

Oral History Interview

with

COL. R. ALLEN GRIFFIN

Deputy chief, China Aid Mission, Economic Cooperation Administration, 1948-49; headed State Department Economic Mission to Southeast Asia, 1950; director, Far East program division of Economic Cooperation Administration, 1950; special representative, Economic Cooperation Administration and Mutual Security Agency to Far East, 1951-52.

Pebble Beach, California
February 15, 1974

by James R. Fuchs, Harry S. Truman Library

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FUCHS: Might we start with a little background on your career, Colonel Griffin?

GRIFFIN: Well, in the First World War I had been a captain of infantry and I commanded a company of riflemen successfully. When the war was over I went home to pursue what was to be

my career, which was that of a newspaperman. Then in the Second World War I tried to get in and finally did as a public relations officer to General [Ben] Lear. It got him into all sorts

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of trouble and got him into some trouble with Senator Truman, because Lear was an abrupt and outspoken man, and I was a newspaperman and not really a public relations man; my sympathy was entirely with the news. I admired General Lear enough to feel that he would have felt it was inconsiderate of me to try to protect him. He was the only general I ever knew who didn't give a damn about what the public thought.

FUCHS: That was old "Yoo-hoo" Lear.

GRIFFIN: This was Yoo-hoo Lear, and Yoo-hoo was one of the incidents of that period.

FUCHS: What do you recall about that?

GRIFFIN: I was his public relations officer at the time. I recall it very keenly. Lear was a devoted golfer, when he had time to play golf, and he was out on the Memphis Country Club golf course, which is more or less in the center of a

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residential part of the city, with a main road going past it. And that's the road you usually take going through from the Lebanon area, the eastern Tennessee area, in the direction of Arkansas. He was playing a hole right near that road when along came some trucks loaded with soldiers returning from maneuvers that had been held by, I think, the 35th Infantry Division. This was, I believe, a quartermaster regiment that was going past at that time; and I believe that division was commanded by a brother of Harry Truman.

FUCHS: General Ralph Truman. He was Truman's cousin.

GRIFFIN: Yes. Those men were a little out of hand, and some girls were walking along the sidewalk and the men made a lot of gestures and shouted a lot of things that were entirely unbecoming even to soldiers under those circumstances. In fact, they acted in a manner that Colonel

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Richmond, who was playing with General Lear, said was lewd and obscene; and Lear said, "Richmond, go out and stop those trucks."

So, Richmond went out and stopped them and Lear asked for the officer in each of the trucks. There were two officers there, and he dressed them down; and he said they were going to hear more of it and he wanted that entire regiment to bivouac in Memphis that evening, near the fairgrounds, and he would see them in the morning.

He told me about this that evening. We were close friends and I had been a civilian friend of his. He had gotten me back in the Army. I rejoined the Army in the spring of 1941; not in December,

but in the spring. I left my business, my wife closed our house, and so forth, and we went to Memphis. It was foolhardy in a way, but I was sure we would be in the war. I was sure of that when Munich took place. And from that time on I tried to see how I could

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get back in the Army. I got in the back door through General Lear and friends, with the understanding that I didn't want to stay in the Specialists Corps -- in fact, I never wore the insignia. I wore crossed rifles from the time I reported to duty. He told me later it was very obvious to him that I was out of uniform, but he didn't want to scold me about that.

FUCHS: You felt that you could better serve your country in the service?

GRIFFIN: Oh, yes, I never believed in this bunk that you could serve your country better by staying at home and doing something pleasant. That's what young men say. I only wanted one more thing; I was a vigorous man and I wanted somehow to get back into combat duty. I knew a lot of Army officers and I respected them very much, but I knew I was much smarter than many

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of them; and I felt that if I could get a command I'd handle it well. And Lear knew what I wanted, although I took what I could get.

So, he dressed them down pretty hard the next day, and he ordered them to march, I think it was a total distance of 14 miles on foot, after they got out of town, and then they could be picked up and taken on. Well, there was perfect hell to pay as a result. Of course, it was warm weather, it was summer, but they carried no weapons. They were empty-handed, in cotton clothes.

Well, Lear himself could have walked 14 miles under those conditions without suffering; but they were a bunch of spoiled kids -- National Guard often is -- and they made a lot of it, and the press made a lot of it. Senator Bennett Clark was interviewed in St. Louis and he said Lear was a "superannuated old goat" and should be relieved of command. You know, the turmoil

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of an amusing incident which became hysterical. Well, it was the first public effort by a general officer to institute a little discipline in the United States Army, which was not in good way, and I think it had quite a good effect in the long run.

But, subsequently, in the Tennessee maneuvers this division was not conducted and controlled or disciplined in a way that Lear felt was satisfactory, and he relieved General Truman of command.

Of course, that raised hell in the Congress and the Senate. It raised such hell that General [George C.] Marshall sent Lear a cable, which Lear showed to me. He called me into his office and pushed it across the desk, told me to read it. I read it and it called upon Lear to explain in detail the justification for the disciplinary action he had taken against this unit of that division, signed "Marshall."

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Lear was quite upset that Marshall would question him, so he pushed across to me the cable he was sending to Washington, which was: "I took the disciplinary action I considered necessary under the circumstances Lear." An abrupt answer.

He and Marshall never got along, really, but each man admired the other; but their difficulties with one another personally had begun as early as the Philippine insurrection.

FUCHS: How was that?

GRIFFIN: When they were very young. And then in the First World War Marshall was a colonel and he had a job in Washington -- I forget what it was -- and Lear went to him and asked him to be sure to send him overseas. Marshall just gave him a cold look and said, "Everything will be done according to plan," and Lear never had a chance to serve overseas. And, of course, by

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the time the Second World War came along, he was too old to serve overseas, at the beginning anyway. Later he was sent over to clean up the mess that Eisenhower had left in his rear.

FUCHS: What lay beneath this antipathy, starting with the Philippine incident?

GRIFFIN: I guess it was a sort of personal rivalry. Lear had tremendous respect for Marshall, but he wasn't going to let Marshall put anything over on him, hence that telegram. That was a very defiant telegram. Quite! But he was challenging Marshall because he felt Marshall had no right to hold him to account, not for anything. He knew it was political, that Marshall had yielded to political pressure, and that he'd have nothing to do with any political chicanery of any kind. He wanted to make it plain to Marshall, he knew Marshall could read plenty between the lines; and that was the end of it.

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But a couple of years later Lear was put in charge of ground forces after [Lesley James] McNair was first wounded. By that time Lear was, I think, on a promotion board in Washington. When McNair was wounded, Lear was called to Washington to take temporary charge of ground forces. Subsequently, McNair was killed, the second time he got exposed. I think he was killed at the St. Lo offensive; he had been wounded in Africa.

Then Lear was called to Washington and put in this job again. He was in that job when I was wounded in France in the Second World War during the period we (the 13th Infantry) were supporting the 4th Armored Division south of Rennes. I was wounded in a combat patrol operation that I happened to be with. It wasn't serious and I had it dressed and we went along.

Later when we were in the Huertgen Forest a lot of difficulty set in, in my elbow. They tried to fix me up there, and finally they sent me

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to Paris. And then in Paris the only mistake they made was not to take x-rays. So, they sent me to Washington. I was in Walter Reed Hospital and there's where a young doctor said, "I think this had better be x-rayed," because nothing was showing except the old scar. And they found this spent bullet. Some bullets went through, one spent bullet lodged there, and nobody knew it. I was sewed up there.

FUCHS: From machine gun fire?

GRIFFIN: Burp gun. I killed the man who did it, but I didn't know he had really hurt me. It was all very exciting and it happened in a hell of a hurry. And I never felt too good about killing him, either. It was not a pleasant thing, because he was young and good-looking and, hell, you get disgusted after those things take place. It's easier at a distance, you know.

FUCHS: Most of my action was in tanks. It was more

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impersonal.

GRIFFIN: But, the upshot of that was that they took an x-ray and found this and extracted it, and then Lear came over to see me in the meantime. He had come over to see me twice when he was ground forces commander, because I had been with him, you see. And he asked me what I wanted to do. He said, "Do you want to go home or do you want to go back?"

"Well," I said, "I want to go back. I have to go back; I have to finish the damn thing."

He said, "They are about to give you a board. You know you are terribly overage; and you have been somewhat disabled." He said, "I'll see what I can arrange."

I then read in the paper that he had been appointed by Marshall (I'm getting back to Marshall again, you see) to be deputy theater commander in France. That sounds very big;

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actually it was to mop up the rear. Eisenhower's command had left all sorts of scattered stuff with little or nothing to do; and Lear's job was to clean that up, retread troops, and so forth; and do that in England, too.

So, just before he left he came to see me again. He said, "Now, Allen, when you feel you're ready to go, you feel a little bit cocky, you telephone ground forces and ask for so and so" -- I forget the officer's name -- and tell him you're ready to leave, he'll have his instructions." And he said, "I'm leaving tomorrow."

Well, Lear left, a week passed, I couldn't stand it any longer, I was scared to death that the board might work, you know. So, I telephoned ground forces and told them I was ready. Do you realize they had me out of there the next day?

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FUCHS: Pretty good for the Army.

GRIFFIN: And flew me over. So, I joined Lear there, and ended my career as a staff officer, which was the thing I wanted to get out of, and did get out of; but I had a very successful regiment.

FUCHS: Which regiment?

GRIFFIN: The 13th Infantry Regiment of the 8th Division. I had a wonderful regiment and a wonderful time, a very enjoyable time.

FUCHS: Did you have any occasion to talk to General Ralph Truman at the time of this incident?

GRIFFIN: No.

FUCHS: Did the General and General Truman have a confrontation at that time?

GRIFFIN: I think they did, yes, but I wasn't there.

FUCHS: Between your two World War activities I read

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that you had a position as a secretary to the first Polish minister to the United States. I wonder how that came about?

GRIFFIN: That was right after the First World War. But that came about through Herbert Hoover. Herbert Hoover was a Stanford man, Stanford University; and I went to Stanford and, as a matter of fact, I started the military training unit at Stanford, that now no longer exists.

That was in 1916. I went to the first officer's training camp in San Francisco and to my utter amazement I was commissioned a captain. Well, that was favoritism of some sort, but I don't know quite what sort; except that two of the officers in the training unit I was put in in San Francisco had been Regular Army officers who had been assigned to the Stanford thing, and I presume they were influenced by what I had accomplished at Stanford, something like that. But, at any rate, I was given a higher rank

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than I dreamed was possible or warranted.

I then went up to Fort Lewis and in due course we were ordered to go to the port of embarkation, which was Camp Upton. We went from there on His Majesty's ship the Olympic, which was one of the faster ships afloat, and which quite regularly had been making the crossing in about five days, one way. It was a beautiful, big ship, and my company was put on it with the rest of my battalion, and I was given to share with another officer in my battalion a perfectly beautiful stateroom, beautiful stateroom.

You see, the British at that time weren't dismantling their ships for troops. They just put the troops down in the hold in hammocks all jammed together, and fed them dreadful food, our troops, too; whereas the officers had lovely quarters on the ships. It was the good old style and we benefited by it, although it hurt our conscience a little bit to be so well-treated

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while there was nothing you could do for your troops, they were in the hands of the Limeys.

Well, by golly, word was sent around, that if there were any officers on the ship who were graduates of Stanford University they were requested to meet that evening in cabin so and so where Herbert Hoover was.

That was an astonishing thing and a very pleasant thing, and I set it up so that I'd be free of any duties that evening. So, I went to this suite of rooms that was occupied by Hoover and by Hoover's secretary, a man by the name of Ed Nease, who had been a fraternity brother of mine at Stanford. It's another one of those coincidences. Sometimes your whole life is just a series of coincidences, and all favor you. We had a pleasant evening. I was a reasonably well-read person, and I had been very much interested in the war, or else I wouldn't have started military training at

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Stanford. Hoover apparently had heard about that; and, of course, my friend Ed Nease had him particularly well-briefed about me. We had a pleasant evening and retired and went about our different affairs. Then the next day I was invited to come again and I couldn't. That night I had to be with the troops, but I sent word I could the following night, and so I was asked the following night.

It was all very pleasant. I can't say that I thought I was making an impression upon Hoover, because at that time I never dreamed of anything like that. Later I could speculate back on it and say, "Well, some of the things I said or did must have influenced him in some way." He was going over there to make them take the coal that they had agreed to take; that's why he was on this trip. They were welching on the agreement.

To make a long story short, I finished the

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war; I went home, and I got myself discharged at Camp Upton, because I wanted to get a job on a newspaper in New York. Well, I didn't. By that time they weren't interested in any war heroes, you know. Then I tried in Philadelphia, and I tried in Chicago. I tried in Denver; I tried in San Francisco. Then I went up to Portland, and I was walking on the streets of Portland one day trying to decide which newspaper I would go to, didn't know a soul, to the best of my knowledge, when a familiar face showed up in front of me. It was a chap who had been a major commanding a battalion that was adjacent to the battalion that I was in at one time, and whom I had seen several times while doing some personal patrolling. One thing I enjoyed in war was patrolling.

He had been very friendly to me and I had done him a few favors, too, in my wandering around at night; and he asked me what I was doing.

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I said, "Well, you know, I have just arrived in Portland. I'm hunting for a job."

He said, "What kind of a job do you want?"

I said, "I want a newspaper job, any job on a newspaper;" and I recounted my travel. I said, "Hell, I've now traveled more than 3,000 miles trying to get a job."

He said, "I'll give you a job. Show up tomorrow."

He ran the desk of the Portland Oregonian, which was a fast desk and they had a classical format then. Well, I was put on the desk. It was very hard work; it was rough work, because I wasn't ready for it. So, I really sweated it out and tried awfully hard, I felt so damned obligated too, and I had to make good. I worked there for four months and by that time I had met a couple of guys who were working on the Journal. One of them was the city editor of the Journal, and one day he told me he had an opening and he

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said, "Wouldn't you like to do reporting?"

I said, "Of course I'd like to do reporting. I've rather put the cart before the horse here, you know." You're not supposed to go on the desk until you've been a reporter. But at any rate, I got two and a half dollars a week more, so I went over to the Journal and became a reporter.

I hadn't been there more than a few weeks when one day a telegram was delivered to me and it said, "Will you come to Washington to be secretary to the first polish minister to this country?" Signed "Hoover;" and it said, "State when you can come and how much."

Well, I read this damn thing over and over and I couldn't figure out what the hell "polish" meant at all. And then, "minister," all that meant to me at the moment was an ecclesiastical collar, that's all it meant. Finally I took it over to the city editor, and I put it on his desk

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and I said, "Bill, I can't understand this telegram."

He looked at it for a moment and said, "Griffin, will you let me have that job?" He said, "You're being offered a job as secretary to the first Polish minister plenipotentiary to this country."

Then the light dawned and I immediately cabled, "Yes, can leave at once," and named my price. I got an immediate return cable and went to Washington.

That was a fascinating job, because I had been a Republican from the beginning. When I went to Stanford my first election was in 1916, and I was definitely against Wilson because the slogan

then was he "kept us out of war." Well, I thought that we should have gone to war; and I had been an admirer of Charles Evans Hughes, and so I voted for Charles Evans Hughes. Not enough Californians did.

I went to Washington. I reported to Hoover,

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and we got a little closer as time went on. He told me that he understood I wasn't an amanuensis - I wasn't even a good typist -- but, he said, "By 'secretary' I mean you have a responsibility to keep these people from making any serious mistakes. And if at any time you think that the fat's going into the fire, let me know, but only then." He said, "I don't want to be bothered with little things, that's up to you, but," he said, "you've got to see that they get into the protocol of meeting our people, and that they don't do any stupid things." He said, "[Prince Stanislas] Lubomirski is a fine gentleman," and he said, "that's all."

Well, it was fascinating, and Lubomirski was a very fine gentleman, and he became almost like an uncle to me. We had a warm relationship, and we went around a great deal together and I tried to protect him; but I couldn't protect him from the State Department. Mr. [Frank Lyon]

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Polk was then Acting Secretary of State, and the Polish Sejm had made an agreement with a banking firm in Chicago, by the name of Armour and Company. Well, that's a good name in Chicago, you know, but unfortunately this firm had nothing to do with the Armours. They were a bunch of slickers who used that name and who sold themselves to the politicians in the Sejm, which is their parliament, you know, to float a dollar loan in this country. How much they oiled up those politicians I don't know, but I was with Lubomirski when he got the papers on this; and they had a representative by the name of O'Laughlin -- I think it was O'Laughlin -- who was a writer on the Washington Post. He was Irish and very clever, very personable; a delightful type person, but he just knew how, when things started to go wrong for those people, to apply the blackmail. And it worked, and of course, the problem was, Lubomirski was the one that had to raise the money.

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I had to go with him, fix up all the train schedules, make all the appointments, all that sort of thing; also brief him on every locality that the train went through.

I was very busy whenever we got on a train. I had to pack myself with a lot of things that he would ask questions about, and be prepared to be nice to the Polish banker, and the Polish brewer, and certain Polish lawyers, and so forth, that we'd meet in these various cities like Rochester and Buffalo and Detroit and so on and so forth, where there were big Polish neighborhoods -- still are.

I'll try to make this a lot briefer now. I've got to. We appeared at many gatherings and with many groups and the more we went on with this thing the more Lubomirski resented being made the tool of this group of people in Chicago. This was a dollar loan, and we were getting dollars out of those poor Poles. We'd meet in those halls

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which were sometimes very cold. I remember we were in Rochester when it was 20 degrees below zero. Here would be these men who had been miners and industrial workers of various sorts and so forth (poor immigrants); and when they'd sing the Polish national anthem and raise their faces to Lubomirski, tears rolling down their cheeks, it upset you very much, because you were there to rob them, to the great advantage of this gang in Chicago. That's where the money was going to go.

How much of it ever got to Poland, God only knows. But meanwhile, my more important job during that period -- this was during the period of the Bolshevik invasion of Poland -- was to get uniforms from the Department of the Army; heavy underwear from the Navy; and credit from the shipping boys to get the damn stuff over there. There was a lot to do. Well, on one trek we came back to Washington and Lubomirski was ready to

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explode; and he had me make an appointment for him to see Mr. Polk, the Acting Secretary. He said, "We've got to abrogate this deal with these people." We kept the appointment and I started to go into Polk's office with Lubomirski and Polk didn't like that. He stood up and he said -- before he greeted the Ambassador -- "Mr. Ambassador, the gentleman who is with you is not authorized to attend this meeting."

And Lubomirski bristled and said, "I have authorized him to attend this meeting."

Then he sat down and he spelled out his grievances against this firm: that he felt the entire thing was dishonest, that dishonest people in Warsaw had connived with these people, that he had to do something which was absolutely against his conscience as a Polish gentleman, and that he felt that this whole agreement had to be abrogated. Mr. Polk looked at him coldly in the eye, and he said, "Ambassador Lubomirski, Your Excellency, you cannot abrogate any contract with an American business. I have to call upon you to perform

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that contract according to the letter of the agreement." That was that.

That was one thing I reported to Hoover; but Hoover said that nothing could be done about it. Well, that sort of affected me about Democrats, too, a little bit.

FUCHS: Coming down to the later period, how did you receive your appointment, first as assistant to Roger Lapham and then later as deputy chief of the China mission of ECA? Why were you selected?

GRIFFIN: On account of John Barleycorn. Roger Lapham and I were both members of the Cypress Point Club. He was really the first president of the club and was the president for many years, and he took the club through the depression. He was a very ordinary golfer, but a great gambling golfer. He liked to bet on his game. I played a little golf, and I knew Roger very

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well; we were good friends. When he was appointed to his job as the first mission chief in ECA, which was the one to China, he phoned me and said they were coming down to spend their last day or two here before they take off. And he said, "Helen is going to phone and ask Hester and you to have dinner with us and I just wanted to tell you I hope you do."

So, all of that took place and we had dinner together; but before dinner I used to like to drink a little more than I do now, and Roger was a good drinker and we had quite a lot to drink. Then we had dinner and we had a little more to drink. Finally Roger said, "Allen, you've got to come to China with me."

I said, "Roger, I can't go to China with you, I've just come back from a trip" -- my wife and I had been to Europe in 1947. I said, "I've been away from my business an awful lot, and besides, I don't know a damn thing about

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China."

He said, "Well, I don't either." He said, "You don't have to know anything about China. I need a friend when I get there. I need someone on whose shoulder I can cry if necessary." He said, "Why don't you come?"

So, when Hester and I went home I told my wife about it. I said, "Roger would like to have us go to China. What do you think about it?"

"Well," she said, "do you want to go?"

I said, "I really do."

She said, "Do you want me to close the house again?"

I said, "That isn't the point." I said, "Do you want to go?"

She said, "I'll go anywhere you're going."

"Well, that's settled."

So, it was settled in my mind. Just about that time the telephone rang, it was Roger's son, Lewis, and he said, "I want you to know, Allen,

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that Dad isn't drunk."

I said, "I never said he was."

"Well," he said, "you might have thought so when he asked you to go to China, but," he said, "he's a foxy old guy. I want to tell you he really wants you to go to China with him and we want you to go, too." And then he phoned again the next morning and repeated it. So, I told Roger that I'd go.

But I said there's one thing I wouldn't do, I would not go to Washington to be briefed, and I didn't.

FUCHS: Is that right?

GRIFFIN: No, I didn't. He said he'd get on the phone with Paul Hoffman and fix it up; and he did get on the phone with Paul Hoffman, and he did fix it up and I got my orders and I followed Roger about a week after he left.

FUCHS: Why did you not want to go to Washington,

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just because of the trip, or an aversion to . . .

GRIFFIN: Well, I had an aversion to getting briefed, you see. I remember when I was briefed on public relations before I joined General Lear. I was supposed to be in the Munitions Building for two weeks getting briefed. After three days I went into the commanding general and saluted and I said, "Sir, would you please give me my orders to join General Lear now?" I said, "I'm a newspaperman. I know this business inside and out. Nothing's going to make me a better public relations man, but I would like to go back there and get into this business."

Well, he scolded me a little and then he told me where to go and get some clothes, and where to join Lear. I felt the same way again.

FUCHS: Could you recall at this very late date what your thoughts were as a newspaperman in

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relation to China after the Marshall mission and Wedemeyer mission? China was obviously in a bad way at that time. Did you feel this aid act of '48 could come near doing what it was meant to do?

GRIFFIN: Well, of course, the ECA was a European born operation, all of its thinking was European. The aid thing for China was sort of a sop. I didn't think it ever had too much reality to it. I think that Roger Lapham tried to give it all of the reality that was humanly possible, and because he and I agreed fully about how to do things there and when to do them, after a few weeks he made me his deputy. He was a wonderful American. He was just a man that was American all the way through, as well as being a brilliant man and a man with a great touch in his public relations with the Chinese. I was absolutely devoted to him all through our period there.

What we discovered was one disillusionment

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after another. The war was lost when we arrived but we didn't know it for almost a month; but later in the month of July -- I arrived in Shanghai on July the 4th -- Tsinan, one of the most important cities on the peninsula where Tsingtao is, fell to the Communists. It was a surrender. It really wasn't even a siege, it was practically an arrangement. A whole series of such events took place month by month. We knew then that the Communists were going to win the war. We knew that what we had to do was to save the pieces of the Nationalist regime as best we could. We knew that all these thoughts that Chiang Kai-Shek might introduce late reforms and all of that, and win the hearts and minds of the people back again, etc., we knew all that was too late. China is a country with not that type of communication, that type of control. We knew, subsequently, that all these attacks on the grounds they weren't

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being given enough weapons and arms and ammunition was all nonsense. And yet some very good authorities kept making those assertions; but it wasn't true.

The Nationalist Army was a well-armed, well-equipped army, far better than the Communists were, for a long period of time. Major General Barr, who was our chief of military mission with the Chinese, and who was just as impatient with the Chinese from a military sense as anyone was, testified fully to that effect before unfriendly committees of the Senate, who were trying to find a scapegoat for all these things. The scapegoat wasn't America and wasn't American, it's simply the time of revolution had come.

Now, I admire Chiang Kai-Shek in many ways. I think he is a most extraordinary man, but he's not a man of our time. I got that expression from T.V. Soong. I had made a trip to Canton to visit our branch manager there and

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I was about to leave town when T.V. sent for me on the grounds it was an emergency. It wasn't an emergency, but I went to see him and he was filled with his complaints about the Generalissimo.

At this time. T.V. Soong was the governor of the province. He said, "You know, there's no way of getting along, really, with the Generalissimo." He said, "I paid out of my own pocket" -- and of course that's something of a joke -- "for five Piper Cub planes, brought them here and had men trained in their use. They were very important, due to the banditry in the countryside, for my people to get around and see the various chiefs, mayors and so forth in the province, see if taxes were collected and etc., etc. What happens, some air force officers were sent here by the Generalissimo to commandeer my planes, and they did; and the Generalissimo says, 'There'll be no airplanes used in China that aren't under the command of the Chinese air force.'"

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He said, "There I am, I'm out of pocket, I haven't the planes, I can't carry out my functions." He said, "You know, the Generalissimo is an honest man, he's a fine man, and he's a great man, but the Generalissimo is not a modern man."

I have never forgotten that, because that was the truest thing anyone could say about the Generalissimo and I believe every bit of it. I believe the man was always meticulously honest. I think he was a man who had great vision up to the time when the Kuomintang began to go to pieces under the defeats caused by the Japanese. But after all, he created and developed the strength of the Kuomintang and they were on their way to making a great country out of China when the Japanese felt they had to intervene. They had to prevent this giant from pulling itself together. So, they came in to destroy Chiang Kai-Shek and destroy his great political party, which is

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what the Communists wanted done too. And so both sides from then on collaborated against Chiang.

There are a lots of opinions about Chiang Kai-Shek, but the one that I believe was truly based on the character of the man, was T.V. Soong's, and no one had more cause to be annoyed with him than T.V.

We sort of went around putting our finger in the dike in Chinas trying to help a little bit here and a little bit there. I remember on one occasion I broke all the Foreign Service regulations, because Admiral Badger who had our fleet at Tsingtao, wanted to stay there as long as possible, because the Navy really was plush in Tsingtao. All the top brass in the Navy had those beautiful houses, in a great park of theirs on the shore, beautifully furnished,

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lots of servants, and everything lovely Although the Commies were quite near, they didn't want to leave, and they wanted order kept in the town.

Well, the town was blockaded by land, and they had run out of Chinese National currency, and gold yuan, or whatever one they were using at that period. There were a lot of mills there, cotton mills, and the mills had to keep going. If they didn't keep going, if they couldn't pay their help they might go on a rampage in Tsingtao and then the officers would all have to leave their bungalows. It would no longer be a tolerable place for the fleet to be. So, the question was, what can we do to help?

Well, Roger and I, and a lad by the name of Hopkins, who was our local representative in Tsingtao, met in Badger's office. Badger always opened preliminaries by reading some of his dispatches until you went to sleep. Then we got down to this case, how could we keep this

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town from going under, how can we keep the people employed?

Young Hopkins, whose father was manager of the Abasco firm's investment in Shanghai, the Shanghai Power Company, who had a fine war record said, "There's only one way to do it." He said, "There's a lot of gold here, there's a lot of gold, and if we had enough national currency here we could buy the gold and that would put the currency back into circulation, because currency is

hot stuff and they pass it out as fast as they can, you see, so it goes right into industry, right into the payrolls and so forth. So, we need currency."

Well, Roger looked at me and I looked at Roger and he said, "You know, we have billions of dollars worth of counterpart funds stacked up in the credits in the bank."

I said, "Well, Roger, if you agree to it I'll get some of Chennault's planes and fly

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some loads of that up here to Hopkins."

He said, "You go right ahead. No one's going to know anything about it but those of us around this table."

I don't know how true that proved to be, but at any rate we loaded a couple of planes with currency, and flew into Tsingtao, and all of this went into the hand of this young man whom we absolutely trusted. And one day a pilot came into my office in Shanghai with a couple of trays, put them down on my desk and he said, "I've been told to deliver this gold to you, and to no one else." So, I signed this little piece of paper, unlocked these things and began to look at them and there were little nuggets and gold fish and all sorts of things. Well, it was terrifying. I knew I had broken the law, so I sent for our comptroller.

Now, he was a professional in the Foreign Service staff. I told him very briefly what had

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happened and I said, "I want you to put this in the vault and safeguard it and find some way to get it to the Treasury Department."

He said, "Mr. Griffin, I won't accept that."

"Well," I said, "you'll have to accept it, because after all I can't keep it here, I can't take it home with me, I can't be in possession of it. You're the representative of the United States Government who is authorized to be in possession of the assets of our establishment, so it's up to you to take it."

He said, "No, sir, you've broken the law."

FUCHS: You signed for it and took it into your possession? In what way did you break the law?

GRIFFIN: I had trafficked in foreign currency. I had bought gold with our counterpart funds, you see. Hell, nothing is worse. After a long argument I thought he was weakening a little

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bit and I said, "Now, see here, suppose I write a memorandum right now, which I'll sign, that I am solely and completely responsible for having taken this action. That I took it in what I considered to be the best interests of the United States Government and it resulted in this amount

of gold coming to this office; and that you had refused to accept it at first, that I had given you orders to accept it as a subordinate, and that I take full responsibility for the transaction and for the orders I have given you. Would that satisfy you?"

"Maybe."

So, I dictated that piece of paper and gave it to him and handed him the gold. I never heard about it again.

Then, I remember Li Ming, who was reported to be China's greatest private banker. He was a Hangchow boy and owned the Hangchow Power Company, and had a great heart for the people

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of Hangchow. I have several times, when he couldn't get around anymore, and when we had the only transportation, borrowed an Army jeep and driven him to Hangchow and walked among the tea plantations with him. He was that kind of a Chinese. And he pleaded for a certain contract being filled which we had once undertaken, to build up the banks of the river there, which had suffered a great deal of damage from a terrific torrent and tide that takes place there. A tide which is practically one of the greatest tides in the world.

Then we went to Mukden which became rather famous due to the seizure and confinement there of our consul general right after Mukden fell to the Communists, and we saw some sort of parade, passing in review, a lot of General Wei Li Huang's army; and we were in the staff room and watched the staff work of what appeared to be a most competent lot of young westernized

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Chinese staff officers; very impressive. All of Wei Li-huang's equipment was American. Big 6 x 6s, or trucks, 155mm guns, 105mm guns, lots of ammunition, smart-looking troops, well-uniformed, obviously well-fed. He was in a very protected situation there at Mukden; but already north of him there had been difficulties.

FUCHS: About how much money was involved in these counterpart funds with which you bought the gold?

GRIFFIN: Oh, I don't know. By that time, Chinese money had no value except for, could you buy a spittoon with it? Could you buy a sack of coal with it? How much rice could you get with it? The value changed from day to day. In terms of American value I haven't the faintest idea what this Chinese counterpart fund that we used on that occasion was. A small check was deposited for me on one occasion. I have the bank statement in my office, framed, at which time I suddenly

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was worth over three billion dollars. Now, I think that came from a check that may have been for somewhere between 250 and 500 dollars. How many billions we used to buy this gold out, I just don't know. It was bundles.

FUCHS: They were in need of cotton, and cotton was one of the commodities, I believe, that we were supposed to furnish under the . . .

GRIFFIN: Yes, but they had the cotton. They had the cotton. The cotton was up there in the mills. What they had to have was money to pay the help, you see. They had paid for this cotton with counterpart funds.

FUCHS: I have read that shortly after Roger Lapham and yourself, as his special assistant, arrived in China that there were charges made by Northern Chinese officials that funds were being unfairly distributed. Do you recall anything of that?

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GRIFFIN: No.

FUCHS: And what about the airlift of food into Mukden? Do you recall?

GRIFFIN: Well, we had very little to do with the airlift of food. That was a military operation. Mukden was lost because the Generalissimo ordered Wei Li-Huang to evacuate Mukden and move south and go into North China to make a new front there. We moved out and, as I understand it, the Generalissimo was in a light plane giving orders about how they were to do this and how to do that -- one of the follies of this whole unfortunate war -- and they were trapped by the Communists and this whole army with all of its beautiful American equipment that we had seen, was gobbled up. I guess most of the soldiers were retreaded and became Communist soldiers, better-trained, better able to be used later in the fighting on the Honan plain.

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FUCHS: Were there any long-range plans that you were involved in with Chinese officials to increase their efficiency and production, to use these funds in a good way?

GRIFFIN: Oh, yes, but those came to naught right under your eyes. For instance, we formed the Joint Commission on Rural Reconstruction, the JCRR, which had American and Chinese counterparts. The most significant American that we had in that field was a man by the name of Moyer, who was from the Department of Agriculture. He became significant throughout Southeast Asia, too. I think he's still living. And he was a very effective man, and so was his Chinese counterpart; but the man never could really get started on the mainland. They'd take a little nip at this or that, but it was always too late. Where they got really started and had it function most eminently was on Formosa. That's where land reform really worked. That was the Joint

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Commission on Rural Reconstruction.

FUCHS: Do you feel that the ECA money, then, was really money down a rathole in China?

GRIFFIN: No, I think the ECA money that went into things like the rural reconstruction was productively spent, but it was very little money. Now the money that went into cotton, which

was quite a lot of money, was productively spent in that it permitted a more gradual turnover of the country with less waste of people and resources as the revolution went over.

For instance, in the city of Shanghai we evacuated Roger Lapham and his wife and my wife, and so forth, and we had a volunteer by the name of George St. Louis who volunteered to remain behind to close up our mission after the occupation by the Communists; and he had a volunteer Chinese staff. And we did everything perfectly, because we had long before the end

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begun to get out supplementary payrolls out of fairness to our employees. You would pay them on Friday for a payroll that had been prepared, say, on Thursday, and by the time they were out on the streets to buy something with it, it had collapsed maybe 50 percent. It was a horror, you see. No one who hasn't been in the midst of galloping inflation has the faintest idea what a horror it is for the working people.

So, we devised a scheme whereby our employees were paid supplementary payrolls and at the end we were paying two or three supplementary payrolls. A supplementary payroll followed by a supplement to the supplementary payroll.

FUCHS: How did you happen to, after a short time out of the Government service, come back in as the chief of the mission for Southeast Asia? Here again it was ECA, although there was some planning, I believe, for TCA funds which was then in the Congress.

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GRIFFIN: Well, do you want to know the brutal truth?

FUCHS: Yes, sir.

GRIFFIN: All right, I think it happened that Roger Lapham and I collaborated on a paper that was requested in 1949 by a commission that was set up to satisfy critics of the China policy that we were going to do better in the future. That committee consisted of Dr. [Everett N.] Case and Mr. [Raymond Blaine] Fosdick and Mr. Philip C. Jessup. They sent out a letter to doubtless hundreds of people who had something to do with China affairs, asking them to tell them what ought to be done in the future. Well, Roger Lapham and I collaborated and we wrote a paper on that. (There must be a copy back here somewhere.) And it was a very good paper and constructive paper; and I think it caught their eyes. All of this was done under the greatest of confidence; it was during the period of the

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McCarthy thing, you know. I know it made a little sensation there, our type of paper did, because we were requested to let them take it out of the limbo of confidentiality.

By that time we decided that we weren't going to be used -- because that's all that meant -- and we refused to give them that authority. However, it came to the attention of the Secretary -- and another thing came to his attention, too -- a realization that I was a Republican, I was a publisher, I was an old acquaintance, if not a friend, of Bill [Sen. William F.] Knowland, who was

supposed to be the head of the "China Lobby," whatever that is -- I never knew what it was. At any rate I thought Bill was misguided in many ways with his ideas and I several times tried to set him straight; but, he was a determined man, you know, very strong character. And I think that this whole mission that became known as the Griffin Mission was set up to show to the Republicans

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in Congress that we were going to do something about Southeast Asia. I think that's all it was.

Now, I admire Dean Acheson very much, and when I was asked if I would be willing to take such a mission to Southeast Asia if Dean Acheson asked me to, I said I would, because I still believed there were things we ought to do.

FUCHS: Who was that overture made through?

GRIFFIN: Assistant Secretary of State for the Far East.

FUCHS: Walton Butterworth.

GRIFFIN: Walton Butterworth. He telephoned me from San Francisco before he took what then Senator Knowland described as "a slow boat to China," which literally is what he did, too. He took a slow boat and he got out of the country.

Well, I went back East and saw the Secretary and found out to my amazement (certainly

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not to my delight), not one damn thing had been done about setting up this thing of which I was to be the chief. Yes, there was one thing: they had appointed the administrative officer, that's all.

FUCHS: That was whom?

GRIFFIN: That was Bill MacAfee. A very useful and very nice fellow. And there I was, never having worked for the State Department itself before; never having created a mission; and sitting down at a desk with a secretary trying to find out for myself what sort of people I should have on this mission and where the hell I was to get them.

Well, somehow I had good luck and things began to fall into place. The one time the Secretary helped me was when the man I wanted was in the commercial department of the State Department, Sam Hayes, a very brilliant fellow,

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whom I only met then for the first time. I hadn't known him before but I had heard about him and I determined I would like very much to have him. I asked him to do it and he turned it down. He didn't want to leave his wife, and he didn't want to do it.

Well, I was pretty disgusted then, and so I went to the Secretary and I started to complain. I said, "My God, can I get the people I want? Everybody is turning us down." I said, "I don't blame anyone for not wanting to work for me, but after all if I'm to go off on this thing I'd better get going, I can't just sit around here."

Well, he rose to the occasion then, and he said, "He will have to go with you. If he wants to stay in the Department, he will have to go on this mission."

So, that took care of Sam Hayes. Subsequently, when we met -- the group of us that were to

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meet and go on from here and meet others that were coming around the world the other way -- Sam Hayes was extremely helpful.

After we took off for Tokyo -- this is another story -- and were out for a day and a half, I decided to ask Sam Hayes to be my deputy; and he accepted and I was in great good luck from then on -- the one man that didn't want to go. He's done a book about it; you must have the book. [Samuel P. Hayes (ed.), The Beginning of American Aid to Southeast Asia: The Griffin Mission of 1950. Lexington, Mass.: D.C. Heath and Company, 1971].

FUCHS: Yes. How large a staff did you have?

GRIFFIN: Well, it's all in the book, it varied at different places. Now, two things went wrong with the mission. One was, when we got our orders we were to go as directly as you could go to Saigon. I felt that was wrong. You can't send a mission of this type, an economic mission, to that part of the world without coordinating with the guy who is the Supreme Commander. So,

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I telephoned Washington, and I said, "We have to have new papers."

FUCHS: Who set up that initial itinerary?

GRIFFIN: I don't know. But it was a stupid itinerary to start that way. And I made that plain because it meant nothing to me if they said, "Well, Griffin, if you're so particular you don't have to go." That would be all right with me, too; it's not my career.

So, I insisted that they route us via Tokyo, which they did. And that was helpful -- although a briefing by a Willoughby is never helpful. But it was proper to do that and subsequently it was to our advantage that we had done it, because by the time missions were set up in that country they had a lot of business to do with Tokyo.

FUCHS: Did you see MacArthur at that time?

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GRIFFIN: Oh, yes. Every time I've been to Tokyo I've seen MacArthur. I've seen him four times and every time I've enjoyed it very much, and understood his method.

FUCHS: How did you consider military assistance? Did you think that we should have had some kind of massive military assistance rather than an economic development scheme, that by that we might have stabilized the situation better?

GRIFFIN: No, the thing that upset me about this mission was that I selected the mission except for two men, and who the hell would show up in San Francisco to go with us but a Navy captain and an Army colonel, neither one of which I considered out of the top drawer. Not at all. They were attached to the mission; officially they were a part of the economic mission. Well, I was upset about it, particularly in Saigon when I found them trying to connive

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with Emperor Bao Dai about arms and so forth. He didn't want the French to get the arms. Bao Dai wanted them for himself; he wanted his own private army. And I told them that they'd have to cut it out.

And then we went to Burma. I went to Singapore and discussed the whole question with the British High Commissioner. You never found an American who knew anything, in that part of the world. You had to talk with the British if you were to understand a little experience with the area. I talked with MacDonald -- the son of the late Prime Minister -- a man I had great respect for, which grew on me; and he thought I might go next to Burma, and then come back around, which is what we did. In Burma, where we had the gravest difficulty in being able to talk with the Burmese -- they were sort of like wild animals skittering away in front of us -- I considered these two military jokers

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such a burden that I sent a cable to Washington and told them to please relieve them from any connection with my mission and to recall them. That was with the full approval of our ambassador, David Key in Burma, and they did it. I got rid of them.

That made things better and easier because then we were purely an economic mission interested in Point IV and economic gains and had not one damn thing to do with the military.

My own personal belief that while we were in China, right along, was that we should never have a military undertaking in Asia; just never have it. By the time I had gotten out of China that was so ingrained in my evaluation of the condition in the Far East that I'd do battle at any time to keep any American soldier out of the show. Not for sentimental reasons -- the American boy is no better boy to me than most other boys -- but purely because our country cannot waste its

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energies and its wealth in military adventures that aren't of direct benefit to the security of the United States. You have to prove it's direct.

FUCHS: While I was talking with Ambassador [Philip D.] Sproule in Orinda he said get to your view on that. We were also talking about the fact that the China Aid Act was for 400 million, but 125 million of that was sort of tacked on for military assistance.

GRIFFIN: That's right. But our mission had no use of that money whatsoever, not even indirectly. That was all tacked on and handed over to whoever in the military services in Washington had to do with the support in the field. And they used that at their discretion. I don't know whether very much of that was ever delivered, of that 125 million dollars. I think what they had in the field was mostly what they already had in the field; and that was enough.

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The trouble was basically with the Generalissimo. He would want in command of his armies only men known to be loyal to him personally. Their other abilities were not of a primary consideration. Therefore, brilliant youngish generals, who had had Western training -- which is what was needed -- were relegated to the ash heap; whereas these oldtimers who were personally loyal to the Generalissimo, they got the job. And you could figure it out that if a guy who commanded a division lost his division through incompetence but loved and was loyal to the Generalissimo, he then would be given an army corps. When he lost that he'd be given an army; because his only test was loyalty. There again that comes back to the fact that he wasn't a modern man. These were no longer armies where the silver bullets would do the work; you know, where you could buy off the enemy. If the enemy was Communist you had to fight, you had to know how

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to fight. The generals that knew how did not get the command.

FUCHS: How did you come to be appointed as special representative, then, of ECA and the Mutual Security Agency in the Far East? We are down now to 1951 and '52.

GRIFFIN: Well, they were trying to keep me. I wanted to go home. The futility of these things is very depressing. You would have a few undertakings. These were all very modest, our whole thing was modest. But you have to fill the pipeline and by the time you've gone through all the shuffling of papers and the conferences and the meetings and the revisions that are necessary to get something in the pipeline, you're exhausted. You get to the point where you kind of lose interest; because the other end of the pipeline is so many months away and when you go on these things you do see things that you feel

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are urgent. I mean, it would strengthen this country so much more if these things could be done and done properly. But after a while you realize that, if they ever got done at all, they aren't going to be done properly, and that you have been, really, giving up your time and sweating it out a lot -- you have a lot of anxiety over it.

You want to serve your country well, and I've always worked twice as hard when I was in the employment of Uncle Sam as I've ever worked for myself. I think that's true of any number of civilians who are nonprofessional who go into it for the love of doing a job and because they think they might be useful, and so forth. When they realize they aren't useful, then they want to go home. Well, that's when you get promoted in a thing like this. I know Mr. Harriman worked

me over in his office on this thing. He said, "You're a special representative; you have the title of ambassador; this would be

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as permanent as you want to make it," and so forth.

I told him, "No," I was going home.

FUCHS: This was 1952 when you resigned. You did serve during the period of the Korean war in 1951 and part of '52. What were your principal activities then?

GRIFFIN: Well, my principal activity, really, was running the office in Washington; and then I went on my last trip. I made the trip as a special ambassador. I'd gotten the office remade and went off as special representative.

FUCHS: There has been a charge made that funds were diverted, in the sense that we promised new equipment to countries there, and then the Korean war came and we were taking the new equipment and giving them used equipment. Have you any reflections on that?

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GRIFFIN: Well, no, that must have been military. It had nothing to do with our stuff, nothing at all. As I said, I was entirely out of that. I'm a civilian military man. I believe in a big navy with a good army and all that sort of thing -- but I'm not a military student or professional; I'm a civilian.

FUCHS: What came of the recommendations of the Griffin Mission? I believe the State Department issued a statement that you had recommended a modest sum of something like sixty million be used, and I believe they thought they could cover this with unexpended China Aid funds. What do you recall of that?

GRIFFIN: I don't recall much about it. We never advocated that much money for one year. There again, I haven't got those old budgets; I defended those budgets before committees in Congress, but I haven't got them here. They

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were modest.

When I left there I was asked to become a director of the Asia Foundation, which I became and I've been with it ever since; and it, of course, is a model organization. Our entire budget is between six and seven million dollars for all of Southeast Asia, see. But, whatever we do we do promptly, we do it effectively, and we have no red tape. Most of our funds come from the United States Government, mainly State Department and AID. I think Kissinger once got a scholarship through us; a fellowship or something of that kind.

FUCHS: Most of these are grants for study?

GRIFFIN: Grants, yes. Most of them are that. Or, for instance, the finance department of a country like Afghanistan -- that's an example -- needs an adviser. We sent them a man who was with them for quite a few years, helping them get straightened

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out and modernize their methods. We sent educators over to spend a certain number of years with the university there, or with lower forms of education. We bring their people over here. Scientists who, otherwise, would never on earth be able to attend a convention of some sort over here; we see that these men that are good men, top men, get taken care of, and that they're sent home. And a certain amount of younger people we send to college over here. Not too many. We don't do that on a big scale. The big thing is to get them back and have them be productive in their own country.

FUCHS: I imagine you had discussions with French officials about Indochina. What was their attitude?

GRIFFIN: Well, they were right, we were innocent. The French officials said, in effect, "You're the advance guard of the Americans that are going

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to take over this country from us." In effect that's what they said; and they made many impediments to what we thought was our progress. The most cooperative of the French over there were the military people, who were very pleasant people. M. [Leon] Pignon, who was the Governor General in Saigon -- a very extraordinary man, a very fine man -- he was just barking up the wrong trees all the time carrying out the orders of his Government.

He had some hopeless situations. He called us to one meeting right after we arrived there, and here are a bunch of Vietnamese whom we had already met, here were a bunch of Laotians, and here were a bunch of Cambodians, and here is M.M. Pignon, and here I was with my group. And he got up and he made a very pleasant announcement about this being a historic meeting and so forth. Then he said, "This is the first evidence of the new quadripartite regime in this country."

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Up jumped the Vietnamese and said, "This is nothing of the sort," and gave him a hell of a scolding, and said, "There isn't any quadripartite thing, there never is going to be, we're not a part of it." The others all felt the same.

I was so sorry for this man. He had staged this thing. It was a pretty formal meeting, and I think he thought he had had it arranged, and it just blew up in his face.

FUCHS: One last question, I know you're short of time. No doubt the mission arranged to see a lot of different groups in Southeast Asia. Did you generally feel that the people you were dealing with were giving you straight answers, or did you think there was some duplicity?

GRIFFIN: Well, I wouldn't call it duplicity. Those people are all looking out for an advantage they can get politically. They are all politicians. You can't deal with anyone who isn't a politician

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when you're dealing with governments. All of these people want to be as well-rooted as possible in their jobs, or make progress towards a higher job, and if they could use you in that respect they will.

Well, what are you there for? You are there to be used. If that is consonant with American policy, if you see it as a long-range advantage to the United States dangling somewhere in the future by being used, you're used. It's going to happen anyhow. You are sent there to be used in the first place.

We were used by Mr. Truman's men, and so forth, to make a better picture for the Democrats before the Republicans in Congress; to show the United States is doing something about Southeast Asia because they said that they had not done anything about China. We had lost China and this way we weren't going to lose Southeast Asia. I don't think anyone was as unscrupulous with us,

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in a way, as our own Government was; but I knew that all the time.

FUCHS: Do you feel that your mission changed any policies, altered the course any in Southeast Asia?

GRIFFIN: I'm trying to think of a single place where it did. You see, we certainly didn't alter things in Burma, because we were kept out of Burma. Even the little Asia Foundation office was kicked out of Burma, gentle though it was. Vietnam is history. Maybe they would have collapsed sooner in Vietnam; I haven't any idea. Indonesia went to pot with Sukarno. There may have been some remnants to our advantage left there. I don't know. Maybe some of the professors there, a few people like that. But I believe our training -- of Indonesian officers by our Army, and Indonesian police by our police was much more fundamental in influencing

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a more efficient and decent course of events in Indonesia than the effect of the economic thing. These personal contacts are very, very important.

It's like the Vietnamese war. If we hadn't helped with the Vietnamese war, maybe Indonesia would be a Communist country today. I don't know. This is all speculative. You don't know where you've sown a little seed; you like to flatter yourself that you have. Once you've been immersed a little bit into the masses of those people and witness the insoluble problems of those countries, you feel no one is going to solve them because there are just too many people there. They have a little of democracy for a while, and they have a little of dictatorship for a while, and they flop around seeking something. Meanwhile, the people who are power hungry seek power, and the tougher the conditions the more people are seeking power.

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I'm not cynical about it; it's just the way it is. I do believe that we have enough really fine quality Americans or educational institutions or something of that sort, that make an impression upon some people who are or eventually may be the rulers of a country, so that a little advantage in the long run may accrue to America. It's like, how do you establish search and evasion routes for your fliers? Now, that was none of our business in the China mission, but it was the business of a few CIA people whom we only incidentally knew. But they had had some Mongolians or someone come up with some wild venture. They got a little help, and so and so, from us -- there was no other way for them to get a little help. So, we'd look the other way and give them a little help. Tell them to stick their hand in our pocket or something like that. Well, who knows, someday an American flier may be shot down over one of those places,

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and a little rug factory that we established that way might have some people to shelter him. It's too long-ranged to think much about.

FUCHS: Did you ever have occasion to be with Mr. Truman, either socially or in connection with your Government job?

GRIFFIN: Well, he was a captain, of an artillery company I think, and I was the captain of a rifle company in France in the Meuse-Argonne offensive, and that's as close as we ever came together. I didn't think his division did very well, but, of course, everyone has varying opinions about that. It was practically on the flank of ours, and I felt that they didn't do as well as they might have.

And then I met him when I returned from this mission in Southeast Asia. Mr. Acheson took me over to the White House and we had a little meeting, and he asked me to tell him a

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little about the thing, which I briefly did. He was cordial and thanked me for having conducted it, and that was that. It was pleasant. It was unexpected.

FUCHS: Well, thank you very much. We certainly appreciate it.

GRIFFIN: You are more than welcome.

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