

Oral History Interview

With

EDWIN W. MARTIN

Vice consul, Hamilton, Bermuda, 1941-44, Leopoldville, Belgian Congo, 1944, Peiping, China, 1946-48, Hankow, China, 1948-49; consul, Taipei, Formosa, 1949-50; consul, also 2d. Secretary of Embassy, Rangoon, Burma, 1950-51; with Department of State, Washington, 1952-, deputy director, Office Chinese Affairs, 1953; director, Office Chinese Affairs, 1958-61; and Ambassador to Burma, 1971-73.

Washington, D.C.

June 3, 1975

by Richard D. McKinzie, Harry S. Truman Library

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MCKINZIE: Mr. Ambassador, I think a lot of historians are interested in why people went into Foreign Service in the first place. When you were going to Oberlin and doing your graduate work is this something you had a kind of life plan to do?

MARTIN: Yes, I was interested in foreign affairs and I got interested in the Foreign Service simply as a means of, you might say, implementing, my interest in foreign affairs. When I was a senior at Oberlin, an alumnus who had joined the Foreign Service about seven or eight years previously came back and gave a

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talk. His name was Jack Service. That's the only time I ever met him, when I was a senior at Oberlin. I wouldn't say that he triggered my interest, but he more or less whetted my appetite, because he was very enthusiastic about the Foreign Service. I didn't go into graduate work in international relations with the idea that the only thing I was going to do was to be a Foreign Service officer. I was interested in the field in general, so I naturally took the examinations, but I didn't pin my all on that.

MCKINZIE: You had a kind of exotic first post when you got in, didn't you?

MARTIN: Bermuda?

MCKINZIE: Yes.

MARTIN: Normally Bermuda had not been a first post,

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but because of the bases for destroyers deal that [Franklin] Roosevelt and [Winston] Churchill made in 1940, some extra staff was needed at the little Consulate General there in Bermuda. In those days the number of new Foreign Service officers, of course, was very small; usually around 35 or so people were taken into the Foreign Service annually. I think my class was about 40, which was one of the largest in prewar days.

The first year was understood to be a probationary year, and you went directly to your first post and then after this probationary year you'd come back to Washington for a session at the Foreign Service--well, we didn't have a Foreign Service Institute then, but for some training. The idea was they didn't want to waste the training on you if you weren't going to last, and they could get rid of you without

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a lot of fuss and feathers in that first year. So they would send candidates who had passed the exams to nearby posts--usually in Mexico and Canada. This was the first time they ever sent one to Bermuda.

Well, I'd been going to Fletcher School at Medford, Mass. and as Bermuda was a very close post it was very cheap for the Government to send me there. People thought, of course, that I had drag in the State Department. The fact is, I didn't know a soul in the State Department, never set foot in the State Department in my life. I went directly from Fletcher to my first post. So any thought that I had some special pull to get a post like that was just not correct.

MCKINZIE: As a young Foreign Service officer having this post in Bermuda, did you expect that you eventually would have this special relation-

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ship with British affairs?

MARTIN: No. Well, I had, of course, been born in India. So I had an interest in the British Commonwealth; but it was pure coincidence that I went to Bermuda. You have no control whatsoever over where you are sent on that first assignment. Well, usually you didn't have much control anyway, but especially on the first assignment. It just happened to be, really, for geographical reasons. I would normally probably have gone to Canada due to my location. But anyway, I went to Bermuda. And I enjoyed that assignment partly because I had lived as a child in the British Empire, and so I got along, I thought, well with and liked British people.

I don't want to spend a lot of time on the Bermuda assignment, but it was, I think an excellent one for a junior Foreign Service

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Officer. It was a small place and I learned all the consular ropes there, including some rather exotic things, because Britain was at war. We got into the war while I was there, and it was a big rendezvous point for convoys going over to Europe, to England particularly, and so we had problems with merchant shipping, with accidents that took place at sea in these convoys. They'd run along at night with no lights, or virtually no lights, and sometimes they'd have collisions, and we'd get ships with gaping holes in them. They'd come into Bermuda, and, of course, one of the jobs that a Consulate has, and I was a Vice Consul of course in those days, was to look after the problems of American shipping and I had all kinds of problems. Anytime you are dealing with ships and seamen you're going to have not only the routine business of signing on and off seamen, but looking after

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those that get in trouble with the law.

MCKINZIE: On shore leave.

MARTIN: On shore leave and at sea. So, there were a lot of interesting aspects to this job. After we got into the war, I had to handle a strike of the crew of a merchant ship chartered by the U.S.

Navy. The Navy wanted to treat it as a mutiny. The crew claimed the ship was not seaworthy. Finally the crew agreed to sail when the Navy agreed to provide a warship to escort them.

The British had a huge censorship establishment in Bermuda; they had people from all over the world censoring mail. They brought in neutral ships, like Portuguese and Spanish vessels and so forth that were headed for mostly Latin America, Central America, and they brought them into Bermuda, took off all their mail and

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censored it. So that brought a lot of interesting people there, to Bermuda.

Then I mentioned the bases for destroyers deal. The U.S. built two bases there, a naval base and an air base, and we had all sorts of problems you don't normally run into as a vice consul, such as handling American labor that had been brought down there to construct the bases. When the laborers got into trouble it would involve us.

So, from the standpoint of training and getting an all-around experience in consular work, it was an excellent place. At the same time we felt that we were contributing to the war effort, because we were directly working with the Navy and Air Force in building their bases there, and later on we had a destroyer escort training setup there.

We had some interesting people coming

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through Bermuda because Pan American Airways operated flying boats from Baltimore to Bermuda to the Azores to Lisbon. We had people who'd stop over and we'd have to look after them, like General [George C.] Marshall, and Harry Hopkins, many diplomats, and military men. Sometimes they would be delayed. It depended upon the weather. Sometimes they couldn't get into the Azores or sometimes they'd skip the Azores and fly direct to Lisbon; but in that case they could only take on about ten passengers because it was a longer flight, so we'd have VIP's stuck there in Bermuda for several days.

Well, we felt that, although we were a tiny little post about 750 miles off the coast, because of the convoys, these bases we

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were building, the traffic we had going through there, we didn't feel cut off or isolated, we felt very much a part of the whole effort.

MCKINZIE: Was it a three-year tour?

MARTIN: Well, what happened was this. You see, normally, as I said, you went out for a year and then you came back to the States, but during my first year in the Foreign Service Pearl

Harbor occurred, and the Foreign Service immediately stopped recruiting. The last people who came into the Foreign Service on a regular basis was the class of '42 who had taken their exams in '41 before the war. But after Pearl Harbor they didn't give any more Foreign Service exams. So they stopped the program which they normally had of bringing

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back the people after their probationary year, and they left us at our posts. So, instead of having a one-year tour as I normally would have had, I was there for nearly three years. But by that time, of course, everything was more or less arbitrary, and all rules sort of gone by the board, and they just kept you where they needed you.

MCKINZIE: Well, why then the Congo?

MARTIN: Well, it just happened, I don't think there was any special rhyme or reason. I think it was, again, the wartime situation. They happened to need somebody in the Congo. I'd been with this post for nearly three years, and they decided to send me there.

There, of course, again we were very much geared to the war effort; the Congo was a producer of raw materials. In those days it was controlled

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by the Belgians. Before I got there, actually, Leopoldville had been one of the way stations on our air route that linked the United States with the Far East, believe it or not, because the Germans had occupied North Africa in the early part of the war. So the air link was down to South America, across the South Atlantic, to Central Africa, and then across Central Africa on to East Africa and to India and the Far East.

When I got there in early '44, the Germans had been chased out of North Africa so the shorter link had been restored, but Leopoldville had been on the previous air link. Our particular work there, aside from the routine consular duties, was to expedite the shipment of raw materials, and particularly uranium. We used to ship uranium--that is we used to issue consular invoices for commercial shipments of uranium

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by air. It seemed to be a very expensive thing to do, and it wasn't until the explosion of the first atomic bomb that I realized what the significance of it was, because in those days I think this was the primary source of uranium, that part of Africa.

We also shipped out wild rubber, because the Japanese had occupied the big rubber plantations of Southeast Asia. The Congo used to be a big source of rubber in the very early days of the rubber industry. Then plantations in Southeast Asia and elsewhere had made it uneconomical to collect wild rubber, but they went back to collecting wild rubber again in the Congo during the war.

MCKINZIE: Did the people seem fairly placid to you, that is to say, did you anticipate at that time any problems that were beneath the surface, as such?

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MARTIN: Well, I was struck by how paternalistic the Belgian administration was and how unenlightened it was in the sense that it had not developed the African population of the Congo which, of course, was divided up into many different tribal groups. It had not given them educational opportunities. In fact, there was not a single Congolese who had received a university education, which was fantastic considering this was 1944. Congolese were trained as clerks in banks, as locomotive engineers, as medical assistants (which was somewhat lower than a trained nurse level). There were maybe a half dozen or so high schools in the whole country, and these were practically all run by missionaries, Catholic and Protestant. As a result there was no reservoir of administrative or professional Africans, that is Congolese, being trained to assume the responsibilities of Government.

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This was quite different from what was going on in, say, British colonies. In Nigeria at that time, and in the Gold Coast, you had thousands of Africans who had received university educations, who had been to Oxford and Cambridge, who sat on the bench, who were judges, who were doctors, and so forth. The educational level was so low in the Congo that even our principal local employee, sort of the head clerk of the Consulate General in Leopoldville, was a Nigerian, because you couldn't find anyone well enough trained among the Africans in the Congo to fill the job.

It was, in other words, a situation that was out of step especially with what the British were doing, but I think also with what the French were doing too. The Belgians obviously had no plan for--or they were not working, developing the resources, the human resources

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for eventual independence of the Congo. When they gave independence to the Congo, along about--when was it, about the end of the fifties I think it was--I remember I felt that this was something that would produce trouble, because they simply hadn't prepared the ground for it, and of course, there was a lot of trouble then.

MCKINZIE: You were there only a short time, weren't you?

MARTIN: Yes. Well, what happened was--this is an interesting footnote, not very important, but two things happened--one is I was ill a great deal. I got malaria, and I got bacillary dysentery I lost a lot of weight. I was finally ordered to leave the country. I was going to be transferred to Tehran, because I couldn't seem to shake off this sort of perpetual round of

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dysentery and malaria.

In those days in Leopoldville the incidence of malaria, at least among the white population, was around 85 percent, so it wasn't so unusual to get it, and it just seemed to hit me in combination with the dysentery so that the doctor thought that I should get out of there. But then I got drafted; I got a notice from my draft board. Up until the spring of '44, the State Department requested draft boards to defer Foreign Service officers on the grounds they were doing important work in connection with the war effort, which we were. But in the spring of '44 the Department adopted a policy that all Foreign Service officers under the age of 28 would no longer be deferred. I was 26 when the policy went into effect, and 27 when I was actually drafted, so I was one of the oldest Foreign Service

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officers to be drafted.

Now, this was an interesting thing, because here I was over in the Congo helping to ship out uranium and that sort of stuff and was drafted to go back to the States and join the military, which as far as I was concerned was fine. Most of my friends in my generation were in the Army and I was glad to follow along, but from the standpoint of national interest it was a very dubious move. I don't know the exact number of Foreign Service officers that were drafted, but since they were only those under 28, and since they had not recruited any Foreign Service officers for the last three years, I doubt if more than 50 or 60 at the most, probably not that many, could have been drafted. At the time that I went into the armed forces I think the U.S. had 12 and a half million people in the armed forces, so to add

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to twelve and a half million, they drafted fifty or sixty out of a total Foreign Service officer corps of about 800. It didn't make a great deal of sense.

In fact, when I got back to the States, my draft board said, "What are you doing back here?" They said, "We think this is the most ridiculous thing we've ever seen, bringing you back from Central Africa when we've got people sitting here in our own town who have been deferred right along and haven't stirred." But as far as I was concerned I was glad to do it. I felt that this was an experience that I wanted to share and I was glad to have the opportunity.

Incidentally, my British colleagues there in Leopoldville were aghast at my being drafted because Britain had been in the war since '39 and hadn't drafted their Foreign Service people,

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despite the fact that proportionately Britain had far more people in the armed forces than America did.

But as I said at the time I was quite glad to be called up and I look back on my whole experience in the armed forces as being one that added to my education.

MCKINZIE: You were in basic training, I understand, at the end of the war?

MARTIN: Yes.

MCKINZIE: On V-E Day.

MARTIN: Well, on V-E Day I was in basic training, and I was a student company commander in Officer's Candidate School on V-J Day. About the time I went to Officer Candidate School at Fort Benning the State Department sent out a letter to Foreign Service officers who had been drafted

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saying they were needed in the Foreign Service, because posts closed during the war were opening up again. The War Department had agreed that Foreign Service officers would be released if they wanted to leave the military service to return to the Foreign Service. Naturally, as the war was over and the Foreign Service was my career, I said, "Yes." So I was honorably discharged on the 30th of September, 1945, "for the convenience of the Government," to go back into the Foreign Service. I reported to the State Department in Washington two weeks later.

Now, one of the little twists of all this was that I had the exact opposite experience from the vast majority of people who were drafted into the Army in World War II. I was abroad when I was drafted. I came home, I spent my entire military career in the United

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States and I was released in order to go abroad again. So, it was sort of an upside down experience you might say. But again, because of the fact that most of my generation had some military experience or other I was glad to have the opportunity to go through basic training, go through Officer Candidate School, go through the mill, and generally have that to look back on. I think it gave me a kind of dimension that I wouldn't have had if I had never put on a uniform.

MCKINZIE: When you came back to the Department, did you have, by that time any say at all about what your next assignment was going to be?

MARTIN: Well, I'll tell you how it happened. I came back and reported for duty and naturally was sent to personnel, and the personnel

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people said, "Where do you want to go?"

And I said, "I don't really care. I want an interesting assignment, of course."

And they said, "How about Shanghai?"

"Well," I said, "that sounds quite exciting." So, they sent me up to what was then called the Division of Chinese Affairs, and I went up there and encountered a young officer by the name of Fulton Freeman, who, incidentally, recently died at a prematurely young age. Tony Freeman was a Chinese language officer who had been doing his Chinese language study in Peking at the time of Pearl Harbor. He was interned there by the Japanese and later repatriated. He had been given the job of recruiting a new batch of Chinese language trainees, because they were going to start the language program up which had lapsed during the war. He persuaded me without much effort

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that it would be much more fun to go to China knowing Chinese than it would just to go out as a generalist.

So, my departure for China was delayed by nearly a year and I was sent to Yale University where they had developed, during the war, techniques as they had developed elsewhere, Harvard and other places, for teaching language much more rapidly than they had been able to teach it in the old days. I spent an academic year at Yale studying Chinese fulltime, mostly language but also area studies. So this is how I happened to get into the China specialty, a totally fortuitous thing.

I had actually decided, more or less, before that, that I'd like to get into a "hard language" program, in fact I was interested in Arabic. But this opportunity came and I grabbed it and I haven't regretted it.

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MCKINZIE: While you were studying Chinese, the situation in China was on the downhill and deteriorating.

MARTIN: Yes, well that's right. I was studying Chinese at Yale in '45-'46, and that was about the time the Marshall mission was in China. I arrived in China in September of '46 for another year of language study (actually it was a little over a year) and the Marshall mission was just about winding up then, in the fall of '46. I think it was around January of '47, I don't remember the exact date, when Marshall decided that he wasn't going to be able to do anything more, and he left. But it was pretty apparent certainly by the time I finished my Chinese language study, which was February of '48, that it was just a matter of time, really.

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MCKINZIE: Why do you say it was apparent? From official things you'd learned or from what you observed as you traveled, and your contacts with Chinese in the course of study? As a student of language you must have had some contact with the people?

MARTIN: Oh, we had a lot of contact. I was not doing any official reporting in those days, there was one exception which I'll mention later, a very unusual opportunity that I had; but as a young FSO, on fulltime language study in Peking in '46-'48, I did make a lot of Chinese friends. I might mention, incidentally, my wife is China-born, and speaks beautiful Chinese, which helped, of course, in making Chinese friends. Also I wanted to utilize my Chinese as much as possible. We made a lot of friends among students in Peita, which is Peking University, Peiching Ta Hsueh. I

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audited a course in Chinese diplomatic history at the university, which was an eye opener. It was taught by, of course, a Chinese professor in Chinese and presented a point of view on relations with the United States and Britain and other Western countries which was quite different from the one that I had been exposed to at the university in the United States.

MCKINZIE: The view was that of the Nationalists?

MARTIN: No, the view was a Chinese view. I wouldn't label it Nationalist necessarily. In fact most of the professors there were very unhappy about the Nationalist Government. No, it was not a Communist, I wouldn't say it was a Marxist view, I would say it was a nationalist view with a small "n", not a Kuomintang view, it was a view of the Chinese. And of course, there was

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a good deal of Chinese documentary backup for this presentation. Anyway, I enjoyed it thoroughly and thought I'd learned a great deal from the course, but at the same time I made a lot of Chinese friends among the students, being one of them, and going to their dormitories and having them over to the house. They were obviously very disillusioned with the Kuomintang and were enthusiastic about the Communists, and large numbers of them left the University during those years to go over to the Communists where they were welcomed and often given responsible jobs.

One of the problems the students had with the Kuomintang, the government, was its failure to provide them with any kind of employment prospects. In other words, after the university most of them found themselves unable to get jobs, and naturally this

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affected them and their outlook. And the Communists on the other hand seemed to provide exciting prospects for work even though with no monetary return. The Communists appealed to the students' sense of nationalism with the idea that they were going to rebuild China into a strong, respected world power.

MCKINZIE: Were they more ideologues of a Marxist nature or were they more nationalists...

MARTIN: There undoubtedly were ideologues among them, but the friends I made I would say were not ideologues, primarily. They were to some extent, I think, but I think they were mainly

attracted by the feeling the Communists were going to win, they had it made, they were going to pull China together and make it a respected power. I think that was number one.

I think they also felt that capitalism

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as they had seen it working in China was not the way to get the country moving. The country was in the economic doldrums, they had no economic prospects, I think they were convinced that socialism for China was the better way, and so to that extent perhaps they were ideologues. But they were disgusted with corruption and so forth, and--well, that was the students.

Now, I'm not saying that the students were typical of China, but in China students have historically played an important role. I wouldn't say they were strongly anti-American, there were anti-American demonstrations, but they were primarily based on the ground that we were aiding what they considered to be a corrupt regime which was not going to last. I used to have long discussions with them on a number of points I didn't agree with them on, or at least I tried to give them the

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American point of view. For example, most of the military equipment which the Nationalists had, we gave them to fight the Japanese, and therefore it was erroneous to say that we had given them this aid to fight the Communists. That was just baloney, in fact, Marshall had taken a very evenhanded position in his dealings with the Nationalists and the Communists.

I did a certain amount of reporting as a political reporting officer out of Peking after I finished the language course, but then I was transferred to Hankow in May of '48.

MCKINZIE: For no particular reason, or because Peking was beginning to get...?

MARTIN: Oh, no, it was just natural. The people who completed the course were sent out to various posts. A friend of mine, who was the

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first one to complete the course (because he had been stationed in Chungking during the war and had some Chinese when he started the course) went to Nanking, to the Embassy. Other people who finished about the same time I did went to Tientsin and Shanghai. I went to Hankow, another friend of mine went to Canton.

MCKINZIE: All south.

MARTIN: Well, yes, we were already in the north. We were scattered. In those days, of course, China was, and had been for years, very regionalized. The warlords were still pretty influential so that political reporting was not monopolized by the Embassy, though that was obviously the

most important place for it. The different consulates, the major ones, like Canton, Hankow and so forth, and Shanghai, naturally, did do a good deal of political

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reporting, which is not normally the case for most consulates. But in China it always had been the case. I traveled extensively in my consular district which took in the whole of Central China, six provinces of Central China, and had a population of a hundred million people. So that while it was a consular district in China, its size and population were greater than the vast majority of countries in the world, and that was my bailiwick. I was the political reporting officer for that area.

So, I traveled extensively and it seemed to me that even by the summer of '48 the Kuomintang, the central government, had really lost control of the countryside pretty much.

MCKINZIE: Who had it?

MARTIN: The Communists, I'd say. The Kuomintang had

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the cities still, but the villages were pretty much beyond their control, and their military (Nationalist's military) was concentrated in the cities and along main communication routes. They could not control the vast countryside where 80 percent of the people lived.

MCKINZIE: How were you treated by the people in the countryside that were sympathetic, or under the control of the Communists?

MARTIN: Well, of course, I didn't actually go into areas which were under direct Communist control. We weren't allowed to and it would have been foolish to do so because we could have been captured. So I was pretty much in the towns, or the major towns and the cities. I think people were afraid, many of them I think saw what was coming and especially as the Communists came down from the north. But I didn't feel

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any particular hostility. The places that I visited generally were places that had, at that time, relatively few Americans, mostly missionaries, but virtually no businessmen or officials. People didn't know exactly what was going to happen. But the reason I say that the Kuomintang lost control of the countryside is that they were not able to enforce their laws and particularly their currency and economic controls in the countryside.

An illustration of that is that in August of '48 they introduced a new currency called the gold yuan--they obviously were trying to give an impression it was somehow linked with gold, which it wasn't, and they set a 4 to 1, four gold yuan for one U.S. dollar, rate; and they ordered people to turn in not only their old currency, which

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they exchanged at a certain rate, but all their dollars and any gold or anything that they had in the way of metals, silver, and so forth, to be exchanged for this currency. In the cities they tried to enforce this harshly, even to the extent of executing people who didn't comply, but it was a total failure in the countryside; they had no way of enforcing this in the countryside. So the people just refused to take this new currency and the inflation went on. The people in the cities could only buy things from the country if they used silver dollars or gold bars or some other currency of that kind, but mainly gold and silver. So by May of '49 when I left the mainland of China the gold yuan, which ten months before had exchanged at four to the U.S. dollar was now exchanged at something like 500,000 to one dollar, if you can imagine an inflation like that.

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In other words the gold yuan became useless as a medium of exchange, and this was because the cities were at the mercy of the countryside. The countryside would not accept the gold yuan, and the cities could not eat unless they provided the countryside with something that the farmers were willing to accept.

MCKINZIE: As recently as August of '48, though, there were some plans in the works and there were still contingency plans in Washington about aid to China which would reconstruct the countryside and it was all tied of course to reforms, that they wanted Chiang to make and that he never made.

MARTIN: Oh, I think it was much too late in '48, it was too late to do anything.

MCKINZIE: Are you saying then that the China aid

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bill in 1948 which passed, what was it, 450 million dollars for China aid, was too late?

MARTIN: Yes. I think by '48 I would say it was too late. I think the Nationalists had already pretty well lost control of the countryside. The major reform, which interestingly enough the Nationalists finally did accomplish and very successfully in Taiwan--and I was there at the beginnings of that, that's a different story--was land reform. But in the mainland land reform never was accomplished, and, of course, this was the single most effective political tool I think that the Chinese Communists had, the turning of the landless peasants and tenant farmers against the landowners, and there they could draw on an enormous reservoir of ill will. Of course, the Communists went back on their own promises, or at least the implication of their promise, which was that

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once he got rid of the landlord the farmer could own his own land, which was the farmer's dream. Eventually, of course, after the Communists came to power, they collectivized the land.

But as a political tool the promise of land ownership by the Communists was very effective. If the Chinese national government had honestly implemented land reform early on--'48 was too late, I'm convinced of that--you might have had a different story in China.

MCKINZIE: Could you talk a little bit about your relations with Chinese officials when you were in Hankow?

MARTIN: Yes, I think I had pretty good relations with Chinese officials. Of course, as a consular officer--I was still a vice consul--we were supposed to deal with the local officials, that

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is the governors and the mayors; and I made it a point to go around and meet and talk to all these people in the consular district. The American consul general, by the way, was a very fine old-time consular type, who was not a China specialist. And so I was pretty much it when it came to this sort of thing. Generally I was quite well received. My last swing through the district, I remember it quite vividly, was in March of '49. By that time the Communists had already taken Tientsin and Peking, and they were down to the banks of the Yangtse River, They were facing Nanking which was attacked the following month; so things looked pretty grim by that time. When I attempted to see the Governor of Hunan (Hunan is the native province of Mao [Tse-tung], of course, and was part of my consular district), he wouldn't see me. There were all sorts of rumors that he was going

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to make a deal with the Communists and it was pretty obvious that he didn't want to see me because he didn't want this association. I recall coming back and writing up my trip and saying this guy is very dubious. He had a dubious reputation anyway. He was an old-time Kuomintang, by the way, but I think as it turned out he did make a deal with the Communists. The province fell without a fight. Some of the officials were, I think, doing a pretty good job, others were not very impressive.

The mayor of Hankow and his wife were among the unimpressive people. Their big reputation was that they could drink anybody under the table. This is an old Chinese custom. I don't know whether you know this.

Just to digress a minute and bring it right up to the minute, in yesterday's paper there was an account of some of our athletes

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who had gone to the People's Republic of China this last two or three weeks to compete against the Chinese teams in track and field. They had meets in Canton, Shanghai, and Peking. They had

a big farewell banquet a couple of nights ago and the Chinese served maotai, which is a very potent drink, about 150 proof. Several of our athletes apparently disgraced themselves drinking too much maotai, and some of their colleagues and coaches were pretty embarrassed about the whole thing.

I smiled at that, because anyone who has lived in China and has attended any kind of official function as many times as I have, knows that--especially I think when you're younger maybe--the Chinese do try to get you drunk. There's no question about it, that's their idea of--at least that's one idea of hospitality that they have, so I could sympathize

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with these guys. Anyone who goes there should be warned, especially younger people. The Chinese make you feel that you should drink to be polite, but actually a lot of Chinese never drink, never touch it, and they are quite frank to say, "I just don't drink." If you can't handle it, that's the best way to do. Anyway the mayor of Hankow and his wife were drinkers, they were people that could handle it.

MCKINZIE: In your reporting did you report things like that?

MARTIN: Oh, yes. In the normal course of reporting, you'd report not only on political trends, economic developments and so forth, but on personalities, and your assessment of them and how effective they are and what they do, this was standard.

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MCKINZIE: Well, on the subject of reporting, the tone of reports coming from other parts of China got some people into deep and serious trouble in the Department later on, and there were periods which, I understand, predated your period, when it was simply unacceptable to send certain types of reports on through. I'm thinking particularly early when Patrick Hurley was in there.

MARTIN: Well, fortunately that era was over when I was in China.

MCKINZIE: Did you ever feel constrained?

MARTIN: No, I never did. I never felt at all constrained. Of course, I never was in the Embassy, but naturally the Embassy supervised. We had to send copies of our reports to the Embassy; but the people in the Embassy were, I think, very open and I never felt the slightest

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bit of restraint from there. Leighton Stuart, you can't imagine him doing anything like that, or Walt Butterworth, who recently died, an extremely able guy, none of the people there. You never had that feeling at all that you were under any kind of restraint. And I don't know of anyone who was reporting in China at the time that I was reporting that had ever made any complaint of this

sort or who ever felt that he got into trouble because of what he said. Now, I think there was a special era that related to certain personalities--you mentioned one of them, Hurley, which did not exist again fortunately--that was over with the Chungking days, and all the wartime atmosphere and the problems; but after the Embassy moved to Nanking, certainly in the time that I had anything to do with it, reporting, I never heard anyone who felt a restraint or

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who got into trouble because of it.

MCKINZIE: Well, no one in any field likes to say they report what they think their superiors wanted to hear, but you never felt that there was a line that was popular to take or that you couldn't report what you really thought about the prospects.

MARTIN: No, I don't think so. Of course, I wasn't in the Embassy. I wasn't in a position to...

MCKINZIE: Still you were doing political reporting.

MARTIN: I was doing political reporting, but what did that amount to? That amounted to traveling around this enormous district and talking to people and seeing what was going on and reporting it, and that was it. And I don't think there was any kind of restraint.

Of course, the expectations from the field

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at that time were--I don't know what they were in Washington, I don't know that they were much different. You know, unless people are really familiar with U.S.-China relations in that postwar period, I find that they make a jump, they jump from the wartime, Hurley period, up until the time the Communists took over and they completely forget that there was this interim period. They often forget this, and people who I'm very surprised don't know better do not realize that there were a lot of us in China wandering all over the country, right up until '49; that we maintained consulates and the Embassy there actually up until early '50, that some consulates were open for a year after the Communists took over. People don't realize this. But that's a fact, and as far as we in the field were concerned our feeling was, as I've indicated earlier, that certainly by

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'48 it was all over, it was a matter of time; and secondly, that we would do business with the new government, we all expected to do it. We all expected to stay there. The proof of this expectation, I think the best proof, is that although we could have sent our families back to the States when they were all evacuated in the late fall of '48, the vast majority of us chose to send them to Manila, because we felt that they would be able to come back soon. And some of the wives, against the advice of the State Department, and on their own, actually came back to China after being evacuated to the Philippines. My wife might have been one of them except for the

fact that she was about to give birth to twins. She was planning to come back to Canton and stay with friends of ours. But our whole outlook was, and this was the outlook I think of most of the business community, "You know, we're

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going to find some sort of a basis for dealing with the Communists because there--I mean that's it, they won, they've taken over." The cold war really hadn't sort of settled down in that part of the world at that time.

MCKINZIE: In this period, just before you left Hankow, did you have trouble getting around over these six provinces and what kind of accommodations, in those sort of support things that you have to have in that kind of a world, how was that?

MARTIN: Well, I was not only doing political reporting, but as a consular officer, I was also responsible for what we call protection of American citizens, and actually this gave me both an excuse and a reason for visiting certain places. If you simply go there and say, "Well, I'm here to report on what is

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going on," you don't get such a good reception, but if you go there and say, "There is a missionary family here, a missionary group, who is having a hard time with the local authorities who are occupying their property," you have a good reason to be there, to protect American-owned property. Not only missionaries but American companies, especially the oil companies, had big installations all over, such as storage tanks, etc. It was a part of my official job to try to get their property restored. Their property was often occupied by the Kuomintang military. It was American property, they had the deeds to the property and everything. I utilized such opportunities to make contacts. I would always go and see the governor or the mayor of somebody like that in my official capacity. When I was in town doing consular business I'd make courtesy calls, and

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that was fine. I made some of these contacts through the missionary interests or the business interests, but I was able to see other people as well. It gave me a little more balance to find out what our own people on the spot, many of whom had spent many years in China, thought about the situation.

Because a good part of the countryside was not really safe, although, generally, the main lines of communications and the main towns and cities were still under the Kuomintang, I went by air to a place like Sian in Shensi Province, which was in my district. To Kiangsi and Hunan Provinces I went by boat and by train and by car.

MCKINZIE: You never felt endangered in these trips?

MARTIN: No, not really. No, I wouldn't say so--even as late as this last trip I mentioned before, in March of '49, I was away for a couple of

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weeks. I went to Kiangsi and Hunan by boat and by train and then a couple of hundred miles by car. I didn't feel in any particular danger. In May of '49, I was transferred to Taipei and was supposed to take home leave first. Although the Communists were not far from Hankow, that wasn't the reason I was transferred, it just happened to come up. I was going to take a jeep and drive south down through Changsha and down to Canton, because by that time, and for some time, all commercial transportation out of Hankow had been cut off. The Communists had already taken Nanking further down the Yangtze River. As it happened a plane came in, a Civil Air Transport plane. CAT was American at that time, I think, an American-run outfit. I hitch-hiked a ride out on that plane. But no, I never felt--I was a little bit, you know, apprehensive about driving a

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jeep down to Changsha, knowing that the Communists were operating in guerrilla fashion south of Hankow at that time, down towards Changsha, and I was a little apprehensive about that, but I didn't think I had any choice.

MCKINZIE: You mentioned that you fully anticipated having normal relations with the next government whoever that might be. Is there any validity to the claim made by some historians that what people in Washington, at least, and evidently a lot of people in the field, hoped for was neither a complete victory by either of the two major sides, but that some third force would emerge out of all of this and that that third force would be a force with which the United States could better deal?

MARTIN: Well, I think there was a period, a rather short period when there was some thinking along

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those lines. For example at the time when I first went to China in '46, in the fall of '46 and maybe into '47, I think there was some feeling--in fact we knew some of the third force people in Peking--that they would be at least a part of the new government and they might modify it or balance it. I think that this was partly wishful thinking and partly thinking that was promoted by the third force themselves, who were mainly intellectuals; and as I say, I was acquainted with some of them in Peking, they made quite a persuasive case that the Communists would need them because they had contact with the outside world and the Communists would want to put on a moderate face. They were all anti-Kuomintang, and they were against the Kuomintang because of corruption, because of dictatorial methods and also because the Kuomintang had treated the intellectuals

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badly; but again there was this pervasive feeling, especially I think starting by '47 at least, that the Kuomintang was finished anyway, so you're working out a new approach.

MCKINZIE: Regardless of the amount of American assistance that the Kuomintang might get from the United States?

MARTIN: Oh, I think that...

MCKINZIE: You know there were a lots of people who...

MARTIN: No, it wasn't a question of amount of equipment and amount of military aid. They had the equipment. They lost it in battle. I don't know any of my colleagues there who were doing reporting, certainly in my generation, or even older, who felt that the Kuomintang could have been saved at that time by infusion of

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more aid. You might have prolonged the battle, and if we had eventually gotten involved as we did in Korea you might have had an enormous American involvement in the war, but can you imagine the U.S. trying to hold down China? I mean that's just fantastic. Thank God we never got involved in that.

But getting back to the third force, I think it became evident, and I can't give you an exact date on this, but certainly I would feel by the time, say, I went to Hankow in May of '48 that the third force really was not a viable political entity. It consisted of people without any real power base. The Communists I think found them useful. The Communists, of course, as you know, followed United Front tactics. This is a standard technique, they still use it, the Chinese Communists still use it effectively, the whole third world bit that they are now on

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is a United Front technique on an international scale. The Communists use it in Laos, they are using it now, as they have before; once they get into position to exert their authority, they're going to take over total control, the United Front's already a complete facade in Laos.

So these, the third force guys in China, weren't real in terms of any power structure that could even begin to hold its own with the Communists.

Now, when the Communists came into power they did appoint a number of non-Communists to rather unimportant positions including Fu Tso-yi, who was a warlord of the North, who surrendered Peking to them. I think he quite wisely surrendered Peking to them, because there was nothing else he could do, and he saved the city; but as a reward he was appointed Minister of

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Water Conservancy and so forth. There were a few other people of that kind, including ex-warlords and Kuomintang generals that cooperated with the Communists. The Communists had the real power.

No, I think that what we underestimated in some ways was the--well, maybe it would be more accurate to put it this way, and I think this has been a mistake in American policy in China and in the Far East in general, in my experience, we overestimated our own importance in China.

MCKINZIE: How so?

MARTIN: Well, because we thought--well, not only our own importance, but the importance of the West as a whole. We thought, "All these guys got to do business with us, now how the hell can they get along without the Americans." This

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has been our attitude right up through Vietnam, a major error in our thinking, I think, on the Far East. Not that we can't do a lot, we do; but there are those things even the greatest power can't do.

So the idea was, well, the Communists will come to power, but they'll need to do business with the West and so forth. Actually it's something I think I learned fairly early on and whaled away at for years within the Department, that these guys are going to run it themselves their own way. After all these years they now have gotten into a position where it is useful for them to do business with us, but in those days their number one priority was to make the revolution, and they could not make the revolution and do normal business with the United States, Britain, France or anybody in the West, it was impossible. So that the

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idea that if we had made this gesture or that gesture or Leighton Stuart had gone up to Peking and said, "Yes, we want to be friendly," that it would have changed the whole complexion of China, I think, is utter baloney. I think it's disproved by Mao's whole career, his writings, his dedication to revolution. He doesn't believe in our system, period. He never has. And he's only going to do business with it if it's to China's advantage. And in those days if he was going to remake China, as he wanted to do, he could not afford to allow the remnants of any American presence in China. Although the British recognized the Communist Government in January of '50, they weren't able to establish full-fledged diplomatic relations with China until the Geneva Conference of '54. I was there at the time when they did it. They were called by the

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Chinese a negotiating mission, they were never given diplomatic status, or recognized. Why? It's very difficult to be buddy-buddy and establish normal relations when you're going to turn out everybody in the whole country, you're going to kick out every foreign businessman, you're

going to close down all their establishments, all their banks, that's the only way they could make revolution in China.

What I've said just now about making revolution is a hindsight judgment based on everything that's happened since then, weighing up everything. I think the evidence is over whelmingly on the side that this was the compelling nature of their revolution and that they had to do what they did in terms of their own rationale, their own objectives. Again, I think this business of a little thing here, or a little thing there would have

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turned the course of history away from the way it went--it's to me a misreading of history, and again an example of the repeated overestimation of American influence in that part of the world, and the importance of the United States.

MCKINZIE: Were you aware at the time, though, of the psychological effects that events in China were having on people in the United States, that the slow withdrawal of Chiang Kai-shek from the mainland, his series of defeats, and the fear that half a billion souls would suddenly come under a Communist regime, was so traumatic for Americans, regarding it as a major American defeat in diplomacy, and I think kind of a defeat of United States mission in the world?

MARTIN: I certainly wasn't aware of that, and that didn't seem to be actuality. The statements

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of Truman and Acheson as late as January '50--at that time I was in Taiwan--did not seem to reflect that. They seemed to accept the Communist victory with a certain amount of equanimity. They said we're not going to defend Formosa, which was the reason I was sent out of Formosa as soon as I was. It was anticipated that the Communists; as early as March of '50 might launch an invasion of Formosa.

Now, where history really would have changed, is if there had been no Korean War, and the Communists had taken over Formosa, if they had been successful--and they probably would have been because we were not going to resist them. Our policy was hands off, let the dust settle, we're not going to defend Formosa. We had no military aid program then of any kind there. We had long ago recognized that Formosa was part of China and

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that was it. Now, if China had taken Formosa at that time rather than gone into Korea--of course they eventually might have gone into Korea and we might have gotten involved then, but by that time they would have already had Formosa, at least that wouldn't be an issue today.

Now, I was in Taiwan when Chiang Kai-shek came over. I was in Taiwan at the battle of Quemoy, which was the only successful major battle the Nationalists fought in the period of '48

to '50, that I know of; and it was perhaps of historical importance, because it bought a little more time. But still the American military estimate in early 1950 was the Communists were going to take Taiwan, and it was just a matter of time, and President Truman and Secretary Acheson's statements of January '50 made it clear that the U.S.

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was not going to do anything about it. Now, I think at that time our policy was hands off and whatever we may have thought about the Communists, certainly as far as I was concerned--I was back in the States on home leave the summer of '49--I didn't get any sense of panic from people I talked to. I got the sense of, "Well, this has happened."

The decision which was made in early '50, maybe March or April, I don't know when the decision was made, but it was implemented in March and April of '50, to pull out our remaining official establishments in China, our consulates and the Embassy, was made, I think, in the realization--I think it must have come home to Washington, then, that we weren't going to be able to do business with the Communists. We were willing, that's the thing that people forget, we were there, and we were willing to do

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business with them, we didn't recognize them immediately, but we gave every indication--the Truman-Acheson statements, the fact we left our Ambassador there after the Communists came in, the fact we left all of these consulates open--we gave every indication that we were going to stay on. We had no military aid program to Chiang Kai-shek. The Communists are bright people, Chou and Mao, some of the brightest in the world--they could see these signs. But despite all of that they were not willing to do business with our consulates, they weren't willing to allow them even to do the most routine things.

MCKINZIE: For reasons that you have previously stated.

MARTIN: That's right, because they could not make the kind of revolution they were going to make

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and leave the U.S. presence in China, it's impossible. And why did we pull out? Because our officials, I understand--I wasn't in Washington--but we were given to understand in the field, and I think it is true, we did not want incidents to be created in China which would arouse animosity in this country which might bring pressure for intervention of some sort to do something. We wanted to say, "Okay, we'll pull everybody out, we'll just leave them alone;" and so we had a very much hands off, let the dust settle policy. It was not until June 25--or whatever the date was, that the North Koreans invaded--and Truman made his dramatic decision to intervene in Korea and to insulate Formosa from that war, that the hands off policy changed. I wasn't in Washington, I don't know what the atmosphere was, but certainly up until the Korean War I was not

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aware of any great pressures to change our China policy. It changed then. I was in Washington in the final year of the Truman administration. During the election campaign the Republicans were beating a dead horse. They won the election, of course, but they were beating a dead horse on China, because we had already changed the policy. They wanted to make the most of it by blaming Korea and everything on the Democrats. So, when they came into office the China policy couldn't change, because it was already changed.

MCKINZIE: When you went back to Formosa in 1949 after your home leave, you mentioned the possibility of a Communist attack on the island, but wasn't there also some feeling that Formosans might not be too hospitable for a very long period of time?

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MARTIN: Well, the Formosans, of course, were bitter for the most part against the Kuomintang, against the Chinese Nationalists. They had been treated very badly, and I think a lot of Nationalists will now admit this. They took very severe measures against the Formosans in '47, which the Formosans still talked about a lot in 1949. The situation was rather uneasy between the Formosans and the Nationalists, the mainlanders in Formosa, at that time, which may have been one reason for the military estimate that the Communists were going to take over Formosa.

The U.S. had had only a small consulate in Formosa. All of a sudden it increased in size, with the fall of China to the Communists. We had a man, I think he was called the Charge', Bob Strong, who had been following Chiang Kai-shek around on the mainland to the various

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temporary capitals, and he followed him over to Taipei, in December. I think the Embassy was still open in Nanking and Bob came to the consulate in Taipei as sort of a representative of the Embassy following Chiang Kai-shek around as the head of State. But we did not call the consulate the Embassy until after the Embassy was closed in Nanking. And then I think it still was quite nebulous. I think it was probably the summer of 1950 that [Karl Lott] Rankin came up to be Charge, but we didn't have an Ambassador as a resident for several years.

MCKINZIE: How did your work change, because you were now suddenly in a very large consulate?

MARTIN: Well, it wasn't all that large, a lot bigger than Hankow, that's right, but it wasn't very big in those days, it was still pretty small.

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To give you an idea what the situation was in the fall of '49 in Taiwan, I think we had less than a hundred Americans on the whole island, the whole island, less than a hundred Americans,

including families. We had no military aid program there. Well, I was assigned to a new job. I was assigned there as economic officer, in fact the only job I've had in the Foreign Service specifically as economic officer. But as economic officers, we were all contributing to the general assessment of the situation, economic, political, and so forth. You had sort of a feeling that you were just marking time until another province of China fell, you see. Then we became involved with--well Chiang Kai-shek came over, [Philip C.] Jessup came over on a special mission and so forth. That was the first time I met Chiang Kai-shek, when Jessup came over.

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Then in January of '50 the orders came from Washington that the Embassy should be reduced to a skeleton staff, because they didn't want a lot of people caught there by the Communists. And since I had already been separated from my family for a long time, and I had the little twin boys who were born in Manila when my wife was a refugee there, we were transferred to Rangoon. Of course, the funny thing is, when we got to Rangoon, rebels with artillery on the other side of the airport had been shelling the city. We went through two barbed wire barricades manned by soldiers with submachine guns to get just from the airport to the hotel in town. So we were much closer to war there than we were in Taiwan where we were evacuated from. Fortunately, that was the high tide of the insurgency and in fact it had begun to recede somewhat even

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by then in Burma. But that's another story.

MCKINZIE: When you get transferred, precipitously like that, and you are brought into a place like Rangoon where there is a political situation, which had its own peculiarities, and which is also dangerous and the situation is very unstable, how long does it take to get acclimatized, what kind of briefings do you get? I notice you were not only consul there, but you were at one point second secretary in the Embassy.

MARTIN: Yes, I was. Well, in those days we didn't get much of this sort of thing like briefing and so forth.

MCKINZIE: That's what I wondered.

MARTIN: You just were thrown in and told to swim. That's been developed a great deal in the last twenty years. But I did have consultation in

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Washington at the China desk, you know, about the situation and so forth. I can't remember the details of it but I certainly was able to read the latest cables and so forth that were coming in before I got out to Taipei; but, you see, our whole policy was--to use a familiar phrase I've used before--"let the dust settle." It was just sort of a holding operation, we were marking time. The Communists had won. There was no indication that we were going to try to take back China, and so the idea was, well, we've got to find out how we can get along with these guys; and in the

meantime Taiwan was another holding--it wasn't a holding--we were just there, to see what was going on. We had no program, we had no policy to try to keep Taiwan out of Communist hands. This was not the policy. Our function there was strictly observing and seeing what was going on.

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MCKINZIE: In 1950 and 1951, though, when you went to Rangoon, the situation was quite different than the one which you described before we turned this tape recorder on, namely that at present Burma is capable of balancing various influences in the country. Isn't it true that in 1950 and 1951 the United States had a large ECA mission, Economic Cooperation Administration mission?

MARTIN: No, when I went there we had nothing, nothing.

MCKINZIE: Not in 1950?

MARTIN: Yes, it started in '51, I believe, or it may have started in later '50, but when I went there we had nothing in the way of a mission. It did start up later, you're right. But that didn't really cancel what I said about Burma. Burma started out right from the

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beginning announcing that it would be non-aligned and it has stuck very faithfully to that policy of non-alignment. It was willing at that time to receive aid from various sources and it did. Burma was the first non-Communist country in the world to recognize the Peoples Republic of China. It was one of the first non-Communist countries to actually establish diplomatic relations and to receive a Chinese Communist ambassador, I was there at the time it happened in 1950, I remember it very well. It was pursuing a policy, as it always has, I think I can say consistently, in its whole independent history from '48, of leaning over backwards to be friendly with China; it has to be. On the other hand, it was not going to take sides with China, but the very fact that it was the first country in the world outside the Communist bloc to recognize the PRC, the first country to establish diplo-

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matic relations with it, indicates how careful Burma has always been from the beginning. Now, the fact is they received aid from us, they received aid from the British, they were willing to receive aid from other countries. That's always been their policy.

MCKINZIE: Do you think that aid implies some sort of intervention, regardless of how mild, in the internal affairs of a sovereign nation, that is if you have some kind of control over the spending of the money which is given?

MARTIN: Well, I suppose it depends on how sensitive you are. Perhaps it does. Now, the Burmese were so sensitive that they suspended our aid mission, kicked it all out, you know, in

1953, and it was kicked out for about three years, because they didn't like our alleged support of Kuomintang troops in Burma. I think it was a political

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gesture on their part. The amount of interference, as you call it, that any aid donor can get away with is strictly up to the country involved. I mean if you want to be an aid recipient without any control whatsoever by the donor the chances are you're not going to get any aid, from the World Bank or any responsible organization. So, it's a question of negotiating the extent to which the aid is going to be monitored. On the other hand, if the United States insists on certain types of controls, then it's not going to give any aid to a country like Burma, period, you might as well forget it.

So, somewhere between a blank check, or at least a check without any strings, and some sort of strict control, that area is one that has to be negotiated bilaterally.

MCKINZIE: You were there at the time, though, the

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ECA mission was established?

MARTIN: Yes, I was and I didn't have much to do with it, in fact, I had nothing to do with it. I don't recall a great deal about what the terms and conditions were then. I do recall as a political reporter harping on the fact, which I haven't any cause to regret harping on because it's been true for the last 25 years, that Burma would prefer not to have any aid than to have aid which it feels in any way infringes on its sovereignty or on its internal controls.

In those days the prevalent theory in Washington, at least from a person in the field's point of view, seemed to be that anyone would do just about anything to get some help from the United States, and maybe some countries did, but Burma was not one of them. It was not a very popular thing to say, but I have said it, and others did too, that as far as

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Burma was concerned, you know what you can do with your aid, and Burma, of course, demonstrated this in '53 when they kicked the whole thing out.

This is a choice which countries like Burma have to make, of course. I think it partly depends on their own self confidence, their whole national psyche. Self confident countries can afford a certain amount of interference, as you call it, where others, like the Burma--the official attitude in Burma seems to be that the average Burman is a very easily corrupted person, and any contact with sophisticated foreign devils, like Americans, will contaminate him--he must be kept somehow insulated from them. This is the point of view, perhaps slightly exaggerated, which I think is fairly prevalent in the Government of Burma today.

MCKINZIE: How did the outbreak of war in Korea in

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June of 1950 affect this work?

MARTIN: Oh, it didn't affect it much, because Burma was very isolated from Korea, it was a neutralist country, and although the Burmese in the UN voted, I think, initially in favor of the resolution for intervention, I think that was perhaps the last pro-U.S. vote that they made on the Korean question. They began to identify themselves later on with the neutralist bloc and finally pushed negotiated settlement, and so forth. They generally lined up with the Indians on it. I imagine there probably were efforts, which I don't recall--it's a long time ago--I'm not sure how much I personally was involved in trying to get the Burmese Government to go along with the various UN positions, but it really didn't affect them very much. Now, the whole business of the Chinese Nationalist troops that retreated into Burma,

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and which were supported covertly for a while, had nothing to do with our Embassy.

MCKINZIE: It did not have?

MARTIN: No, nothing to do with our Embassy.

MCKINZIE: Why then did the Burmese maintain that?

MARTIN: Well, they were looking around for some way to retaliate against the U.S. for pursuing a policy which they didn't like. So naturally the only way they could retaliate against us was to take some measure against the U.S. presence in Burma. They can't take it against U.S. presence in some other place. But the U.S. Embassy in Burma was not involved in any way in this exercise.

MCKINZIE: Were other agencies of the U.S. Government?

MARTIN: No. Not, in Burma, no.

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MCKINZIE: There's one other thing about Burma that I think historians would appreciate your comment on. After 1953 there was at least the subtle implication, if not overt statement, that neutralism was somehow immoral, that the world was splitting between two dynamic ideologies and to be neutral while all that was going on was simply unacceptable.

MARTIN: Well, from the ideological point of view, of course, the Chinese--when the Communists came to power in China in 1949, they expressed this very same sentiment; you have to lean to one side or the other, you cannot be neutral. In effect, they said the good guys lean

toward Moscow, and all the rest of the guys who don't lean toward Moscow are bad guys. It wasn't until '53 and especially '55 with the Bandung Conference that the Chinese Communists began to cultivate the neutralist, nonaligned countries.

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MCKINZIE: But that's about the time the U.S. was making its...

MARTIN: The U.S. was going the other way, yes. Just about the time, as you were pointing out, that we got down on the neutralists the Chinese Communists were coming around to cultivating them, although they had taken exactly the same point of view (against neutralists) for about four years, '49 to '53. Now, all during the fifties, generally speaking, the Communists--for example, I took part in the negotiations at Geneva as well as in Panmunjom--and generally speaking the Chinese Communists from the time of the Geneva Conference in '54, and Bandung in '55, were more forthcoming in our bilateral negotiations than the U.S. We were taking a hard line. But I'd say in the sixties, the shoe was on the other foot. By that time, of course, the Geneva talks had ended; the talks

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were held in Warsaw starting in '58. Well, it is often forgotten that for nearly three years the so-called Warsaw talks were held in Geneva. I was actually personally involved in the Geneva talks and--well, I was just making a generalization here, but I think it's a true one. In the sixties we tended to take a more flexible line in the talks and the Chinese took a more rigid line.

And then in the seventies we sort of come together.

MCKINZIE: Did you travel extensively in Burma?

MARTIN: No, I couldn't travel extensively in Burma, because most of the country was occupied by insurgents. I did make a trip up to the Seagrave Hospital in Namkam on the Shweli River along the China border. That was after Dr. Seagrave, the famous Burma surgeon had

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been arrested and brought down to Rangoon for trial. He wanted somebody from the Embassy to go up to the hospital where his sister was still working. The Foreign Ministry sent an escort along with me. But that was the only trip of any consequence I made.

Well, I did take one trip up to Toungoo in the Shan States, but generally we weren't able to travel very much. One of the first things I did when I went back as Ambassador in '71 was to take a thirteen hundred mile overland trip. While there was still about a third of the country in the hands of the insurgents, I still was able to make that kind of a trip, which you couldn't make at all in '50 when I first went to Burma. We were fairly well confined to Rangoon in those days. You could get to Moulmein, I think, and you could fly to Mandalay and I went there several times. You couldn't take

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overland trips up to the time I left in the fall of '51.

MCKINZIE: You then came back to the Office of Chinese Affairs in 1952?

MARTIN: Yes. Well, actually I got back in December of '51, but I sort of took up my duties in January of '52, right.

MCKINZIE: You took it over at a tough time for the Office of Chinese Affairs.

MARTIN: Yes, it was.

MCKINZIE: Dean Acheson was on the defensive and so was almost everyone else that had previously been connected with that office.

MARTIN: Yes, but not only that but Edmund Clubb the director of the office was under suspension, because he was being investigated for security

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reasons, and morale was very bad, it was a very low period. Troy Perkins, an old China hand, was the acting director and he wasn't very well. Clubb never did return because, although he was eventually exonerated by Acheson, he decided that he'd better take retirement. And so we had an acting director, I think, until the summer of '52 when Walter McConaughy came from being Consul General in Hong Kong, to be director of the Office of Chinese Affairs.

MCKINZIE: Did all of those things cause people in the Office to be super cautious in their own talk, or their own recommendations about policy matters?

MARTIN: Oh, I suppose it had an effect, but I can't speak for others. So far as I was concerned we drafted a policy paper which reflected what the policy was, and what seemed to be practical.

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After all, the Korean War was raging, what options do you have?

We were fighting Chinese, there were half a million, or God knows how many, three quarters of a million, take your pick, Chinese troops, driving the U.S. marines out of North Korea, what kind of policy are you going to recommend? The recognition of China and so forth? I mean there not only was the McCarthy era, but a lot of people forget that there were Knowlands and McCarrans and everybody else to set the whole thing on the defensive. What people, I think, forget about that period was that, whatever you might think of China policy of that era, I defy anybody to come up with any realistic alternatives. We spent a great deal of our time defending ourselves for being too soft on the Communists and hard on Chiang Kai-shek, that's where the political

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pressures were. That's where the congressional pressures were all during that period. And the idea that some liberal-minded Foreign Service officer might have changed the course of China policy in those years I think is so unrealistic as to be laughable. Foreign policy is made here in Washington. It is made by a whole bunch of political pressures, and when you are engaged in a shooting war with somebody the idea that you somehow can change it is ridiculous. You had to be realistic, there's no sense in making it an ivory tower, you had to recommend policies that were going to wash, that were practical, feasible, at least that's been my philosophy, otherwise, you might as well not be in the business.

MCKINZIE: You said you defied anyone to come up with a viable alternative to these things.

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MARTIN: Yes, I mean viable politically in Washington.

MCKINZIE: Well, what about General MacArthur's alternative of bringing in Chiang Kai-shek's troops into South Korea and that kind of thing, supporting him more heavily, allowing him to get his foot in the door.

MARTIN: I don't think that would have been viable. I don't think that there was ever any support on the mainland that would have developed for Chiang Kai-shek. Again, the people who were hollering for this on the right wing, were people that hadn't been out to China in '46, '47, '48 and '49. The people in China were war weary; Chiang's resistance collapsed in the latter half of '49, just collapsed. Here were the people of China, after going through this dreadful Japanese war, and three or four

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years of civil war, and finally they could relax and breathe, now there were several millions out of the five or six hundred million Chinese--landlords and people who were getting the business, and it was hell for them; but 90 percent of the people at least didn't have to worry about feeding the Communists here, or the Nationalists there, or being fought over and so forth. It seems to me the whole bankruptcy of Chiang's power base was exposed by the collapse in '49, and what on earth is he going back to, who's going to rise up, who's going to--I think of all the years that have elapsed and all the failures of Chiang's intelligence agents to incite any kind of movement to support this.

My feeling in those days was that even if the Communists were--and I think they came closest to it perhaps, with the "great leap forward,"--even

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if they got to the point where they lost enough confidence, or their organization was torn up, and they couldn't hack it, that it wouldn't be Chiang Kai-shek and the Kuomintang that would come back. It would be some wing or some element in China already there on the mainland who might gather up some remnants and say, "I can do it better;" but I could never see any basis for revival of the Kuomintang in China. Their collapse I think was utterly complete.

MCKINZIE: Then when you were in the Office of Chinese Affairs and had to deal with Formosan affairs, Nationalist affairs, was your own position simply that the island should be developed for the Nationalists as well as for the Formosans?

MARTIN: Well, I don't think that anybody could rule out--I had very little confidence that there

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would be an uprising on the mainland, but you couldn't completely rule it out. But the idea that we should support a military reconquest, either via Korea or direct, I think was never supported that I know of within the State Department, or by Dulles either. In fact, Dulles was extremely cautious. Dulles' public statements were made for political effect. I'm not saying that he necessarily exposed a different face completely, but his actual diplomacy, if you'll follow it, is very much more cautious than his public statements which were made to fend off the right-wing pressures.

MCKINZIE: You're referring to what the *Journal* called unleashing...

MARTIN: Yes, they were never unleashed, and Dulles was very careful not to do it because he had no

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faith in it really. One of the estimates I think that we made--I think generally our estimates would stand up pretty well if they are reviewed--there was no real threat that Chiang Kai-shek would try and return to the mainland unless you had a mighty upheaval there.

In other words, he knew the military odds. He basically was a very cautious guy, militarily. His whole military history was one of caution. I remember when we were discussing the negotiation of a defense treaty with Taiwan, which was simply formalizing the unilateral commitment that Truman had made in ordering the Seventh Fleet to defend Taiwan--a commitment written into the highest policy papers--the main argument for the treaty was, "It'll be more believable, therefore, it will be a deterrent."

Dulles said he was all for the treaty, in principle, but he thought that Chiang Kai-shek

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would never buy the treaty, because he said, "If we make a treaty with Chiang I'm going to have to write in there certain things that he won't buy, such as it only applies to Taiwan and the

Pescadores, which will immediately define the territory which he controls. And there was an exchange of notes that went along with the treaty, which in effect leashed Chiang Kai-shek. And Dulles said, "Why should Chiang buy this, because it ties him down?" Our argument was, "He'll buy it, he'll buy it in a jiffy," which he did. Of course he tried to get the best terms he could but he did buy it.

Why? Chiang Kai-shek knew as well as any of us that he wasn't going back to the mainland, he didn't have the power to go back to the mainland. And what this treaty did was to put in a little more binding form, a

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commitment which the United States had made, to give him protection, that's what he was interested in.

So, Dulles himself misjudged to some extent the back to the mainland thing. Of course, here's a thing that both the liberals and the conservatives more or less agreed on, they both exaggerated. The liberals exaggerated the dangers and the conservatives exaggerated the possibilities and said the administration was not giving Chiang the opportunity, that it was holding him back. The liberals said we weren't holding him back enough, because he might do it. They were both wrong.

MCKINZIE: You mentioned earlier that when you went back to Taipei in 1949 there was no aid program, but there certainly was an aid program to Nationalist China after June of 1950 and a rather large one.

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MARTIN: Yes, but it didn't really begin to get going until--well, perhaps the decisions were made after June '50, but I don't think it actually got going until some months after that. Of course, by that time I was not in Taiwan.

MCKINZIE: No, but you were back in the Office of Chinese Affairs.

MARTIN: Well, I came back to Washington in December 1951. Again the Korean War was important, that was the big turning point. We then decided to commit ourselves to a defense line in which Taiwan was considered an important part. Therefore, the aid to China, to the Chinese Nationalists, was designed to strengthen Taiwan as a defense bastion against the feared Communist Chinese expansion. You see the whole concept that the Communist Chinese were expansionists grew out of

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their intervention in the Korean War. Now, hindsight does one thing or another. I know Allen Whiting, I've read his book, and he was my deputy, but I don't buy everything he says. But on the other hand, I agree with the idea that the Chinese Communists were not necessarily in on

planning the Korean war--in fact I think if the Chinese Communists had had their way, they probably would have said, "To hell with the Korean war, we want to take Taiwan." But anyway, I'm prepared to buy the idea that the Chinese Communists wouldn't have come in if we hadn't gone north of the parallel. But the fact is, you've got to deal with what realities are. The fact is that the Chinese did come in, we did get into a bloody fight with them, we lost 150,000, or whatever it was, this was harped on over and over and over again; this started a tremendous backlash in Congress which

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strengthened the right wing, and we wound up with the containment policy transferred from Europe, where it started out, to the Far East, and all this starts from your asking me about the aid program to Taiwan.

Well, the aid program to Taiwan was justified as a keystone in our containment policy, that was it.

MCKINZIE: Okay. Let me ask one more question and that is about your part in the negotiations at Panmunjom, how you happened to get involved in those?

MARTIN: Well, what happened was that in the armistice agreement of July 1953 there was a paragraph, Paragraph 60 I think it was, which said that within 90 days or something the two sides will get together and have a conference on the political future of Korea, the unification and

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political future of Korea. Well, the two sides at that time were the UN side on one hand and the Communist North Koreans and the Chinese Communists on the other. For some reason or other, which I still am not entirely certain of--in fact I'd like to see more research done on this--the Communists delayed, they didn't want to hold a conference, they didn't want to implement this Paragraph 60 for some reason, or they made certain demands. And, I can't remember, I think at that time they had already made the demands for certain neutral countries to be invited to participate and so forth, which of course, was not in the language of Paragraph 60.

That'd be very interesting, it would be an interesting research field: why did they do that at this time? Did it have something to do with the armistice in Korea? Was this

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really perhaps the time when Peking began to change from its hard line policy to one of cultivating neutrals? I think that may have been the turning point. The war was over and they were taking a new line, because--and this may well be the first time that they had really come out, because they came out and said we want neutrals to participate in this.

Well, this wasn't in the treaty, this wasn't in the armistice agreement and so the UN went through the motions of appointing a small UN group entirely composed of U.S. personnel to go out and

talk to the North Koreans and the Chinese in Panmunjom to see if we could set up this conference.

Well, Arthur Dean, who was Dulles' old law partner and a very brilliant lawyer, was appointed head of this little team, and he took with him Ken [Kenneth Todd, Jr.] Young, who was

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at that time, I guess it was, Director of the Office of Northeast Asian Affairs, simply Japan and Korea, and he took with him a military officer, whose name I forget unfortunately, who was an old time Army man and a bright guy who happened to be promoted from Colonel to Brigadier General during this little time. And then, I think more or less as an afterthought, the Department decided to send somebody who had some China background along, because after all it wasn't just the North Koreans, it was the Chinese as well who were negotiating. So I was literally on 24 hours' notice--I was put on this little mission that was sent out in October of '53 to Korea to negotiate with the Chinese and North Koreans, to try to set up the Korean political conference as proposed in Paragraph 60 of the armistice agreement.

Now, Arthur Dean at least expressed a

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great deal of confidence to the press, and actually within our own circle, that he could get this negotiation over within a matter of 10 days to two weeks. In fact, I was told by the State Department I would probably be gone about two weeks, that's what I was told when I left on 24 hours' notice in the middle of October. I got back in February, four months later, the negotiations a total failure. Dean walked out of them in December. So, I think he's never quite forgiven me for the fact that I had expressed great skepticism in the beginning that we could accomplish this mission in any short time at all. Although we were there under the UN flag and insisted on maintaining the UN flag, the Chinese and the North Koreans said, "Why don't you put the American flag there instead, that's what it really should be." Although we were there under the UN

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flag we were American diplomats on a special mission. It was the first time since the establishment of the Chinese Communist Government in '49 that Americans had sat down at the diplomatic level at the negotiating table with the Chinese Communists. That was in October of '53. It turned into a completely sterile operation, it turned into a sort of a propaganda match.

MCKINZIE: Did it start out that way?

MARTIN: Well, it didn't start off too promisingly. There was sort of a wrangle over the agenda and so forth. But I think what killed it, my own theory of what really killed the negotiations, and they might have never gotten off the ground anyway, was that that part of the armistice agreement which called for repatriation of prisoners after they had been interrogated to s

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ee which way they wanted to go, broke down very early in the fall of '53, because the Chinese prisoners were, in large numbers, opting not to go back to China.

Now the Chinese were not going to put up with anything like that. So, they accused, and I think quite falsely, the Indians of not conducting the interrogations fairly. Anyway, they managed to sabotage that operation, while accusing the U.S. side of sabotaging the whole armistice agreement. While in one part of Panmunjom they were saying we were sabotaging the armistice agreement, they could not in another part of Panmunjom agree to implement it.

Now, you may recall the way this thing was finally resolved on the prisoner issue. At the expiration of the period during which the prisoner interrogations were to be conducted, the Indians could get no instructions from the parties to the armistice as to what they should

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do next, so they said, "Well, we can't sit here for the rest of our lives in Panmunjom holding these prisoners."

So they conducted their own little exercise. They let the prisoners out one by one--that was a very dramatic day, I remember that day--and they came to point "x" and they said, "Do you want to go north or south? If you want to go north, it's back to China, walk that way. If you want to go south, to the UN side, go that way," and something like 13,000 prisoners, the vast majority of them, chose to go south, of course.

That was ticklish. Some people were afraid the Communists would try to start up the war again, which I think was nonsense, they weren't interested in starting up the war. This was all very embarrassing to them, but at least they didn't have to sit there

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day after day and contemplate their own rejection by their own people. They could blame it on sabotage by the UN side, they could blame it on the Indians and so forth. It sort of got rid of that issue. But by that time our other talks had broken down. Then in January of '54 there was a meeting in Berlin which--and I forget the details of this, but anyway at that meeting it was decided to hold the conference in Geneva on Indochina and on the Korean thing at the same time.

So, we actually did get the political conference on Korea, and many people forget that that was also held in Geneva in '54, because Indochina sort of overshadowed it, but we did have a political conference on Korea.

A funny thing happened, Dean walked out, and I think--I don't blame him for breaking up the talks. I think the way he did it

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probably wasn't the best way to do it, but, anyway, they were attacking his whole motivation and saying that he wasn't negotiating and so forth. Well, there's no sense in negotiating with somebody--the minimum you have to have for negotiation is each side accepting that the other side is there trying to negotiate. If one side doesn't accept that, then it's just a total waste of time, there's no question about it. An absolute waste of time. That's a minimum.

Well, when they made clear they weren't accepting that, which they were deliberately doing in order to find some provocation, well, Dean walked out. The Department was much embarrassed because he didn't have instructions to do that, and he left the Department flatfooted. So they left Ken Young and me there to see what would happen.

We spent two more months there living in

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Munsani which is the armistice commission camp, and in January we proposed that the liaison officers of the two sides meet to try to get talks going again. I was appointed the UN liaison secretary, so I had three sessions with my opposite number, a fellow named Pu Shou-chang the liaison secretary for the Chinese-North Korean side. Pu finally got up and walked out on me, and I think they did that just to pay us back. But, in that very same month, in January of '54, this Berlin meeting had taken place in which they decided to have the Geneva Conference, so the conference on Korea was set up anyway. The whole atmosphere in Panmunjom, of course, has for years been very bad. The armistice commission people have met for all these years and done nothing but wrangle with each other. Of course, there's another way to look at it, for 22 years the armistice has held up!

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But it was an interesting exercise in seeing how the Chinese Communists negotiated, what techniques they used. People who have negotiated with the Russians have been familiar with the little ways they use to try to humiliate you. They were all so ridiculous in a way. If there had been a trial in front of a judge, I think that Arthur Dean as a great lawyer, would have won hands down. I don't think there's any question about it. But of course, in diplomatic negotiations like this with the Communists there's no judge.

Now, the one positive benefit that may have come out of these negotiations, a very fleeting one I think, but one for which Mr. Dean should get a lot of credit, was on the media side, the propaganda side. Dean was able to go out after the meetings and have a press conference and say we proposed this and this to the

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Communists--he projected an image of the UN and the U.S. being much more flexible than the Communists. I think he was successful in doing this. It may have been undercut to some extent by his walking out, but anyway, he did this successfully.

There is no judge, and no jury, except that world public opinion is to some extent, although that's not going to really change anything. But you have to find some ground of mutual interest, otherwise you're not going to get anywhere in negotiations.

MCKINZIE: Did you feel, to go back for just a second, that Dean Acheson was more a "Europe first" Secretary of State than John Foster Dulles?

MARTIN: Well, they were very different, and during Dean Acheson's tenure as Secretary of State,

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I was only in Washington one year, and I never saw Dean Acheson in operation. I never was in a meeting with him or anything. I was just not on a level where I did that; whereas, I was in a number of meetings with John Foster Dulles, usually as a backup man for somebody from the Bureau of Far Eastern Affairs. Dulles was a man that--well, I think a lot that's written about Dulles now is perhaps somewhat superficial. I think Dulles will come out in history better than perhaps he looks now, partly because he made a lot of statements that I personally think were worse than his diplomacy. In other words, I think his public image is worse than his diplomacy. He tended to be an ideologue, a moralist, and so forth, which may have been partly due, as I suggested earlier, to the kind of political pressure he felt himself under, partly due perhaps to his own way of thinking.

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I think it was also a sort of ideologist age then. Acheson was a more practical guy, and to come back to your statement, I think Acheson was much more Europe oriented. I don't think he had much use for the Far East, I think he felt it not important to the U.S. interest. I've heard him make remarks about people of Southeast Asia that I wouldn't want to repeat.

MCKINZIE: You mean nationals or diplomats?

MARTIN: Just about the people.

MCKINZIE: The peoples?

MARTIN: Yes. I don't know whether he felt that way about China or not, I wouldn't necessarily say that; but my own feeling, for what it's worth, and I must stress again I've never worked with him in a meeting, or conferences the way I did with Dulles, is that he tended to be Europe

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first and that he did not have a great deal of interest, or put a great deal of weight on the Far East. I'd say Dulles was different that way. I think Dulles was more of a global guy. Maybe he went to the opposite extreme I don't know, but I think he did give a great deal of attention to the Far East, perhaps partly reacting to the political climate in Washington, in which the Republicans, his own party, were making a great thing of the "we lost China" bit.

But the main impression I have of Dulles, aside from his moralistic and ideologue speeches, which, as I say, I don't think were a true reflection of his actual diplomacy, was that he was very much of a lawyer throughout. Now, Acheson was a lawyer, too, but my feeling was that Dulles was rather legalistic in his approach, more so than Acheson, and not being a lawyer, perhaps

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I was particularly sensitive to this. My own feeling about Dulles was that he was often too legalistic on one hand, and on the other hand did not have a feel for the people and the movements that were welling up in the Far East, that he tended to look at it too much in terms of treaty, legal obligations and so forth. So, that's my reaction to the two men, but as I say, I did see Dulles in operation quite a bit; I never did see Acheson in action, so it's hard for me to say.

MCKINZIE: Well, Ambassador Martin, thank you very much for your assessments and your relation of your own experience. We appreciate it.

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