, they assigned different Route Packs, and this was one big criticism that the Navy was assigned such and such Route Pack and the Air Force some other one. Pilots would often complain they could see enemy activity going on in the Navy's Route Pack area but couldn't do anything about it, because

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they would get in hot water for going over there. They said it created a lot of interservice rivalry. Were you aware of any of this?

V: Of course, the Route Pack thing goes way back to the Rolling Thunder days. I think I mentioned I was Chief of Operations for PACAF, and my counterpart was a guy named Bringle, Admiral Bringle. We had to wrestle with this problem of who had responsibility and where because the Rolling Thunder war was conducted from Honolulu back in those days. Admiral Oley Sharp was a very strong-minded guy, and he felt it was his responsibility, and he was on top of this thing every day. He was conducting meetings at least twice, sometimes three times a week, on what we were going to be doing in the next phase of the bombing down there, and Bringle would be directed to carry out the Navy portion of it, and I would be told to implement the Air Force portion. Now, you could have gone two ways: One, name an overall air commander and have him responsible for coordinating all of the activities throughout all the areas. That would have necessitated a single air commander. That probably would have been the better way. But because of Navy

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concerns and disagreement in the JCS, it was agreed that we wouldn't do that, but we would divide the territory up so that instead of having one guy direct all operations in all areas, we would divide it up geographically and have two guys conduct operations, each in his own area. There was no other way you could do it, because it takes monitoring by headquarters to constantly be on top of everything that's going on in his area of responsibility. So that gave rise to the Route Pack system.

Now, essentially, the Route Packs were picked for the convenience of the fleet, primarily. They were off the shore there anchored off--not anchored--but cruising around in the Gulf of Tonkin, and the Route Packs that were given to them were those that were in closest proximity to their ships. They had, as I recall, Route Packs 2, 3, and 4, which were right along the coast in the upper sections. And we were given Route Pack 1, and we had 6 over in the extreme west and Route Pack 5, which was the Hanoi area primarily. So they were largely responsible for Haiphong and the coastal strip south, and we were responsible for Hanoi and the areas to the north and

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the west, and to Route Pack 1 which was just north of the DMZ [demilitarized zone]. That's how that worked out. What that saved, you see, was a great deal of detailed coordination. Otherwise, you wouldn't have been able to operate. You would be flying in each other's bombing pattern. You would be bouncing each other by mistake if you were in there, and the Navy was in there. It would have been very difficult to do it, so this was one feasible way of doing it, and it was the system that was used throughout all the war in the north.

The war in the south was different, and the war in Laos and Cambodia was different. When there was Navy participation there, it was under my command and my control. They would come in and tell me the day before how many sorties I would get the next day, and they'd report to my controllers, and they would be put into the targets that we wanted them in under our control. The Marines, who were actually based in Thailand--we had two squadrons of Marines at Nam Phong--were under my operational control. I actually tasked them and picked the targets for them and put them on their missions. There was a squadron

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of Marine A-6s and F-4s, and we sent them frag [fragment] orders just like Air Force units. They were given their mission and instructions just like the Air Force units.

But the Navy had to be coordinated with in any areas where we'd be in juxtaposition. That sometimes got difficult because of the communications problems. But I did have this Navy liaison staff right with me in my headquarters, both in Saigon and later up in Nakhom Phanom, with a Navy admiral who maintained contact with the fleet and who coordinated these activities so that we didn't run into each other.

I think the war could have been fought more effectively had there been one commander. I think we could have done things mutually to each other's advantage if we had been able to use forces simultaneously.

I remember once we worked a coordinated mission with the Navy, took several days to plan it, and we were attacking some targets in the Hanoi area. They were going to come in from the sea on the east side, and we were going to come in from the west, and we

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0 were going to saturate the defenses with this great wave of airplanes. Then we had the targets picked that we were going to hit, and we thought we would do great damage and saturate his radars and overburden his interceptors and so forth. The concept was good, good sound tactics. The mission day came, and we launched and went up there, and the guys came back and reported they hadn't seen any Navy airplanes, but they had carried out their portion of the mission. There were plenty MiGs around, as usual. They were buzzing all over the place. And lots of SAMs [surface-to-air missiles], and there didn't seem to be too much diversion going on, so they questioned the effectiveness of the strategy.

We found out the next day that the Navy had never launched. They had some local sea condition out there where they couldn't launch, so they didn't tell us that they weren't going. They simply didn't go, and we went in by ourselves thinking that we were up there with support coming in from the sea. So, that sort of thing happened, you see, where the Navy commander on the scene had the authority to cancel his mission. I'm not saying it was wrong. He had some operational

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situation which made him decide he couldn't go, but there was no way, apparently, for him to tell me right then and there he was doing it, and I didn't know until the next day that he had done it. So that kind of a problem did exist. But by and large, the Navy was cooperative and helpful, and the people that I worked with were professionals. I went out to the carriers. I flew in a Navy fighter from the carrier.

That was quite amusing. One day I went out there and talked them into letting me fly an A-4 two-seater. All these gobs came swarming up from the companionway to see me being belted into the back seat. So I said to the yeoman who was strapping me in, "God, haven't these sailors ever seen an Air Force general get a ride in one of these airplanes before?" He said, "Hell, General, we ain't never seen a Navy admiral get in one of these!" (laughter) But they were really a professional bunch, and they did a very fine job.

The Navy and I both had more trouble with CINCPAC than with each other, of course. CINCPAC was up there rather remote from the war trying to tell us

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what to do, and he was making very great demands on both the Navy and ourselves. In fact, he was rougher on the Navy than he was on the Air Force. This was Admiral Gaylor up in Honolulu.

I think, by and large, however, despite the problems that I talked to you before about having many bosses, because I happened to be down there and something had to be done that day, I had the authority to do it, and I would do it. And it was a question of squaring it away with my various bosses the next day.

There were constraints that still existed. People still were concerned about civilian casualties. They were concerned about hitting targets that some people believed didn't contribute to the war effort. We went through that great hubbub about bombing dams and dikes, which was all a lot of baloney. We weren't bombing dams and dikes, and yet the press insisted that we were. Finally a guy came down--a newspaper reporter--and demanded to talk to me about why I was bombing dams and dikes. I told him we weren't. He said, "Oh, but you are because, you know, every day we are getting reports of this." So I said, "I'll

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tell you what I'll do. I'll put you upstairs with the intelligence people who do all the BDA, the battle damage assessment. We take photos of every bomb we've dropped, and I'll let you look at any photos for any day of any of the bombing that we have done all during this Linebacker campaign. You think that you have heard somewhere that we have bombed a dam or a dike. You can go to the record and they'll pull it out." This guy went up there, and he spent 3 hours and he pulled out all these things, and when he got all through, he had to admit that we weren't bombing dams and dikes.

I said, "Now, I will admit to having bombed a dam and a dike. Two of them, by accident, when laser bombs didn't guide and we took a chunk out of them, but in neither case did we breach it." He wanted to see those, and we showed him those pictures. I said, "Those are the only, to my knowledge, dams and dikes that even had minor damage done to them." This guy said, "Thank you, very much." And he went back, presumably, to write a story.

A week later I got a call from the Commander in Chief,

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Pacific Fleet, Admiral "Chick" Clary (Bernard A.), who was up in Honolulu and who happened to be a friend of mine over the years. He was very irate. He said, "Why did you tell the New York Times that the Navy was bombing the dams and dikes?" I said, "I never said anything like that." He said, "Well, you are being quoted. There's an article that has appeared in Washington. The Navy sent it to me, and it's now here in the Honolulu Advertiser, a repeat of it, where you are quoted as saying the Navy is doing it." I said, "Wait a minute. I have the tape of that interview. I'm going to send it to you," which I subsequently did. Not once was the Navy mentioned in the whole interview. We finally got ahold of this reporter and asked him why in the hell he could say something like that. He said, "You did, by inference. You said you weren't doing it and, obviously, somebody was doing it. The only other guy out there that was bombing was the Navy, so it must have been him. So, by inference, you were implying they were doing it." That's the kind of problem you run into with the press that I alluded to earlier. They'll take something and just completely distort it and quote you or misquote you in a headline where it gets you in trouble with a lot of

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people, undeservedly, really.

I remember another incident when I was bombing in Cambodia. This was 1973 and we were trying to save Phnom Penh. I got an urgent message from Jerry Friedheim, who was the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Public Affairs, and he said, "I am quoting an article from the Washington Post and New York Times. It is dated Cambodia in which the charge is made by this reporter that you used B-52s to destroy 10 Cambodian cities, and that this guy personally interviewed the refugees from these cities. I must have an immediate answer to these charges. The affair could develop into a nasty publicity situation in Washington. I must have a reply in the next 24 hours." The guy had named the 10 Cambodian cities or villages. I sent a reconnaissance airplane out to each one of them immediately, brought the pictures back. I had them on my desk within a matter of hours, and we had them blown up into big 11 X 14s, and there were no B-52 bomb marks on any of the 10 cities that this guy had named, not a single B-52 bomb. Of the 10 cities, 7 of them had virtually no war damage of any kind. They may have had minor, you know, shell damage

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or something of that kind. Three others had bombing evidence. These were in the Parrot Beak. The bombing was, by my experts, typically the bombing done by the South Vietnamese Air Force. They were 250-pound bombs, which we never dropped. These were 250-pound bomb craters. Even this was minor damage on the outskirts of one of these towns. But the 10 towns were virtually untouched. I sent all these things back by special courier with all the actual photographs and the text and the data. We hit our computers with the missions we had run at the various times and so forth, proving conclusively: first, that the towns had not been destroyed as alleged; no B-52s were involved as alleged. The destruction was very minor contrary to what the article said. That thing went back by special courier and nothing ever appeared to refute the arguments this guy had presented in his news article.

I couldn't get an answer back as to why we weren't coming up with a counter to it. Finally, on the next trip back, some 3 months later, I rushed up to Friedheim's office to find out why in the hell he hadn't blasted this guy for this misrepresentation. He said, "Well,

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the whole thing died down a couple of days later, and we didn't think it was worthwhile dredging it back up again and stirring the whole mess up again. So we just let it die." But on the records, you see, in the newspapers for some historian in the future who comes across it will be an article that may be the basis for something he writes later about indiscriminate bombing in Cambodia by the United States Air Force. Never refuted! Left to go unchallenged because it would have been more of a chore to dredge it up and to kick it around again than to put it to rest. I found that happening many, many times. The whole dams and dikes thing was a good illustration of it where charges were leveled almost every day that we were bombing dams and dikes when we were bending over backwards to keep from hitting any of them, straining our operations so we wouldn't hit them, and making the job more difficult for our pilots to be sure that we wouldn't hit any, yet to destroy a target nearby that had to be destroyed.

H: Didn't it appear rather ludicrous that the military would have to defend an action like bombing the dams and dikes? Wouldn't that be an ideal military target?

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V: Well, you see, the press campaign was suggesting that we were indiscriminate in our bombing, and this was used as part of the evidence of our being indiscriminate. We were bombing dams and dikes which harmed the poor farmer who is trying to grow rice, and we are flooding villages and causing needless loss of civilian lives and making life miserable for these poor people when it really isn't a valid military target. You know, it's not contributing to the war effort. That was the thrust of all that argument. And it went on and on for months unchecked. We never did put it to rest even when we had the guys down looking at the actual target work.

Now, the amount of constraints placed on us to insure that there were no civilian lives lost and to minimize damage to the countryside were quite extreme, and we never had anything like that, of course, in previous wars. But in this war they were very much there, and I had to be conscious every time I went out on a mission of this fact. I'll tell you an example of the extremes to which this was carried.

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When we got through, during Linebacker I, destroying virtually all of the powerplants, with the exception of the one in Hanoi which was protected--the Navy worked on those in Haiphong and destroyed all of them, and I knocked out all the powerplants surrounding the Hanoi area and the upper part of the country--they were now virtually without power. They were resorting to small power generators, and the whole war effort was suffering very badly up there. The cities were going dark, and the factories couldn't produce any more, having a major effect on morale.

The Russians had been building, at the same time, a hydroelectric powerplant up northwest of Hanoi. They had dammed up a river and had built a big earthen dam with a big concrete spillway encased, and on this concrete spillway, they had constructed the generator plant, and it had, as I recall, three very large turbine generators. The capacity of this was such that if they got it working and tied into their grid system it would replace something like three-fourths of all the electricity that we had destroyed previously and, you know, really put them back in business. So one day the intelligence guys came in and said,

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"Well, they've done it. They've turned on the power at Lang Chi." I think the name of the place was Lang Chi. "And the power is on again all over North Vietnam, and this damned hydroelectric plant is really turning it out." They recommended that we destroy it.

So I went back and asked for authority to destroy this plant. I couldn't destroy it because it had been one of these that had been put on this excluded category. I now felt I needed authority to destroy it. The answer came back, "No; you are denied authority to destroy it. The reason is that the generating plant itself is located right on the face of the dam and if in your efforts to knock that out, you hit the dam you are apt to breach it, and this will cause a rush of water that will go down river, and there are seven small villages downstream that could be wiped out, and we don't want to suffer the loss of life." So I appealed it, and I talked on the phone to Admiral Moorer. I said, "You know, this is insane. We have gone to so much trouble to bring them to their knees and destroy all this power, and now, by the pull of a switch, they're making up all this deficit again. We have got to destroy this thing." He said, "Well, I

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tried. I can't. They are afraid you are going to breach the dam. I'll tell you what, I'll try to get authority for you to do it if you can precision bomb it." I said, "Well, I can do that. I'll use laser bombs, and I'll take my best crews, and we'll try our damndest to keep from hitting the dam." He said, "Well, let me talk to them." So he did.

A couple of days later he called back and he said, "Okay. I've got you the authority. You go ahead and do it. But don't hit the dam." He had gotten the authority from them on the understanding that I wouldn't hit the dam. (laughter) Now, this dam . . . Here it is, you see, and this powerplant is 50 feet from the base of it--50 feet! And we are supposed to destroy these turbines 50 feet away from this dam and under no circumstances bomb the dam. That's the conditional authority that I was given--to knock it out but under no circumstances hit the dam.

Well, I went up to Carl Miller [Brig Gen Carl S.], who was our wing commander at the time, flying these laser guided bombs--there's one of them over there, incidentally [pointing to a model]--and we had a big

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prayer session. I said to these guys, "You know, I'm going to do it, but if you guys hit the dam, don't bother to come back here. Just keep flying west, and I'll join you over India or some other place." These kids put twelve 2,000-pound bombs through the roof of a building that was 50 feet wide and 100 feet long. If you want to talk about precision bombing, there it was. They didn't touch the dam at all. I sweated the whole mission out, of course, because it was my neck if we wiped the dam out. But that's the kinds of conditions and constraints, you see, that were being placed on the commanders. No loss of human life.

I remember once when we were bombing in the Hanoi area and were using laser bombs. Virtually all my bombing in Hanoi was with laser bombs, because I had to be precise. I couldn't kill populations, and we had to learn techniques for bombing with these precision weapons. We only had four systems, four operational systems, where we could lase the targets. These were Pave Knife systems. They were experimental pods that we were using, and they had never been produced in any numbers, and we went through that

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whole Linebacker war with four operational pods. We had to break our necks to keep them from being lost in combat missions. We went to all kinds of ends just to see that those airplanes were not lost over enemy territory because it would have drastically reduced our capability to do this precision bombing.

Anyway, these kids were up there on this mission, bombing in the Hanoi area using lasers, and one of the bombs was a no-guide--it doesn't guide--and it goes crashing right into a highly populated center of Hanoi, right through this big building. This kid comes back, and he tells me very frankly that he bombed what looked like a big civilian residence or something there. He's sorry as hell that the bomb didn't guide. So I knew I was going to be in plenty of trouble. I got the guys to get out all the photography of the city and we would identify a number of buildings up there, and I'd put the intelligence people to work on it to see what we had hit. I thought, "well, golly, maybe it's the local hospital. It could be a local orphanage." It could be all kinds of horrible things. It turned out to be the Communist

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Party Headquarters. (laughter) One bomb! Of all the buildings it could have hit, it went smashing into the Communist Party Headquarters. And you know, I think it had a salutary effect on the outcome of the negotiations, because I really think these guys thought we were now going after Communist leadership. They thought it was a deliberate move, and these Americans with their precision bombing had precisely bombed this thing right in the heart of Hanoi, and "They are after us, the leadership. My God, we had better start talking." (laughter) But it was all an accident! Of course, when I reported back what it was, nobody said "boo" to me. In fact, I talked to Tom Moorer here, within the last month, about this incident. I said, "You know, you never sent me a reprimand at all for dropping that bomb right in the heart of Hanoi." He said, "Nobody ever made an issue of it." (laughter)

But you see, there was a building that was off limits. That was not on the authorized target list. Nobody would ever permit you to do it because they were afraid you might hit the building next door by mistake and kill some civilians. That's the kind of constraints we had.

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You compare that to what we were doing in World War II, when, like I say, the RAF would go out every night and firebomb a whole city with 1,000 bombers and destroy 20,000 people. And people thought that was a valid objective in a war. Now, you kill one civilian by mistake and you are on the carpet. The commander is held responsible. These kinds of constraints were on us all the time we were down there. We had to be very careful and very conscious of it. The thing that makes me mad is the picture painted by the press was of indiscriminate bombing. You know, so many times those words appeared in articles like the one I've described of wiping out Cambodian cities. The facts were just the opposite.

H: You know, what you were mentioning about the press not seeing any value in bombing dams and dikes. General O. P. Weyland would certainly take exception to that because he feels that's one of the very things that brought the North Koreans to the peace table, because once they had problems keeping food on the table, the whole civilian population was pouring pressure on their leadership to get it over with.

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V: Well, I know General Weyland. He is a very great air commander. He's a fine man, but he is of a different era. He's not of the era of the Vietnam constraints and controls. Things changed drastically, even from Korea. Now, they had their problems and restrictions in Korea, too, as opposed to World War II, but nothing like those that were placed on military operators in Southeast Asia.

H: Would you like to bring in something?

M: I would just be interested. I have heard various comments of individuals about Jane Fonda's and Ramsey Clark's visit, and the outcome of their visit, if you would care to comment on that.

V: Well, I hope that Jane Fonda is having some second thoughts now. I think she thought that the North Vietnamese were patriotic people who were motivated primarily about concerns for the welfare of their country, and that they wanted to be free of foreign entanglement. They were basically decent people who were humane and kind in their treatment of our prisoners and so forth.

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The only thing she ever saw, I am afraid, was evidence of that kind. You know, people went out of their way when she went down there to convince her that the picture I just painted was a real and an accurate one. She was shown prisoners of war [POW] who were selected very carefully because they weren't as decimated as the others or as emaciated and who were more willing to play the game and say that they were well treated.

Now that all the facts are out, perhaps her views are changing a little. We know now the terrible story of the conditions that our POWs were subjected to. We know of the great inhumanities of the North Vietnamese, not only to our people but to their own people. They were certainly not civilized in the sense of the word that you and I know it. I think she must be having some doubts today also about her initial assessment about these people, because here they are up to their necks in another war. As you mentioned earlier, they are bombing over in Cambodia. They are doing the same things that we were accused of doing, bombing in the Parrot's Beak, and waging a major war against a neighboring country. They have been active up in Laos doing the same thing. So the complaint that we

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have heard that if we left them alone and got out of their country, they would live peacefully with their own neighbors was a speculative dream.

[End Tape 3, Side 2]

Well, the strong views of people who opposed the war in Vietnam had colored their objectivity. I had ample evidence of it during their visits. I remember in one case--I won't mention the name here because the man is still active in politics--I received a message from a prominent Senator who was opposed to the war in Vietnam. He said he wanted to come down and talk to me personally about my bombing in Cambodia. This was after the war had ended in Vietnam and I was in Nakhon Phanom, Thailand. So he arrived in Saigon. We sent an airplane over from Thailand to pick him up and brought him over, and we had briefings all prepared for him. When he landed, it was around noontime, he said, "I hope I'm going to have a chance to eat before we go into the briefings." And I said, "Yes." A very nice guy, incidentally, an amiable fellow. We went over to the club and had a little meal there for him, and we had a drink for

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him, a martini, and he polished that off, and as I recall, he had a third one and he polished that off. Then he had a big lunch. We went over to the briefing hut, and I had this young officer giving him a complete rundown on why we were bombing and where we were bombing in Cambodia. The lights went out and pretty soon we heard this loud snoring. Well, it was the Senator. He had fallen asleep right alongside of me. Well, he had been traveling a long distance; it's true. He had been on airplanes for a long time and he had been pushing all the way through. That lunch didn't help, and the martinis certainly didn't. He was tired. But now he gets here for the prime purpose of the whole visit, to find out for himself what's going on, and he goes to sleep.

Well, it got a little embarrassing. This young man who was giving the briefing could hardly hear himself over the snore. So he finally stops and he goes like this (motions) to me, and I went like this--cut it. We turned the lights on, and I shook him and I said, "Well, Senator, you have heard the briefing." He said, "Well, that was excellent. I came down here to find out this sort of thing. That's why I'm here."

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He hadn't heard a thing. Well, we put him on an airplane, and now we flew him directly into Phnom Penh. Mind you, Phnom Penh is under siege, 25,000 enemy troops right around the outer limits of the town trying to move in and we are bombing trying to keep them at bay. He gets off the airplane, and he had arranged a news conference; he had sent word on ahead through one of his aides that he was coming and all the press was waiting at the airport when he got there. And he conducts a press interview right at the plane side.

He said he had come all the way down from Washington to find out for himself the true story, and he was glad he did because he was now more convinced than ever that we were wrong in what we were doing and that he had just come from the headquarters that was planning and conducting the bombing campaigns. And he spoke authoritatively. Then he proceeded to say everything he had said in Washington against the bombing. You know, it's kind of disheartening when something like that happens.

On another occasion, I got a message from Bella Abzug

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[Bella S., D-NY], who was at that time in Congress, very much opposed to what we were doing in Cambodia and Laos. She said she wanted to come down and talk to me. I invited her down and said, "I will arrange a full day's briefing for you." She appeared in Saigon and I sent an airplane over to get her to bring her up to my headquarters. But the pilot called me from Saigon and said, "She doesn't want to come to your headquarters right away. She wants to go up to Laos to Vientiane and wants to talk to the American Ambassador first." So I said, "All right, fly her up there."

In the meantime, I picked up the phone and called Ambassador Godley and said, "You are about to have a visit from Bella Abzug, who is out here to find out why we are bombing in Cambodia and Laos." I explained the situation to him and he said, "Well, fine. I'll welcome her. I'd like to talk to her and tell her what we are doing." I said, "Well, I'm going to get a chance to talk to her after you are through because she is going to come back to my headquarters." So she goes up there and spends the night. The next morning the pilot called and said, "Hey, she doesn't

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want to come down to your headquarters." I said, "Now what does she want to do." She wants me to fly her and her husband and a secretary that they have with her directly to Hongkong." I said, "No. Tell her to get on commercial air, and you come on home." He said, "Are you sure you want to do this, General?" I said, "Yes." So we left her stranded up there.

Now, the whole purpose of the visit, presumably, was to come out and find out why we were bombing. She was going to come to my headquarters to find this out and yet she would rather go to Hongkong than down to my headquarters at that stage of the game. I don't know why or what she had in mind, whether it was urgent business or a shopping tour or what, but she couldn't find time now to come down to talk to me to find out what we were doing and why we were doing it. And as I say, I left her there. Godley had to make arrangements to get her on commercial air up to Hongkong. That's the sort of things you run into with people with their minds made up who don't want to really see the facts and who won't listen or go through the motions of listening, just sleep through it. It was disconcerting because we had a real story to tell,

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you know. We knew what was happening there and we knew the true military situation. We could reassure these people about the great care we were exercising, avoiding indiscriminate bombing, and the care we took to see that there were no civilian casualties. I was very proud of our record in Vietnam, all during Linebacker because by their own count, I think the whole Linebacker campaign resulted in less than 1,000 casualties, civilian casualties, in all of Vietnam. That's by the official statements of the Vietnamese themselves. This is almost inconceivable. We had dropped more bombs when I was the commander down there in these two Linebacker campaigns than had been dropped in the whole European campaign while we were involved with American forces. People don't know the magnitude of this thing.

H: Why don't we discuss the Lavelle [Gen John D.] affair, then, while we are talking about this sort of thing?

V: Have you had a chance to interview General Lavelle?

H: Yes, we have.

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V: Good. General Lavelle, of course, was my immediate predecessor. He was down there at a very difficult time. He was down there at a time when there was delicate negotiation going on where they were hoping to get detailed peace discussions going with the Vietnamese. As you know, there had been meetings unbeknownst to most of us in third nations between the Vietnamese, North Vietnamese and the US State Department people, with a view toward getting a dialogue going. The Administration had decided that we were going to play a very careful watch and wait game and that we would limit all of our bombing to the area just immediately north of the DMZ and to in-country, and that we would avoid any major military operations beyond that up in the north. All the bombing stopped during this period in the Hanoi area, and the bombing effort that we had mounted during Rolling Thunder was brought virtually to a halt. This was the period when George Brown was down there as the commander and Lou Clay, who followed him.

The air war was essentially a war in-country, the war in the south. They were not responsible for major

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operations up in the north. They didn't have the problems that Momyer and I had with the large campaign in the north, which was another order of magnitude of activity.

In any case, the Administration wanted to give the appearance, in order to get this dialogue going, of great constraint and great restraint on our part. And they had decided on a set of rules. The rules were that out of prudence we would continue our reconnaissance activity north of the DMZ to make sure that no surprise attack was being planned or being mounted against us, so we had to mount surveillance and armed reconnaissance, or reconnaissance, along the Route Packages. Not armed reconnaissance; they were armed all right but they weren't permitted to find a target and destroy it. The nature of the mission was to ferret out what was happening on the approaches to South Vietnam across the DMZ, and we were limited to an area maybe some 20 miles north of the DMZ and all up and down the major routes feeding down into the DMZ area.

Now Lavelle was the commander during this period, and

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it was a tough period for him and for the guys that had to do the job because the rules were that you could not fire on the enemy until he fired on you first. And this was handed to the Defense Department by the President. These were agreed rules which were passed on by the JCS to the Commander in Chief, Pacific, and on down to MACV, who was General Abrams [Gen Creighton W.], and to Lavelle, who was the Air Commander. Very clear--you cannot fire unless you are fired upon first.

Now this was putting his pilots in a disadvantageous position because they'd have to fly along, down low enough, so they could see what was happening which put them right down in the area of withering ground fire. On many of these missions they were receiving ground fire and they were losing airplanes. Guys would fly along over a spot and brrrrrrrp, a burst would come up behind them and before they could do anything about it an airplane would be down. The thing was very difficult on the pilots, very demanding on the pilots because it put them at a great disadvantage. It was all right to say, "You can't fire unless you are fired on first," but the tactical

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situation was such that it made it almost impossible for you to fire on him after he fired on you because you are moving very fast and you go beyond the spot, and he's under cover. You know, to go back and find where the fire came from even would be difficult. They were very cagey about the way they were doing it, you know, they'd wait until you were overhead and blam!

I think General Lavelle found this increasingly difficult to live with and found it difficult to justify to his pilots. In known areas of enemy firing--as I recall it to the best of my knowledge--he started a policy of preemptive strafing where his airplanes had been lost previously and where it was likely they were going to be hit. I think he was actually dropping bombs in some instances. I guess his reasoning went like this: I know they are going to hit me here because it has happened before. My pilots are at a great disadvantage, and I will interpret the rules from Washington liberally here and, in these instances, bomb or strafe first, suppressive fire, to keep them from hitting my pilots in known areas of previous

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incidents where I have lost airplanes."

Now, he did this without notifying Washington that he was adopting this policy. The first evidence that drifted back to us that this was going on was some people who had been out there who came back and who had heard rumors of this, and then the operational reports that were coming in didn't jibe. The munitions expenditures didn't jibe with the number of operational reports of missions. They were using more rockets and bombs and 20-millimeter fire, rounds, and so forth, than was justified by the mission reports that we were getting in. So he had set up a dual bookkeeping system where one thing would be reported back only to him, and the other would go into the main reporting system, I think, without realizing that there were other systems that would cross-check this, like logistics.

In any case, when the word got back that this was possibly going on, General Ryan, who was Chief of Staff of the Air Force, got concerned about it. He made a trip out there; he was going out anyway, but he made a special point to check with Lavelle on

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this, because as Chief of the Air Force, this was beginning to reflect on the Air Force. I only know General Ryan's part of this, because I was back in Washington at the time. But anyway, General Ryan came back and assured the JCS that he had personally talked to General Lavelle, and that this was not going on; this was not happening. So General Ryan, you see, had put his reputation, his word, on the line with the Chiefs, and this was passed on up the line to higher echelons up in Defense where there were some concerns also. But it was, in fact, going on. And, of course, the bubble finally burst, and the evidence was very conclusive, and now General Ryan sent out an investigating IG [Inspector General] team, who went out and really did a thorough search, and at that point, Lavelle said, "Yes, dammit, I did it, and I did keep it from my superiors. But I thought it was the sort of thing that Washington would condone." Well, it wasn't, you know. And if he thought that, originally, he certainly would have told General Ryan on his first trip out there that, "Yes; I am doing it, and I know you people will support me." But the way he did it, you see, was to say "No,"-- he hadn't done it, and then he put General Ryan on

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the spot with all his superiors. I think General Ryan had no recourse other than to make it an IG issue, and when the IG discovered it, then it was a court-martial type of thing, deliberate misrepresentation and deliberate lying to the Chief of the Air Force when he asked the question. You may get on this further if you ever get around to interviewing General Ryan, and someday you presumably will, and ask his view of this. But this is my best recollection of it.

Now, in defense of General Lavelle. His troops really were in an indefensible position. He knew he couldn't get Washington to change the rules, so he stepped in to help the guys in the cockpit and stuck his own neck out in the process of doing it, and he got it cut off. Was he wrong? Or was he right? I don't know, except I think, in this day and age, you know, commanders simply can't operate that way. You've got to be very cognizant of the rules of the game, because the Washington-level control is very absolute and very precise. I have never talked to General Lavelle about this since this incident occurred. And I would be curious to find out from you what he did say in

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his own behalf on this.

H: Well, I didn't conduct the interview personally, but a member of my office did. According to him, he said that General Lavelle felt that, although it was not in any written rules about how he was to conduct things, it was always implied. At least he had the feeling that he had this extra leeway that we were talking about, and when things started turning sour, they all backed off and left him standing there naked, so to speak.

V: Well, I think there are two things wrong with that: One, of course, is that the reporting system he had for this was known only to himself, so it wouldn't have been known back in Washington; and the other thing is this incident I just told you about of General Ryan's going out and personally talking to him. He was very much concerned and made this trip and actually asked the direct question. As I say, to correct the record so we are absolutely clear on this, General Ryan should be asked for his view on this. That is my recollection, really, of what happened. Lavelle was a tremendous combat commander.

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He had a lot of know-how, and his troops thought the world of him. I think he was doing a very credible job down there. I think he was in a very tough position, and he reacted the way he did. But there never was any understanding in Washington that this would be tolerated by anybody.

In fact, I had attended a conference out at CINCPAC where his deputy had come up, and we had talked about what we were going to do about this situation. And I said to them, "I'll tell you the JCS thinking on this. The Chiefs say that we must abide by the rules. You cannot fire on them until they've fired on you, but once they've fired on you, there is no limit to the amount of effort you can put in in response. In other words, if you want to go back there and just beat the living bejesus out of that spot from which that fire came and drop all your bombs on it, fine. There is no restraint on that whatsoever, but clearly you must--and this is a rule from the President himself--you must be fired on first. But once you are, really go back and teach them a lesson. Turn the airplanes around and go back and drop your bombs all over the place there and really show them that

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you mean business."

Whether he misinterpreted that guidance to mean that the Chief would support him in the other thing he did or not, I don't know. But in subsequent investigations that were conducted by OSD, they sent a team out and others, it was demonstrated very clearly that the whole chain of command had sent the word down to him that he had to be fired on first, and he was, in fact, not waiting in some instances until he was fired on first. That was an infraction of a very strict rule imposed at a very high level which the Chief's themselves never did like but couldn't get changed. We had made repeated attempts to get that loosened up, but no, because you have to go back to what they were attempting to do. They were trying to demonstrate restraint. They were trying to get the North Vietnamese engaged in negotiations. They were trying to demonstrate that we were using great restraint in our own operations to improve the atmosphere to get these people around the conference table, and this was a carefully calculated political move to achieve this objective, and you couldn't have a commander in the field blowing it by doing something

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else, and that's the way it worked.

H: Where did this originate, this particular restraint you are talking about?

V: Right over in the National Security Council and around the President himself, because they were planning this campaign of negotiation that I am talking about, and it was sent over to the Secretary of Defense and down to the Joint Chiefs as a directive.

H: All right. When you assumed command of the Seventh Air Force after General Lavelle's removal, did you encounter any morale problems? How did they receive you?

V: Well, we were in the middle of a major war at this point. You see, the whole thing had changed. The invasion had now started, and you know the pace of combat activity just mounted dramatically. The situation, frankly, was this: The Administration had banked on Vietnamization working. The Vietnamese would now be able to do this job by themselves, and they could handle any future attempts by the North to

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take over, and we had been pulling ground forces out all over the place. So, at this point in time, there virtually were no more US combat troops on the ground in contact with the enemy. They had all been pulled back and were on their way home or had gone home or back in rear areas. The South Vietnamese were now out there by themselves, and the enemy had been preparing for a whole year in anticipation of this situation, when we would have been out of there and no longer engaged on the ground, so that they could mount a major offensive and destroy the South Vietnamese, crumble the whole thing, gamble on getting a quick victory before we could get back in. So what we were faced with was making up the difference of 500,000 ground troops in the face of the first really major large-scale invasion, and doing it with the Vietnamese themselves and with US airpower. US airpower was now called on to do what 500,000 ground troops really hadn't been able to do too well in the previous year, and the work we had to do was cut out for us. We had to really go to work to save these little guys, and we had a whole series of crises--Quang Tri, and Tan Canh, and An Loc--everything was going to hell at once, and these guys came pouring across the DMZ;

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they had these T-54 tanks, 130-millimeter guns. They just blasted all the South Vietnamese with three divisions up there. One of those divisions, the Third Division, just broke and ran. Christ, they threw down their guns and their arms and abandoned their tanks and fled. And some of them were recaptured later as far south as Hue, and some of them were executed by General Truong [Lt Gen Ngo Quang], the I Corps Commander up there, because of having fled in the face of the enemy, but units were crumbling all over.

At Tan Canh, I remember this was the first appearance of the sagger-wire guided missile at Tan Canh, and this was up in the highlands, number II Corps. I got a call in the middle of the night from General Abrams, and he said, "Jesus, we've got a major catastrophe on our hands. The 23d Division at Tan Canh has been attacked by armor, and it's fleeing in the face of the enemy. They've thrown down their arms, and we are going to lose Pleiku. There is nothing between the enemy and the city of Pleiku but this division who is in rout. You have got to get air up there." So we sent gunships up there that whole night, banging

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away in the dark, trying to slow this thing down.

The next day he called me and said, "The situation is getting worse." He had just talked to the corps advisor who said that the enemy is advancing and that they can't form a line, and the 23d Division is in complete rout and, "What are we going to do?" So I said, "I'm going to go up and see for myself." So I jumped in an airplane and flew up to Pleiku, got in a small, light Army plane and flew up over Tan Canh. It's now the morning of the next day, and there are tanks all over the place that are burning and upside down. There is no sign of any marching troops pursuing the friendlies, but the road is choked with fleeing South Vietnamese 23d Division guys. They've all thrown everything down, and they're lightly clad now, and they're heading south as fast as they can. But nobody is in pursuit!

The armor that had been pursuing them initially--that had hit them--had been virtually destroyed by our gunships. All night long they had been banging away on them, and there were burned out hulks everywhere. Then I flew up over the Tan Canh division encampment

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area, where the friendlies had been before the attack, and I could see untouched M-41 tanks sitting there, completely untouched, where they had been abandoned by these little guys who ran. What had happened was that they had charged out to meet the armor attack of the enemy, and then they ran into these wire-guided missiles that they had never encountered before. And they'd picked off these first couple of M-41s, poof, like that, and these little guys knew they were up against something they couldn't handle, and they just fled.

Well, I got back and Abrams is pulling his hair out. He's just had another report from up there. The situation is terrible; the enemy is advancing. I said, "Wait a minute. I just came from up there. There's nobody following these jokers. There's a big gap between Tan Canh and the retreating troops. If you told them to stop now, they could turn around and walk back to Tan Canh unopposed." He said, "Is that right?" I said, "Yes." We found out later this was an armor attack designed to achieve tactical surprise. They didn't have the infantry support for it; it was never meant to gain ground

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or the whole territory or to pursue, and we had misinterpreted it. These little guys that were running out were crying, "Alarm! Alarm! Alarm! We're being pursued!" This was the nature of the war, you see.

Air was now being asked to do the work of US ground forces and, air, and it was a tremendous job. The artillery problem I ran into, for example. General Truong, the I Corps Commander, when I went up there said to me, "We've got to destroy the enemy 130-millimeter guns there. Unless we stop them, I won't be able to hold the city of Hue even, let alone Quang Tri." He described the problem to me. The enemy had brought these long range, 27 kilometer range, very accurate 130s, which the Russians had given these people, had brought them and had used them to destroy all of the fire support bases on which our 155s and 105s were mounted. They put them in the jungle individually at isolated points, and dug them into the ground so only the gun barrel stuck out in the jungle, but they were firing on known targets which were highly visible and long-established fire support bases. We couldn't find them, but they

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had no trouble finding us. They had all the coordinates, and all this fire would be coordinated and brought to bear so that Truong's artillery support evaporated. He had no fire support. And he said, "Unless you destroy these 130s, I won't be able to hold the line."

We went through a tremendous effort to try to destroy these 130s. We had to find them; we tried dropping sensors in there, trying triangulation from acoustic and seismic sensors. We ran them through computers. We had infrared-equipped airplanes up there to detect the flashes of the guns. I finally said to the Army, "You've got to give us some help, and get people who can do crater analysis to tell us the direction from which the fire is coming." Up to this point, they couldn't even tell us where the fire was coming from. It was just BANG! impacting. When I went up there, General Kroesen (Gen Frederick J.), who is now Deputy Chief of the Army, was the advisor up there, and he said, "We don't have any capability to do crater analysis. These little guys don't know how to do it, and I don't have anybody on my staff that can teach them." I said, "Unless I get some idea of where it's

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coming from, get an azimuth, so I know where to look, I've got this vast jungle to search and literally several hundred square miles for every gun fired." So I went back and told Abrams they didn't do crater analysis up there. He couldn't believe this; in fact, he said, "You're full of bullshit!" I said, "Come on up there and see." So the next day he got in the plane with me, and we went back up and talked to Kroesen, Truong, and his people. No; there wasn't a man up there that knew how to do crater analysis. Crater analysis is obtained when you look at the hole the shell makes in the ground and see the angle at which it landed, and then you can sort of backtrack and see where or what the trajectory was, and you can get an azimuth.

Well, Abrams, when he got back to Saigon, got on the phone and called Fort Hood [Texas], direct, and said, "Get a couple of guys out here immediately that know how to get an azimuth." Well, when we got all this working, we were finally able to go to work on these 130s. We ultimately killed over 250 of them by air, finding them and destroying them. We were digging them out with laser-guided, 2,000-pound bombs. It was one heck

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of an effort. I might add that that 130 still represents a tremendous threat, even in Europe. There are 500 of them along the central region. We are faced with the same problem today because the Army has not developed a counterbattery fire capability against that weapon.

I had General Truong get me one of those captured 130s, completely intact, a perfect gun, and I shipped it back to the Army, and it's sitting over here in Aberdeen Proving Ground. I said to the Army, "If you do nothing else, reproduce it, so you'll have a gun at least as good as theirs." It's never been done. The Army still pots around with 155s and other weapons. You know, they fire at half the rate--they've got one-half the firing rate; they fire 3 rounds a minute instead of 6, and they fire up to 14 kilometers instead of the 27 that this thing fires at. They are outranged and outgunned all the time. They haven't corrected that problem. They're working on it, but to this day in Europe the problem is exactly as it was in Vietnam. Lessons learned? Apparently, zero.

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H: That's rather pathetic. Did you have any association with the Pueblo incident?

V: You mean the . . .

H: The Navy spy ship . . .

V: Off the Japanese . . .

H: Korea.

[End Tape 4, Side 1]

V: Somewhere there is in existence tapes of the complete exchange via secure phone between General McKee's [Gen Seth J.] Headquarters in Fifth Air Force and PACAF Headquarters in Honolulu on this whole incident, several tapes of detailed information that went back and forth, instructions, directions, and everything else that went back and forth. The whole thing. We taped them and had them in the command center. I brought them back to Washington later, and they were given to the command center; the Air Force Command Post had them in their files and records. They may

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still be there. If you ever want to get the true story of what I'm about to tell you, that's where it will be in these tapes.

B: We have excerpts of those transcripts down at the Center [Albert F. Simpson Research], but I don't think we have the entire thing.

V: Well, the incident occurred, as I recall, developed and moved very quickly. Are you taping?

B: Yes.

V: The first indication we had at PACAF that there was an incident was when General McKee personally called the command center and reported the incident. He said that a Navy ship was under attack, and he had to have instructions; he was being asked by his boss what he could do to help with the situation, and he was in Japan. This was happening in Korea, but he had command of all units over in Korea, and his air commander was over in Korea. Kunsan was being asked, by the UN [United Nations] Commander and US Commander over there, what assistance the air could give to this developing situation, and he quickly outlined what had happened.

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This Pueblo was out there with its listening devices and the enemy had showed up and had captured the vessel and had taken the skipper off of it and were turning it around and were bringing it back to port, and we only had a couple of hours before it was inside territorial waters and landing. And he had to have some idea as to what his authority was to take action in support of the ship. Well, I was Chief of Operations at PACAF. I remember I was at a party that evening when this call came in, with General Ryan, who was the PACAF Commander. Ryan and I both beat it over to the Command Post, got on the secure phone with General McKee, and those tapes were then made of the word that went back and forth.

The dialogue went something like this: McKee said he had very limited capability to respond. He didn't have proper ordnance on the airplanes, and it was going to be some time before he could do it. He had to have some idea of what his authority was to go out and take military action against the ship that had captured the Pueblo. We asked him to stand by, and we'd attempt to get authority from our command authority, which in turn was CINCPAC. CINCPAC was just up

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the hill from us there in Honolulu.

The CINCPAC Commander was off on a trip somewhere, and he couldn't be reached. CINCPAC has traditionally operated in a way where nobody can make a decision in the headquarters unless the CINC himself is there, and the authority that has been vested in the number two man, who is not a deputy incidentally, has traditionally been just a chief of staff, has been very little, and this guy always has to get hold of his boss to find out what's happening. So he's endeavoring to reach his boss to find out what we want to do.

In the meantime, they've sent the word on to Washington that all this is happening. The word has now gone back through several channels. CINCUNC [Commander-in-Chief, United Nations Command] has sent word back, US Forces, Japan, Commander has sent word back and his other hat--this is also General McKee--and we've now gone back through CINCPAC with word that the ship is under attack and being escorted back, and what do we want to do?

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Well, Washington is in a state of confusion. We can't get any answer or any decision out of Washington, and CINCPAC is more or less paralyzed by the absence of their commander, and they're taking the view that nothing should be done in the absence of CINCPAC. The Chief of Operations at the time was General Roy Allison, USAF [Lt Gen Royal B.]. He was the man whom we were talking to up there, and he could take no action. He had no authority to give us any authority to do anything in CINCPAC's absence. General Ryan and I said, "We've got to give General McKee some sort of an answer. If something is going to be done, it's got to be done in the next hour or so because the ship is going to be back in national waters pretty soon, and it's going to be much more difficult for us to take any military action when they are back in North Korea. We talked about it, and we finally reached the decision between us--and it was really General Ryan's decision, because he was the commander; I was just making the recommendation--that in view of the fact that this was an attack against US forces, it was inherent in a commander's authority to take action in defense of his own forces. This has been an unwritten rule; in fact, it's a written rule in JCS pubs and has been

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for years that authority is vested in the commander to take whatever action is necessary to protect his own forces. And we said, "This is a clear case of that. A US force is under attack; the commander now has a right to do something about it, and we're going to pass this authority on." So, we authorized General McKee, right then and there, very clearly, to go out and intercept those boats and sink the North Korean ships, if necessary, to turn it around and establish the status quo.

Now, General McKee, at that point, is having great difficulty in determining whether he can do this, because the airplanes that are ready to fly happen to be QRA [quick reaction alert] airplanes that are on nuclear alert, and he has got to download nuclear weapons and then load them with conventional weapons, and he's got to have the proper fusing for them, and he finds that he's having difficulty finding fuses for bombs that'll match that he can now put on the airplane, and time is running out. And in the final analysis, nobody went out there and did anything because he couldn't physically convert those airplanes to a conventional bombing capability from their

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nuclear posture, but he had all the authority in the world to do it, given to him by the Commander in Chief, Pacific Air Forces, General Ryan, under the rule that a commander has the right to take action to protect his own forces.

I know that in General McKee's mind he had--and I've heard some of his testimony over on the Hill that in the absence of any authority or any decisions made in Washington--to go ahead and do things on his own. But I say, "No." Those tapes will reveal that he was given clear authority by CINCPACAF to actually go out and take military action against those vessels. Now, had he been able to put the bombs and the fuses together and to get out there, he might have sunk the escorting ships, and the whole nature of that incident may have changed right then and there, but he wasn't able to pull it off.

H: Well, there was also a problem with the Navy being reluctant to notify Fifth Air Force Headquarters. It was quite a time lapse there.

V: There was a time lapse, but they were still in inter-

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national waters when all this was going on, when all this discussion was going on, and it was simply physically impossible for him to match the fuses with the bombs and get them on the airplanes. If he had been able to do that, they would have been out there.

H: And also, I understand that the Navy didn't notify anybody of the nature of the mission to have support lined up to begin with.

V: That's right. There was no preparatory action. In other words, no preparations made in case they got in trouble. But nobody thought they were going to get in trouble. This was a routine mission of a nature of something that had been going on a long, long time, routinely. And the Navy hadn't had any incidents involving their ships before, and they didn't think one would happen now. So, it's understandable why they hadn't asked for any special protection at this time. But that wasn't the first time that ship was out there, nor was it the first place where it had been done. It had been done all around the world, but they were out in international waters, perfectly within their rights, and nobody thought these little

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characters would come out of national waters and attack our vessels on the high seas. We were wrong; they did. But our inability to react because of physical constraints on the equipment is really what the key was here, not in the absence of a decision. It's true, there wasn't one made by CINCPAC because he was gone, and his headquarters was paralyzed. General Roy Allison was the Chief of Operations and was the man with whom we were dealing in CINCPAC, and his hands were tied. He couldn't take any action in the absence of his boss. Consequently, no decisions were made at the headquarters above us, but General Ryan bit the bullet and said, "Go get them! Go down there and make a couple of passes, and if they don't turn around and turn the ship loose, sink them!" The record is very clear on this. And if those tapes still exist in the USAF Command Post, you can get the precise wording of the conversation which is essentially what I just told you.

M: This would require speculation on your part, but do you think that the North Koreans anticipated this problem with our weapons, that we wouldn't be able to

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react that quickly?

V: No. I think they just thought we wouldn't have guts enough to react, that the Washington scene would be consulted; there would be a big deliberation; they would have the whole thing pulled off; they'd be safely back in port before any decision could be made. But they were fooled in that respect. The decision was made; it was just the equipment limitation that prevented us from doing it.

H: I read some of the congressional testimony as a result of the Pueblo incident, and several of the Congressmen were very, very upset by the fact that here a major power was caught with their pants down, and they felt it was just absolutely humiliating.

V: I felt very badly, too. I was really anxious to get those ships sunk. (laughter) If you read those tapes, you'll find that out by the tone of my voice on them. I was the one that was handling the telephone calls. Ryan was standing there alongside of me, and we were discussing this, and I would relay the message to McKee at the other end and tell him what to do.

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We were very anxious to stop this thing and very determined to stop it. We were physically unable to do it in the final analysis because of the equipment problem. You will find that in some parts of the tape there, McKee was saying, "I don't have any fuses." Well, we had punched the computers at PACAF and said, "Well, we know you've got fuses. Our records show that you've got X number of them at so and so." He didn't even know this in his own headquarters. We finally told him where to go to get the fuses, but by the time he had everything located, time had run out.

H: How do you feel about Commander Bucher's [Cdr Lloyd M.] action during this incident?

V: Well, it's awfully hard to put yourself in somebody else's boots when you were not on the scene. I think his interest was in saving lives. He didn't want loss of US lives. If you ask me what I would have done, I would have issued arms to everybody and said, "Fire!" You know, I wouldn't have permitted it to happen. I think I would have gone down fighting; that would have been my reaction. In his own defense, I must say this was a different type of ship; it wasn't

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a fighting ship of the Navy. They had been led to believe all along that they were never going to be attacked. They knew there were some risks attached to the mission, but they didn't think they were that kind. They were ill prepared for military activity, probably didn't know how to fire the guns they had on board. So he picked the easy way and decided, "Well, the path of least resistance is no resistance." I would have found that very difficult to swallow if I had been the commander.

H: Do you feel this compromised our intelligence effort any, by them getting ahold of this very sensitive ship?

V: Well, it probably gave them some idea of the state-of-the-art capability up to that point, but you know, we were going on to new equipment and everything else, so we quickly went beyond that point in time where it would have been that meaningful. The new and more sophisticated stuff was not on the ship. So it probably confirmed to them that we had a very good capability in this area, and it probably helped them in the design of similar equipment, but it was pretty

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ancient stuff by the time they got a chance to exploit it.

H: Well, as a result of the Pueblo incident, did they streamline these command and control efforts?

V: We went through a whole lot of soul-searching examinations, and later on I was involved in some of them, because this thing was still reverberating when I was back there as a J-3, which was just 1 year later. We were doing complete examinations of our command and control, the response mechanisms, and how to get decisions made. One of the things we did, of course, was to put into effect support procedures for missions of this kind. From that point on, all of these guys, wherever they were around the world engaged in such missions, always had protective missions planned and ready. From that time on out there, McKee and his forces were now ready to move, and they were notified in advance, and the forces were on readiness to support them. This was done all over the world, sort of locking the barn after the horses have been stolen, but we did tighten up on all those procedures.

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But you have got to understand, you know, there had been a whole history of these things. This had been going on for a long time with nothing of this kind ever happening. You are sort of lulled into a false sense of security. He is playing the game the way he should. He's not out there in international waters interfering with somebody else's vessels nor are you. You know, Soviet trawlers are right off the coast of the United States all the time, just beyond national waters doing the same thing, and we don't attack them.

During the Vietnam war, when we were flying bombers out of Guam going into North Vietnam, the Soviet trawlers were sitting off the end of the runway, 3 miles out, radioing ahead the takeoff times, force composition, expected arrival time, the whole works, and we weren't out there sinking them, because, you know, we play by more humane rules--international agreement and understanding. Koreans? No; they aren't constrained by anything like that. They're pretty much barbarians in that regard. I wouldn't expect them to observe any covenants or rules. You know, it took us a long time to learn this.

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Did this 200-mile fishing limit put a stop to the trawlers coming in so close?

V: No. It only says you can't fish out there. They aren't fishing.

H: They're fishing but in another way.

I'd like to backtrack a minute. You mentioned earlier that you'd like to talk later about the ordnance on the F-111 and the problem that arose. Would you like to address that now?

V: Yes. The Air Force, for the last several years, has been making a conscientious effort to develop anti-armor capability to deal with the tremendous tank threat in Europe. As you know, the Soviets have 20,000 plus tanks over there which they could bring to bear in a relatively short period of time in an offensive in Europe, and people have been very much concerned about this massive armor capability. So, the Air Force has been working on the A-10 to do this job, and they have been putting a lot of time, money and effort into what I call "one-on-one" weapons.

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These are weapons of the Maverick type, the EO, electro-optical types, the little television guidance systems in the nose, and they home in on the contrast that the target presents, and they're designed to score direct hits. The Maverick, which has long been heralded as the answer to the armor in Europe, was sent to me in Southeast Asia when the war was still on. It was a brandnew weapon system with tremendous potential. It was sold to me as a weapon that was going to stop all the traffic on the Ho Chi Minh Trail. "Here's a lethal weapon that has a 99 percent kill probability. Man, if it sees a target, it's dead." And we brought it out there and we were killing nothing with it, and we discovered very quickly the reason. As I said, the thing is a contrast weapon system; there must be a contrast on the target, and this thing then has a centroid system that measures the contrast and centers, and the weapon supposedly impacts on the center. But what happens if you don't have any contrast? Suppose it's in the shade of a tree? Or the shade of many trees like it is on the Ho Chi Minh Trail? No contrast; no lock on; no weapon kill capability. And that's what we discovered out there. I kept getting these idiot

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messages from these guys in Washington saying, "Why aren't you killing more tanks and vehicles with this Maverick we sent you?" And I kept sending messages back saying, "This isn't a test that you are conducting out in the desert on a bright, sunny day where you get a shadow and a contrast. We have this problem." And a few of them drifted out to Southeast Asia to talk to the pilots, and they discovered that "Yes; this is a problem!"

Now, when I became the commander in Europe, the first thing I heard was, "Boy, we are going to get these Mavericks over here, and that's going to finish the armor problem." Well, the weather in Europe is "no contrast" weather most of the time. It's just terrible. I said, "I don't think it's going to do this job, and we are wrong in giving the Army a false sense of security and ourselves a false sense of security. It's not going to do this kind of job or have anywhere near the kill capability we are describing." Well, there were pros and cons and arguments back and forth, and the Air Force was about to buy 25,000 of them. Before the Air Force placed the order for Europe, I said, "I want a test of this first in Europe. I want

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them to come out here and we'll actually test this weapon in the European environment." So in 1975 we ran such a test. TAC [Tactical Air Command] sent three of its best Maverick pilots, and I had three guys that we trained up very quickly, and we put them to work, and we ran the tests for 3 months, as I recall, working with US Army tanks. They'd go out there every day on the range, and their mission was to fly around, find the tanks, lock the weapon system on, and not fire it, of course, but if we got the proper signals and indicators then we knew we had a lock on and presumably the missile was going to guide. We found it was very difficult to achieve this positive lock on and the assurance that it was guiding.

The first thing we discovered was that all the lock-on ranges that had been talked about, 6,000-plus-foot slant ranges, was a lot of baloney. We weren't locking on at that distance. We had great difficulty in getting any kind of lock on; you know, they had to drive the thing down to 2,000 feet. Over a period of some several months, the kill probabilities that were reported were very low, and we tried all kinds of things to make the system work. We slowed the air-

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planes down, which in itself is bad because that makes the airplane vulnerable, and--mind you, these were the same crews doing it every day, and their proficiency gradually improved to the point where they were getting better, but only after many, many hours of missions, and I knew the average pilot wasn't going to have this kind of training. The average guy told to go get the Russians that were now coming was going to be right where these guys were the first several days of their effort.

Well, it finally dawned on everybody that, you know, I had a legitimate concern, that the thing wasn't very good for the European environment, so the Air Force went back and said, "Well, we had to come up with new, more sophisticated systems for guidance on this Maverick, and we'll look at IR [infrared] heads and laser heads and other things, which is what they are doing now.

I contended that this is okay in limited numbers, but it should not be the major weapon we are relying on for several reasons. First, I can't see any justification in having one airplane duel one tank. This is the

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so-called one-on-one system that I'm describing where an airplane lines up on one tank, goes down and presses attack and exposes himself to the supporting fire of those automatic weapons that are there in support of that tank. So you are taking a \$12 or \$13 million airplane and exposing it to destroy a \$100,000 tank, and the odds aren't that good. The losses are going to be very great, and it just isn't worth it. What I want to do is equip the airplane with the weapon that will get multiple kills per pass and which doesn't require them to line up precisely. Right now the pilot has got to make the pass, find the target, double back, make a lineup run, then come in and make a pass and lock the weapon on, and then get out of there. At any point in that pattern, he could be shot down by multiple weapons, because we have a whole family now of surface-to-air missiles that are supporting this armor. They are all mounted on tank chassis that roll along with the armor. New weapons like the SA-8 that has self-contained radar and radar missiles, rolls right along with the tanks, SA-6 system, the S20-23/24, a very lethal radar-controlled, high rate of fire, multiple-barrel weapon that'll knock an airplane down at 5,000 feet and

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below, regularly. And I don't think we should duel with expensive airplanes in that kind of environment, one-on-one.

What I want to do is locate the center of mass of the armor, which we can do today with many sophisticated platforms that we have up there. The SLAR [side-looking airborne radar] airplanes, for example, side-looking radar, has great precision now. They can locate armor, and we can determine location. We can data link the data back immediately to the operational base where the airplanes can go immediately to that spot. I want them to know the general center of mass location, then I want multiple-kill weapons on board the airplane so that he gets into the area, and when he drops, he doesn't have to line up individually, he just knows that there are clusters of tanks down there, and he drops enough weapons with area kill capability so one of those clusters will kill that grouping of tanks. In other words, I want several tanks killed for every single pass, and I don't want this guy maneuvering around down there to line up. I want him to go over at high speeds, at the most advantageous altitude and direction, and lay that

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stuff in there.

Now, I know these kinds of weapons can be developed. We haven't developed them because the interest has been elsewhere. The thrust has been on these electro-opticals. Electro-opticals are terribly expensive. You know, even this so-called unsophisticated Maverick that we were testing in Europe cost \$20,000 to \$25,000 apiece. You'd go bankrupt firing those things, you know, trying to kill 20,000 tanks. It's like the Standard ARM [antiradiation missile] that I had in Vietnam. This was an antiradiation missile that fired back down the radar beam and was supposed to kill enemy radars, enemy SAM radars, and acquisition radars. It would home on the beam and go down. You know, they cost \$200,000 apiece, and I never had any concrete evidence that I had ever killed a single radar with any one of those weapons, and we fired hundreds of them off at \$200,000 apiece. So, the idea of going bankrupt that way hits me the wrong way. I want multiple kill, minimum exposure, and I think the kids in the airplanes want the same thing. The boys who have been out there and have been shot at and who have seen the heavy losses we sustained in well-

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defended areas want an even chance. The answer lies in area-type weapons.

When I was in Europe, I got with the Germans, and they were developing a system called STREBO for their airplane, which is the MRCA or Tornado and which is similar to our F-111, only it's smaller, and they wanted to be able to go out and get some worthwhile kills when they got there. So they were developing an area weapon, a very excellent concept, that was going to carry these little 44-millimeter shape charges which would be ejected by a gaseous injection system, controlled out of little tubes so that it had a very precise pattern formed. And it could be done from low altitudes instead of using, as we do, parachute drop canisters which then open and scatter the stuff around, which is sort of haphazard and requires altitude in order to work. This could be done from low altitude and was controlled the positive way.

I actually went down with the Chief of the German Air Force, General Linberg [Lt Gen Gerhard], and saw these things demonstrated. We saw the shape charges demonstrated against tanks, and I came back and got

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hold of the Chief of R&D [research and development] of the Air Force, Mr. LaBerge [Hon Walter B.], who was Assistant Secretary for R&D for the Air Force, brought him over, had some of his people look into this, and this thing was then dumped into the R&D research program in the States and quickly got nowhere, because it wasn't invented here. If it isn't invented in the United States, then nobody is interested. People had a million reasons why they didn't want that system to be seriously examined. Incidentally, they are still looking at it, because some of us have been screaming and kicking so loud that they're working the problem. But they've come along now with a whole new series of Air Force weapons which show great promise, if they get on with them. But they are having great trouble getting it sold over on the Hill now, largely because the Air Force itself for years has been going the other way and casting aspersions on this other approach. Now, they've got to turn around and try to sell it. But there are some of them that show great promise, and I think, if you have a chance, you can get somebody to give you a briefing on some of these concepts that they have worked up as part of this WAAM program--Wide Area Antitank Munitions.

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But I think it has got to come, and if you couple the bad weather situation that I described earlier with loads of armor, and the risk of flying down low and making multiple passes, then you've got to come to the conclusion that I have--that's not the way to do it. The best way to do it is to find the center of mass and then have a wide area kill, and you can do it day or night regardless of weather. You've got a weather delivery capability in the F-111 airplane. Say, you load an F-111 with loads of weapons of this kind and lay that stuff in there, and everyone has multiple kills, and the thing could carry 20,000 pounds of this stuff; you could saturate a wide area with lethal weapons. You know you are going to get armor kills, because we can pretty well pinpoint the armor now. They can't hide from our side-looking radar any more. We've got RF-4s with side-looking radar that'll pick out armor, (sound), like that. But now you need to get the delivery vehicle in there and do what I just described, and the ordnance has to be good. It's coming. It's taking a lot of time, but these people are turning around. There was a great proclivity in the Air Force for a long time to like to buy these intricate weapon systems turned out by electronic

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industries that costs thousands of bucks and involve advanced states of the art of electronics, and we were just really overboard on that kind of stuff, in my judgment. The money was going into programs of that kind. Nobody was putting it into ordnance that I've been describing.

H: This STREBO you were mentioning that the Germans are developing. Is that an acronym for something?

V: Yes, but don't ask me what it is. S-T-R-E-B-O.

M: I've seen the concept.

H: All right. Another issue we could discuss here shortly is the very controversial one that came up again recently. You might have seen it on 20/20 about Agent Orange and our defoliation effort in South Vietnam. There's a big public outcry now about so many of the airmen and ground soldiers that were exposed to this defoliation element, and they are suffering all kinds of aftereffects.

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H: We were discussing the defoliation effort over in Southeast Asia. Do you feel it was worth the effort to begin with, or how do you assess the value of it?

V: Well, by the time I got over there, we were doing very little of this. I think the thing had run a full course by that time, and most people figured it wasn't worth that much effort. It certainly wasn't worth all the flak the military was getting in return. So, there was no emphasis on defoliation at all when I was in Southeast Asia.

The requirement, of course, came initially from the commanders who were very much concerned about the jungle cover that was being exploited by the enemy. Let's face it, they were taking advantage of the jungle cover right up to the edge of every military encampment in Vietnam and using the element of surprise, and people said we should cut this cover down so they couldn't continually ambush us the way that they were doing. The R&D community grandly came forth with this solution, so everybody went overboard hoping to defoliate the devil out of everything and destroy that jungle which was our enemy and their

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friend. The North Vietnamese were extremely skillful in taking advantage of cover and ghosting through the jungle. You never knew where they were, and efforts were being made to control the approaches to valid military facilities. First, I don't think anybody knew there would be these aftereffects we are talking about, so the decisions to use them were made without that foreknowledge. That has a bearing on your decision at the time, of course, since you aren't encumbered by concerns of cancer or whatever later. But I think the tactical results, so far as I can see, that were really achieved with them were minimal, because the jungle had a habit of growing back awfully fast even after it had been defoliated, and there was just so much of it. But there was no way you could have made much of a dent in it, enough to really make that much difference to you. My own feeling is, it wasn't worth all the effort.

H: Doesn't this get back to what we were talking about earlier of trying to dam the waterfall up from the bottom instead of going to the source?

V: Well, I think you were quoting General Weyland on

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that? I think he was implying that if we could have gone to the source, which was Hanoi itself, earlier with the Rolling Thunder operations many years before, the war probably would have ended. I certainly agree with him, but politics being what they are, and the constraints on the administrations being what they were, I understand why it wasn't done.

We talked earlier about the difficulties the President has in keeping public opinion with him and keeping the war effort going and keeping the press from being absolutely ruinous in their campaigns against what you are trying to do. I just don't think it was possible in any of the administrations that I was familiar with back in those days to sell that kind of a program. You would have been called mad to go bomb them back into the Stone Age, as General LeMay is quoted as having said we ought to do. But when we did it in Linebacker II, you know, sent the heavies up there and really laid that stuff in there, it brought the results.

But that's got to be put in perspective, too. I mentioned earlier that what we did in Linebacker II

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was simply redo what had been done previously in Linebacker I, only we compressed it now into a shorter time period, so the impact on the enemy was that much greater. But he wound up at the end of Linebacker II about where he had been in October after Linebacker I, with about the same kinds of targets destroyed and nothing more. We had simply made an error in miscalculating their willingness to sign an agreement after Linebacker I. When we took the heat off of them, they said, "Well, to heck with you. We are not going to sign any agreement. We are happy. You probably can't ever bomb again. We know your problems at home; the problems with the press and the Congress and the people, the waning support for the war. You have already said this one is about to end. Now, how are you going to reintroduce all this bombing?" So the President had to make a very tough decision to do what he did, when he did it.

B: There were some very noteworthy and tremendous efforts on the part of Air/Sea Rescue in Southeast Asia. One interview we had with Steve Ritchie [Capt Richard S.], he mentioned that you were instrumental in insuring the rescue of John Locher [Capt Roger C.] who

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was shot down over in Vietnam. How did you view the value of the Air/Sea Rescue? What part do you think they played in the overall role in Southeast Asia?

V: Absolutely essential for the morale of the combat crews. The guy had to have a feeling that he had some chance if he was shot down, and I consider it to be absolutely essential that we have a vigorous program of rescue going, and you know the thing paid off so well, so many times. And it did instill in the combat crews a feeling that they had a fighting chance. It wasn't all over when they got shot down.

For some reason or the other, that kind of thinking never got to Europe. For example, when I got to Europe I discovered there was no Air/Sea Rescue plans for combat operations in Europe. There wasn't a single Air/Sea Rescue unit based on the Continent of Europe. The only outfit was over in England, and it would be miles away from the combat once it started, and I wanted them reorganized on the basis of the kind of system we had in Southeast Asia. Well, that's gotten virtually nowhere. Money, other constraints, people who are willing to believe the war will never

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happen, et cetera. But I am a strong believer in giving the pilot a fighting chance.

The incident he's talking about was for a guy who had been shot down and had been gone for quite a considerable period of time, as I recall. Everybody had written him off, and then all of a sudden this walkie-talkie came back on the air. One of our raids was up in that same area again almost 1 month later, and lo and behold, this guy is still alive, and he's up there. But he's way the devil up north and west of Hanoi, deep in the heart of enemy-defended country and, you know, to mount an effort up there could be very costly. We could lose choppers; we could lose escorting airplanes; we might wind up with a whole lot of airplanes down and a lot of other guys down in the jungle just to save one man. A commander, when he authorizes a mission like this, has to weigh all these things. Do you wind up with just a terrible debacle when you are all through or what? As a matter of fact, this kid was located up in the hills in visual range and visual sight of a major airfield on which there were North Vietnamese combat airplanes, taking off and landing, and he was watching them

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every day. We were going to have to pull this off right in the shadow of that major airfield.

So, when they came to me and said they wanted to try it, I had to sweat out the possible repercussions. The whole airfield could have been alerted. They could have taken off and shot down one or two Jolly Greens with their crews, lost some of the escorting birds. It could have been a mess. But I really felt that if we planned it well, used the element of surprise, that we would get away with it, because I had been one of the champions of the Son Tay raid years before where we had done the same thing essentially, and I felt it was worth it. I mean, here's a kid who had stayed alive, and he was led to believe he had a fighting chance; now, you owe it to him. That's probably what Ritchie was referring to. I had to make the decision and I said, "Let's go get him!" And they did, without a single loss.

M: This might be a good point. Would you care to comment on your role? This is the second time you mentioned that in the Son Tay raid.

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V: Well, Son Tay was conceived of back in Washington at the time I was a J-3, and when it was first advanced a lot of people thought it was crazy, because here we were going up deep into enemy territory, just 20 miles I think it was from Hanoi, to try to rescue some prisoners. The whole thing would have to be a masterpiece of execution if you were going to pull it off, because we were going to take choppers and troops and land them up there. SAMs were almost certain to be encountered because you were well within the missile range not to mention MiGs. The whole thing sounded like a very great risk, but it was worked up by the special operations people in the JCS who were under my control. They briefed me on it, and you know, my initial reaction was "Good God!" But the more I thought about it, the more I thought, "Well, we ought to give those guys in the prison camp a fighting chance. If we can pull it off, great."

My job became one of organizing the planning for it and laying the ground rules down, and how it was going to be done. Then I had the major responsibility for selling it over in the White House. I was the first guy to take it over to the White House, and

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I, personally, along with the project leader, briefed Kissinger on it when he was the National Security Council advisor, before the authority was given by the President for it. It was touch and go all through those planning days. It was "go" then "no go," and delays were encountered and so forth, but we finally, you know, had to bite the bullet and got them off the ground and away they went. As you know, it was a very successful operation. From an operational standpoint, everything went off fine. We didn't lose anybody, but the prisoners weren't there. It was just a failure in our capability to detect with any authority that sort of intelligence. But at the time it was conceived, it was a pretty daring thing.

M: Your earlier days, when you first came back after getting your degree, you were in intelligence. It has been said before that on the outside perhaps it was an intelligence leak on the Son Tay raid. Do you share that belief?

V: No. I think I know what happened. Son Tay was a camp that was built on the banks of a river where it had a habit of flooding occasionally during heavy

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rain periods. Some years it didn't flood, other years it did. I think it had been a prison, initially, before it had become a prison camp. It probably hadn't been used as a prison for this very reason, because it was being threatened periodically by rising waters. At a point in time prior to the raid, the waters had risen, and they were right up to the walls of the thing. I think the decision was made to evacuate the prisoners at that point because of the threat of the rising waters, and off they went. They were probably going to be brought back at some later date, and they may have been moved temporarily to another facility. We simply didn't detect the correlation between the rising waters and the other indicators to know that they had been taken out. We had reconnaissance airplanes up there; we were taking pictures of them. We had drones up there, reconnaissance drones, and the interpreters were carefully looking at the appearance of the camp to see if vegetation was growing up over the foot paths, and it wasn't. In the final analysis, they said, "It's still occupied." We learned later that they had moved a North Vietnamese unit in there. When we got up there, we discovered that there were others in the camp occupying it. They weren't

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prisoners, but they were some other contingent that had moved in there. So that continued the signs of occupancy. They simply weren't the prisoners any more. In my mind, it was just a failure on our part to see the correlation between rising waters and removal of the prisoners, initially, and then another element totally unrelated to POW work coming back in to occupy the premises.

You know, you've probably heard that we did have some last minute doubts. The intelligence people came in at the last minute--I think a day or two before the raid--and said, "Hey, we think there's evidence now that it may not be occupied." The DIA came in and said that. But they couldn't be certain, and this thing had gone so far it would have been criminal to cancel it and then find that, in their latest analysis, they had been wrong, and the guys were still up there, and we had done nothing about it. We figured we were going to be able to pull it off successfully with minimum losses, hopefully with no losses, and, therefore, we ought to go through with it on the chance they still may be there. And that's what we

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did. But it took a lot of guts back in those days on the part of everybody, including the President, you know, to authorize this, because it could have been a big debacle. They've had a whole group bounced up there and shot down and guys down in the middle of the night and lost without any chance of recovering them. It could have been a mess.

But it was beautifully planned and executed. Lots of careful preparation went into it. I was quite confident. In fact, I was asked, when I was over there briefing Kissinger, whether or not I thought it was going to work. Kissinger had known me over the years, and after our little group had gotten through briefing him, he called me aside. In fact, I stayed behind a minute in his office, and he said, "I want your view. Is this going to work? Are we going to lose a lot of people?" I said, "No. It's going to work." My neck was way out at that point, as you can well imagine. But I had a reasonable confidence, because everything had been carefully checked, and we had calculated reaction times of the enemy, and how much time we had before the system would be alert to the point where they could really start opposing you.

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And we were going to work within those parameters. This all proved to be quite accurate. We just goofed on the intelligence.

H: Once this failed, did that preclude any further attempts at this?

V: Yes. The enemy took everybody from the outlying camps and consolidated them in carefully guarded camps, primarily in the Hanoi area, where there was no chance you could get to them. And there we were. It did indirectly have a benefit; in almost every case, their conditions improved because they were brought into civilization. These camps out in the boonies were pretty bad places. Now they were brought in and they were put in the Hanoi Hilton there, and conditions improved for all of them. And for the first time, they were put together. The isolation they had suffered previously--a guy all by himself, you know, in an isolated part of the camp--and now all of a sudden, they were together, and they were permitted to talk to each other, and they were meeting old friends and had a tremendous morale boost. And the word had gotten to them, now the attempt had

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been made and their morale was extremely high. So the whole thing was useful even in its failure.

H: These torture stories that came out of Vietnam. Was there a great deal of validity to these?

V: Oh, yes. I think we have documented in our discussions with the boys who have come back that it was going on. They weren't observing any of the Geneva Convention rules. That's why I say that Jane Fonda and others were totally misled on this. They thought these boys were being humanely treated under the rules of the Convention of Geneva. Not so.

H: In the book, The Air War in Indochina, edited by Raphael Littauer and Norman Uphoff at Cornell University, it's pointed out in regard to the Vietnam war that "The technological approach to counterinsurgency outstripped the political one from the beginning, and since the goal of the struggle is political rather than military, the means employed have represented a failure of the imagination and all the paraphernalia of the electronic battlefield, while aimed at improving technical efficiency and reducing US

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casualties, can lead only to further depersonalization of an essentially human struggle." How do you view this statement?

V: Well, I think it's an overreaction on the part of the writers to something that was basically true. You know, we had all kinds of technology which had to be constrained in many ways because of the political constraints we talked about before. And there is a tendency on the part of the R&D and the scientific community to push forward developments and projects which may or may not be acceptable to the people who were, you know, given the orders. I had all kinds of offers of help from the R&D community, from people who thought they could end the war very quickly. Most of the concepts that they came up with really weren't worth the time and the effort. Some of them were pretty harebrained. But there was a lot of imagination shown by a lot of people, and we were moving very fast in the way of new technologies and new developments. It was a tough war though. As I said, when it was in the guerrilla phase, as I mentioned earlier, in many ways it was harder than fighting the way I was fighting, because the thing

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had pretty much gone regular forces activity when I got there.

Even in Laos and Cambodia, the large formations were now assaulting with pretty well-defined positions and so forth, so you knew you could get to them, and they were using sophisticated equipment of their own now, which they couldn't hide in the jungle the way they could hide a guy with a pack on his back and a simple AK-47 rifle.

But I think these people fail to see one thing. A lot of people have said that our failure to pursue the guerrilla phase and understand the nature of it and to work it properly was the cause of our debacle in Vietnam. I think the nature of the war would have changed anyway over the years, because the North was getting far more sophisticated. They were getting this new equipment from the Russians. They were getting the capability to take this thing into the field on a much more sophisticated basis. They were getting pretty good equipment in terms of modern warfare capability. A T-54 tank was a match for anything we supplied the guys in the South. In many

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ways it was better than the M-48, which was the biggest tank that we had given the South Vietnamese.

As I mentioned earlier, the artillery clearly out-gunned us. It was far superior. And when we were talking about new weapons to destroy armor, these guys had it in the field down there using it against us. The sagger-wire guided missile, which antedated the TOW and which went into combat early in 1972, was effectively killing our tanks, and while we were talking about new, modern weapons or shooting down airplanes, they were fielding them. The SA-7 was quite a revelation when it was first used. It took the low-performance airplane and swept it out of the skies wherever that weapon appeared. We simply had to take them and ground them; we couldn't use them there. It meant the demise of the old A-1 which people had talked about very fondly as being the type of airplane to use in the guerrilla war of Southeast Asia. Well, what kind of a vehicle was it when they introduced more sophisticated weapons, as they were ultimately going to do anyway regardless of what we did? And they did. When they brought them in, it changed the character and nature of the war. So I

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don't think it was entirely in our hands. These people were getting better equipped, and they were training in greater capabilities, and they were going to bring to bear whatever it took to win the war that they could get their hands on. I think the proof of that is in the Easter offensive when all this stuff was sprung on us. It was coming. So you may have been able to beat them back in the guerrilla phase but, you know, they would have turned to the other phase anyway in hopes of defeating you. And they almost did. People don't realize how close that thing came to a total military defeat; you know, by late April or early May, things were in bad shape in Vietnam. Things were crumbling all over. We were holding on to An Loc by our toes, and Quang Tri had fallen, and we had had the debacle up in II Corps, and the enemy was advancing everywhere in a major military action. It took a lot to turn all of this around. You know, to get the South Vietnamese back up to Quang Tri, it took a tremendous effort. I had to be up there almost every day, up in the front lines with the Vietnamese forces, finding out what they needed in the way of air support. At this point I was no longer just the Seventh Air Force Commander; I

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was the Deputy MACV.

When Abrams went back to become Chief of Staff of the Army, his deputy was moved up to be Commander; that was Fred Weyand (Lt Gen Frederick C.), and I became the deputy and took over Weyand's old job. I had two jobs now, the Air Commander and the overall Deputy Commander, and I really had to get out in the field and do things that Fred himself was doing previously. I was out with the troops many, many days, actually out in the field in the front areas trying to find out what they needed. We orchestrated, for example, the whole effort to recover all of Quang Tri. I was up in the forward posts with the Marines who were launching the assault to retake Quang Tri, and we were planning air campaigns in support of them every day and then going back and laying on the missions in support of them.

We had a few funny incidents that occurred. Once when I was at Marine Division Headquarters, I talked to this little Vietnamese Marine general, a one-star who commanded up there, and I said, "You haven't moved a bit since I was here last," which was just a

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few days earlier. "We agreed if I'd put all these B-52s in you were going to move on out and regain some of this territory." He said, "Well, I tried very hard, but the enemy has us pinned down with artillery fire, and we haven't been able to get to it. You know, there are three observation towers. They are water towers, and he's got spotters up in these towers, and he's spotting the artillery fire, and it's very accurate. As soon as we come out of the holes, well, they lay this fire on us, and I can't advance until we destroy that. I've got to have, at the minimum, those towers destroyed." I said, "Why didn't you call up and get some support from us? We could have used some laser-guided bombs and knocked those towers down right away." He said, "Oh, I made that request." I said, "Well, what happened?" He said, "The answer came back from your headquarters that using laser-guided bombs on water tanks was not cost effective." (laughter) This is true! Some kid up in Blue Chip up in ops center had gotten the request and said, "I'm not going to expend any of these costly laser-guided bombs on water towers," not knowing the tactical situation. The whole advance is held up; nobody can move because

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of three water towers. While I was standing there, I picked up the phone, called back, and within an hour we had a laser strike and knocked out three towers. Next day the general advanced 4 or 5 miles back toward Quang Tri. That's the way these things happen. You frequently don't understand why something doesn't come off, and you find it's some little glitch like this, some little human failing in some part of the mechanism. I found that I had to be personally involved all the time, and I mean every day, 7 days a week.

In fact, in the 18 months I was out there, I had 1 day's leave. I took off Christmas Day during Linebacker II. (pause) We had a little respite there, and I think we stopped bombing for 3 days at Christmas. My daughter came out to visit us in Thailand. That's the only day off I had in the 18 months of that war, and the rest of that time, 18 hours a day and late into the night, many times all night long, trying to stay on top of these situations as they developed.

Something like some young major who had been taught that it's not cost effective, you see, to use laser

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guided bombs on water towers without really understanding the problem in the field.

H: While we are talking on that, one of the most talked about issues is the high cost of weapon systems. You have already talked a little bit about it. When I interviewed Dr. Alexander Flax, one of the things he pointed out was that he had done a study on the rising costs of weapon systems in World War II, and according to his projection, by the year 2000 it would take our entire present-day defense budget to buy one airplane.

V: Well, he's quite right in discussing trends of that kind. I want to turn them around, really. I want more effective airplanes in smaller numbers and ordnance to make up the difference. That's where our great deficiency is. We are going the other way. We seem concerned about numbers. We've got to have numbers. We created this high-low mix concept. We'll have a limited number of costly airplanes and buy a large number of lesser airplanes, and that'll keep the numbers up and then we'll be able to do the job. But if all those numbers are on the ground and

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can't fight, then what have you got? This brings up an interesting observation I have made to a number of people about the choice of our F-16 for Europe.

When I was over in Europe, I was not only the USAFE Commander, that's US Air Forces in Europe, but I was the first commander of the new headquarters that had just been created in the alliance structure, and it was an outfit called AFCE, Allied Forces Central Europe. I had to organize the headquarters and get it ready to be prepared to fight the whole air war in the central region, and it was my responsibility to fight the forces of six air forces. There were six air forces under us in AFCE, you know, and this was quite a task to get all this coordinated, get all this communication in, get the plans written, and do all these things.

But at least, for the first time, it was a single airman looking across the whole central front instead of having it divided between the 2ATAF [Allied Tactical Air Forces] up in the north and the 4ATAF in the south, who hardly spoke to each other and planned their own little wars. Now it was going to be all

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fought as a single entity.

Well, now, comes the proposal to reequip the forces of these countries--Belgium and Holland being two of the outfits under my control there--they are now going to pick an airplane. The United States comes in with a candidate which is the F-16. I had some doubts and concerns about the F-16 which I let Washington know about through US channels; namely, its lack of all-weather capability. I was particularly disturbed by the fact that it could only use IR missiles, the Sidewinder. It couldn't carry Sparrows which meant that it would be limited in bad weather situations, because IR missiles don't fire when the weather is bad. And it had very limited capability to put black boxes in it to acquire targets in bad weather. And its a very small airplane with limited cubage, single engine, one pilot. The one pilot alone, you know, vastly restricts the kinds of equipment you can use to do the all-weather job, so I was sort of concerned about all this.

[End Tape 5, Side 1]

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There were two other candidates for the replacement airplane, and one of them was the Swedish Viggen, and the other was the French Mirage. The F-16 was being pushed, of course, by our Government as the best choice, new technology, good thrust-to-weight ratios, high acceleration, good maneuverability, but they were being very quiet on some of these other things that I was concerned about. You know, how was it going to fight in bad weather and so forth.

Finally, I started looking into some of the candidates, and I went up and flew the Swedish Viggen. I told the Swedes I wanted to fly it to see what kind of an airplane they were offering, and they graciously did this. They brought me up there and permitted me to fly the airplane to test the systems out and check its all-weather capability. I was very impressed with it, incidentally. It had true blind-landing capability. They could bring the thing back in and land it in zero-zero weather. It had radar missile capability. In many respects, a fine airplane for the kind of theater we were playing with. I came back highly impressed with it.

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I went to the French and asked to fly their Mirage. The only one I could fly was the Mirage V. They were very chary about the few F-1s they had available. They did let me fly their latest fighter, however, which was the Jaguar. They took me out to a French airfield and I flew that. So I had flown the Mirage V and the Jaguar for the French.

And then I sent in a request to Headquarters USAF to fly the F-16 so I would have a basis of comparison. After all, I was the overall air commander in the central region, and I had now flown some of the stuff the candidate airplane countries had, and it would have been a good idea to see what my own had. And I was denied authority! No need for the Commander of Allied Air Forces Central Europe to fly ours. The decision had been made. We are buying it. What you say has no bearing on it. They didn't say that, but that was the inference. They just politely said, "No; you can't fly it." And I sent this request directly back to Washington to the Chief of Staff of the Air Force, and the response denying it came from the Vice Chief. What I am saying is, the operational commander has very little to say on matters involving equipment procurement. It was like my trying to get

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that all-weather capability when I was out in PACAF, the LORAN. It never came except through a fluke when McNamara put money in the program. And when I wanted other things for Europe, people found reasons for not doing it. When I got over there, I discovered there wasn't a single laser-guided airplane in all of Europe 2 years after the war had ended in Vietnam and after the tremendous success we had had with laser bombs--not one single laser bomb or an airplane capable of delivering it in all Europe. And when I asked the people in Washington, "Why?" they said, "Well, we are just in the R&D phase of a new version of this equipment, and we are going to settle on this system and buy some later for operational use." I said, "When will that be?" "Well, about 1982 or 1983." I said, "What happens if the war starts in the meantime?" "Well, that's too bad."

Now we've got lasers over there because I made such a noise about it that they found some R&D pods, which were sitting on the shelves, and sent them to me. I traded PACAF for some of their laser-equipped airplanes, and we finally wound up with a laser capability in Europe. The same thing happened on LORAN. I demanded they send me a LORAN capability.

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There was none in Europe despite my previous story of how vital it had been in the campaigns in Vietnam, leading B-52s into Cambodia, and bombing missile assembly sites in bad weather. Not a single laser capability in Europe! Why? "Well, there is going to be a new system that is going to come along and it's called NAVSTAR, and it's going to do the job better than LORAN." "When is it going to be operational?" "1987, we hope." It has slipped, of course, since then, and nobody knows when it is coming in. In the meantime, you get nothing. Once again I went back, and I traded PACAF for some of their LORAN-equipped airplanes, and I got the R&D guys and TAC to give me one of their R&D sets of LORAN, mobile LORAN, which we moved over there and physically set up so we would have some all-weather capability in Europe. And then they sent the laser bombs and the LORAN-equipped birds over to do it. Nothing had been done like this previously. It's almost as if all the lessons we had learned down there had been totally ignored.

When I asked for more F-111s to get me around this bad weather problem, I ran into a hornet's nest.

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There I ran into problems with the State Department. I found out later the real reason for my having been denied the authority to get the second wing. Dave Jones (Gen David C.), who had been in Europe, knew the importance of it, and he wanted to help and had tried to push it, but he was running into opposition across the river.

I only found out, very recently, long since having retired, what had happened. It seems that Kissinger was over on an arms negotiation talk in Austria, I guess it was, and on his way back he had stopped in England at one of our bases. He was flying in Air Force 2, and they were using Mildenhall as a refueling point because we had similar airplanes over there in our command and control fleet. He was greeted at the airport by my Air Force Commander, the Third Air Force Commander over there, Rosencrans (Maj Gen Evan W.), and Kissinger took him aside and said, "What about this F-111 that Vought is trying to get over here in larger numbers. Is it a good airplane?" Well, Rosencrans was a very enthusiastic guy and said, "Hell, yes. It's a great airplane. We ought to have it. It's good." Kissinger said to

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him, "Can it reach the Soviet Union from here?" And Rosencrans said, "Oh, yes. It's got long range." When Kissinger got back on the airplane, I am told by somebody who was in a position to know, Kissinger said, "Kill that proposal. It's going to complicate our arms discussion and negotiations if we bring another weapon system in that can reach the Soviet Union." So here I am trying to solve an all-weather problem, and there's a political reason why we can't do it.

In the meantime, the Soviets are bringing in all kinds of systems, like the SS-20, which can reach all our bases regardless of weather. Their missile systems are now posing a great threat to us, and nobody is concerned about this, but they are worried about the impact on arms negotiations. Only we worry about that sort of thing, apparently. This array of capability is building up across the line, opposing us, and we can't do something with forces already in existence.

When I tried to bring some B-52s over to demonstrate the capability of B-52s to support ground troops--

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I wanted to stage a demonstration for the corps commanders and the division commanders to see how we could bring in firepower--I was denied authority on the grounds that it would be provocative. Our own deputy commander over there, Deputy CINCEUR [Commander in Chief, Europe] said, "No; this would have to be carefully handled and would require that we invite the Russians to observe it. It has political overtones. We shouldn't do it." So here you see we are placing hobbles and restrictions on capabilities that already exist to do the job we may have to do someday. We do it to ourselves in many instances.

But the point I am making with the remarks I have just made is, the operational commander has very little say-so about the new systems and the weapons that are being brought along for his use. The things I have been screaming for, both as a commander in Vietnam and a commander in Europe, were not the things that were high on the list of priorities in Washington for development. Those are things being pushed by others in other areas, particularly in the R&D area, who have thoughts and concepts of their own and who are pushing that. While they are pushing

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Maverick, I am trying to get area weapons. And who is winning? They are. We are buying Mavericks, that sort of thing. So, how do you get the voice of the commander into the hardware business? Well, you've got to change the system somehow, and we haven't done it yet.

General Goodpaster [Gen Andrew J.] tells a very interesting story. He was, of course, over there as SHAPE [Supreme Headquarters Allied Powers Europe], Supreme Allied Command, and bothered by the fact that he had very little say-so about weapon systems that were coming in. You know, things were being introduced that didn't seem to fit the needs of the troops, and he came back and talked to the JCS about it. He said, "You know, I have no mechanism for getting my views into the choice of weapon systems you send over there." So the Chief said, "Well, gee, sit down and write up a list of the things that you consider important. We'll work it in. We'll consider it."

So, he went back and conscientiously went to work with the staff, and he came up with a list of, I think he said, 20 systems that he thought would be

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extremely useful in Europe. He sent this message back to the JCS. Well, he heard nothing from the Chiefs. A month went by, 2 months, and 3 months--no response. He came back on a visit, went in to see the Director of the Joint Staff. He said, "Whatever happened to the message I sent with these recommended priority items that we need over in Europe?" The Director said, "I think that's being handled back in the Requirements shop in Plans. Why don't you go back there?" So here's the Supreme Allied Commander, he walks out of the Director's office and went to the backroom, and he locates a lieutenant colonel who is the action officer on this. He said, "Oh, yes, I got that. I've got it in my drawer somewhere." And he rummages around, and he finally pulls out the paper on which nothing has been done! That, I think, kind of sizes the problem for you. You understand why the air commander over there has no voice in the choice of airplanes, because the Supreme Allied Commander himself had no choice on any weapon systems that he's being told to fight with.

No mechanism exists whatsoever to get the Supreme Allied Commander's voice into this. And you find

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the various other countries buying stuff that I think is worthless. We are not the only ones.

I think the A-10, for example, was a bad decision for the United States Air Force in Europe. It might be fine elsewhere, but over there it's going to have an awful job staying alive. The Europeans are buying airplanes like the Jaguar which has very little capability to do the job in the European environment. They don't have the bomb nav [navigational] systems that they need for that kind of weather and, you know, they are essentially clear airmass, daylight capable airplanes; yet they are buying them in some quantities.

The Germans are buying Alpha jets in great quantities. I have serious doubts about their being able to survive. They are essentially A-37 type trainer planes, and who is going to keep them alive and keep enemy air off their backs and do all this sort of thing?

So each guy comes in, throws something into the pot that he's building, and they ask the Supreme Allied Commander to fight with it, never asking in advance--that man who is going to have to run the war--what he

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thinks. I think that's wrong. Don't you?

I have written articles on this, and I have written a pamphlet for the Atlantic Council which may be of interest to you. It goes to this subject, and I make this point. Maybe, slowly, people will begin to listen, but it takes a lot of time. Okay; you want to knock off?

H: To begin this session, General Vugt, could you maybe give us some suggestions as to how we could possibly alleviate this problem of mushrooming costs in weapon systems?

V: We have two areas to concern ourselves with. One, of course, in the strategic area, and the other is the tactical area. I'll talk about the tactical area first.

I mentioned earlier that it might be a good idea to consider the development of new munitions which will give us multiple-kill capability for CAS [close air support] instead of using the one-on-one techniques which exposes airplanes unnecessarily to high loss.

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rates to the enemy ground fire. Their multiplier effect of a multiple-kill capability should be looked at very seriously. Instead of buying more airplanes that'll do less individually, you could buy less airplanes that'll do a lot more. I think we can probably find the answer that we are looking for.

It's cheaper, obviously, to buy good munitions than it is to buy airplanes, and what we have to do is improve the kill ratio for each sortie by making substantial improvements in our munitions. It doesn't make sense for us to be employing the same expensive systems that we are developing today at great cost, employ these systems with munitions that were essentially designed for World War II use, the 500-pound bomb; the Mark 82, the Mark 83, and the Mark 84 are old weapons, and we've made very little improvement since World War II in our capability in this conventional area. I submit that one way to save costs would be to make great improvements in these systems. And these weapon systems that I am describing, or munitions, need not be costly.

Fragmentation weapons can be very cheaply manufactured

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once you put them on the production line. American technique and know-how, I am sure, will permit us to develop these weapons at relatively modest costs. I am certain that the answer doesn't lie in producing single-pass, single-kill weapons that costs \$25,000 to \$50,000 apiece. That's the best way I know to go bankrupt. Not only do you expose the expensive airplane, but if you get a miss, you've expended a great percentage of your munitions budget. I think the answer obviously lies in cheaper, more effective munitions in the conventional area along the lines that I have described. The Air Force WAAM program is the initial step in this direction.

We have to be careful here, however, that we don't once again make the thing too complex and costly. I know the tendency, even in the WAAM program, to do this. The concept of simple fragmentation effectively employed is being, I think, somewhat obscured now when we start talking about putting individual homing capability into each fragment, in each individual bomblet, so that pretty soon we are putting circuitry in again and higher homing devices and all that, and the cost is going to mount dramatically. These things

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we have to forego. So, I would make a plea for airplanes that can do the job, day, night, good weather, bad weather, but with a multiplier effect in the munitions they carry, so that each pass results in multiple kills of enemy armor, and other targets, too, of course. Whether it's oil storage depots or munitions depots of the enemy, the weapons that I am describing can exact heavy tolls of targets of that type, too.

Now the strategic area is something else. Here we are in a race with the Soviets who seem bent on achieving superiority, and they're putting considerably larger amounts of money each year into their strategic programs than we are. I don't think the American public realizes it, but the Soviets are expending approximately twice the amount we spend each year on strategic weapon systems, and they've come from a position of vast inferiority just 5 years ago to a position of at least parity, and in the judgment of some of us, superiority in the strategic weapons realm.

Unlike other leaders in the Air Force, when I was on

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active duty, I was not a strong advocate of the B-1. This may seem surprising to most people, but the B-1, I thought, was not going to be survivable for the next 20 years in the face of Soviet weapon systems that I see coming along. The B-1, unfortunately, had to save on costs to keep the program alive, and many things were cut out of the airplane that I thought were essential for survival.

For example, supersonic dash capability on the deck, that was one of the first things to go in efforts to save money. And then we eliminated the high-dash speeds at altitude when we eliminated the variable air scoops on the airplane, once again, in an effort to save money. This began to reduce the airplane to very modest penetration capabilities, and having had a lot of experience with trying to get B-52s over Hanoi, I can assure you that the job is a tough one, and a second-best airplane can't do it.

I think we have great potential in the F-111 fleet. I think that airplane can be improved to do a better job in the strategic mission role. It has all the attributes I described. It's one of the fastest

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airplanes in existence today on the deck, and it's probably one of the fastest at altitudes today. This may seem surprising to the uninformed, but the airplane will outperform virtually all our modern fighters today in high-speed runs at altitude or on the deck and has vast potential. It also has a superb bomb nav system, and it can do the job regardless of weather conditions. It's limitations, of course, are on range because of the limited cubage in the airplane.

But, I think this can be handled with some modifications in the fuselage, perhaps a re-engining with higher performance engines which are coming along now. In other words, I don't think we need to go through the expensive development of a new B-1 which has in many respects inferior performance to the F-111 that is already flying. So I would say there's one area where we could save money. But already the people talking about a reworked F-111 are trying to hang on the kitchen sink. This could doom the whole effort.

The cruise missile has potential. I don't think it's the answer that everybody would like to believe it

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is. It will be susceptible to enemy interception by new and advanced SAM systems that are coming along. The SA-10, for example, has great potential here. The new IR systems may cause it problems in the future, and new long-range interceptors may work on the carriers. And if its range is limited to 2,500 kilometers, as is now the case in SALT [Strategic Arms Limitation Talks] negotiations, it makes it possible for the Soviets to conceive of an advance-based, long-range interceptor to get after the carriers.* So there are problems with this system, but I do think it has great potential for us.

I am opposed to expensive developments in the strategic area which drive costs up unnecessarily. For example, we talk about mobile missiles; we talk about complex basing proposals for them. One of the proposals was to dig a tunnel—a very expensive proposition. We have spent a lot of time and money looking at the feasibility of it. Now the concept is so-called MAP concept, or multiple-aim-point concept, where we will dig many, many holes and then hide missiles in a smaller number of them.

*NOTE: This range limitation has since been dropped.

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I look at the Soviet approach with the SS-16 missile which is much more simplistic. They come up with a launching platform, a TEL [transporter erector launcher], which is a mobile vehicle, and they can drive it around anywhere and fire it without the necessary ground support structure that we are describing for our systems, keeping the costs modest.

We rule it out for a lot of reasons in this country, most of them political. People don't think it's feasible to drive vehicles of that kind around American roads armed with nuclear warheads, but I think we can get around this by sensible programs of basing the missiles on military installations, and then during periods of crises moving them out into the relatively uninhabited areas. There are literally thousands of roads in American rural areas which could accommodate missile systems like this and wouldn't cause the problems that people are describing.

So, once again, we do it the hard way; we drive costs way up with basing programs that are going to bankrupt us in the long run while the Soviets do it the simple way. They design a truck-like vehicle with an

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erector and launcher, and have the feasibility of concealing from us, if they wish, the total numbers they have available. All they have to do is store them in buildings or caves which can't be observed from our satellites, and they are in business. So I think we have to take a lesson from the Soviet book in a lot of these areas. Some of their weapon systems are basically very sound, very effective, and they don't drive the costs up with oversophistication, which seems to be our tendency in this country.

H: Another problem in that regard which other commanders have voiced to me is that when a weapon system goes into production, oftentimes the individual commanders will suddenly come up with some other late modification they want to put onto this system which will often entail a major overhaul of the original plan. And this is another thing they feel is a big factor in causing weapon systems costs to rise greatly.

V: I think their point is a valid one. We get a basic design for a weapon system finalized, and then everybody out in the field begins to dream up new additions and add-ons which they think will improve the system.

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And in many cases the increase in performance is very marginal and is certainly not worth the additional costs. I have been opposed to that. They were doing that with the F-15, for example. The F-15 was designed as an air superiority fighter, all-weather capable, to do a very difficult job primarily in Europe in the tough weather environment, and the next thing you know they were talking about putting additional long-range tanks on it, and they had all kinds of add-ons they wanted to put on the airplane that would result in a heavier airplane, reduce performance, and vastly increase the cost. I opposed that when I was a commander in Europe. I said, "The airplane is doing fine for our environment and for our requirements; don't garbage it up." But there is a tendency to try to garbage up these things.

And a lot of people make a career out of dreaming up additional add-ons for weapon systems. I guess the Pentagon is full of little cubbyholes with little guys in it dreaming up concepts of this kind.

H: All right. Going back to Vietnam again, you already addressed this somewhat, but maybe you'd like to add

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something to it. John L. Frisbee noted in a September 1972 issue of Air Force Magazine that "In the Rolling Thunder years, civilian officials in Washington decided what targets would be hit, with what armament, on what days, and often at what time of day." As you voiced earlier, you didn't have quite the problem prior commanders had, but do you think this is something that is going to always plague the military in the future?

V: Well, I would hope the lesson has been learned by all concerned, by both the politicians in Washington and the commanders in the field, that it's not the way to do it. I think you alluded earlier to the fact that somebody has commented that Linebacker was far more effective than Rolling Thunder for a variety of reasons, but one of the chief reasons being the freedom the commander had to pick the targets and match them to the operational requirements of the weather and the day, and the weapon systems available, and so forth. I think that lesson has pretty much sunk in now, and I would hope we won't revert back to the old system, but obviously there is no guarantee it won't happen again. We may have a

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very sensitive political situation where people are worried about escalation and where constraints will be placed on the military again, but I would guarantee that as soon as that is done the military effort is going to become relatively ineffective again as it was in Rolling Thunder.

H: You had an interview some time back with the Seventh Air Force historian, and you stated in that interview, "I don't think the enemy has enough strength to mount another invasion like they did last spring, so I don't think we are going to be faced with the situation which calls for the South Vietnamese having to do everything that we had to do along with them last spring. An enemy offensive can never achieve those proportions in the foreseeable future, so the job would be a considerably less difficult one for them." Well, in light of what happened in Vietnam, were you a bit too optimistic at that time? Or how would you look at that now?

V: No. I think my comments were made in the context of an effective implementation, of course, of the peace treaty provisions, and certainly, with one of those

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key provisions being adhered to which was that the Ho Chi Minh Trail would not be permitted to be used by the enemy, which incidentally was part of the agreement. To review the history of that again, the concern I had all along was that if the enemy were permitted to use the trail after the peace treaty, they would begin to build up a capability in Cambodia right across the border and in the immediate vicinity of the heart of the country, which was Saigon itself. I was assured by our negotiators that the terms of the agreement were such as to preclude this. As a matter of fact, one of the articles of the agreement, which was pointed out to me at the time, stated both sides would be denied the use of Laos for their own military purposes. In other words, we would have to stop bombing in Laos, which we did, of course, following the agreement, and they would have to stop using the Ho Chi Minh Trail in connection with their intended operations in the South.

Now if that provision had been enforced, then what I have described certainly would have been the case. But after the agreement was consummated and everybody went home and relaxed, I, of course, stayed down

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there and observed that the trail was being used in an ever-increasing rate, and that they were actually violating the provisions of the agreement within a week or two of the signing of the agreement. And after we had left and stopped our military activity in Laos and all bombing on the Ho Chi Minh Trail, they were jamming the trails with vehicle convoys numbering 300 vehicles or more. I sent all these reconnaissance photos back with urgent messages of concern and, of course, received no answers, because at this point everybody in Washington didn't want to have to face up to the possibility of resuming bombing again. The guy was getting away with a gross violation, and Watergate had paralyzed our reaction.

I came back, after I finished my combat tour down there and after the bombing stopped in August 1973, and reported to the JCS that I predicted the South Vietnamese would not be able to contain the military situation, and it would be just a question of time before the war would be lost. Everybody said, "Well, this is very contrary to what intelligence is telling us." Intelligence was reporting, especially the CIA, that the North Vietnamese were having difficulty

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retaining a foothold in the South, that their numbers had been reduced to levels lower than ever seen since 1967 or 1968, and that the areas coming under friendly control increased every day.

[End Tape 5, Side 2]

In essence, the view prevailing in Washington was that Vietnamization had succeeded, the enemy was no longer capable of mounting a major offensive, and the South had a very good chance of surviving under these circumstances that were actually prevailing. I sent a message back to Washington to the JCS, through channels, in which I said that without the help of the United States Air Force the South Vietnamese could not fight the war if it ever resumed on a large scale again and hope to prevail. This message was sent up to the Secretary of Defense. In a very, I think, interesting response from the Secretary's office--actually not written by the Secretary himself but by one of his assistant secretaries--he stated that this is just General Vogt crying wolf; it's an effort on his part to convince everybody the United States Air Force is sorely needed in Vietnam

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forever and, therefore, his views should be disregarded. I'm sure this message is available in the historical files somewhere if somebody wants to see it. I was, at that point, forecasting defeat of the Vietnamese in the event of a major resumption of hostilities because of what I had observed to be happening, namely, a major buildup opposite Saigon. It was apparent that the enemy, this time, would go for the jugular--the main artery of the country--and they would not resort to the type of campaign they had during the Easter offensive of 1972 where they came in from remote areas and worked down toward Saigon; in which we had, of course, been able to defeat them with massive applications of airpower.

Now when I finished my tour in Southeast Asia, I came back to Washington and reported this to the JCS. We had a session in which I voiced my fears and concerns. I asked the Chiefs if I could be permitted to go present this case to the State Department, because I felt that there was some misunderstanding about South Vietnamese capabilities to do the job. This authority was granted, and I asked for a meeting with the Secretary of State and his people who were involved

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in the Vietnam situation.

The Secretary himself didn't see fit to attend, but he had his Deputy Secretary conduct the meeting. This was Secretary Rush [Kenneth], who was a very competent and able man. I had known him previously when he was in the Defense Department, and he was now number 2 in the State Department. He did hold a meeting at my request and present were all his assistant secretaries and division chiefs concerned with Vietnamese matters. I told them I thought it would be only a question of time before the South was lost in the face of what I saw to be a major enemy campaign building up again. I expressly pointed to the use being made of the Ho Chi Minh Trail in violation of the agreement. I challenged the intelligence reports that were being issued at that time showing great optimism. And mind you, this was some 18 months or 2 years before the fall of Saigon, and I flatly stated it was just a question of time unless we took decisive action to enforce the agreement.

Secretary Rush took me into his office after that meeting and said that while he had respect for what I

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had to say, he couldn't jibe it with the reports he was getting every day from many sources not only the intelligence sources but from our Ambassador in Saigon. Ambassador Martin [Graham A.] was sending him very optimistic reports about the progress that was being made and the optimistic attitude that prevailed in the South. He asked me how I could reconcile my views with all these official reports, and I said, "I think they are wrong and I predict that we will have a major catastrophe in South Vietnam. I can't tell you exactly when, but if a major offensive ever occurs and we do not fulfill our commitments and get back into the war with American airpower, all will be lost." I have talked to Secretary Rush since then. I met him later in Europe when he was the Ambassador to Paris, and we flashed back to that period briefly, and we agreed that it's just too bad the things that I was talking about then somehow couldn't have been transmitted or translated into actions that would have prevented the catastrophe that finally did occur down there. So far from being the optimist that is portrayed in that little quote from the historian's interview, I was in fact the Cassandra, 2 years before the fall of Vietnam, that was predicting

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it, but my voice fell on deaf ears.

H: Why were these intelligence reports so contradictory to everything you were saying?

V: I think they were looking for the things they wanted to see. This is a case where everybody had breathed a great sigh of relief. We were now out of the war. The bombing had stopped. We had an agreement. We were going to close our eyes to these little violations of the agreement, and what Washington wanted to hear were things that supported this feeling of well-being. They didn't want to hear the things that were disturbing. The fact that the agreement was violated in the manner I have described, without any action on our part, was not only an unfortunate thing from the United States' standpoint but it was really a sellout of the Vietnamese who had been told flatly by the representatives of our Government that if they went along with the peace treaty, we would, in fact, react vigorously to any violation of the agreement by employing our airpower again, if necessary. And the Vietnamese President and his generals were told that, "General Vocht is going to Thailand where he is going

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to stay with all this vast American airpower. It will be poised to resume bombing, if necessary, if there is any violation of the agreement." And when the violation came, nothing happened.

Now let me flash back to a situation that occurred in Laos some months after the agreement was signed concerning Vietnam. There was another agreement reached with the Pathet Lao which brought a cease-fire in Laos. We stopped all bombing in accordance with the terms of that cease-fire and both sides, the Vientiane Government and the Pathet Lao, agreed to essentially hold the positions they now held in the field at the time of the agreement, and neither side was to make any attempts to gain advantage nor to seize new territory. I, of course, was sitting up in Nakhom Phanom, and I had an intelligence organization that was quite effective. Reports began to come into me that the enemy was preparing an attack on a major route crossing just north of the Mekong River, which the enemy had had as a major objective all during the war and which they had never been successful in accomplishing because the area was fairly heavily defended. As a matter of fact, there were Thai volunteer forces in there that

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were defending this particular area. Intelligence reports that I began to receive indicated the enemy was planning to attack and seize this major crossroad area in violation of the agreement they had just signed.

When I got these reports, I flew up to Vientiane and saw Ambassador Godley, and I said, "What will we do if these guys do in fact attack?" Well, he checked with his own intelligence sources up there and said, "Well, I don't think it's going to happen. It's true that we are seeing some activity, but that can be explained away on various other grounds. But on the face of it, it's not very plausible that the Pathet Lao would risk this settlement which they labored to get and which all of us had agreed and expose themselves internationally to a violation of an agreement just to gain a little crossroad. I don't think we have to worry about it." I said, "I'd feel better if you and I, Mr. Ambassador, thought this thing out in advance and queried Washington so that I would know what to do if it does happen because, obviously, I am the guy that is going to have to take the military action if and when it occurs. And it could occur

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some night when we are all least expecting it, and we are going to have to be able to react."

He agreed that it would be a good idea to do something about it, and he went back to Washington through State channels, and I, in turn, went back through channels to the Chairman of the JCS with a request that they give us some guidance as to what we can be expected to do if, in fact, this attack did occur in violation of the cease-fire. Washington wasn't very excited about it either, and the view prevailed that this would be a ridiculous thing for the Pathet Lao to do, but they agreed that in all probability I would have the authority to resume the bombing in defense of that area, if necessary, but that it would require approval at the time the incident occurred.

Well, within 3 weeks or 1 month of this episode, I was called urgently one night by Ambassador Godley who said that the friendly forces at this area had just reported that they were under heavy attack, the enemy was advancing, and the friendly troops were retreating. They were in danger of being overrun and annihilated. The thing that made this difficult

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was that they were, in fact, Thai volunteer forces, and the political implications of having a disaster involving a substantial number of Thai volunteers made this whole thing of utmost urgency. In the middle of the night, he and I had to get on the phone and call Washington. I called back through channels again to Admiral Moorer. He got Secretary Kissinger on the phone, and Washington now galvanized itself into action. And the Chairman and the Secretary of State met with the President and got a decision to go ahead and bomb. In the meantime, I had made plans for this and F-111s had been alerted to the possibility some days before, and we now got them ready to launch.

I had sent a formal request for authority to bomb through channels which went, of course, to CINCPAC. Some hours later I received a response from CINCPAC which said: "The commander is not on the scene. He is off on a trip. We anticipate a 24-hour delay on any decision on this matter. In the meantime, you are directed, repeat directed, not to employ any military aircraft in response to this activity." Well, the whole thing was going to be over in 24

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hours because of the nature of the attack itself, the size of it, the fact that the defenses were crumbling and the forces were fleeing, and 24 hours would have meant total defeat. It reminded me of the situation which we described earlier when we were talking about the Pueblo, when the Commander of CINCPAC was gone and nobody could take any action, and everybody hesitated, and time was consumed, and we were unable to get out and do the job we had to do then. Fortunately, at this point Admiral Moorer was on top of this situation and phoned back on a secure phone and gave me verbal authority to launch. If that verbal authority had not been received by me via secure telephone, there would have been a total debacle.

I later met the commander of the forces who had been attacked and talked to him, and he said, "If you hadn't gotten there when you did with those bombers, all would have been lost."

Well now, what are we talking about here? We are talking about the willingness of the Communists to violate agreements even when they don't seem to make much sense in the light of international politics.

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All the reasoning that I heard from Washington and from Ambassador Godley himself about why the Pathet Lao wouldn't break a solemn agreement that had international sanction, because what would it net them? All went down the drain, and the Communists were thinking far out in front of the rest of us. They knew that we had very strong antiwar feelings at home, and our hands were now being tied in Washington. The resolution was already in the Congress against resumption of bombing, and they had the very strong feeling that our hands would be tied in any of this activity. I think this explained the activity on the Ho Chi Minh Trail, too. Their willingness to violate a major facet of the agreement was based on their real acute understanding of the political situation in Washington which was one of making it improbable that the United States would resume full-scale bombing in Vietnam.

Now the Pathet Lao misjudged the situation, because the thing still had not deteriorated to the point at this stage of the game where we were paralyzed from responding and we did, in fact, respond vigorously. The F-111s were in there almost immediately. We followed them up later with some B-52s, and the message

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got across loud and clear to the Pathet Lao that if they tried that again, they were going to get hurt, and they didn't. From that point on, they rather scrupulously observed the agreement they had signed. But in Vietnam nothing was done about this gross violation of the use of the Ho Chi Minh Trail, and they took that as a signal that we were paralyzed, and they could proceed apace in an orderly manner to get their campaign organized to launch the final attack against Saigon, which came, as I predicted, in pretty much the manner in which I predicted.

Why did the people down in Vietnam itself, our Ambassador and others on the scene, not know this was happening? Well, let me tell you something that happened to me personally while I was still down in Southeast Asia.

After the agreement was signed, a military man--two-star Army general--was assigned to the Ambassador's shop to oversee US military assistance which was continuing in support of the Vietnamese. He was to report to me through military channels for all matters involving military affairs. He obviously reported to the Ambassador for all matters inside Vietnam. But

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his chain of command was up through me. I still had responsibility for the entire area, including responsibility for the possible resumption of bombing in Vietnam if and when the situation arose which required it.

I had asked for and received permission from the JCS to continue my relationships with the Vietnamese Corps Commanders. I knew these people individually. General Truong, for example, in I Corps was an outstanding officer whom I had supported all during the early days of the invasion and had been assisting him in retaking Quang Tri, which you recall occurred before the end of the war. They had regained all the territory they lost in the vigorous campaign to drive the enemy back out across the DMZ. The Chiefs had authorized me to make daily visits, or visits as often as I thought necessary, from my headquarters in Thailand to the corps commanders' headquarters throughout Vietnam to keep my finger on the military pulse so I could inform them of what was happening. And I made some of these visits. Some of the things I saw I didn't like.

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General Truong, for example, began to express concern about what was happening in his area. He said the enemy was consolidating its position; they were bringing in military supplies in violation of the agreement. You will recall the agreement stated that both sides would permit monitoring of the resupply activities of all forces in Vietnam, and we in fact set up procedures and machinery for permitting the North Vietnamese to examine and to count the materiel that was coming in in support of the South Vietnamese forces. They had to come through approved entry points, and they were permitted to examine the manifests.

The North Vietnamese, by the terms of the agreement, would do the same thing. And they would select certain points, across-border points, by which their supplies were to come, and we were to be permitted to observe the materiel coming in. Well, once again, they completely violated this agreement and never agreed to the inspection of any of the materiel coming in. And they were using cross-border points for the flow of equipment into the country in direct violation to the agreement. Truong had noted this up in

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his area. And he said, "I am very much concerned about it. It's like a sieve up here. This stuff is coming across."

When I made some of these reports back up through channels, once again it was the kind of thing they didn't want to hear. And the next thing you know I was told by our American Ambassador, Graham Martin, that I was no longer permitted to visit the corps commanders. "I don't think the presence of a four-star general, who has been leading the bombing campaign, is conducive to the proper settlement of the postwar situation in Vietnam and that, henceforth, you will not be permitted back in the country except with my express permission." So, in essence, I was now being denied access to the people who could tell me, and who would tell me and who would be frank with me, about their concerns and what was happening.

Now, he didn't deny me the authority to have some of these generals over to my headquarters in Thailand, occasionally, and I did resort to this. And I did fly some of them over to my headquarters to get information from them on what was happening and to

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reassure them that I was still there, and that our plans were current for the resumption of the bombing if and when it was necessary. But this was no substitute for the former close relationships I had had where I could actually go into the country and talk to these people and find out what was happening.

So, we willfully cut off the flow of information that would have helped us in our efforts to see what was happening and which may have led us to understand what the enemy was up to. And, once again, the reason for it, apparently, was it was the kind of thing they didn't want to hear in Washington which was now beset with the problems of Watergate, growing unhappiness in Congress of our handling of the situation down there. It was just ironic that after having driven the enemy into a hard agreement, which if it had been adhered to would have preserved all our holdings in the South, we were now giving it all away. Having won the military victory, we were now giving it all away by our unwillingness to enforce the very agreement we had insisted upon. I think the American public ought to hear this story.

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When people say to me, "why did you lose the war in Vietnam?" it causes my blood to boil. We did not lose the war. We achieved a very substantial victory which, in fact, drove these people to the conference table. As a matter of fact, Kissinger himself told me, after his first visit to Hanoi following Linebacker II operations, that these people were on their knees and eager for a settlement at this time.

Now, here's a case where it wasn't a military situation, and the politicians lost it. I hope the historians someday straighten the records out on this count. This was all occasioned by your statement that I was overly optimistic. I hope we have put that in proper perspective.

H: Frisbee (John L.), from the Air Force Magazine, who toured Vietnam in the 1972 period, also noted, "So it seemed certain by mid-July that the invasion had lost its momentum, irretrievably. It had not reached any of its objectives: to discredit the Vietnamization program; to humiliate the US, or to seize and hold enough South Vietnamese territory to cause the overthrow of the elected government. Airpower had been

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decisive." Well, did the United States really believe that the North Vietnamese had been this greatly decimated? Did they really believe they were at the point where they couldn't mass another big invasion like actually took place?

V: Well, I think what Frisbee was saying was that with the presence of US airpower there, the fact that the ground invasion had been turned back, it was very unlikely they would ever be able to mount another one under the same circumstances and prevail. This is the point that I made repeatedly. They had been hammered into the ground. They had been defeated on the ground by the South Vietnamese who had received massive doses of air support.

Now I don't think people recognize how much of a part air played in some of these campaigns. We have already talked about the Tan Canh situation when the 23d Division broke and ran in the face of the first use of the wire-guided missile by the enemy. But following the initial attack across the DMZ and the attack that drove down through Quang Tri and caused the fall of Quang Tri, there was virtually no organized

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resistance left in the North which could have prevented the fall of the city of Hue from these invading forces--nothing, of course, except airpower. General Truong attempted to establish a defense line north of Hue and south of Quang Tri which had fallen, but his capability to hold was very limited. As I say, the 3d Division, which was the major element in the defense of that area, had broken and run. He was in the process now of trying to round up the deserters, and he was extremely weak.

We have talked about the artillery situation that was causing him great difficulty. But now, here's the enemy, you see, in a position to exploit the fall of Quang Tri and the decimation of the total division and to now march unimpeded against Hue. Now what stopped them? Well, what stopped them was one of the most effective, I believe, interdiction campaigns that I have seen involving airpower. We placed FACs [forward air controller] over every inch of that road between Quang Tri and Hue, and we determined the vulnerable interdiction points, and we kept those points interdicted on a 24-hour basis. In our own battle room, we established from aerial mosaics a gigantic map that extended

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from one end of the room to the other on which was marked every single vulnerable point over which these people could move armor or tanks or guns, and that point was guarded by a forward air controller who brought in air as needed to destroy it. And at some of the river crossings, for example, after we destroyed bridges, we saw the North Vietnamese bringing in, in broad daylight, cranes in an attempt to put new spans up in the face of all this airpower of ours, and we would destroy the cranes and the bridge-building equipment right there. But they were anxious to get these interdicted points open again so they could flow south and seize Hue, which was obviously their objective. But we interdicted so thoroughly that none of their main battle tanks could move down across these river crossings and culverts, and so forth, which were totally bombed out, primarily with the use of laser-guided bombs that were brought in by our forward air controllers, and we did such a thorough interdiction job that they were stopped.

Now they finally resorted to the use of amphibious tanks, the PT-76 amphibious light tank. One night they forded several streams with about 35 or 40 of

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these tanks, and we caught them at daybreak coming on down toward Hue. We engaged them with airpower, and I think we had the largest, up to that point, single airplane versus tank battle that had been waged in the war. And at the end of the day, there was just smoking remains of the hulks of some 35 PT-76s on the battlefield north of Hue. They never got to hit the line that General Truong had hastily formed. So air had completely stopped the movement of these forces that were bent on exploiting their initial victories at Quang Tri. I don't know whether historians of airpower are aware of this very classic interdiction campaign which essentially saved the city of Hue.

Now, An Loc is a story, I think, that has been documented. General Hollingsworth [Maj Gen James F.] and his heroic efforts to save the city of An Loc are, I think, well documented and recorded. I might tell you a very interesting incident that occurred in connection with An Loc.

I had only been in Vietnam a couple of months. General Abrams was still the commander when An Loc was brought under major siege, and one day we had an urgent message

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from General Hollingsworth saying that he expected a major attack on An Loc the following morning, and that he expected the attack to be an overwhelming one that involved a number of regiments, and he had to have available tomorrow to support him all the air that could be made available including all the available B-52 support. This request came in to MACV Headquarters, info copy to me at Seventh Air Force, and it was routinely handled by the MACV staff. The request was turned down that afternoon on the grounds intelligence information available to MACV didn't support General Hollingsworth's contention. When the word got to me that there had been a turndown of the request, I immediately checked with my intelligence sources, including my forward air controllers who were up over the scene at An Loc, and everything I heard tended to confirm General Hollingsworth's contention that they were, in fact, going to be hit with a major attack the following morning.

End Tape 6, Side 1]

General Abrams had his same staff elements present at the meeting that I had called for, and we reviewed

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the bidding again, including the evidence I had presented which supported Hollingsworth's contention that there would be an attack in the morning. General Abrams turned to his staff intelligence people and his operators and asked them what they thought. And they said they stood firm in their original view, that Hollingsworth was in fact crying wolf and they saw no need to divert the B-52s from their normally scheduled missions the following day. General Abrams turned to me and said, "You are overruled. We'll continue with the normal air scheduling."

So I went back to my headquarters and began a more intensive search into the data and the evidence. I had a FAC flown up from An Loc to my headquarters, and I queried him firsthand about the situation down there. He told me about the obvious preparations that could be seen. They were bringing up large supplies of ammo [ammunition]; the mortars were being repositioned; the artillery was being moved up. He could see reinforcements coming in; the indicators were quite clear.

That evening, by the time I had gotten all this information to the point where I thought I had a

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convincing case, I again called General Abrams, this time at his quarters, and asked for another session on this issue. He agreed. And when I got over there, it was about 9 o'clock in the evening, and he was sitting in his quarters with the same staff elements who had been there earlier in the day. And he said, "All right, present your case." And I presented my case again. This time with more convincing data, and the same sort of a scene evolved with his intelligence guys saying "No; this wasn't so," and with Abrams finally saying, "You are overruled again."

Then I probably stepped out of line with General Abrams, and I said, "General Abrams, you know the President is on a visit overseas at the present time. He's going to be talking to the Soviets. It would be inconceivable that we would want to permit the loss of a major bastion like An Loc," which had become a symbol of resistance and stalwart defenses being mounted by the South Vietnamese in the face of this invasion. "It's inconceivable to have this thing fall while all these negotiations are going on." Well, this really made Abrams mad. He said, "I don't need somebody like you to tell me the political

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consequences of the fall of a city like An Loc. You are overruled, and goodnight!"

I drove back to the other side of the field to my headquarters and got there just in time to hear the phone ring; it was General Abrams, who was very furious, on the telephone. He said he didn't appreciate my lecturing him in front of his staff on political significance of a military situation in an area in which he had been fighting for a long, long time. I said, "Well, General Abrams, I can walk into these meetings and tell you what your staff thinks and what you want to hear, and I'll be of no use to you at all. If I walk in and tell you what I think from a professional standpoint and argue the case the way I see it, I'm going to do you some good. Only in that manner can I be helpful to you. I've had my hearing; you've made your decision, and I'll faithfully carry out your orders, but I can't agree that you should ask me to tell you only that which your staff tells you and what you want to hear." Well, there was silence on the phone for a few seconds. He said, "All right, John, all right, all right, I agree." And he hung up.

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And then to that man's everlasting credit, he walked from that telephone in his quarters over to the operations center at MACV Headquarters and redirected the targeting of all the B-52s for the following morning. And when the enemy forces attacked--as they did--the next day, the first battalion was caught out in the open as they came out of their foxholes and started toward the defenses of An Loc; the first wave was caught by a blast of B-52 bombs that came down and obliterated them, and An Loc was saved.

Postscript of this story: I talked to General Hollingsworth just 3 months ago and told him this story, which he had never heard before. He had never heard that he had been denied authority to get that air support that night. It had been kept from him completely by all his Army cohorts. And his comment then was, "My God, you mean those weenies up in that headquarters were trying to tell me what the situation was in the area I was familiar with and was defending?" And, in fact, that's what they were trying to do, and Hollingsworth had been in the chopper every day, overhead, observing this himself, and yet he was being overruled by staff officers in

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the headquarters many, many miles away, who were routinely doing their job. This is one of the problems, of course, that we've had down through history where the guy on the scene is ignored, and somebody else who thinks he has superior knowledge, but who is really remote from the situation, makes the decisions.

Well, to get back to the original point we were making, and that is that airpower had in fact saved the situation throughout all of Vietnam during this Easter offensive which was a massive effort by the enemy to take advantage of the fact that the United States had pulled all of its ground forces out of the war and were no longer engaged. They thought they could sneak in there and seize the country, a coup de grace, and airpower kept it alive.

I think the man you have just quoted was, in essence, saying that in their having been defeated by this massive use of airpower, they were in fact not going to be able to mount another offensive of that kind under the same circumstances--of course, where US air was still permitted to be on the scene and to help. That had been my contention, and that was really the

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basis of my earlier comments to the Seventh Air Force historian. But if you remove the threat of the use of US air, then you are, in fact, sealing the doom, and that's the case I was making. When you fail to enforce an agreement which is carefully contrived to preserve the independence of Vietnam, and you stand by and let these violations occur without using the air as you promised to do, then you have in fact invited the defeat which occurred.

H: Did General Abrams ever bring this point up again with you at a later date?

V: Never. We never discussed the situation again, but General Abrams and I enjoyed the closest relationship from that point on. He understood what I had said; he understood that I was working for him, that I was doing my best to help him, and I think he understood for the first time that there were other ways to look at situations in the field except through the eyes of the staff who, in many instances, were pretty remote from it.

I must say that the staff of MACV at this point in

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time was sort of rooted to the scene in Saigon. They were not getting out into the field. Later when I became, as I mentioned earlier, the Deputy MACV and actually moved into the headquarters and moved all my operations center physically over into the MACV Headquarters, and I now had a clear-cut responsibility to look into ground matters as well as air, I could in fact get on out into the field. I had an Army chopper assigned to me full-time with a crew that could take me anywhere I wanted to go, and I got out into the countryside to see what was happening. And I knew what they needed in the way of air support and help because I was out several times a week into the forward areas to see what was happening and what help was needed. And, occasionally, finding things that I described earlier like my own headquarters denying a request for laser bombs to bomb water towers because that's not a cost effective application of laser bombs. This sort of thing was happening so often and can only be resolved by somebody who got out there and saw for himself what was going on.

H: This situation kind of reminds me of what General Weyland and General Kenney remarked about General

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MacArthur, that his staff sealed him from the real world, and he didn't often see the real picture.

V: I think this has happened down through history. I think many an airman who has been an advisor to an Army commander, be it World War II or in Korea, has run into this problem. He runs into the mechanism of the Army staff, and the Army staff is a pretty stolid thing, and the Army system involves use of the staff. And an Army commander, traditionally, works his problems through his staff and generally goes along with the staff conclusions. That's certainly not true in all cases; there are mavericks, Hollingsworth being one of them. But, by and large, that's been my observation over the years. Now, in many cases, this is fine. But in many other cases, it's disastrous. And I think it's incumbent upon all Army commanders who have overall responsibility to listen to the professional advice of their airmen.

I might comment at this point on the command arrangements in Vietnam. Others have talked about it. I know it has been addressed in a recent book that General Momyer wrote. The command arrangements were

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difficult. The Seventh Air Force Commander, living across the field from MACV, had only scheduled appointments and meetings with MACV. He didn't interface with the MACV staff very much. He was busily running his own little air war, and he was not in on the planning phases of many of the combined activities which could have profited greatly from joint efforts before the actual combat activity took place. There was a tendency to call air in after things had turned to worms to try to retrieve a situation when, if air had been involved in the original planning and properly applied, it never would have turned to worms.

When General Abrams went back to Washington to become the Chief of Staff and General Weyand became the commander down there--this was I think in May 1972--the situation changed. Now my staff was there in the headquarters working with the MACV staff. I occupied the office right next to the commander himself. I now had authority to get into the ground business, and the close proximity of all the principals working together resulted in dramatic improvements in air/ground coordination, which has led me to believe that air commanders and ground commanders must be

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colocated in major areas of operation.

When I got to Europe later, one of the first things I insisted on was an implementation of this idea or concept for wartime activities in NATO. For example, as the AAFCE [Allied Air Forces, Central Europe] Commander, I was reporting to the AFCENT [Allied Forces Central Europe] Commander or the Forces Commander for the entire central region, who was a German four-star general. My headquarters was several hundred kilometers away from his, and it didn't make very much sense to have an air commander separated by that kind of distance from the ground commander. The accepted solution was that we would ultimately move our headquarters up to his headquarters so that we could be colocated.

But that really wasn't the thing that I felt was necessary. I felt it was necessary that we be colocated in our fighting headquarters, so that when the war actually came, if it came, we could be in the same operational facility conducting the war, and I went to work on the Boerfink bunker concept which was an effort to bring the AFCENT Commander and his staff and

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the AAFCE Commander and his staff together in a single operational facility with all the communications and computers, and the intelligence data and everything necessary to run a war together. This took a lot of doing, and there was a lot of opposition to trying to get this joint headquarters operational to the extent that it would be manned, for example, in peacetime. People didn't believe we ought to be putting people in a bunker underground in peacetime. This was sort of an inhuman thing to do. And that attitude prevailed for a long, long time.

Even today we still have situations where air commanders are located many, many kilometers away from the ground commanders that they are going to be supporting. I point, for example, to the situation involving the 4ATAF Commander who is located at Ramstein, and the Army group commander who is over at Heidelberg, separated by a mountain range and many, many kilometers. They, obviously, have to be located together to fight the war properly, and until this occurs, the kind of situation that I have just described that prevailed in Vietnam will prevail there. We have to learn to put our airmen and our

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ground force personnel together so they can fight a concerted war, so air can be included early in the operational planning for any military mission and not be used to bail people out after they get in trouble.

My relationship with General Weyand was a good one. He was a very enlightened commander; he worked very closely with us in doing these things. He made good, sound decisions. He appreciated the use of airpower, and I think we formed a team that was very effective in ultimately turning back the invasion and, essentially, freeing the South Vietnamese territory of the invading forces. But it took a tremendous effort, a lot of sorties and a lot of determination by American personnel to do that job.

H: All right, since you had the vantage point of being in both Southeast Asia and Europe, just what kind of fallout did we derive from the Vietnamese defeat? What did our European allies as well as our allies in Southeast Asia think of this "cop out," so to speak, from the American side?

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V: Well, of course, the United States went to great ends to convince people that that wouldn't happen in Europe, that you are allies who are protecting US vital interests in an area of the world that we can't "cop out" of, and we began a series of reassurance visits to convince these people that this was in fact the case. But I must say that there is still serious concern and doubt in the minds of a lot of people. I encountered it when I was there on some occasions. After a few drinks, when some of the generals from the allied countries that I was involved with had a chance to talk to me confidentially, they would express concern and ask for reassurances from me that in fact the United States would not, in the event of Soviet pressure, do what we had done in Southeast Asia.

Now what kinds of assurances can you give these people? It recalled the situation that existed in Vietnam just prior to the signing of the agreement when I was asked by Washington to reassure all the people I had contact with in the Vietnamese Government that we would, in fact, come to their help so they would sign the agreement. You recall the South

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Vietnamese President was very much concerned about going ahead with the peace treaty, and there were last minute efforts to convince him it was the right thing to do. General Haig was sent down there to reassure and to threaten him into signing that agreement. He finally did agree to the signing after he received iron-clad guarantees that we would, in fact, be there in the event of a major attack.

But at this time, General Haig and others came to me and said, "We would like you to go to your military counterparts, the people that you have been fighting with and supporting here for the last year, and convince them that we will in fact remain steadfast. You know, if you tell them now that the United States is serious in its determination to back up our guarantees, they will probably listen to you." And I refused to do this. I am sure it didn't make Washington happy to find out that General Vogt was not going to go around to Vietnamese generals who had confidence in him and assure them that we would take the political action necessary to turn on the bombing again when the time came. I refused to do it.

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And I refused to do it because I was looking at the Washington picture, too, just the way the Russians were and others and the Communists in Southeast Asia. I could see the disintegration that was occurring. I could see the resolutions that were being introduced in Congress against any resumption of bombing anywhere in Southeast Asia except with express permission of Congress after a vigorous debate. And I didn't feel that I could, in good conscience, offer reassurances to these people under those circumstances. I can sleep nights as a result. I wonder if other people do.

H: How much credibility do you assign to Frank Schnepf's book, the CIA man who was in Saigon during the fall? He voiced the fact that it was such a debacle, that there was no cohesive policy at all from the Embassy on down.

V: Well, I must confess I have not read his book. I have been busy reading some of the other things. But I do intend to read it. But let me say, I would not be at all surprised to read in that book evidence such as you suggest he presents. It's in line with

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what I described earlier to be the "we don't want to really face up to it happening" attitude that prevailed, particularly in the Embassy down there. Somebody comes in with bad news, "We don't want to listen!"

And I think what you had was an unwillingness on the part of the Ambassador, himself, to admit that things were going bad. And that we would, in fact, have to face the decision of someday getting out of there. I think his view was that we would prevail, that we would stand firm, and if we stood firm, everything would come out all right. And I think the lack of planning for the evacuation reflects that feeling and that view. It was "never admit that it was happening to you." Therefore, don't plan for it. I think the evidence that I have seen of that evacuation somewhat tends to support what I presume is the main conclusion of the book; namely, that it was badly disorganized and sort of disastrous. I will read that book in the next few weeks, hopefully. I suspect that it's going to support my own views on what was happening down there.

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H: I guess that's sort of like the old saw about the king killing the messenger with the bad news.

V: It's reminiscent of Hitler in his bunker with bombs falling all around him, listening only to the advisors who came in and said, "Things are going to be all right." And the final inevitable day came when they told him the roof was falling in, and he had to blow his brains out.

H: Well, in line with what you've been talking about here, what are your feelings on the downgrading of the PACAF position to a three-star instead of the former four-star that it was?

V: I think you have to look at the whole command arrangement problem to make an evaluation of that--the whole command arrangements problem in the Pacific. I think I mentioned to you one incident earlier where I was getting conflicting guidance from Washington and from my superior headquarters in Honolulu. One saying, "Go bomb," and the other saying, "Do nothing for the next 24 hours."

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What it suggested to me was that the arrangements were not sound and were not good. The delays built into sending decisions, for example, from Washington to Honolulu where they were massaged and put into new words and sent on down to the man fighting the war in Vietnam, delays of that kind were inexcusable in a wartime situation. And I seriously question whether it would be to our advantage to fight a war that way again. I know General Abrams felt very strongly that it would have been far preferable from his standpoint to be answering to Washington, getting the decisions to the questions he asked from Washington, presenting his case directly to Washington for things he wanted to do rather than having to go through a man who was, for all intents and purposes, as far away from the war as Washington was. And what difference does it make if it's 7,500 or 5,000 miles away? The same problem. I think what we are talking about here then is, is there a need for an intermediate headquarters between the guy who is actually fighting the war and the decision makers in Washington itself? I think the answer is, "No!" And if we ever become involved again out there, whether it's in Korea or Southeast Asia, we ought to get the middleman

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out of the business.

Now if you look at it in that light, then I think it makes sense to begin the downgrading of the component commanders who are under this middleman. Abrams was the first, of course, to move in that direction when he became Chief of Staff of the Army. He questioned the necessity and the wisdom of keeping large Army representation in rank in the component structure in Honolulu in support of CINCPAC, and he downgraded that, took his four-star out, and eliminated the component commander for all intents and purposes. The Air Force was belatedly following that procedure sometime later when they downgraded the PACAF.

H: I have heard it said by a couple of other generals that they felt it just gave a further indication to our allies in Southeast Asia that we were assigning less importance to the region. How do you feel about that?

V: Well, it could be construed that way, I presume, by the people who were concerned out in the area. I think they are going to be much more concerned about

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other things though than the downgrading of the rank by one star in Honolulu. I think they are going to be concerned about other things they are seeing, like plans to pull out of Korea, or present difficulties in the Philippines which are lessening our involvement and our presence down there. These are the sorts of things I think will impress these people, visible evidence of the withdrawal of the US power from these areas. If I were the remaining allies in Southeast Asia, I'd be looking around for ways to hedge my bets, also. And I think the number of stars on the guy sitting in Honolulu is not that important.

H: That's all I have on Southeast Asia, if you have something you'd like to bring in, Art, please do.

M: No; I don't have anything at this time. When he gets over to Europe, I have one that's related which I made a note on, but that's the only thing.

H: All right. Well, let's talk about USAFE awhile then, if you would like to get into that. You took over from General David Jones as USAFE Commander. Did you institute any changes when you took the position, or

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did you leave things pretty much in force?

V: I made, of course, many changes out in the field in the areas that I talked about earlier, where my own experience or my recent experience in Vietnam led me to believe that improvements had to be made. I think we've talked about how I introduced all-weather bombing systems with LORAN. We brought LORAN in and set it up and began actual training missions, not only with US airplanes but with allied airplanes flying on the wing of our Pathfinders. And we conducted actual live-bomb drops on Grafenwohr Range with these Pathfinders to see if we could do the job like we had done in Southeast Asia in all-weather conditions and found that we could even with German pilots flying on the wings of our pilots. I had the new challenge, of course, of setting up the new AAFCE Headquarters, which only became operational after I arrived, and I had to create this whole new headquarters with all the supporting mechanisms and the communications. So that was a new job and a new task.

I went to work on the Boerfink concept, which was

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an effort to bring the fusion concept to Europe, where we fuse intelligence with operational decisions. We went to work on the design for the Boerfink bunker to bring in the necessary communications, intelligence processing capability, the highly classified intelligence input into the bunker, and to establish all the relationships with the subordinate commands and the lateral commands, so we could use that facility as an effective operational facility if and when war began. I was struck with the fact that most NATO headquarters were planning headquarters and not operational headquarters, and I was determined to make a change in that in the headquarters I was involved in. I observed, for example, the fact that the Soviets had prepared themselves for surprise attack. Back in the old days, they were incapable of that. But they had now achieved a posture in Europe which, for the first time, gave them a chance to mount an attack with forces already deployed in the forward area. Indeed, their exercises demonstrated this was what they had in mind.

[End Tape 6, Side 2]

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So I concentrated on developing the capabilities for immediate response both in the headquarters structure and in the force structure itself out in the field.

I made other attempts to solve the all-weather problem. I made a concerted effort to get an additional wing of F-111s over to Europe. I introduced the beacon bombing tactics we had employed in Cambodia and Laos, and actually demonstrated this to the corps commanders in the field, bombing through overcasts. We wrote doctrine and policy papers on the employment of this technique by ground force commanders and distributed it so they could call upon this all-weather capability in the event of actual combat. I began holding a series of meetings or symposiums with the wing commanders and above, of all the air commanders in the central region, where we could sit down and discuss the kinds of problems we would run into if we had to fight together. It was a free exchange of views and information with follow-up actions being taken after these meetings.

I set about getting out in the field and flying the equipment and meeting with the squadron commanders

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and the wing commanders of the various air forces that were now going to be responsive to me in the event of a war, which included, of course, all the air forces of the central region, some six of them. I flew the British Harrier, for example, and examined its unique capabilities for operations in Europe. I flew with the Belgian forces in their Mirage airplanes, and I generally got to work with and visit at the operational level all the air forces that would be fighting together with us.

At the same time, I began an effort to work closely with the French, and I struck up a very close working relationship with General Rentier, who was Chief of French Tactical Air Forces in Germany, flew with his units, flew his Jaguars, and established liaison with him and began joint planning with him, so that if the French ever made the political decision to support NATO, the military plans would be ready.

I worked closely with the British to resolve some of the difficulties we had in coordinating offensive and defensive activities. A big portion, for example, of American air was based over in England, and yet there

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was no mechanism established to coordinate the offensive and defensive activities involving the air space of Great Britain. The British were charged, of course, with the air defense responsibilities for the whole area, including our airbases; yet they had no mechanism to be informed of the offensive activity of those units. You know, when they were taking off, where they were going, and when they were coming back, so they could be aware of all this. No machinery existed for any of this, and we began to work directly with the British personnel involved to insure that we could, in fact, be knowledgeable of each other's activities.

General Smallwood [Dennis] was the commander of all the British forces involved, and he and I worked very closely together. We established direct communications between his headquarters and my headquarters at AAFCE so that we could, in fact, talk and communicate about the impending air operations from British bases if and when they should occur.

H: Was this a unique thing? Hadn't previous commanders attempted to have this sort of relationship that you had?

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V: Well, let me say, General Jones did a tremendous job and spent a great deal of his time in attempting to get the concept of AAFCE sold in Europe. I certainly don't want to downgrade or in any way underestimate the achievement that he made in succeeding in doing this. You've got to remember that Europe was pretty remote from the war in Southeast Asia, and there wasn't the same sense of urgency about being prepared for combat in the minds of the commanders in Europe that there was in those of us who were actually involved in the fighting. I think Jones, of course, appreciated the problems that existed with the division of air between the ATAFs over there and the inflexibility of applying air in a concerted way, and so he spent a great deal of his time trying to convince the military and political authorities that we ought to create an overall air commander for the central region who could coordinate the activity. And I think to his lasting credit, he achieved this, and it was no mean achievement.

So when I got there that had already been agreed to, and when the headquarters was actually activated and I became the first commander, the roadmap had

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already been drawn as to which way it was to go. I had to go to work, of course, and dream up all the concepts and doctrine, the policy papers for the new headquarters, issue the new directives, come up with a new Emergency Defense Plan; and all the other things that a new headquarters had to do but, by and large, they were in conformance with the original concepts that General Jones had succeeded in selling in Europe. So, I think that explains a great deal of what I have described.

His preoccupation with this was a very important job, spending so much of his own time on it. It didn't give him the time to do these things I know he would have wanted to have done and which I had a chance to do when I got there.

What I did when I got there was sort of divide the responsibilities in the headquarters. I left the administrative responsibility, the housekeeping responsibility, the logistics responsibilities, the concerns about troop welfare and morale and educational programs, the school systems, and dependents' care problems, and all that, to my deputy commander,

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who did a superb job, General Poe [Lt Gen Bryce, II]. He was uniquely equipped to do that kind of a job. He vigorously attacked those problems, and I went to work on the operational problems. And that division permitted both of us to operate at maximum effectiveness. I would commend that procedure to a lot of other headquarters. I know, for example, that many commanders in the past have been bogged down in the mire of drug abuse problems, alcoholism and that sort of thing, when they should be out there worrying about how they are going to fight the war if and when it occurs.

And I must say that the Army commanders in Europe have had this problem. They've had to worry about and personally devote a large amount of their time to drug abuse problems and that sort of thing instead of getting on with the business of how they are going to fight if and when the war occurs. I tried to reverse all of that. I tried to be operationally oriented, and I was, I think, since I had just come from a fighting war involving new Soviet systems and SAM systems and the other things that I encountered, I was imbued with a greater sense of urgency to get on

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with this kind of a job. And I was also aware of the fact that the Soviets had now, for the first time, achieved a capability to surprise us, and selling the idea to NATO, for example, that we would have limited time or limited warning proved a very difficult one.

I remember one of my first meetings with my immediate commander in the NATO chain, General Ferber, who was a four-star German general, Army officer, in command of APCENT--an outstanding guy with a lot of ability. When we first met, I expressed to him my concern about the new Russian posture which could lead them to attack us without much warning. I said it could be a matter of a couple of days instead of weeks or months, and I urged him to join with me in an effort to get our forces on a better posture of alert and readiness and to make the headquarters operational in peacetime. I noted, for example, that before we could be ready for the annual SHAPEX exercises we had to prepare for weeks in establishing the forward headquarters. We had to go out and put generators in position, string lines and hook up switchboards. Do all these things to make these so-called war fighting facilities operational, and we

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literally started 1 month before the actual exercise so we could be ready in time to run the exercise.

I said to General Ferber, "You know, if what I am saying is true and the Russians could attack in 48 hours, we won't have time to do all this." And General Ferber, as I say, was a very capable guy and a very honest man, looked me in the eye and said, "General Vocht, I have assurances from the highest level in your Government that we will have at least 30-days warning." (laughter) And I'm sure this is true. Secretaries of Defense, who had been over there previously, had made the case that our new techniques and intelligence systems would give us this kind of warning. I think it is now agreed everywhere, including the highest levels in Washington, that the warning time could be as small as 48 hours.

And Secretary Brown (Harold, Secretary of Defense) has recognized this problem. I think he has been far more perceptive in this regard than his predecessors, and he's doing things now which are designed to increase our readiness in the face of this new capability on the part of the Soviets to attack without

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much warning.

But that's the kind of environment, you see, I found myself in having come from a fighting war where I could see the capabilities of new Soviet equipment, then going into an environment where people had been sleeping for a number of years, and where I saw, for example, communications equipment built in the early fifties that were quickly saturated during exercise play, 60-word-a-minute teletype systems--secure teletype systems--which when we ran our various exercises through the years were hopelessly behind the play of the urgent traffic. In the first 24 hours of one exercise, for example, we were 7 hours behind in message traffic delivery. How can you possibly fight a modern war involving fast movement of enemy forces and the need for instant response when you are 7 hours behind in the delivery of messages? This is what I encountered.

I spent a great deal of my time trying to pull ourselves up by the bootstraps. One of the problems I ran into was the unwillingness of some to release highly classified intelligence which only the United

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States had access to. I wanted to get that broken loose so it could be made available to NATO. We had to adopt various techniques, a so-called "Green Door" concept where it would be a US element that had access to this and could sanitize it and pass it out through a "Green Door" in the operations center to our allies who were going to have to fight the war.

Computerization--you know, when I first got over there, computers were a bad word in NATO. People said, "What in the world are we going to do with computers?" And the people in higher headquarters, like AFCENT, said, "God, you are just going to flood us with information and we won't be able to fight the war. We don't have any need for the kind of detailed information you are talking about that would require computers." And I told them about my experiences in Vietnam where I had to computerize the frag orders to the wings, because it was now impossible for the human mind to draw up a frag order in the limited time we had between missions because of the new increased complexity of those missions. And I pointed out, for example, what was involved in a simple

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Linebacker operation up into the heavily defended areas of North Vietnam where missiles were a major factor, electronic surveillance capability was all over the place, redundant radars, and so forth.

I said, "Stop for 1 minute and think what goes into an operation of that kind. You have jamming airplanes that have to be up and in position at precisely the right time, because if they are ahead of time or behind time, they aren't going to be effectively covering the orbit that has been established to provide the electronic support for those strike airplanes that are coming in. You have your escort airplanes that have to be at precisely the right place at the right time so they'll be between the interceptors coming up to meet them and the attacking force. You have to have Wild Weasel airplanes at precisely the right position at the right time so they can use their antiradiation missiles to suppress enemy SAMs when that force is in a vulnerable position, and so it goes." All these things have to take off at precisely the right time so they can be at their appointed place at the right time. And computing all this becomes a very complex thing. So we had to go to

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computerization.

All our frag orders in Linebacker were computerized frags where the computer did all the computations and determined takeoff times, fuel loads, and even in some instances the types of munitions and all that had to be employed, the jamming frequencies that had to be employed, the spectrums that had to be covered, and all these things.

There was a problem in Europe vastly more complex with more complex Soviet systems to be dealt with, and people were talking about World War II type frag operations and running missions as we did in World War II. I said, "It can't be done. That's why we need computers."

I pointed out to General Ferber that the enemy has the option of striking where he wants to, that he can mass his forces. We have to find out where the real thrust is and where the feints are; we have to get all source intelligence up and that information has to be brought in immediately so the commander can make the right decision as to where our main defensive

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effort will be mounted. The time is going to be vastly compressed because of the rate of movement of Soviet armor. We won't have the leisure of looking at written reports from intelligence sources that are 2 or 3 days old, that the computers will take this intelligence and digest it for us and disgorge the stuff we have to know.

I said, "The logistics problems alone that we are going to run into are going to be fantastic. There will be some units that will be short of defensive missiles and others that will be short of offensive missiles, and some will be short of bombs, and just maintaining a status report on our munitions readiness alone will sop up all the communications capability that now exists within NATO and provide no excess for operational matters that'll have to be discussed." So all this has to be streamlined and computerized and put into a manner that makes sense. Of course, I had had all this in Southeast Asia. People don't appreciate it. But we had a true fusion center.

I might tell a little story at this point which illustrates that what I'm describing was necessary

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for Europe. In our Linebacker operations against the North, when they were reestablished by direction from Washington, we began bombing up in Hanoi again after a layoff of a couple of years following termination of Rolling Thunder. In those operations, we quickly encountered very effective fighter defenses by the MiG-21s that were employed by the North Vietnamese Air Force. They had done a great deal in the intervening years to improve the capability of that air force. The redundancy of their radar had been vastly improved; they had better tracking capability. They had Soviet advisors in their operations centers who were assisting them in detection of raids and determining the types of airplanes involved, et cetera, so they could effectively employ their own air against us.

We, on the other hand, were operating well beyond our own radar range and our pilots were more or less going blind when they flew up into the Hanoi area. Here we had an air force up there, North Vietnamese Air Force, having the advantage of detailed information on the precise location of every attacking airplane as well as their own airplanes, which they

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could see on their own radars. So they could position these airplanes properly and evade our CAP [combat air patrol] airplanes. And for the first time, we began to suffer very heavy losses. At one point the loss ratio fell below 1 to 1, the lost to victory ratio. This was a very serious thing. Never in the history of the United States Air Force had we fought an air war where we were now losing more airplanes than we were shooting down. There was great concern in Washington about this. There were visits from everybody from the Chief of Staff of the Air Force on down asking me what we were going to do about this. The problem was just essentially the way I had described it. We were fighting up in his territory with a radar-rich environment on his part and totally devoid of a capability of our own.

Now, the Navy had Red Crown and they had some radar capability, but it was not of very much use to us when we came in from our Thai bases. We were out of range of that radar, and we weren't getting the support at the altitudes and in the areas where we needed it. So we were essentially going blind when we got up there. And we were asking the pilots in

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the individual airplanes to do the jobs that were being done by the controllers and the skilled operators of the vast radar system in the north. It simply was no contest.

I, finally, in an effort to do something about this, decided we had better take all the intelligence gathering capability that we had and fuse it in real time with our operations so the pilot in the airplane could be told as he is flying along everything that we knew from all our intelligence gathering capability. This was the first real application of the fusion principle, and we set up command facilities in our operations centers in direct contact to radio relay airplanes with the guy in the cockpit which could tell them, for example, that a MiG had just taken off and was coming toward him.

Now, I can't, of course, go into the kinds of techniques that were used because some of it involves security classifications that are tight even today. Certain forms of intelligence gathering that most people don't have clearances for, certainly not the pilots in the airplanes. But we set this thing in operation,

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as I recall, in August 1972, and we had a dramatic change in the loss to victory ratios. From the previous month, July as I recall, where we had actually lost more airplanes than we shot down, the month of August and until the end of the war, the ratios now changed 4 to 1 in our favor, because our pilots were now alert to the dangers around them. This was the fusion of intelligence with operations.

I note that even today there is a misunderstanding about this capability in some of the interviews that you people have conducted with some of our ex-Vietnam pilots. I note one, for example, that you conducted with Ritchie where Ritchie said he sometimes wondered what we were doing at Seventh Air Force, that they were pretty much on their own out there and that they had to rely on radar information from obsolescent radar platforms, et cetera. Ritchie didn't know of this so-called "T-ball" system that I have just described, because he didn't have the security clearances. And he didn't know why, suddenly in August 1972, the victory to loss ratio dramatically switched because we couldn't clear him for that kind of information and still have him go on a combat mission.

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But that was the fusion concept in operation.

I had satellite communications direct with Washington. Satellite receivers right on my facility so the information could be beamed directly down and rapid transmission of vital information back and forth to Washington. I have already discussed the almost daily communications on the phone with the Chairman of the JCS, conducted through this satellite communications on secure means, all of which I had in Southeast Asia and none of which existed in Europe when I got there.

I found, to my great chagrin and dismay, for example, the first week I was in Europe I wanted to talk to General Ferber in his Brunssum headquarters and had no means to do it. There was no secure communications via telephone with his headquarters. And a week later I had an opportunity, or a requirement, to call out to a base in Thailand on some business that I had to strain ten out, going back to the days when I had been commander out there. I was able to pick up the secure US telephone, a KY-3 system, and call all the way out to Thailand and talk, instantaneously, with

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somebody out there to get the information I needed, halfway around the world on a US system. Yet I was totally incapable of picking up a similar type instrument and talking to my immediate commander just 250 kilometers away in Germany! That's, you see, the difference that I discovered between what we had in Vietnam and what we had in Europe. And that sized the problem for me. I realized then that we were back in the World War II environment, and something drastically had to be done about it.

I discovered many other things. I discovered, for example, that we were still geared for nuclear warfare, primarily, even though our strategic doctrine had changed, and we were not operating in accordance with MC-143 which called for new emphasis on conventional capability so we could build a pause in our combat from the conventional to the nuclear phase, and so we didn't have to go nuclear immediately. I discovered, for example, that no conventional targeting was being done in our facilities in Europe. We had a recce tech facility, for example, at Wiesbaden that was part of my US organization. This outfit did virtually all the targeting work for all the NATO

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countries. It had not drawn up for many, many years one single conventional target folder! All their time was spent on drawing up the nuclear attack folders for the pilots in the cockpit. The word hadn't even gotten down to them that the doctrine had changed, that they were now supposed to be ready to fight conventional wars. And when I asked, "Where is an analysis of the bridges and all that we will have to destroy immediately with our laser bombs to slow down the enemy advance?"--there was none. Nobody had ever done this, because they were worried about QRA strikes on nuclear targets and updating that, and all the computers and all the recce tech [reconnaissance technical] analysis capability was spent in doing that kind of a job. So nobody had ever bothered to do the other. Those are the kinds of things we had to get into and to go to work on to bring some semblance of the real world back.

Then I ran into a great many other problems. I ran into doctrinal problems between the air forces of the various countries concerned. The British, for example, told me they didn't believe in close air support as a concept. They said, "We don't intend

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to do close air support. We are going to draw up bomblines, and we'll do battlefield interdiction, and our bombing will be done out in front of the troops." When I had made a pitch for bringing in tactical equipment that would permit the United States Air Force airplanes from US bases over in Germany to go in support of the armies up in the North--the Dutch, the British, and the Belgians--I was told there was no need for this, they didn't believe in this close support. I wanted to put forward air controllers up there and 407L tac [tactical] control equipment, and they didn't want any part of it because they didn't believe in it. And somebody said, "What's wrong with the old concept of battlefield interdiction?" I told them a story that involved me in World War II when we were using the bomblines concept.

I was sent out with my squadron to bomb a column that was supposedly advancing on a certain position, and I was under the control of a British ground controller. The ground rules were that I was not, under any circumstances, to bomb on this side of a bomblines that had been established that day, and the

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bomblines were drawn on our maps as we took off.

When I got out there, I contacted the ground controller who directed me to the area and authorized me to bomb anything on the other side of the bomblines that looked like a column advancing on this position. When I got there, I discovered that the column existed all right. It stretched for many miles and involved tanks and trucks and guns, and other vehicles, only it extended on this road right through the bomblines. One-half of it was on one side of the bomblines; the other half was on the other. So I called back for instructions and said, "Do I bomb just half of it, or do I bomb the whole thing, and is it enemy or friendly?" "If it's on this side of the bomblines, it's supposed to be friendly. If it's on the other side, it's supposed to be enemy." And the guy in the controller position said he had no further instructions; I was on my own.

Well, you see, this is an intolerable situation. As it turned out, I finally had one of my wingmen drop his bombs safe and make a high-speed pass parallel to the column so he could get a positive identification

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on it, and it turned out that column was a retreating allied column and not an advancing enemy column, and if I had carried out the orders of the day, which was to bomb anything on the other side of that bomblines, I would have been involved in the massacre of friendly forces.

And yet that's the concept you see that people are talking about employing today in Europe which could result in many disastrous situations in a fast moving fluid situation on the battlefield. There is no room for it any more. We have to have a precise knowledge of what's happening on the ground. There must be people on the ground who are in contact with air and who can tell us precisely where the friendlies are and where the enemies are, and we have got to be able to bomb with some precision where it's going to do some good and void friendly casualties. We need all this tactical control capability over there. I might add the Russians have it themselves. They have their controllers, and they have all this forward equipment, and they control their airplanes very carefully from ground-based radar equipment.

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[End Tape 7, Side 1]

The tape ended where I was saying that the Soviets have this equipment, including ground-based radar equipment, and we've got to be able to do the job at least as professionally as the enemy intends to do it.

H: You mentioned awhile ago that it was difficult convincing the European Allies to formulate plans for conventional warfare. Well, I have talked to various commanders that believe there is no other recourse, that we don't have an adequate conventional force in Europe to even think about countering the massive Soviet forces in the Eastern bloc. How do you view that?

V: I think we ought to spend a couple of minutes on this because it's important. Obviously, we are never going to have that kind of a capability unless we go to work on it and develop it now and to take refuge in the thought that, "Well, we don't have it, and therefore we've got to use nuclear weapons immediately," and, accordingly, do nothing about correcting

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the problem, I think, is a mistake. And it's a mistake for several reasons.

The most important reason is a military reason. Years ago when the United States had superiority in the nuclear realm, both tactical and strategic, this kind of a concept made sense. But the situation has drastically changed today.

First, in the strategic area, as I talked about earlier, the Russians are at least equal to us or perhaps even superior. But in the tactical area, the same thing has occurred in the last several years, and people are not really cognizant of this. We no longer enjoy tactical nuclear superiority in Europe. The Soviets have introduced new weapon systems that, in some respects, are better than our own and in numbers sufficient to do the job.

We like to believe that if the enemy advances with conventional forces and achieves a breakthrough, we can bring a pause in that activity by using, for example, nuclear artillery or carefully and selectively employing small yields, air delivered or otherwise,

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or perhaps with the Honest John. If you look at Soviet exercise play, you discover that this is not the way they respond to your first use of nuclear weapons. They don't simply cease and desist.

In their exercise play, they enlarge the war immediately and respond with a very massive nuclear response of their own. It's a theater-level response, but it's a response nevertheless. And it involves many and larger yield weapons than we employ, and they have developed new systems to employ in this kind of a mode.

I mentioned earlier the deployment of the SS-20, but people should stop and contemplate what this involves now. The SS-20 is a 3,000-mile range, multiple war-head, nuclear weapon designed to be used against NATO if and when we get into a theater nuclear war in NATO. Now, what will the target of this weapon system be? Well, it will be all our nuclear facilities, our storage depots, our major airbases, our major supply depots, our major oil supply depots, and in general, all the key things that we consider to be of great importance and value to us. Our command and

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control facilities, our communications facilities and centers, all will be targeted by this accurate weapon which really can't be countered by any known weapon system we have in Europe today. How do you go find a mobile missile that's being towed around on the back roads of western Russia which is targeting the vital facilities that I just described?

So, if anybody thinks that our resorting to the use of nuclear weapons is going to bring an end to the war immediately when this guy is planning and actually developing a capability to respond in a massive way on a tactical level is badly misled. And I would ask, for example, who thinks the war would last very long if we went to the use of tac nukes and he responded by destroying all our airfields and the equipment on it in a mass of employment of SS-20s? Who thinks the war would last very much longer under those circumstances?

So there are sound military reasons for our wanting to play the game along the lines that I have described. We must pull up our conventional capability, and then make the resort to nuclear weapons on his

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part a very, very serious thing which he's got to think about and contemplate long and hard before he opts to do it. That means introducing systems of our own to counter things like the SS-20, and they don't exist today. What counter is there, or what weapon comparable to the SS-20 exists in all of NATO today? There is nothing. You must, at that point when he starts using SS-20s, employ strategic nuclear weapons. And is it likely or probable that the United States is going to escalate the theater war which the enemy is carefully limiting to so-called theater weapons to an intercontinental exchange? Well, one wonders whether we'll have the guts and determination to do it at that point.

The weapons I have just described that he's deploying are out from under all SALT controls. They are the so-called "grey area" weapons, and they aren't being counted in the limits being placed on strategic weapons. Why? Because we have all agreed. Even our side has agreed they aren't strategic weapons; they are theater weapons. Do we ever contemplate their being used? Why, I imagine we do, because he does or he wouldn't be deploying them, and they'll be

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used in the situation that I described, where we go nuclear very quick, and he responds with what he's got. And it's going to be very much to our disadvantage to do it, because our main nuclear capability today are the limited battlefield-type weapons like Honest John, a few Pershings, the artillery, and our QRA airplanes. And, as I say, that's no match for modern long-range, multiple warhead, untargetable mobile missiles.

H: I have read, and I am sure you have too, that per square yard West Germany has more Soviet agents than probably anyplace on the face of the earth. While you were USAFE Commander, were intelligence leaks a problem for you? And how did you go about countering this?

V: Well, there is no question but that there has been a great deal of infiltration into the NATO system. I know, for example, in our exercise play major decisions were known to the enemy about as soon as they were made known to the subordinate commanders within the NATO structure itself. We've all seen the various agents who have been captured in recent years, who

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have been apprehended, highly placed at the very highest levels of the German Government; some of them in the British Government. We know this infiltration has taken place.

I used to offer, as guidelines to my troops, the thought that we had to do our planning in such a way that even if the enemy knew about it, it wouldn't make all that much difference. In other words, we had to do things in a sound military way and employ weapons in a sound way and in sound procedures so, even if he knew we were going to do it, it didn't make that much difference. He'd have to counter them with his own weapon systems and his own best capabilities. But I felt our ability to achieve dramatic surprise by more planning, for example, simply wasn't possible in NATO any more. I operated on the assumption while I was there that just about everything we said or did within NATO channels was known to the enemy within 6 months or, certainly, 1 year. And I wrote my plans, procedures and doctrine in a way which didn't make that much difference if it appeared in the newspaper the next day, because it was going to be a sound operation and a sound procedure regardless

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of whether it was known or not.

H: In the February 1978 panel discussion at the Air War College, in which you participated, the conclusion was reached that NATO is not doing enough to meet the Soviet challenge, and that our European Allies are especially lax in this respect. What can the United States do to get these people to reverse this situation?

V: I think a lot is being done today that had not been done previously because of the new emphasis Secretary Brown has put on NATO improvements. As you know, he has a Special Assistant for NATO Affairs, Ambassador Komer [Robert W.], who is sort of riding herd on these people trying to get them to make the improvements in the areas that are crying out for improvement, and I think it's a case of holding their feet to the fire. I think we are going to make many strides forward in some of these critical areas as a result of this new emphasis we are placing on the problem. But, basically, it's a matter of constantly bringing home to them the fact that the situation has changed. It's not like it used to be years ago where they had all the time in the world to get ready to do

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these things. The Soviets now have this overwhelming capability to move very rapidly, and we must be prepared well ahead of time. I think this is slowly seeping in over there, certainly into the military channels of NATO.

The German Government, for example, put a white paper out here just 1 1/2 years ago which pointed to all these problems I have just described; you know, they said that the warning time may be 48 hours, and we have to be prepared to fight now with minimum warning and maximum readiness. So this is all an indication that things are improving. Whether or not they will put the actual dollars into the program that are required remains to be seen, but I'm hopeful. For example, there has been very good support here in this last year for the deployment of AWACS [airborne warning and control systems], which is a vital requirement to successfully deal with Soviet air which is increasing dramatically. I think we'll see AWACS as a viable program by 1982 or 1983 with airplanes over there flying. You know, 5 years ago people would have laughed if you said we expected something like this to happen. And we are seeing the creation of

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these operational facilities, like Boerfink. They are coming into being, and there is modernization going on in the forces.

The Germans have made rapid strides in modernizing their own forces, and I think we are doing things ourselves in certain areas that will make a very great fundamental difference.

I might take a minute to talk about Soviet air developments. The Soviet Air Force was defensively oriented 5 or 6 years ago with short-range fighters of the MiG family, -15s, -17s, -21s--earlier model -21s that were essentially air defense airplanes. Now we have seen a whole new family of offensively oriented airplanes, fairly sophisticated with four times the capability for delivering ordnance that their predecessors had. The Flogger airplane, for example, is a good example of what I am talking about. It carries four times the bomb load of the MiG-21, and it carries it over a greater range, and in some models, like the Flogger D, it's well adapted to the air/ground role.

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The new posture we see in Soviet air is one that is offensively oriented versus the old defensive orientation. This has great significance, because it shows Soviet intent. They are concentrating on the offensive employment of all forces now, air and ground. Also we have seen the development of sophisticated airplanes which we, ourselves, have stopped building in this country. We have already talked about the F-111 and the need for an all-weather capable airplane of that type. The F-111 is out of production.

The Soviets have been in production and are rapidly deploying large numbers of the Fencer airplane, which is a smaller F-111 but which does the same kinds of things: terrain avoidance radar, all-weather bombing capability under low altitude delivery modes, and with good precision in that bombing with good air/ground bomb navigation systems. So while we are getting out of the business, they are getting into it.

I just noted, for example, that the Senate and House Committee in conference here recently decided to cut the program of the Navy A-6, which I mentioned some

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time earlier. It is the lone remaining all-weather bombing airplane in production in the United States, and when it goes, we are virtually out of the business. And the Soviets are building them. I don't know what the potential production rate is, but it is probably at least 5 a month, and they are turning them out, brandnew airplanes, so that today in Europe they have deployed operational units with Fencers, in excess of 100 of them, with no indication that the program is going to slacken off. We may be facing 500 of them in the next several years while we are going out of that business.

Those kinds of things: increasing sophistication, around-the-clock delivery capability that the Soviets are striving for, as opposed to our new emphasis on non-all-weather capable, cheaper airplanes in accordance with the high-low mix philosophies and concepts of the Defense Department of previous years. It's almost as if the positions have changed 180°. Where we were once in the business of stressing sophistication, and he was in the business of stressing simplicity; now the tables are turned, and we are going back to the simple airplane, and he's building the complicated

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and sophisticated one. Why has this happened? Well, things were getting expensive, and we wanted to keep costs down while he saw the dramatic results of airplanes with this kind of capability and decided he had better get into that business. And he jumped in with both feet. It's a turn for the worse, believe me!

H: Another real problem in Europe--and you commented on this in one of your articles and in the War College discussion--is the lack of standardization of weapon systems in Europe. The bombs weren't interchangeable for various aircraft, and ammunition was not always standardized. Has there been an effort in this direction?

V: I think so. I think General Evans [Lt Gen William J.] over there has been working very hard to promote interoperability. Standardization is something that has to start with the parent governments when they first buy weapon systems, but interoperability is something that the commander in the field can do. I think Evans has done a great deal to improve this. What we are talking about here is the ability to load

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bombs on another guy's airplane, and if he lands at your airbase when his own has been destroyed and he wants to be turned around and sent back out, you are able to refuel them and take care of his maintenance problem and get him operational again. And they are working very hard on this in Europe, but they can only do so many things.

I was struck by our limitations on this when, as I mentioned earlier, we first brought the LORAN Pathfinder airplanes in and started using them. I said to the German Air Force, "How would you like to make some of your pilots available and fly on the wing of a Pathfinder to see if we can demonstrate this technique and to see if it will work for us? In bad weather conditions, if we have to, we'll use my Pathfinders for German airplanes and on occasions when it is necessary." He wholeheartedly agreed, and we set up a test to see if this could be done. We wanted to fly German airplanes on our Pathfinders, out on the range with live bombs, to see what would happen.

The first problem we ran into was the shackles were different, and the bomb ballistics were different

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between the two air forces. He couldn't carry our bombs on his F-4s, which we were going to use, and conversely, we couldn't use his bombs because our computer in our lead airplane, or Pathfinder airplane, was set up for American ballistics. Here we were, you see, stymied by the inability to carry out this mission because of technical differences in the equipment even though we were both using F-4s. I said, "You know, we have to do something about this kind of a problem." So we set about, in our own shops, developing shackles that would permit his airplanes to carry our bombs.

When I went back to the States with a proposal that we be permitted to do this sort of thing, I ran into the usual flak you run into. It would require safety tests; we'd have to go through a mod [modification] program that would take \$1/2 million and 1 1/2 years to improve the new shackles and mount them so we could interchange ammo. We said, "Baloney." We got a one-time exception, and we ran the test and actually achieved dramatic results with very good accuracies under all-weather conditions and with the German airplanes actually dropping their weapons on the wing of an

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American Pathfinder. But, you know, that drove home to me the very thing we are talking about here.

If the real war came and we had to do some of these things, here we'd be hamstrung in a major way by these little things that exist today. The shackles don't fit, or the lugs are different, the MERs [multiple ejection racks] and TERs [triple ejection racks] are different so we couldn't load our bombs on his airplane and vice versa! I think we can go to work on those problems and resolve them, and the cost won't be very high. But we certainly have to do that, and we have to get on with it.

M: This is probably a good time to bring this in. Have they continued to keep the LORAN and the Pathfinder concept in Europe operational since your departure, or is that something that just passed with your going?

V: As far as I know it is still there. The LORAN net is still operational, and I think the Pathfinder airplanes are still over there. Now the actual amount of work they have done with it, I can't answer,

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because I have not been over to USAFE in some time, but I would imagine that any commander would be anxious to keep the limited all-weather capability he has. I would suspect it's still there.

M: Another short question that I have. You touched on the Harrier capabilities over there. Of course, it's been very controversial with the Marines in our country. Could you share your views on the concept of the Harrier and the deployment? Not necessarily the Harrier but the aircraft of that nature and the operational concept that they feature about dispersal and deploying it to abandoned roads and what have you.

V: The idea, of course, originally was that the airplane could operate in forward areas in support of ground forces and escape the vulnerability which exists back at the home base and concrete runways. It turned out, however, that the British, when they finally deployed the airplane, had to tie it to a main base, and it was in fact operating from a concrete runway and from hangars and fixed facilities just like the rest of us. The reason for this was very apparent.

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There was only so much test equipment, so much ground support equipment, so much shop equipment, so much electronic capability, so many trained personnel, so many bowzers, as they call them, for refueling the airplanes, et cetera. If you took that force and spread it out in small increments all over the place, the equipment simply wouldn't spread around to do this kind of a job. So we found them sitting there on the hard concrete, just like the rest of us, operating from that hard concrete, and I might add, operating not in the vertical mode but operating with a ground role just like the rest of us. Now that latter requirement existed from the fact that the airplane--if it takes off vertically--of course, is very limited in the amount of ordnance it could carry. With its full fuel load as it starts out on a mission, and a full bomb load, it has got to roll along the ground. And I noticed this as soon as I flew the airplane, that we had to very carefully constrain the stores we had on board in order to do some of the things I wanted to see the airplane do. What you wind up with then is a very inferior airplane tied to the runway like the rest of us but with none of the range and payload capability and none of

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the defensive capability that the conventional airplane would have. It's no match, for example, for the Soviet airplanes in air combat, so it's going to have to be protected when it's operating in the area, and it's payloads are so pitiful by comparison that it is a relatively inefficient way to spend your money.

Now having said that, I would also say that there are certain circumstances in Europe where the airplane may be the only thing we've got left if we are successful in dispersing it after the war starts. If it hasn't been destroyed on the hard concrete, and we do get it out and dispersed and make heroic efforts to support it out in those forward areas, and if in fact something like the SS-20 is used against the main bases, then the Harrier may be one of the few airplanes left operating. So, you've got to think about that. On balance, I would say that the airplane and the concept is dubious for the reason that I have already described, and the effectiveness of the airplane is very limited. For example, in discussing this with an aircraft manufacturer recently, what they hope to achieve with the new Harrier, the improved

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Harrier that the Marines are seeking here in this country, I was informed that if and when they get it, it'll have approximately the capability of the old A-4.

Now the A-4 was an airplane that, as you know, has limited capabilities. It was built in the fifties; it's pretty much going out of everybody's force, and here we are in the eighties bringing in an airplane with about the capabilities of a bird that has long since gone by the board. I don't think this is the way to do it. We have got to work the problem differently. I am not a champion of VSTOL [vertical and/or short takeoff and landing], certainly not as the state of the art indicates the capabilities will be for the next 10 years or so.

M: I have heard, or actually read, a report on the Wild Weasel capability, and it led me to believe that we had to reinvent it for Southeast Asia, that the capability actually existed for Korea and was lost, and we turned around and reinvented it for Southeast Asia. With the F-105s and the situation they are in and the limited number of F-4 Wild Weasels that I

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understand we have, it appears this may be on the horizon again--losing this technology and this capability. Would you comment on that?

V: Well, it's interesting to learn that we did have that kind of a technique in Korea. I wasn't aware of it. But it certainly wasn't the sophisticated technique we finally developed for Vietnam. I know, for example, that we didn't have the antiradiation missile which is the essential element of the Wild Weasel technique in Korea. That came along later when we started using the Shrike missile. The Wild Weasel was indispensable to us in operating in that radar environment and that threat environment in the North. It did a tremendous job for us. I campaigned loud and long for an improved version of the F-4 Wild Weasel airplane. I wanted it for Europe as well as for Southeast Asia, of course. And I thought, when I left the service, that was well established, and we were happily going down the road of a substantial Wild Weasel program with a new capability. I know budgetary problems and other things will impact, and we may not wind up with what we want.

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Another thing I wanted and was very much concerned about was the standoff jammer. The Navy's EA-6B proved to be very effective in Southeast Asia and helped them screen their forces. We know in some of the company code reports and analyses that were done later that this airplane did a yeoman's job. I campaigned for the program to convert some F-111s into an EF-111 that could do this kind of a job; the airplane has now been configured. Some of the test results are extremely promising. It has about 10 times the power of the Navy EA-6B, and I know it's going to have a devastating effect on Soviet threat radars. But I also note it's been in and out of the program. Happily, in this conference of both Senate and House that I just described on the new appropriations bill, the F-111 is still in as I think it ought to be.

The Soviets are concentrating very heavily on electronic warfare. They have many, many more jammers, for example, than we do, both air and ground. I know they intend to wring out of their state-of-the-art capability everything they can to degrade our capabilities in the electronic area. I think our own

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Army, for example, has fallen way behind in this race.

I'm mindful of the story told to me recently by Gene Fubini. Fubini, you recall, was in DDR&E [Defense development research and engineering] at one time in the Defense Department, a highly respected man in the R&D area. Gene told me recently that he succeeded, a few months ago, in getting the Army to agree in one of their exercise plays here in the States to simulate the use of enemy jamming during the play of the exercise just to see what the impact would be on the exercise. The Army reluctantly agreed to this and finally agreed that for a several hour period the simulation would be introduced. Well, after 15 minutes of this, the exercise commander came rushing in and said, "We have to call this off!" Fubini said, "My God, why?" He said, "Well, we can't proceed with the exercises. It's disrupted the whole thing so badly that the exercise can't proceed, so you have to stop playing this." There's a story in that. You see, rather than face the problem and say, "All right, let's run the exercise and see where our problems are and how

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bad we are," the approach is rather one of assuming the problem away and getting on with the play the way we want to do it.

[End Tape 7, Side 2]

And I think there is a lot of this in many of our military activities today. We just pretend, for example, the problem doesn't exist.

While I am thinking about this, I might introduce one other matter of concern to me while I was over in Europe. We noted, for example, a great deal of activity on the part of the Soviet forces in the chemical warfare area. I learned, for example, that Soviet armor is completely protected against chemical warfare weapons. They have filtration devices on them to filter the air that comes in. They have decontamination devices, some of them very sophisticated. They can take a whole airplane and wash it down quickly with a high-power pressure water system, or a tank and do the same thing. And they are deadly serious about chemical warfare play. We know they even used live troops and active chemicals, and they

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have suffered casualties over the years in their practice and their exercise play in efforts to be realistic.

The United States forces in Europe and, for the most part, all other allied forces don't have this capability. You know, one attack by chemical dispensing vehicles on any one of our American airbases could render them inoperative. We simply don't have the decontamination capability. We don't have the equipment to do all these things. When we run NATO evaluations by NATO Headquarters of our capability to deal with chemical attacks, the evaluation reports always say that the results were disastrous and the capability is submarginal.

Now what do we do to cope with this situation? We assume that the Soviets will comply with the Geneva Convention and never use chemical weapons, and we don't have to concern ourselves with the preparations necessary to meet the problem. But is this a wise course? I seriously doubt it! The Soviets, themselves, have some reason to believe that chemicals may be employed and are doing all these things so

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they can employ them and be ready, if and when.
And we sit there, I guess in the blind hope that it's
never going to happen, with our head in the sand.

M: This may be an appropriate time--you partially answered
it, but you were talking about Southeast Asia and the
Communists signing and agreeing to a treaty, or an
agreement, and then turning around in 1 week or
2 weeks' time and just openly and blatantly violating
it. Of course, the comments recently about USAFE,
maybe you would care to comment on the SALT talks and
the position we are putting ourselves into, the
vulnerability in view of your feelings on the Communist
ability to uphold the treaty.

V: Well, SALT has been a matter of some concern to me
for quite some time. I have spent some time looking
into the problem. In fact, very recently I was
invited over to ACDA [Arms Control and Disarmament
Agency] and given a briefing by Spurgeon Keeny, who
is the Deputy Director of ACDA, to make me aware
of the things that are being done and, presumably, to
allay some of my concerns and fears. I was apprecia-
tive of that briefing and some of the things he

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told me were very useful and helpful in resolving some of the concerns in my mind.

I am basically concerned, however, with the general problem of the mismatch of strategic forces that I see emerging on both sides. This really isn't something we can pin on SALT negotiators. It's something which has happened and which is a cause, I believe, for great concern. The Soviets have chosen to emphasize the development of large missiles with great throw weights and to emphasize the development of new submarine-launched missile systems which presumably will be relatively invulnerable but which will have exceedingly long ranges and improved accuracies, so they don't have to move their subs forward where they can fall victim to our SOSUS [sound and surveillance system] nets and our ASW [antisubmarine warfare] capability. And they have obviously decided to go into the MIRV [multiple independently targetable reentry vehicle] business in a very substantial way.

Now, the combination of large throw weights and developing MIRV techniques gives them, potentially, the capability to have many more reentry vehicles to

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do the job that must be done than we have. We used to talk, during SALT I negotiations, about this lead the United States had in reentry vehicles because of our MIRV techniques. That talk has now diminished in the face of what we've seen, which is the Soviet exploitation of the earlier agreements which takes advantage of large throw weights and no limits on MIRV techniques. So that we are faced now, I think, with a US force which is growingly vulnerable and obsolescent and which, I think, by early 1980's will be susceptible to destruction by Soviet surprise attack.

Just to refresh your memory on this, you recall the Minuteman II force as a single-warhead thing and somewhat vulnerable. The Minuteman III is the only land-based MIRV warhead vehicle that has three MIRVs; it is limited in size and dimensions to essentially that configuration. And the new Soviet weapon systems going into the field, like the SS-18 for example, theoretically can carry as many as 20 MIRVs. So when we agree to limits on the number of launch platforms or holes out of which these missiles are being launched, and, as a matter of fact, give them a larger number

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permitted under the agreement than we are permitted, and while at the same time permitting them these large missiles which we, ourselves, don't have, and which we are prohibited from building by the terms of the same agreement, we are in fact building, I think, a vast, both qualitative and numerical, inferiority on the side of the West. I can foresee the day when we will be outgunned in terms of actual warheads that can come down on us by very substantial margins.

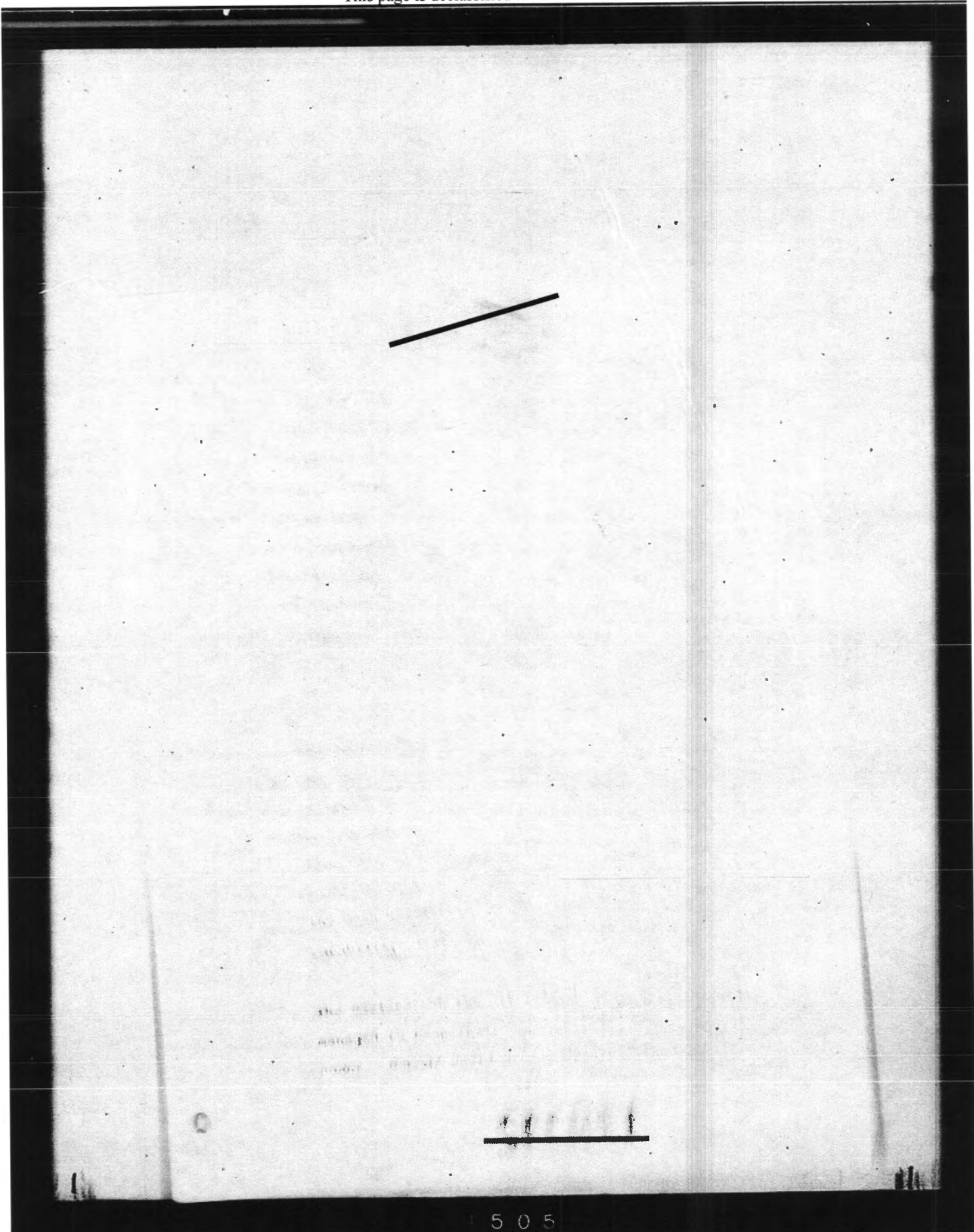
We are told that we can live with this situation because we have a tremendous advantage in the bomber area. And here is where, I think, the great danger lies--in our promoting the view that we can, in fact, equate some ancient B-52s with modern Soviet missiles.

The bulk of the B-52 force can't penetrate any more. I saw that and I described the problems we had trying to keep it alive over Hanoi against relatively unsophisticated SA-2s. So you can forget about its doing a job in the Soviet Union. What you wind up with then is the B-52, essentially, as a standoff missile carrier. By the terms of the same agreement, the number of standoff missile carriers we can have

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will be strictly limited, because we have agreed that this B-52 carrier will be counted as one of the MIRV launchers, just like any other missile. So if we want to stay within the numerical constraints that have been placed on the total number of MIRV launchers, we either have to give up some Minutemen or some submarine launch vehicles or limit the number of B-52s that we can employ in this mode. And that figure is roughly 120. So we have agreed, you see, to limit ourselves, essentially, to about 120 B-52 cruise missile carriers.

And because we are using the B-52, the number we can carry is extremely limited. It will be limited to about 20 cruise missiles. So the kinds of numbers we are talking about is 120 launch platforms with no more than 20 missiles on each one. That is supposed to offset all the factors that I described earlier-- the much heavier throw weights and the large MIRV capability of the Soviet weapon systems.

The Soviets, on the other hand, have very cleverly managed to keep their own strategic bomber out of the count. Nobody would deny today that the Backfire

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bomber is capable of reaching the United States. Everybody admits that it is. In fact, all the work I have done on it, and I have done some very extensive work, especially when I was a member of Team "B" and examining that Backfire capability, leads me and leads everybody in the Defense Department to the conclusion that with one refueling the airplane has a very, very fine capability against the continental United States. In fact, unrefueled it is a 5,000-mile plus airplane. If you refuel it, you are talking 7,000 miles or more, and it carries a very impressive bomb load at that distance. And it's a supersonic airplane. It's got lots of good bomb nav capability on it as opposed to the lumbering, slow B-52. Now that's out from under SALT. The only thing we will get from the Soviets is a written promise that they won't use it against the United States. No limits placed on it in any other way, you see, other than stated intent not to employ it against us. (Recently they promised not to increase production levels, but they refused to admit what these levels are.)

So we will have to unilaterally decide what these

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levels are and say, "Okay, that's it. Now you won't increase it above this figure." And whether or not they do, we'll never know, and they'll never tell us what the production rate is. Now that's the kind of a box we are getting ourselves into.

You see, we're, in our own minds at least, equating some ancient B-52 capability with this vast new missile capability being developed by the Soviets and leaving out from their side of the equation a very modern bomber that's currently in production; the B-52 has long since been out of production; it's a 20-year-old-plus airplane. They're producing this thing at the rate of two, three, four, five a month, and it's going into the active force, and it's not going to be counted under the SALT agreements.

So what I see emerging is an imbalance, and I think it's in considerable part one of our own making because of our overinflated judgments of the capability of this ancient bomber force. Now the situation would have been eased somewhat, of course, if we had been permitted to go ahead with the B-1 even though, as I said earlier, it was being cheapened. And indeed all

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the earlier discussions from SALT I on by earlier administrations had talked in terms of, "We're doing all this and agreeing to all these things because we are going ahead with the B-1, and this modernized bomber force will make the difference." But now that's fallen out, and we are still talking about the same equations and the same agreements minus the modernization of the bomber force, and the cruise missile is supposed to make the difference.

The cruise missile will have limits placed on it. I have discussed the numerical limits. Additionally, the Soviets are moving forward rapidly on new surface-to-air missiles which could seriously threaten our cruise missiles. These are the things that trouble me about SALT.

Not only that but there are other things that I haven't discussed, like the Soviets have already tested an intercontinental mobile missile. It happens to be the SS-16, the SS-20 we talked about earlier with another stage added to it, and the Soviets have the option, if they want to, to take the SS-20 and to put a third stage on it. We'll never know how many

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third stages they develop and store somewhere, and, lo and behold, convert that SS-20 force, which is out from under all SALT constraints, into an intercontinental force. When you talk to people, they say, "Oh, they won't do that. No! They're going to get rid of the SS-16. Heck! They promised that they are not going to go ahead with the deployment of that." But the fact is, they have already successfully tested and have in being a missile, third stage of the SS-20--which, incidentally, is launched from the same vehicle as the SS-20, and as far as we know, from the same TEL, transporter erector launcher. And, as a matter of fact, when a missile is sitting on that SS-20, you can't tell whether it's an SS-16 or SS-20 because it's in a cocoon, and the cocoon is big enough to house the third-stage version as well as the two-stage, and you never know what you are looking at.

These things disturb me and cause me anxiety about the future, and I'm not certain the people in the business have enough military knowledge about the capabilities concerned to really make valid judgments in these areas. I'm also concerned that we have

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oversold our bomber capability and our willingness to trade it off against substantial numbers of new, modern systems the Russians are bringing in.

H: Paul Warnke [Director, ACDA], as you know, is our chief SALT negotiator, and he still voices the idea that nuclear war is so unthinkable the Soviets wouldn't dare engage in anything like this--neither side for that matter would engage in this. How do you view that type of thinking?

V: Well, this gets me back to my activities on Team "B", which you may recall was an effort by the Ford Administration to have an independent look taken at our intelligence-estimating process. Our national intelligence estimates in the strategic area have, I think for a long time, been understating both the capability and the intent of the Soviets in the strategic area. If you go back 10 or 15 years, you find these estimates all saying the Soviets were concerned with their position of inferiority and wanted to achieve parity with the United States, and after parity was achieved, they would level off. Well, then when the numbers got to the point where

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parity was achieved, the rationale had to change, and they began to thrash around in these estimates for reasons why the Soviets were now going beyond what was obviously parity. The kinds of reasons that were advanced weren't very convincing to me, certainly, and indeed what they amounted to was a flat statement, "We don't know what their intentions are."

Team "B" was brought together in an effort to take a hard look at this estimating process and to see whether some things were being left out of these judgments and evaluations. You may recall that Dr. Richard Pipes from Harvard was put on this. He's a real capable guy, a Sovietologist, who has been looking at the Soviet scene for many, many years. A number of us who had had experience in the business were brought in, and I think we had the general feeling when all the dust had settled that the intelligence system, per se, had failed to keep pace with the real intentions and objectives of the Soviets. I think most of us had the feeling, and I certainly have the feeling today, that the Soviets are not going to be content with parity, and they're not going to be content with achieving equality. They are, in fact,

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after nuclear superiority, and they do believe it is possible for a nuclear war to be fought. I think here is the greatest area for policy examination. And we ought to really be bearing in on this one.

If the United States believes, officially, nuclear war is unthinkable, then we are never going to do the things that will permit us to fight a war should that war occur. And indeed that seems to be the way we are going. For example, in all of NATO there are no nuclear protected facilities. All the command centers and facilities, even the facilities that I talked about like Boerfink that we have been striving to put together, are not nuclear capable or nuclear protected. The Soviets, on the other hand, have developed deep underground protection devices and shelters. They've hardened all their communications against nuclear blasts, and they've gone to great extremes to see that the system will function in a nuclear environment.

In Europe, we don't practice nuclear procedures with our troops. We aren't out there running decontamination exercises, and we aren't simulating two-sided,

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large-scaled nuclear war. You ask an American GI how to handle himself on a nuclear battlefield, and he wouldn't have the fundamentals, for God's sake, and yet we see Soviet troops actually being exercised in so-called nuclear environments.

So what this suggests to me is the Soviets really do believe that it is possible to fight a nuclear war; it may be necessary someday to do it; it is thinkable, and they intend to fight and prevail and to be ready if and when it happens. We, on the other hand, adopting the views of people like Warnke, are assuming it's so unthinkable and so horrible that it will never happen; it'll always be deterred and, therefore, we don't have to make all the preparations to actually fight when the time comes. I think this is an oversimplification, but in reality it's a pretty realistic appraisal of what we are talking about.

It explains why there is no civil defense program here to speak of in the United States, and why there is a very substantial one over in the Soviet Union. It explains why they go to great ends for nuclear protection of their tanks and their armored personnel

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carriers, and why they give their troops all this training, and why we don't. It explains, for example, why even the great facilities we have in this country, like Cheyenne Mountain for the Air Defense Command, are not really capable against nuclear attack, and why the SAC Command Post, even though it's underground, will be dug out very quickly by the first blast that hits it. We've never really seriously talked about hardening them for nuclear war. The difference in this philosophy, as I say, is one of deterrence and the other of being capable of fighting; it's a war-fighting concept versus a deterrence concept.

Now, the only thing I can say is: I hope to God Warnke is right, but if he's wrong, we are in deep trouble because we aren't doing the things we ought to be doing to cope with the situation should it turn out the way I suspect the Soviets think it may.

M: You actually preempted what I was getting to. I changed my mind about three different times on the question. I guess at this time the appropriate thing would be to kind of relate it back with a question I .

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had in mind about your comments on when you saw the forthcoming buildup in Southeast Asia and your report fell on deaf ears. General Keegan [Ma] Gen George J., Jr.] has been pretty outspoken on the capabilities of the Soviets, and his crying alarm has sort of fell on deaf ears, too, and people in responsible positions have tended to shove him off in a corner and ignore him. I guess what I am driving at is that I believe you share some of his beliefs but maybe not to the extreme. Is this a true assessment?

V: Well, General Keegan and I, of course, know each other quite well, and I have had very fine relationships with him. He was very helpful to me at the time I was involved in the Team "B" effort, making all his information available to me, as indeed did all the Defense Intelligence personnel. And I must admit that Keegan has been in the vanguard of a lot of things that have turned out to be right over the years. You know, his record is a pretty doggone good one in forecasting Soviet developments. I think his problem is that if he gets things out too far ahead of the intelligence community there is a tendency for everybody to dismiss them as being, you know, way

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out. This is unfortunate, because the man has contributed a tremendous amount to the quality and the effectiveness of our intelligence reporting, but he does tend to be pushed out into that lunatic fringe area by policy makers and responsible people, because he is so far in advance of the normal intelligence community thinking. I think Keegan would be more effective if he came back and got a little closer, still stayed out in front and made the case he's making but rid himself of the extremist image that people pin on him. You know, in the long run, he may be right; he may be the guy who was "crying in the wilderness," but if he couldn't be effective and couldn't convince people because he was branded and pushed out there, his contribution would be thereby limited. I say he should get back a little closer and still continue to do what has to be done and build fires under people and prod people but get listened to and believed, because people think he is no longer way out in right field.

H: Do you believe there should be greater participation by our European Allies in shaping NATO policies and decisions? Do you think it's adequate now, or should

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they have a greater role in this?

V: Well, I think the machinery exists for their participation. I don't think the United States is going to escape the fact, however, that we are the big brother in the alliance, and we are going to have to take the lead in most of these things. It's going to be a case of constantly bringing them along with us, urging them into greater efforts, and in many cases, pointing the way. You know, most of these countries haven't been involved in a war in a long time, since World War II in the bulk of the cases, and they are behind in their concepts and techniques and everything else. We've been actively involved in a couple of wars since then. I think we owe them leadership. I think they look to the United States for leadership, but I think if we exercise this leadership with the machinery that is already established, they can get their word in and certainly will.

H: What about nuclear weapons in this regard? Do you think they should have a bigger say-so in this?

V: I think they have a very large say-so in the nuclear

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weapons business right now, and that may be part of the problem. There's still a tendency in Europe to want to rely on these nuclear weapons as the panacea or the answer to all their problems, and we've been very forthcoming with them. You know, we created the Nuclear Consultation Committee in an effort to convince them that they will have a voice in any decision to use nuclear weapons. We keep them informed on new developments in the nuclear realm. As a matter of fact, I was one of the architects of the Nuclear Consultation Committee idea way back in 1962 and 1963 and proposed this when I was head of the Policy Planning Staff as a necessary device to keep our allies informed of what was happening in the nuclear area. This was adopted by Secretary McNamara, and I attended the first conference in Paris of defense ministers when he formally proposed this. It was a very interesting meeting, incidentally, and I might take a second to tell this story.

The multilateral force had run into great trouble-- multilateral force which involved everybody having their hand on the nuclear trigger by being part of mixed crews either on submarines or vessels.

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And that had all died aborning for a lot of reasons; one of them being that Admiral Rickover [Adm Hyman G.] didn't want US submarines exposed to foreign crews and said, "No; you can't use our submarines." That kind of cut the ground out of that proposal, and then they had to go to the use of merchant ships, and they became so patently vulnerable and so easy to handle that it didn't seem like a good idea any more, and the thing began to die.

There was a need, however, to meet the natural aspirations of the Europeans for some involvement in the nuclear decision making process and the nuclear warfare that might occur within NATO. True, they had QRA aircraft, and we supplied weapons to some airplanes, but this is a relatively modest role, and we kept the weapons locked up under US keys.

I proposed to Secretary McNamara, I think it was in 1962 or 1963 when this problem was created, that we develop a mechanism for meeting with the allies and giving them a share and a voice in all the nuclear procedures and discussions that were going on in this country. McNamara bought this, and we proceeded to

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Paris so he could formally propose this. Now at the defense ministers' meeting that year in Paris, every defense minister had a proposal of his own, and McNamara's got sort of buried under all the mass of proposals that were made, and it didn't create much of a stir. As a matter of fact, the French were very active at that time in those circles and didn't like the idea because it suggested that nuclear consultation could be a substitute for every country having his own nuclear capability. They were pushing the force-de-frappe and the nuclear capability that was in France, and they didn't like the idea of somebody saying, "Hey, we'll handle it, but we'll keep you informed, and we'll let you be part of the decision making process. Just rely on us." So they tried to scuttle the program.

[End Tape 8, Side 1]

McNamara got hold of me that afternoon and he said, "I want you to represent us on the communique writing committee because, after all, the communique that is issued will in effect determine the outcome of this conference. If we can put in this communique the

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statement that I had proposed a Nuclear Consultation Committee, that'll get wide publicity all around the world and, you know, we'll be on our way to getting our idea bought." So I said, "Okay," although I thought I was a little over my head in communique writing, especially when he had his own Assistant Secretary of Defense for Public Affairs with him who is normally in that business.

In any case, when I went into this meeting to draft the communique, I discovered that a draft had already been circulated by the Secretariat who was handling these meetings. He happened to be a Frenchman. And there was no mention of McNamara's Nuclear Consultation Committee idea. I said, "Well, I'm sorry; I can't concur on the communique because you haven't mentioned Secretary McNamara's dynamic new proposal." This man who was running the show said, "Well, General Vogt, if everybody in this room insisted on having his own defense minister's pet project put into this communique, it would be 100 pages long. Now what I have here is a balanced view of what happened. It doesn't commit anybody to anything, and there is no room for your Secretary's discussion of the consultation

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committee." I said, "I'm sorry; I can't agree to it." So he said, "You had better go back and get instructions, and we'll meet again in the morning."

I went back to the hotel and got hold of my boss, who I think was John McNaughton at the time. He was Assistant Secretary to ISA, and I explained the problem. He said, "Well, we had better go see the Secretary." We went up to his room in the hotel, and I said, "Mr. Secretary, I want to report that I was unable to carry out your wishes. I was stonewalled by the Secretariat and by everybody else there. They don't want to mention your consultation committee agreement. Now, I suggest that in the main session tomorrow you bring up this problem and get it resolved. Tell them you are not going to agree to any communique unless they put your views in." Whereupon McNamara looked me in the eye, and he said, "Vogt, you didn't understand what I told you to do. I told you to get that communique written in a way which features my proposal. Now, you get back in there and do it." "Thank you."

Well, I went downstairs to the bar, thinking of

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nothing else to do but to drown my concerns and sorrows, and I was sitting there wondering what I was going to do tomorrow because, obviously, I was up against or between two hard places--"the rock and the hard spot"--when in came the Secretary's Assistant for Public Affairs, and he sat down alongside me and he said, "You look pretty glum. What's the matter?" I said, "Well, I have this dilemma," and I told him what had happened. He commiserated with me and then left.

The next morning when I woke up the Paris edition of the New York Times and the Tribune and virtually all the other papers and the foreign press had big headlines saying, "McNamara Proposes Dynamic New Procedure for Nuclear Consultation in the Alliance." When I reported to the Communique Writing Committee later on that morning, I was met by this irate member of the Secretariat who accused me of leaking this to the press so he would be compelled to take cognizance of it in the communique. Well, naturally, I did no leaking and I can't prove it, but the gentleman who was sitting alongside me at the bar had all these contacts, and the fact that the leak occurred, I

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think, is rather significant. And it was very easy, then, for me to put this thing in the communique. I said, "Obviously, gentlemen, the whole world is talking about this. It's headlines in all the papers, and we obviously have to address it in the communique." Everybody else agreed, and they reluctantly stated that McNamara had proposed this.

Now that broke the ice and we did, in fact, proceed later to meetings to organize this. Over the years since then, we have had this device for discussing nuclear matters with our allies. So there is a procedure and a method in effect to keep them abreast of what is happening and informed on nuclear matters. We do have a commitment to consult them on nuclear matters and the use of nuclear weapons.

H: As you are probably aware, Mr. McNamara was not always too cognizant of the sensibilities, particularly of the British, and I am referring now to the sudden and abrupt cancellation of the Skybolt. They had relied on this very heavily for their defense system, and without any prior notice at all, he cancelled it. I understand they didn't get over that for a long

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time afterwards.

V: This was part of the same problem that I described earlier. Not only the demise of the MLF but the cancellation of the Skybolt had, you know, very severe effects. It sounded as if the United States was trying to freeze everybody out of the nuclear business, that we wanted to have an exclusive province of our own. So the consultation idea was an attempt to reassure them that they did, in fact, have a voice in nuclear matters. We did make many commitments over the years to them, to actually hear their voice in all these matters. So I think it did, to some extent, allay fears and concerns. Without it, I think we would have been in serious trouble with many of these countries who did have the feeling that we had deliberately sought to exclude them.

Of course, the estrangement of France from NATO was, largely, one of the results of this earlier policy. I think McNamara can be held largely culpable in this area. He simply turned off all access to nuclear information and data to the French who, incidentally, were key members of the NATO alliance. I can understand why they expressed great alarm and concern and

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reacted the way they did. They didn't want to be treated like a poor second cousin when they deserved to be permitted to have at least as much as we gave our other allies, certainly the British. The French reaction was very predictable. So I think McNamara did have this blindspot. He wasn't concerned about European sensibilities, nor was he concerned about the sensibilities of his generals that worked for him, I might add. (laughter)

H: Well, did we overcome the problem of the French withdrawing from NATO? Do you think we adequately compensated for it?

V: No, no, no. French nonparticipation in the military aspects of NATO--you know, they are still in on the political side with both feet--but withdrawing as they did from military participation in NATO circles has been, is a terrible blow to NATO. You know, I for one cannot conceive of NATO successfully fighting a war without French commitment. There's no way.

For starters, the major POL [petroleum, oil and lubricants] pipeline for supplying all our US bases

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in Germany comes through France. Just contemplate their turning that off someday in order to stay neutral and not get involved in the war. Yes; the whole thing has horrendous possibilities. The French would have to be in; they would have to be in with their air effort; they would have to be in the defenses of the rear area. We are going to need their territory and space for maneuver. We need the contribution of French forces. As you know; there is a French division in Germany even today. And if they don't fight effectively in support of their area of the line, we are going to have grave problems and difficulties. So I can't conceive of France not effectively working within the alliance. That's why I worked so hard when I was over there to work with the French military.

I must say that the French were very forthcoming. Not only did I have excellent relationships with General Rentier, who was the tactical air commander of these French forces in Germany, but I was invited to consult with all the major air commanders from the Chief of the French Air Force on down to the chief of the strategic forces and their air defense forces. I was taken to their strategic command center, which

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is equivalent to our SAC Command Post. I'm one of the few men who was invited down, actually, in the silo of the French missile, strategic missile, to discuss its capabilities and its employment. I was in the heart of their underground command center and talked to the two launch officers that were on duty about their procedures and responsibilities in the event of nuclear war. And I did the same thing in regard to their underground facilities in the air defense network. I had a free and full exchange with them on military thinking in all these areas. So I think the French, themselves, recognize that their lot is pretty much thrown in with ours in the event of an actual Soviet war in Europe. They want to cooperate, but they have political constraints now.

You know they've never lived down, certainly the Gaullists in France have never lived down, this affront to their sensibilities resulting from their second-class treatment during this era that we just described. It's going to take awhile to overcome that, but we've got to do it.

H: What about these inroads of communism in both the

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French and Italian Governments? They have made sizable gains in the elections in recent years.

V: Well, it was getting to be rather threatening there at one point, but I think the tide has receded now. I think the Communists have rather overplayed their position. The terrorist activities of the Communist elements in all the countries of Europe have, I think, caused revulsion on the part of the populace. I don't think they have the support now that they had just as recent as 1 year ago. So I think we have stemmed that tide pretty effectively for the moment.

There is a school of thought, of course, that suggests we shouldn't actually stamp out or vigorously oppose the development of independent Communist parties in Europe. The thought goes something like this: Moscow has sought, through its party apparatus over the years, to control the foreign policy and the internal affairs of many of its Communist-allied partners, and certainly in the east European countries they have been effective over the years in keeping these people in line.

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They were seeking, through the aid they gave the Communist parties in the Western World, to develop strong militant units that essentially could take over, seize power in their own countries, and remain allied to the Soviet Union. But now we find some of these parties are beginning to break openly with some of the policies of the Soviet Union. There was quite a bit of outspoken opposition to the Soviet move into Czechoslovakia, for example, and what they did in Czechoslovakia later.

There has been a great deal of outspoken criticism in the Communist parties in the Western World against some of the civil rights infringements that have been going on recently within the Soviet Union itself. There has been sympathy expressed for some of the writers in Eastern Europe and in the Soviet Union who have been, as you know, brought to trial and condemned as traitors to the state. So it may be what we are seeing is a break in the Soviet apparatus of control over Communist parties in the West, and they all now seem to be more or less tending to go in their own direction, and they are openly questioning whether or not there has to be a complete subservience

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and adherence to the Soviet view of world politics and of Communist doctrine itself.

Now, I think, on balance, this isn't a bad move. I wouldn't want to see any of these governments actually seize power, but I would want to encourage all of them to be more and more independent of the Soviet Union and to be more and more critical of Soviet policy, because it's bound to work in the long run in the tempering of the Soviet position and view. They've got to contend with this. It's all right for the so-called degenerate West to criticize their policies, but now when they get criticisms from Communist parties in the Western World, this hurts, and it has a great impact on the thinking of a lot of people, and the net result may be that we will see, in Eastern Europe itself, a growing independence of these east European satellites from the Soviet master and fractionalizing of the Soviet empire. I'm in favor of that.

H: As you know, some of the independent Communist parties in the West have criticized the Soviet-Cuban incursions in Africa. And yet, at the same time, some of our

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people in high places in our own Government have sort of qualified these incursions.

V: Ironic, isn't it? Who's mixed up, huh? (laughter)

M: This might be a point to interject, sir. Having been in USAFE in the position that you were, how critical do you think Tito's [Josip Brozovitch] death would be in the way Yugoslavia goes as far as whether they are going to survive or whether Russia will actually make a move on it?

V: Well, a lot of people have spent a lot of time analyzing the possibilities there. What it boils down to is that there are certain exploitable elements within Yugoslavia that, if manipulated skillfully by the Soviets, could result in a split within Yugoslavia which, in turn, could be turned to Soviet advantage. In other words, they might be able to promote an element within the country which they could then identify and which could ultimately take over and bring Yugoslavia back into the Soviet sphere. I think that's probably going to be an objective of the Soviets if and when Tito dies.

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There are certain constraints on the Soviets in this area. You know, one of the most outspoken and vociferous minorities is the Albanian minority in Yugoslavia. The Albanians, however, are probably more critical of the Soviets today than anybody in all of Europe. As you know, they have been aligned with the Chinese for a long time. They recently had a split with the Chinese, and I don't know who they are aligned with today, if anybody, but it's quite clear that they have no desire to be brought back into the Soviet sphere. So they would have some influence, of course, on how the Albanian minority reacts within Yugoslavia, and this is one of the large minority elements. I think there is over 1 million of them. I would suspect that the Soviet's ability to manipulate this minority is going to be very limited in view of what I have just said.

Now there are other elements that probably are more likely to be exploited--minority groups that are associated with other eastern satellite countries, Rumania, Hungary, and so forth. I think that the most objective analysis I have read today is convincing in that it feels Tito has, in fact, prepared

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the mechanism for the transfer of power to prevent this from happening, and every effort will be made to see that there is no major split and the minorities will be carefully handled by the successor government to preclude the Soviets from making an issue of it. So the only other recourse would be for the Soviets to move in in a forceful manner with a military force and strength, and I don't think they are prepared to do that today, the state of the world being what it is.

They've got to be very careful how they expend those chips they have in the use of demonstrated force in that part of the world today, because they are sitting right now on somewhat of a tinderbox. You know, we are running into all kinds of evidence that the satellite countries are growing more and more restive. We hear about a resurgence of nationalism in these countries. We know none of these countries have any love for the Soviet occupying forces. We know that most of them would like to talk about the day when those forces will be withdrawn. I think the Soviets, themselves, are aware that there's a ground swell against their occupation. We have things

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happening today like something that would have been unheard of a few years ago, in my judgment.

For example, the Chinese Premier being invited over by the Rumanian Government for discussions. These are actually taking place, you see, despite Soviet objections, which indicates that the Rumanians now feel they can push the Soviets with regard to an independent policy. Everybody knows, of course, that the Chinese are not exactly welcome in any Soviet camp anywhere, but here you are looking at a situation where they are actually being invited into a satellite country. So there is a certain unrest in there and unease. And I think the Soviets have to be very careful how they play that situation over the coming months.

I think what I am saying is, I hope the Yugoslav transition to a new government, if and when the time comes, will be a smooth one, and the Soviets will not be able to fish in troubled waters. But to be quite frank with you, there is nothing NATO can do to really alter it except to use the full force of its moral persuasion and world public opinion and UN outcry and

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so forth as a weapon against this. If it ever came down to the requirement to use military force to protect Yugoslavia, I think you would find the answer would be "No," there are no plans in NATO for that kind of thing. NATO is strictly a defensive alliance for the NATO countries concerned.

H: General Robert J. Dixon recently stated before the Senate Armed Forces Committee, right before his retirement this year, that American airpower could not succeed against an improving Soviet Air Force. Do you share General Dixon's pessimism?

V: Let me say that Bob and I thought alike on many, many issues with regard to the growing threat in Europe, and I think we had a good, close working relationship when I was USAFE Commander and he was the TAC Commander. Many of the things I was trying to achieve, he was supporting me on, and I am very grateful for the kind of support he gave me in a lot of these efforts that I was making. I think he was making real strides in putting TAC on a real operational businesslike basis. Bob is like me in many respects; he is blunt and outspoken. We aren't, either of us, noted for

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our great diplomacy, and I think we tend to make statements occasionally that people seize upon as evidence of our being out of line or extreme.

Basically, what he is saying, and I certainly concur in this, is that if trends continue, we are going to be outpaced in Europe. If the Soviets continue to modernize and improve and reequip and augment their capabilities the way they have been doing the last 3 or 4 years, we will in fact be outpaced. We have already talked about the kinds of things they're bringing in. The rate of modernization has been unprecedented. You know, they have been modernizing at a rate which has never had a counterpart in the Western World. No air force has ever been so completely equipped in such a short period of time as the Soviet Air Force, and we see no signs of it slackening. These things are coming in.

I have already talked about the Fencer, that when I first went over there they had none of them deployed operationally, or just a handful of them. And when I was leaving over there, you know, the numbers had swelled to a respectable amount and today that number

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is in excess of 100 and, operationally, it's deployed-- a brandnew airplane coming in and rapidly getting into the field and being operationally deployed. You know, it's a tremendous achievement, and here they are turning it out in substantial numbers. Floggers coming out in great numbers and, in most cases, being flown into the forward areas as if it was an urgent requirement to get them there in a hurry instead of more economically shipping them in on flatcars and railroad trains. So there seems to be a sense of urgency about their efforts to modernize.

I would agree with him that, in the long run, unless we pull ourself up by the bootstraps and do the things we have to do, we are going to be outgunned in the air in Europe. Now, people like to point to the F-16 decision as the counter to all this. We've already talked about the limits of the F-16 and the weather environment and so forth, but more than that, the F-16 is a long way off. These things that are happening now in the Soviet Air Force are things that are happening today and tomorrow and were happening yesterday. This is modernization right now, and we are talking about an F-16 deployment that won't have

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an operational impact for years.

Even now you see problems springing up with the program. You know, the coproduction thing is very thorny, increasing costs on the airplane, there will be slowdowns of one kind or another as we try to get through this maze of coproduction and everybody gets his hand in the pie. You know, it may be years before we see any numbers of that particular airplane in operational units in Europe, and in those intervening years at the rate the Soviets are going, you are going to see a large edge of superiority developing.

H: I have a few general questions that I would like to wrap this up with. One of the big problems that's seen in the Air Force, and it's never really been solved, is in regard to the assignment of roles and missions to the various services. It appears they are constantly infringing on the roles of each other. For example, as you well know, we have three different air forces. Can you offer us any ideas on how to better define these roles, and what is a possible solution to it?

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V: You know, the Defense Department is always looking at ways to reorganize so they can effectively amalgamate the efforts of all the services. We have a new report, for example, that has just been released, the so-called Steadman Report, on proposed revamping of the structure of the Defense Department. I think probably all of these efforts are going to fall short, however, of that which is required to do. Really, what you are talking about is, namely, to get everybody working in the right direction and complementing each other rather than opposing each other or competing.

A certain amount of competition is good and healthy, and I point, for example, to the fact that the Air Force found itself fighting the war in Vietnam with a lot of systems that were developed by the Navy. The F-4, itself, was a Navy airplane. It turned out to be our mainstay in Southeast Asia. Some of the more effective weapons, like Rockeye, were Navy-developed systems. If we hadn't had the Navy in the business during this, the competition wouldn't have been there, and when the time came, we wouldn't have had the weapons to do the job. So I think a certain amount of competition is healthy, and I encourage it. But

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we shouldn't get into major hassles over major roles in major areas. I think that's where the joint machinery has to be strengthened to see that this doesn't happen. Instead of each service coming out with its own menu of items for production and R&D every year, it ought to be something that's looked at and agreed upon in the joint arena first with the roles and missions carefully hammered out.

The machinery for doing this in the JCS structure is very weak. When I was the Director, we worked very hard at trying to promote one or two efforts--certain documents--which the Chiefs were interested in developing which would, in fact, have us all take a joint look at the R&D program and the development programs for each of the services. These efforts really haven't gotten too far.

You may have heard about one of the documents which was designed to come up with a joint approach to new weapon systems development and who ought to be doing what, but it hasn't really achieved its intended purpose, and you still find each service coming in with his own ideas, and in many cases, selling them

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separately to the Secretary of Defense and promoting them and sometimes in competition with the other services. I say we have to strengthen the machinery of the JCS, the joint machinery, so these issues are resolved and so the charters are pretty well established within the services when they come forward to the point of sponsoring something before the Congress and with the Secretary. I know of no other way to do it. It means more authority for joint machinery and little less for the individual services.

H: Have you entertained the idea of the "one-uniform" concept?

V: No. I like the idea of the competition between the services. I don't think that offers us very much. You know, they tried it up in Canada, and my Canadian cohorts tell me it didn't achieve any of the designed goals or very few of them. So I see no answer there. I think all of the services can work together in their own uniforms if they increase the effectiveness of the joint machinery. I have worked hard in the joint arena for many years. You know, I had 7 or 8 years in the JCS, and for several of those years, I was

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in a key position actually running the meetings of the operations deputies, and the operations deputies handled, you know, 90 percent of all the business of the JCS, so I was in the middle of all these kinds of things you are talking about.

I know well-intentioned guys are willing to play the game and the joint arena can successfully work together, and they can come up with appropriate divisions of their roles and missions. There are roles and missions that are pretty clear for all of us. I think there is a piece of the pie for everybody. That's the only solution I can offer.

H: You might remember that here awhile back it was alleged the Army actually had more aircraft than the Air Force.

V: Yes. I think probably at one point that was true, helicopters and light planes and so forth. When you add them all up, there are large numbers. But nobody has ever suggested the Army has tried to take over the major airpower roles of the Air Force.

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[End Tape 8, Side 2]

I think what the Army wants and expects, and has the right to expect, is assurances from the Air Force that we have a continued interest in their well-being, and we do intend to provide them the support they need in combat, and we are cognizant of their air transport requirements; we do intend to develop, for example, a new medium transport that will be able to handle Army equipment.

The Army is developing new main battle tanks and new weapons of all kinds. They simply won't fit in C-130s, so it's up to the Air Force to wind up with equipment that can handle these outsized cargoes and move them around in a combat environment. There is a need in Europe, for example, to assist the Army in this role.

I don't think the Army is going to be able to move their equipment back and forth over those roads in Germany once the war begins with impunity like they would like to. You've got the refugee problem which is going to crowd roads, and you've got possible air attacks by the Soviets to contend with, and a lot of

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stuff will have to be moved in very quickly up in the forward areas and laterally by air and, you know, the C-130 is simply not equipped to do that kind of a job any more, particularly when we talk about outsized cargo, certainly not main battle tanks and that sort of thing.

We have new prototype developments like the YC-14 and -15 which would go a long way to help the Army in this regard. They don't enjoy the same priorities and emphases within the Air Force that F-16s and F-15s and other weapon systems do, and I think the Army over the years has been a little resentful of this. You know, "You treat us and our concerns as missions of lesser importance." I think there is a lot of validity in that. We tend to buy the things we want to buy to carry out our missions successfully, and the things the Army has to rely on us for have, in the past, gotten lower priorities. So I think we have to treat them a little more fairly in this regard and meet their legitimate concerns and requirements. If we do, I think our relationship with the Army would improve very much.

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I haven't heard the Army, for example, saying, "Well, we have to buy our own airplanes to transport our equipment around because you guys don't want to do it for us." They are consciously working the effort and trying to support us in getting these vehicles. It's just that the same kind of emphasis hasn't been placed by the Air Force on these programs that have been placed on other programs of greater interest to us.

H: Here again, the helicopter force was built up in relation to the Vietnam war, and I have heard others say if you apply that same factor in Europe, it's going to be worthless.

V: Well, the issue of use of choppers and all low-performance airplanes is a very real one. My own views are very clear on it. I don't think either the Army chopper or our low-performance airplanes, like A-10s, are going to be too survivable, certainly not in the area of the FEBA [forward edge of the battle area] or forward of it. So the roles they will be relegated to are going to be less significant than most people appreciate or realize. The recent attempts for the Army and the Air Force to work together will mutually

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support each other and also the JAWS [Joint Attack Weapon Systems] exercise is a credible thing. I think we ought to encourage that sort of cooperation, but I have the impression that it's one weak reed leaning on another weak reed. If you have to have an Army gunship to keep an A-10 alive and vice versa, you don't have much. And I am concerned that a lot of wishful thinking has gone into it.

I do know that during the Quang Tri campaign we talked about earlier, when T-54 tanks were brought in and when the Army rushed over its TOW helicopter to help us with this problem, we were never able to employ it up where it was needed--up in the high-threat area--because the SA-7 had appeared. The SA-7 made any use of choppers and low-performance airplanes impossible up in that high-risk area. Even in Vietnam, you see, it had limited capability and application. The TOW in Vietnam was about as useless as the Maverick was to be on the Ho Chi Minh Trail, as I described earlier.

So I do think there is a lot of wishful thinking on the part of both airmen and Army personnel with

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regard to the survivability of low-performance systems. The Army chopper will have a role. I can see a role for vertical lift capability to help move artillery around behind the lines, and Medevac [medical evacuation] and certain vital equipment that will have to be moved forward when they are under fire and moving rapidly. The chopper provides this kind of utility and usefulness for them. The Chinook-type of thing which the Army has, I think, is very useful to them. When I was over in PACAF, for example, I was assessing the requirements over in Korea, and it became apparent to me there were limited quantities of things. They needed mobility, and the mobility you get with chopper lift is great. I foresaw over there a very decided requirement for chopper capability and vertical lift capability to move limited assets around. And NATO is pretty much in the same boat. So I would applaud the use of choppers and the employment of choppers by the Army in this role. I just think they're a bit overoptimistic in the use of the gunship in this kind of an environment. For the same reason, I say the same thing about the A-10. You simply cannot slow down in heavily defended areas and stooge around and live.

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H: Along a little different line here, there's been a lot of recent concern about the loss of Air Force pilots, getting out early and going to the airlines and so forth, and in a recent issue of Air Force Times a Captain Randy Smith stated in a letter to the editor in regard to this loss of Air Force pilots to the airlines: "The rate has certainly increased over the past few months as airline hiring began to pick up, but if you go back and look, a healthy percentage of those separating were and are doing so, not to move to a better job, but to leave one that they could no longer tolerate." Captain Smith cites the OER [officer effectiveness report] system, commanders bucking for a star, nonmobility weapon systems, forced overeducation, PME [professional military education], graduate degrees, et cetera. Were you aware of these complaints? And what would you recommend to alleviate this kind of a situation?

V: Well, of course, in all of my Southeast Asian experience, I didn't have that problem. I had some dedicated guys who were fighting a war and knew they were fighting a war and were highly motivated, and problems of this kind, which are problems of the

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peacetime Air Force, didn't exist. Morale was never greater than I experienced among my troops down there. These were gung-ho guys, doing a tremendous job, keen on their mission, keen on their responsibilities, fully aware of the contributions they were making, and despite all the furor at home and the fact that they were being labeled as criminals and everything else by the anti-war elements, they hung in there and did the job.

When I got to Europe, I expected to find much more of the peacetime morale problems, but I was quite surprised to see that it didn't exist there either, because people seemed to be impressed with the new mission requirement--the requirement to get on with modernizing and improving ourselves and being ready to do the job that had to be done. Over there I was quite delighted to find many of the young guys that had flown for me in Vietnam now in the cockpits over in Europe and, I think, introducing a lot of realism into European planning and thinking in, certainly, tactics.

I do note now that time has rolled on and we are

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in a period of relative peace; the sense of urgency of the mission has diminished somewhat and with that comes the kinds of things you are talking about. If a guy is no longer really impressed with the urgency of his role and his mission and responsibility and if he isn't concerned about the threat to the extent that he was before, he begins to occupy his mind with other things. I think we have got to recognize that we are dealing today with a new generation that is far more pragmatic than the generation I remember within the Air Force.

Let me illustrate. When I was entering the Air Force and trying to fly airplanes, it was with a feeling that I had a mission and responsibility and a great desire to be part of it. Of course, it was the war years of World War II. I thought the greatest thing in the world was to wind up in the seat of a fighter plane, to be my own commander of this magnificent piece of equipment, and to do the things that had to be done to free the world of Nazism and all that. Over the years, the challenge which was presented by the threat of the Soviet movement around the world-- the Berlin airlift, the Korean war, and the other

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things--tended to keep me motivated and interested in doing my best to fight what I thought was a threat to our security. Virtually everybody in my graduating class wanted to be a fighter pilot. When we were all asked to state our preferences, we all rushed to put our names down for the new fighter outfits. We wanted to be aggressive, and we wanted to be in control of our own fate and destiny.

Today, in the graduating classes of the flying schools, you find there is a different view. I, last year for example, spoke at a graduating exercise of one of our flying classes, and I had a chance to talk to many of the graduating guys over a few drinks the evening before. It was a delightful and informal gathering, and I asked many of them, "What do you want to do when you graduate? What kind of an assignment do you want? Do you want to get into the F-15 or F-16 or what is it?" I was astounded at the answers.

Very few of them were interested in flying the F-15 or the F-16. Most of them wanted to get into multi-engine. Many of them were asking for assignments in

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MAC [Military Airlift Command]. I asked some of them, "Why is this? You know, when I was just getting into the business, I would have given my right arm to get into a fighter, and the last thing I would want to do was wind up flying transports." The answer I got was, "Well, you know, the world has changed. Back in those days you were involved in fighting. You know, we aren't. Today we have to think about other things. We have to think about our future, our families, potential in case we don't stay in the Air Force, and so forth. Let's face it, 2,000 hours in a fighter versus 5,000 hours in a transport airplane makes a hell of a difference to a man who may decide later that he wants to opt for another career."

I found many of them very much more concerned about matters that we used to dismiss as irrelevant, like family inconvenience. You know, I hauled my wife and my daughter from one end of the world to the other without thinking or batting an eye. It was part of my assignment and responsibility and my duty. Today this kid is very much concerned about what his wife thinks about his next move and whether or not she is going along and whether or not it's going to be

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in an area where she will have access to commissaries and other things or whether she has to live on the economy.

This begins to weigh on him, so you find that attitudes have changed. They are a very pragmatic bunch. I'm not saying they are not motivated as much as we were. They probably are, but they have different things motivating them now. And there isn't the sense of urgency we had when we were getting into the cockpit. But they aren't all anxious to go out there and be fighter jocks any more and to do the things we thought were so glamorous and so important. They are really interested in things that may help them later on in life. This is true, incidentally, not only in the Air Force. I have encountered this in the naval arm, in talking to some of the people recently on that.

I recently had a chance to talk to US Naval Academy graduates in this last graduating class, and I find there is the same concern for other things like family life and their future.

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H: Well, in relation to that question, I have another one somewhat akin to that. In a January-February 1976 issue of Air University Review, a former Squadron Officer School [SOS] instructor pointed out that 61 percent of the surveyed SOS junior officer students, "indicated that in order to satisfy every requirement of their job, they were required to sacrifice their integrity at times." The survey showed there is a significant lack of faith on the part of junior officers in the integrity of senior Air Force managers and leaders. What are your feelings on this, and what must be done to overcome this problem?

V: You know, I saw this problem developing, and I saw how it developed. The higher levels in Washington were getting increasingly into the business of the services and placing demands on the services in the training programs, in the active programs of the various organizations and units, and we began to run into this problem of having to fill squares. A lot of these things were originated well above the service level, up in the Assistant Secretary levels of the Office of the Secretary of Defense, and indeed some of them beyond that, over in the White House or

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elsewhere, all demanding certain things be done so the American GI or airman was, in fact, doing things expected of him. You know, we had the minority program items.

Here's something which, while I won't discuss the merits of it, is an illustration of what we are talking about. Every guy along the line somewhere has to attend so many hours a year minority training programs. This is something that was imposed, originally, on us at a very high level to insure that the minority programs and the minority elements in the services were getting their just attention. I'm not saying it's right or wrong. What I am saying is that here now, on top of all the other things a combat unit had to do to get its people ready to fight and to equip airplanes and to repair them and keep them operational, in addition to all that, now he has another requirement that's been dumped from above on him which eats into his training time.

Now you can do one of two things--either cut down on something else or expand the working hours of the individual. Now the working hour expansion thing is

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knocked out by other directives that have come down which state very clearly that you've got to limit the working hours of these people or give them compensatory time off. This is another infringement that impacts on the total training program. When you put all these things together, you find what this young man has described which is a situation where, in an effort to fill all the squares--all the blocks--that have now been levied against you, you either have to cheat and not do it, and in fact do what he suggests--give up your integrity and fill the square on the side--or make impossible demands on the personnel, timewise. You simply can't fill all these squares and still train and do your job and get the time off you are supposed to get. So this whole thing has become overburdened.

The answer lies in reviewing all these things very carefully and seeing those which are absolutely necessary and those that are just nice to have and eliminating all of the nice-to-have things and getting down to the hard-core things which really relate to the mission of that individual. I'd opt for a whole-sale curtailment of a lot of these programs so they

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don't eat into the time of the man who is trying to be trained to do his job.

H: Well, there is a perpetual problem that always haunted the Air Force as well as the other services which, of course, is the OER system. As you probably well know, they've always had the tendency to inflate, and they eventually become meaningless. Therefore, it is revised from time to time. Could you shed any light on this problem, and what we must do to try to correct that?

V: Let me say that my philosophy over the years has been to ignore, as far as my own career was concerned, the OER system. Some guys have been concerned about comments that have been made, and they appealed these comments, and they go before boards trying to get records changed, and they want OERs changed. They are awfully concerned about what the last commander said out of the fear that it's going to impact on their career. If I had done that, I would have gone nuts a long time ago, because I was exposed to some situations where I was being rated by people from other services and where this wasn't always the most enviable position to be in.

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I worried, initially, when I was a young officer about this, and I finally decided "Well, this is crazy. Don't worry about what does into your OER. Do your best, get people to appreciate that you are capable of doing a good job and your career will take care of itself."

My advice to any young man today is to do just that. Your OER means one thing, but it's not nearly as important as your being wanted by somebody because of your reputation as a guy who gets the job done. And whether your OER says you are very good, or fair, or good, or excellent, is not nearly as important as the reputation you achieve which, in turn, leads to somebody wanting you for a job he has in mind where he has to have a guy he can rely on. That's the thing that really makes the difference--your personal reputation built on your personal performance. Forget the OER..

You have to have, obviously, OERs that get you by the boards and so forth, but that comes, too, as part of this process that I am describing. If you get to be a guy who is in demand and people want you in their outfit because they know you are performing, then the

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ratings, you see, will support that over the years. You may get a few bad ones, but by and large, they'll support that.

Promotions don't come through automatic procedures where a guy sits down and says, "All right, the time has now come for Joe Blow to be promoted." It comes because somebody said, "This guy is ready for promotion, and I want him promoted." And they make the effort to promote him. That's how it works, certainly, in the officer corps.

H: They're presently under, probably, a different system than you were ever familiar with--the quota system.

V: Well, the quota system, of course, came in when I was there. But once again, do you think a commander is going to promote a guy whom he has no confidence in, or a guy who has the reputation of being a nine to fiver and takes great, big lunch hours and so forth but has been working hard at getting OERs and always contests the bad ones, and so forth, or that fellow who always does the job the way you want it done, who is in there when you need him, and who hasn't let you

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down? When the quota comes before the commander and he's asked to state who ought to be in this quota, that's the kind of thing he is going to be thinking about.

H: That's still a very hard choice when you've got a whole group.

V: Oh, sure, sure. Of course, it is, but there is no way that I know of where you can come up with an absolutely fail-proof system which will insure the most competent guy, under all circumstances, always gets promoted ahead of the other. As I say, the factor of human relationships enter into it all the time. You know, the guy who has a personality clash with his boss, who may have all the education and may pass all the service tests with flying colors, if he doesn't get along with the boss, his efficiency report isn't going to look very good.

H: Well, the way it stands now, if that happens at a critical time, when he's first coming up for promotion, it can definitely ruin him. The boards will never consider him again. I think there is--what is it?--

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less than 17 percent of those that have been passed over once will ever get the chance again.

V: Sure. Well, over the years, as I say, that's been my philosophy. It worked for me. I don't think I ever, ever really made an effort to see my efficiency reports when they were finalized and put into the records. I remember once when we were all asked to come in and review our records. For a long time, I found a million reasons why I didn't want to spend the time to go in. It really didn't interest me that much, because I knew I had to establish relationships with people who had confidence in me. And I knew guys wanted me for new assignments, and I figured that that was the way to operate in the Air Force. I knew other guys around me who were absolutely psychopathic about those reports, who worried about it for months before it was due and who ran in to get it as soon as it was available, and then started appeal procedures and went in and cried on the boss' shoulder. I mean, that was ridiculous.

I remember one guy--and this actually happened many years ago--who was very unhappy with the report he

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got. He actually worked for me, but I was the assistant to the overall man who was running the show, who was a two-star, and I was a colonel, and this guy was a colonel. And the rating system was such that I did the rating and the endorsement was by the commander. I gave him what I thought was a fairly good, reasonable report. Well, he came in and said, "Gee, if this doesn't read like I'm absolutely superior, how am I going anywhere? Everybody has to be superior to go someplace." I said, "Look, you aren't that superior. Let's be honest. You're out on the golf course most of the time. I'm in here on Saturdays, and I know the guys who are showing up and putting the extra time in and that I have to rely on to get the job done. You're not one of them. I thought I was very fair in giving you this report, which is a good report." "Oh, it's going to kill me, and I demand that I have this thing reviewed. I want the boss to prepare the report rather than you. You're just a colonel like I am." I said, "Okay. I'll tell him that's what you want done, and I'm sure he'll do it."

So I went in to this two-star and I said, "You know, he's unhappy with his report, and I thought I was

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fair to him. But I think it's proper for me to be objective about it, so why don't you rate him? He is the senior division chief, and he is a colonel." The boss sat down and wrote a report that was measurably worse than mine, (laughter) and it was a very stiff and a very blunt report. This guy got it and he goddamn near died. He came crying to me and said, "I want to go back to the old one." So there you are. All he did was compound his problem. In the end, it worked to his disadvantage, his overconcern for what the written word said and the numerical rating. I didn't fool around with that sort of thing.

In fact, some of my ratings over the years, and now that I think back on them, were pretty mediocre. Of course, I would wind up in jobs where, as I say, the rating officer would be from another service or the guy wouldn't believe pilots were great guys. (laughter) He wasn't going out of his way to say, "Vogt's a great fellow." But I took that in stride.

H: Do you want to add anything?

M: I've got a question I've saved until the end. Maybe

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you can shed some insight on it since you are the only individual who was in command of PACAF as well as USAFE. I'd like to personally believe there was a little foresight on somebody's part to capitalize on the experience of Southeast Asia and bring it to USAFE. Could you shed some insight on this?

V: I think that's true. I think it was a deliberate move. It was a move by General Brown and General Jones [Gen David C.]; Brown, of course, was the retiring Air Force Chief and Jones was coming in. The job in Europe was vacant. I think it was consciously an effort on the part of both of them to get some of the experience from Southeast Asia over in Europe, and indeed in some of my discussions later with the Secretary of Defense, he occasionally mentioned this. They had sent me over there for this purpose--to bring some of the modern thinking and the latest combat experience over to Europe. So it wasn't by accident. I think it was a concerted move. There may have been other reasons for it, too, but that certainly was one of them.

H: You had at least a couple more years to go on your

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tour. Why did you choose to retire when you did?

V: By Air Force rules, I was up for retirement. The Air Force has rigidly adhered to this 35-year rule. There have been some exceptions but, basically, they have stuck to it. My 35 years was up as the Air Force measures it, because I had some constructive service. I don't know if you are familiar with the constructive service system. Back in the days when a hump was developing in the services, they tried to space out the retirement dates of officers so that this hump wouldn't all occur at the same time, and they'd all get out at the same time. So they gave some of us what they called constructive service, and these were credits for combat duty and educational levels and other things which were cranked into a formula which was then applied and which, in effect, gave us retirement service. In my case, it was something like 1 1/2 years. So I really retired 1 1/2 years earlier than the 35 actual years of service, but it was due to this constructive service provision. I was technically up for retirement at this time.

Now many of my compatriots in Europe, and particularly

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some of the foreign officers, couldn't understand this. They said, "You know, you've just come over here. You've only been here a year or so, and you started this new headquarters. We were all getting in gear. We were making great strides, and your country is pulling you out." I said, "Well, you've got to understand that the Air Force has a concept of staying young. We've got to stay young, and that's really what this is all about. We want young leadership and new people coming up."

[End Tape 9, Side 1]

Well, I was asked one day by one of the chiefs of the NATO air forces why I was leaving after only 1 year or 14 months of duty over there, and I tried this theory out on him. I said, "You know, it's the emphasis in the United States Air Force on having young people in these jobs." He said, "Yes; I've heard that, General Vought, but the man who is replacing you is a year older than you are." So I quit at that point. (laughter) I didn't figure I could go into the intricacies of constructive service and active duty and so forth. It happened, of course, in the

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case of General Ellis [Gen Richard H.], who replaced me, that he had had interrupted service and had been out of the service and had got back in around the Korean war, and so he didn't have all the time in that I had. But, you can't explain this to foreigners. If the objective is to keep young; you don't put older officers in. Obviously, the Americans are crazy. (laughter)

H: Well, I have heard it said by several retired general officers that they feel the retirement laws are unrealistic; whereas, in civilian industry, you're reaching your peak about the age we put them out to pasture in the Air Force. How do you view that?

V: I think there will be some modification over the years. I do think we are taking a lot of experience and talent and retiring it too early that ought to be available. This is true not only in the officer rank but in the enlisted ranks also. You know, the Soviets keep their people almost forever. You have commanders that have been there for 15 years or more. Take the commander of the Navy in the Soviet Union. I don't know how many years he's been there, but it's been

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many, many years. He's been able to make great improvements and advances in the Soviet Navy because he knows all the things that have to be known now, and he's moving forward in the areas he has to move forward. He doesn't have to relearn every 3 years like when a new guy comes in, you see. So we are at a disadvantage in that regard.

You have to balance that off against the desire to keep people young and vigorous, but I don't think a guy is no longer young and vigorous at age 57, which I was when I got out--56. That's still pretty young, certainly by industry standards. But I'm not out of Government service by any means. I've taken a lot of jobs since then. I find my horizons have broadened considerably. I'm not only worried about Air Force problems now; I'm worried about the bigger problems of the alliance; I'm worried about the SALT issues. I'm constantly involved in groups that are meeting on this. I get to go overseas and meet with foreign elements and groups. Every day when my mail comes, there is a request to participate in some meeting or some discussion or some effort that's underway in the defense area or somewhere in the security area. I'm,

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I think, probably having as much of an impact on the way things are going to turn out, ultimately, as I would have had if I had stayed in as a full four-star general.

You know, when I was the commander over in Europe, for example, if I wanted to get back and talk to the Secretary of Defense, I had to go through channels. Everybody had to agree that it was a good idea, and many times they said it wasn't. Today I can walk into the Defense Department and meet with the highest officials and find they are always willing and able to find time to talk to me. Just 1 week ago, for example, the Under Secretary for Tactical Systems, Bob Moore, had me in to talk to all his people and express my views on where we ought to be going in new tactical systems in the coming years. I couldn't have done that as a four-star general. The Air Force wouldn't have stood still for having one of their commanders walk into the Assistant Secretary of Defense or the Deputy Secretary and express his personal views on what's needed. So if I did get a chance to talk to them, it would have been in a way that would have had me presenting the official Air

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Force view, and they would have taken my notes and my speech and revised it. What would have come out would have been the official Air Force position. But today I go in and tell them what I think. So I think, in the final analysis, I am having as much impact, or probably more, on some very important areas than I would have had if I had stayed in as a four-star.

And I discovered, as all officers will in time, that there is a world beyond the Air Force. Everything does not come to an end when your career ends in the Air Force. There are a lot of people who have an urgent requirement for your talents and your abilities and your experience. In many ways, it's a new challenge and a fascinating one--and broadening. Instead of narrowly focusing on issues of the USAFE Commander and the AFCE Commander, I'm now facing bigger issues, like where should we be going in SALT? And what has to be done within the NATO alliance to make it work? And things of that kind.

H: As a kind of closing-out question, then, are you satisfied with the present direction of the Air Force?

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V: Well, I think, as you can probably see in the discussion that's gone on before, that I'm critical of many of the developments in the Air Force. I'm critical of some of the choices of weapon systems. I'm critical of their lack of emphasis on all-weather systems. I'm critical of their lack of effort in the more exotic conventional munitions areas. I'm concerned about SALT developments, and the position that we are taking in those talks. I'm concerned about the strategic posture of the United States, a lot of which is represented by Air Force assets, and what we are going to do about them. So I think I would have done a lot of things differently than the present leaders of the Air Force have done. But I must say they are all very knowledgeable men with great ability. You know, the George Browns and the Davey Joneses are not neophytes; they are guys that have been around and have been there and have done the job. And one can argue whether my views are right and theirs are wrong, and whether my emphasis is the right one or theirs is the right one. I really can't say. But I like to feel that I know what I'm talking about, and that I speak with a professional viewpoint based on years of experience.

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I am cognizant of the fact that I was the last combat commander. The guy that had the responsibility to fight the war in the last final hours, and I am very proud of the fact that we did it effectively and in a professional way. I am extremely proud of all the support I got from the guys who worked under me, who were all very competent professionals, from the sergeants down there on the line who were keeping this thing going, to the fellows in the cockpit who carried out the responsibilities of the missions. That's been a good experience for me, and I have a very good feeling about my career and my experiences in the military service.

I think the time had come, at that point when I did get out, where I had to get on to bigger and broader things. I might add that I had been asked to stay on. This isn't generally known, but I had been asked by the Secretary of Defense to stay on for another assignment, but I thought, all things considered, the time had arrived for me to leave.

H: What kind of a position did he have in mind for you?

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V: Well, I don't think I want to disclose that now, because it was one that involved some fundamental changes in command assignments, and I thought these would be difficult problems for him and, I think, as I say, the time had arrived for me, at that point, to get out. Like all others, I would have liked to have been the Chief of Staff of the Air Force. More than that, I would have liked to have been Chairman of the JCS, an area in which I had had a lot of experience. Those kinds of things probably would have inspired me or motivated me to stay on in the service and extend beyond the 35 years. They weren't offered to me, so I think the time had arrived for me to leave, and I did. But I do think the guys that were chosen were exceptionally well qualified and had great competence in the area and have done a good job for us.

H: Are there any areas I didn't bring up that you would like to address?

V: Well, I'm sure there's a million things we could go on chatting about, probably fill 100 more tapes, but I think for the purposes of this effort, we have about brought it to an end. There'll be a lot of

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words to transcribe there.

H: On behalf of the Oral History Branch and the Office
of Air Force History, we thank you most heartily.

[End of Oral History Interview #K239.0512-1093]

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~~SECRET~~
DEPARTMENT OF THE AIR FORCE
HEADQUARTERS UNITED STATES AIR FORCE
WASHINGTON DC



1 Nov 79

REPLY TO
ATTN OF IGS

~~SECRET~~

SUBJECT Security Classification of Oral History Interviews (Your Ltr, 14 Aug 79)

TO AF/CVAH (Lt Col Phillips)

1. We have reviewed the oral history interviews of Gen Vogt and Gen McKee. All pages of the transcripts are unclassified except:

a. Interview of Gen Vogt: Pages 83-84, 91, 93-94, 98, 106-107, 109-112, 134-137, 166-178, 181-182, 184-185, 187-192, 209, 216-221, 226-235, 245-249, 272-273, 291-346, 350-352, 369-370, and 379.

b. Interview of Gen McKee: Pages 210, 213, 217, and 273-297.

2. The interviews should retain their present overall classification of Secret because of inclusion of classified information in the pages identified above.

3. If a more precise determination of classification of material in the interviews is required, it is likely that staffing with offices directly concerned with specific subject matter would result in further declassification.

4. Concerning the unclassified portions: Should the question of release arise, it should be kept in mind that: (i) the position of Generals Vogt and McKee concerning release of their personal views is a consideration; (ii) the transcripts deal heavily in matters pertaining to internal recommendations made within Government agencies, a consideration that brings them within the possible purview of exemptions from the Freedom of Information Act; and (iii) the transcripts include a great deal of information attributed to other agencies, and the views of those agencies should be considered prior to release.

5. We will prepare separate correspondence to PACAF concerning their review of these documents and the need for specific recommendations in any declassification review.

STANLEY VOYIAZIAKIS, Lt Col, USAF
Office of Security Police
The Inspector General

1 Atch
AF/CVAH Ltr, 14 Aug 79,
w/4 Atch (Atch 3&4 (S))

~~SECRET~~

When Atch No. 344 is (not) withdrawn,
not attached. The Classification of
"Confidential" (Secret) on this document
will be cancelled in accordance with [unclear]

1. [unclear] [unclear] [unclear] [unclear] [unclear] [unclear] [unclear] [unclear] [unclear] [unclear]

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