



GEORGE H. W. BUSH ORAL HISTORY PROJECT
TRANSCRIPT

INTERVIEW WITH DAVID JEREMIAH

November 15, 2010
Charlottesville, Virginia

Interviewers

University of Virginia

Russell Riley, chair
Barbara Perry

Sweet Briar College

Spencer Bakich

Assisting: M. Joel Voss
Transcription: Martha W. Healy
Transcript copyedited by: Rebecca Barns, Jane Rafal Wilson
Final edit by: Jane Rafal Wilson

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Riley: This is the Admiral David Jeremiah interview as a part of the George H.W. Bush Presidential Oral History Project. We appreciate your coming to Charlottesville today for the interview. We just had a conversation before the tape ran about the basic ground rules, the most fundamental one being the confidentiality of the proceedings. We always start there. Joel's going to be recording interventions for the transcriber, but it also helps her to know names and voices so that she'll know who's talking when. Barbara will be easy, but we'll ask her to identify herself anyway. We'll do a quick self-identification and we'll come back to you.

I'm Russell Riley. I'm head of the Presidential Oral History Program here.

Bakich: I'm Spencer Bakich. I'm Assistant Professor of International Affairs at Sweet Briar College.

Perry: I'm Barbara Perry and I'm a senior fellow here at the Miller Center.

Jeremiah: I'm Dave Jeremiah and I'm the victim. [*laughter*]

Riley: The specimen.

Jeremiah: The specimen. That will do.

Riley: You said there were a couple of things about the briefing book that you wanted to flag. Why don't we start with that to make sure we have the documents in order before we move from there.

Jeremiah: One of the significant things in my career, not necessarily relevant to this particular study, but in the background material there was a short note in tab 4 of the timelines, on the *Achille Lauro* intercept, which I could go on for about an hour and a half on. It says that the United States Air Force intercepted the hijackers. The United States Air Force only contributed two things to the problem: two C-141s separated in time that transited through the area while we were trying to sort out who was in the traffic pattern, and where was the Egyptian airliner with the hijackers in it. Both C-141s flew lights out with special forces people going from Crete to Sigonella, and they were completely outside this event except for the very end of the story, when we brought the aircraft down in Sigonella. So that one needs to be corrected. There's not much you can do about it if it is somebody else's publication.

Riley: That's why we footnote it, so you know it's not our mistake.

Jeremiah: You should probably have a footnote on that tab, on that subject, because it's completely inaccurate. On tab four again on the timelines, I don't know if you care, but I can explain the difference over the bomb damage assessment between [Norman] Schwarzkopf in the field and the Washington intelligence establishment if that's of any interest.

Riley: Sure.

Jeremiah: It's pretty straightforward. Schwarzkopf was looking at gun camera photography and seeing both ends of a hangar explode, blown out. The Washington analysts at the CIA [Central Intelligence Agency] and other places got the overhead photography and saw a hole in the top of the hangar but no apparent damage, so there was no way that they would classify that as a kill. It was similar to that when we started plinking tanks. The gun camera photography showed the tank, showed the explosion, and showed that it was a kill. Often the turrets were blown off or at least dislodged, so the guys in the field could say that's a kill. They couldn't say that in Washington.

Schwarzkopf of course viewed this as a huge infringement on his authority as commander in the field. The Washington agencies viewed this as chest thumping on the part of the Air Force and the Navy pilots. So that created a lot of hate and discontent for a period of time during the Gulf War.

Riley: Right.

Jeremiah: The composition in tab 6—there is a discussion and maybe it's easier if we turn to that.

Riley: Tab 6, that's the Vice Chair of the Joint Chiefs.

Jeremiah: It's on the very first page in the tab. It talks to the composition of the Chiefs in section 151a. It omits that the Vice Chairman, who was a member of the Joint Chiefs, and that's the Joint Chiefs over there under the advice on requests. That's better explained in the JCS [Joint Chiefs of Staff] 1, as to the correct role of all those folks, and I'll provide you with a copy of that so that you can see. But the essence of it is that the House, I believe—this is drawn from what was proposed and passed by the House in establishing the position of the Vice Chairman, and subsequently in '93 the Senate passed the current version of what the Vice Chairman's responsibilities and duties are and his authorities. This specifically indicates that the Vice Chairman can only speak, it says later on—

Riley: What page is that?

Jeremiah: Page 210, the upper left-hand corner, if you go down to section F.

Riley: Got it. Participation in JCS meetings.

Jeremiah: It says he can participate in all meetings of the Joint Staff but may not vote on a matter before the Joint Chiefs except when acting as Chairman. One: I don't recall that we ever

voted on anything; Two: if that was the standing language up until '93, it was irrelevant, because I participated fully in all discussions.

Riley: Okay.

Jeremiah: But there was a very strong feeling particularly among the Chiefs at the time the legislation was enacted. I happened to be Admiral [James D.] Watkins' Executive Assistant while he was a member of the Joint Chiefs and probably wrote some of the papers arguing against the Vice Chairman having any authority, but anyway, that was a big deal because people saw this as a potential conflict between the Chairman and the Vice Chairman.

Riley: Right.

Jeremiah: So there's that. Finally, I would suggest that when you do the research or continue the research on this, if you have not already read or looked at Richard Haass' *War of Necessity, War of Choice*, that does a very good job of describing the run-up to Desert Shield and Desert Storm and also the Highway of Death discussion and how people feel about it. Quite frankly, I can't tell you that Richard's role was as prominent as his book describes, but he was very much in the business at the time. We'll talk about this later in the Deputies Committee discussion, but he was pretty much the writer, and a very good one, of lots of documents. So I think that is worth reading just as a different view of what was going on, a more expansive view.

Riley: But what you're saying is that it sounds to you like an authentic account.

Jeremiah: Yes.

Riley: And that's enormously helpful, because—

Jeremiah: And throughout, because he talks about both Bush 41 and [George W.] 43 and contrasts the two and their run-up to their respective wars.

Perry: Just to note, Spence and I were talking about that this morning and Spence has read the book thoroughly.

Bakich: And I teach it.

Perry: And teaches it. So he'll be able to speak from that base of knowledge.

Riley: It is helpful for us, not just in preparation for 43 interviews to know that, but more importantly, for people who will come to these oral histories. We cannot possibly cover everything we would like to cover in a single day. So knowing that there are good, valid accounts out there is a tremendous assist to a potential researcher who would come in and wonder, *Okay, where else can I go for something that looks authoritative?* So that kind of information is very helpful.

Bakich: Since we're on this topic, Christian Alfonsi's *Circle in the Sand*—are you familiar with this one?

Jeremiah: No, but it sounds interesting. What's the subject?

Bakich: It covers essentially the first half of what Haass' book is about. Particularly at the upper levels, Alfonsi is one of the first scholars to have availed himself of the materials at the Bush Library, which is particularly why I find it interesting, because you do have a number of not just retrospective accounts but actual documentation that he references. I don't necessarily buy some of the conclusions, but that's another matter. From a substantive, methodological perspective, he is one of the best, and it is one of the more recent accounts.

Jeremiah: In that, just to take it a little bit farther, one of the important things that was done in a hurry was drafting the letter that [James Addison] Baker took to give to Tariq Aziz, which Tariq Aziz refused to take.

Bakich: Trembling hand and all that.

Jeremiah: Which is probably good judgment on his part. *[laughter]* The Deputies Committee had a very significant hand in editing that. That doesn't come across in Richard's account. I mean he was obviously the writer; that's not right. Because that was the one where we threatened—no, we didn't threaten, we said, "Do good or it will be very, very bad." Many people took that as a threat of a nuclear attack, which it was not.

Bakich: I do not recall that discussion occurring in the book, and I would have remembered that.

Riley: Before we get too far down in the weeds on specifics, if there are other pieces of this, please during the course of the conversation let us know. But here is my opening question for you. That is, there are a lot of people who have senior positions in the armed services whose careers don't intersect that much in Washington, maybe not.

Jeremiah: Good for them. *[laughter]*

Riley: My opening question for you is to tell us about how your career—how Washington becomes a dimension in your career at the outset and how do you move into this community of military officials who begin to have a kind of policy-making component as well as your field service component, if that makes any sense. That's a layperson's question. I'm trying to get you to help us see the trajectory of your career so that we get you situated in the Washington community.

Jeremiah: I was first assigned to Washington as a Lieutenant Commander, came off a tour as an operations officer on a guided-missile destroyer, and spent I think three years on that tour in Washington working on electronic warfare matters during the Vietnam War. My area was surface warfare. I was a surface warfare officer and am a surface warfare officer, but the big issue was electronic warfare and how to protect the aircraft because they were getting killed. We kept running down the same ridge and got shot by the same guys and lost a lot of people—anyway, that was the first tour.

During that tour I had the opportunity to participate in a lot of budget discussions and it became apparent to me that civilians were driving the train inside the Navy as far as what we should buy and what we should not buy because of budgetary considerations. Not very many, if any, senior

officers or even low-grade officers who were down in the trenches were in that game. People who knew what the operational requirements were weren't at the table when decisions were made to go ahead with one thing or another, or how much of one thing to go ahead with.

So while I was there I got a master's degree in financial management at George Washington night school. Back to the fleet, back to Washington, and the fleet in this case was Hawaii. Personally I had actually six tours in Hawaii and was married for the last five tours. In each case the detailers said, "You'll never go back to Washington. People won't send you back and forth," but they did.

The next tour was in the office of the Secretary of Defense. After I came back from sea I went to the Armed Forces Staff College, got my joint ticket there, and then went to Harvard Business School through the Program for Management Development and went through that curriculum.

Riley: Was that a one-year thing?

Jeremiah: No, it's 21 weeks. There's a parallel course called the Advanced Management Program, but the PMD [Program for Management Development] was oriented to the guy who was coming out of manufacturing or finance or accounting, whatever, and was going to go to a higher level with responsibilities in sales, marketing, finance or whatever, production. AMP was oriented to senior executives who needed to be brushed up on essentially the same thing. So we were on this kind of slope and they were on a more gracious slope. We all came out at the same place at the end. They would argue about that, but that's the way it was.

It was about 50 percent foreign and 50 percent U.S., and there were six of us in the course who were military. We were sent there by our respective services to enlighten our classmates that we were not necessarily all cretins and knuckle draggers in the military, that we had some other access to education.

Riley: Which year was this, do you remember?

Jeremiah: It would be 1970 to '71.

Riley: So at the time when there was a lot of thinking that there might have been knuckle draggers.

Jeremiah: Oh, yes. The airlines were gracious enough to provide a very generous fare break for people in uniform. I have to tell you that wearing a Lieutenant Commander's uniform in Harvard Square getting to the airport was not necessarily the most pleasant experience. I got over that.

Riley: That's why I asked.

Jeremiah: Three years in the Office of the Secretary of Defense with systems' analysis, PAE [Program Analysis and Evaluation], now something else again but that's what it was. As a result of that I ended up with specialties in financial management and systems analysis. Back to sea. Back to Washington after a command tour as a—this is going to be hard—but basically a financial management position at the O6 level. I wasn't an O6 yet, but they frocked me and I

drove the programming process to build the trades for the senior officers to sort out what to buy and what not to buy.

Then back to sea. Let's see, I think I've got this right. Back to sea as a squadron commander of about half a dozen ships was the nominal idea, but in my case we went to the East Coast. I was asking my detailers what they were going to do with me and they said, "Oh, we have you penciled in to go back to Hawaii as a squadron commander."

I said, "That's wonderful, but I'm getting long in the tooth and I'd kind of like to see what's goes on on the other side of the world." So they said, "Okay, we'll put you down in Mayport, Florida." That squadron was a tactical squadron, so you had no responsibilities for any ships, nobody owned anything. In Mayport I was a nonentity because other squadron commanders were responsible for the materiel condition of the ships and so on and so forth. Once you got past the sea buoy it was all tactical, then they all belonged to me, whoever was in the group from whatever organization.

I did that for a little over a year. Then I was called to go up and be the executive assistant for the Commander in Chief of the Pacific Fleet in Hawaii. We did that for about three years, but it was split between [Donald C.] Red Dog Davis and Jim Watkins. Davis retired and Watkins came from Vice Chief of the Navy and went into the Fleet Commander job. He went to be Chief of Naval Operations and I went with him.

Riley: Okay.

Jeremiah: Then after I was selected for flag while I was working for him I stayed with him anyway. He finally turned me loose to go to a group and a command in Norfolk. In Norfolk I had 53 ships under my command administratively. I deployed as a battle group commander in the Mediterranean and I ended up there for a few months, which included the *Achille Lauro* incident and that interception. Then we left the Mediterranean and did the first night transit of the Suez Canal because we had gained a little notoriety out of the *Achille Lauro* incident and the bad guys were interested in us. I was personally targeted for assassination, so we were ordered out of the Mediterranean and into the North Arabian Sea. We operated in the North Arabian Sea until Christmas and then sailed across the Indian Ocean, went into Singapore for ten days, and came back.

There is a system in the Navy called MODLOC: modification of location. It is a tracking system so the commanders know where all the ships are. When you change location you are told to go someplace or to some latitude/longitude point.

We started getting these MODLOCs to different points in the Indian Ocean. We were supposed to go left towards Diego Garcia and it looked like that's where we were going for a while, then we get MODLOCed in another direction. So we knew we were either going to go into the Red Sea or into the North Arabian Sea. We went on that path until they MODLOCed us into the Red Sea and into the Suez Canal and back to the Mediterranean, where we began operations off the Libyan coast and freedom of navigation operations there.

I came in with the *Saratoga* battle group. The *Coral Sea* battle group was already there and I took command of both battle groups. Then the *America* battle group came in and I took

command of that. We also had some cats and dogs running around. As a matter of fact I had about 43 ships under my operational control for several months. It was the largest naval activity since the Vietnam War when guys were working on Yankee Station with two or three carriers. We got the freedom of navigation engagements at [Muammar] Gaddafi's Line of Death done and I was reassigned to Washington.

Riley: You said that you had easily an hour and a half or two hours of material on the *Achille Lauro*, and we don't have time obviously to get into all of that, but I did want to ask a question or two about that. Because terrorism becomes such a prominent policy problem for the United States in later years, I'm wondering if you have any reflections from your experience there about either the problem of terrorism itself as it presented itself to the U.S. military, or did you have any reflections as a result of your experience about the relationship between the military and the civilian leadership and its cooperation or lack of cooperation or deference or lack of deference as it relates to terrorism, lessons that you may have learned that either you benefited from or we might have benefited from later on down the road.

Jeremiah: Very briefly—do you know the circumstances in general?

Riley: Roughly.

Jeremiah: So I'm in Combat Information Center on *Saratoga* and we get a voice message from Sixth Fleet saying, "Tell us where all the ships in the Sixth Fleet are." In those days we had ships in the Sixth Fleet. We told them and said, "I wonder what's going on, they must have lost the magnetic field or all their deely-bops fell off the status boards." [laughter] So then they said, "No, just tell us where the *Saratoga* is." We told them we were on our way up the Adriatic for a port visit. I went off to dinner because nothing followed after that.

Then my chief of staff called and he said they're asking us some more questions. So I went up to Flag Plot and basically turned *Saratoga* around and headed back down to the central Mediterranean and put aircraft in the air and intercepted the Egyptian airliner that was coming out of Cairo. The Egyptian President told us that the hijackers were long since gone. We knew that they were not because we were listening to his carphone and he was screaming at these people to get them off the ground, get them out of the region. They were not yet out. So we knew that probably we could find them, and that's what [John] Poindexter and company were trying to get done up front in the cookie factory, where President [Ronald] Reagan was.

We set up surveillance of the Mediterranean, found these guys when they came to the Mediterranean, put F-14s on them, and we let them come until they began to try to get into Tunis. They could not get into Tunisia. The diplomatic side had already shut that one down and then they said, "We'll go back to Athens," and to the Athens control area. Athens also said, "No, can't handle it."

About that time they started doing some strange stuff and started to talk about turning around. So we turned on the F-14 navigation lights, and after they inquired as to why, we wouldn't talk to them and told them to go to Sigonella. They wondered why we had anything to say about that. Who were we and where were we, and they said they didn't believe us until we turned on the lights. [laughter] We followed them in and landed them. The two C-141s that I mentioned before

with, as I said, special forces guys, they were getting ready to go and board the *Achille Lauro* but didn't because it got into Egyptian waters. Then Special Forces went back into Sigonella. They told us they were there.

We led the Egyptian 737 there. He said he didn't have any landing charts. We said, "Fine, follow us," and we flew him over the field and then brought him back in and landed him. The Italian commander was in the tower along with other Italian—the air station at Sigonella. The U.S. was a tenant of what was effectively a NATO field, and the commanding officer of the U.S. forces had been pulled out of a handball court to go up to the tower and explain to the CO what the heck was going on. He had no idea. He queried Sixth Fleet to find out what was happening and Sixth Fleet told him that we were bringing in the Egyptian airliner and landing them and the Italian commander turned to his American counterpart in the tower and said, "Why? Why are you doing this now? Why couldn't you do this tomorrow after my change of command?"
[laughter]

So they landed. The 141s were already there. My guys were at altitude, watching what was going on. The Egyptian airliner landed. The 141s dropped their hatches, jeeps rolled out, full of American special forces guys, rolled over and circled around the Egyptian airliner, followed almost immediately by Italian carabinieri going out and encircling the Americans. So we had Italians and Americans like this at gunpoint. [wipes his hands together] "I'm done, not my problem." They finally got that straightened out.

But to the point, I thought it was a tremendous example of how you can pick up with available forces and get something done from no planning, no nothing. And it worked because we had really good people who knew what they were doing. It was the first time anybody in the West had made any effective response to terrorism. It was the fulfillment of the "you can run but you can't hide" statement.

Reagan called us the following day and expressed his pleasure with what took place, and I responded, but I think he was off the line by that time. So it worked very well and it was absolutely ad hoc and a lot of pick-up stuff going on trying to create certain systems.

As far as the terrorists were concerned, it was the beginning of an episode that ended with El Dorado Canyon when the United States flew against Gaddafi in his tent. That was why I was called back into the Mediterranean to exercise in the Gulf of Sidra, in international waters, above and below the "line of death." That was kind of a bookend to this, a period of terrorism that included the aircraft that were taken into—the commercial aircraft that had been intercepted by hijackers and the Marine barracks and all of that period. The combination of things certainly sent a message to Gaddafi that we were not going to tolerate this kind of stuff. "If you want to raise the ante we'll raise it right along with you, and a lot higher." I think that helped.

I don't think it had a tremendous impact on terrorism one way or another except for the very major one of "We're not going to take this stuff anymore," and that changed the vector.

Perry: Admiral, you said at one point, I think, that you were targeted for assassination.

Jeremiah: Yes.

Perry: Was that during this time period or prior to that, and by whom?

Jeremiah: The Red Army, and as a general matter in Italy. Senior officers were targeted. In my case I was specifically targeted; we had intercepts that said that by the Red Army in Italy. We completed that port visit—there's a little story I want to share with you about that in Dubrovnik and then basically went out of the Mediterranean, so we were off the screen for a couple of months. By that time other things had overtaken events.

We came back, and when we came back we were basically at sea for most of that period of time, so I wasn't available to be targeted.

Bakich: I'm listening to your presentation thus far and I'm hearing "at sea," "in Washington," back and forth. Then of course culminating in the *Achille Lauro*.

Jeremiah: By the way, I never got back to the end of that, did I?

Bakich: No, please finish.

Jeremiah: I was executive assistant to Admiral Watkins, went back to Washington, did the battle group, came back to Washington. In the Pacific there were some problems between the theater commander and his naval component commander, and after a year in Washington I was pulled back out to Hawaii to be the new Commander in Chief of the Pacific Fleet. From there, after three years, back to Washington at the behest of General [Colin] Powell. So that's the front to back.

Riley: Okay.

Bakich: To what extent are you coming upon jointness as something that the United States military needs to push toward at this point?

Jeremiah: It depends on when "at this point" is.

Bakich: I guess I'm thinking of the way in which you're going at sea, back to Washington, at sea, back to Washington. I'm wondering if that sequencing of the trajectory of your career is giving you any insight into the way in which maybe—

Jeremiah: When I was in the Pacific we had a very close relationship, particularly when I was CINCPACFLT [Commander in Chief, Pacific Fleet] with the Air Force, the Army, and the Marine Corps. The two former CINCs [Commanders in Chief] were—I would say before, when I was their executive assistant, the other guys (services) were tolerated, but there was no real enthusiasm for doing very much or any real way of figuring out how to do very much.

During the *Achille Lauro* and El Dorado Canyon there was a lot of confusion, there was a lot of parochialism, "I want a piece of the pie." Both were originally Navy exercises. Air Force wanted a piece of the pie, so we had them around. That began to attenuate when I was CINCPACFLT. At the theater level we were working together at the CINCs, the four-star level. An example: we had an exercise that I created called PACEX; it was really an exercise of a war plan. We really did it. The first thing was a meeting of the four-stars at CINCPAC headquarters. We gathered

around the table and we went through the logic of the war plan as it had been developed over time by our iron majors, each supporting their services' parochial interests.

When the four-stars looked at it they said, "Huh? What is this?" The Air Force is going to fly F-16s from Alaska into a fight, with forces engaged north of Japan. They're going to fly across the front of the Kamchatka Peninsula, from which the Russian Air Force would fly interceptors. Our guys would have to lift-off, and fly across, get then minutes on station and return. They had to tank twice to do it. We said, "This does not make sense." Basically we just knocked the war plan off the table and said, "Okay, here's the way this is going to go."

It was full of that stuff all the way down the line. Things that were disconnected didn't work, so on and so forth. We moved people to their theater. We moved an Army National Guard colonel from Ohio who had been going for six or seven years to Adak, Alaska, because that was his mobilization assignment. Then when we did the exercise we actually went there and he was astonished at all the stuff that he was responsible for that was flying in, sailing in, all kinds of things happening. That went all the way around, ammunition depots that were supposed to provide munitions in the San Francisco area to the ships that couldn't get there from here because somebody built a bridge that was too low. They also changed the direction of the highway. Nobody knew that. It wasn't in the war plan. We got a lot of stuff off the table.

Why is that relevant? Because about a year later we're getting ready to go fight in Iraq and CINCPAC, because of that exercise that cleared all that stuff off, all that deadwood out of their planning processes, they knew where everything was and they knew how to get it from one place to another. They had a much simpler time operating as a joint command than the Atlantic side.

Part of that was because the Pacific was one whole. If you were in San Diego, Hawaii, Alaska you were in the same Navy. In the Atlantic you were in the Atlantic Command, then you went to the Mediterranean in the European Command and everything changed. Of all the operations—the Air Force used to go crazy because their ISR [Intelligence, Surveillance and Reconnaissance] aircraft would fly over these Navy theaters and they'd have to keep changing what they were doing, codes, procedures, processes.

We didn't have that problem in the Pacific. By that time we were operating much more jointly. So the answer is that the jointness began—personally, knowledge of General [George A.] Joulwan, General Powell, who were EAs [executive assistants], military assistants, at the same time that I was. We began building things together knowing who we were. Then the Pacific Command, the other theater commanders, you worked together a lot, you knew things. We were sharing or trying to share with the Air Force highly classified information we had, the location of air defense systems in Russia that the Air Force would have to go against. Their intelligence guys didn't see much value in anything that we had because they were more interested in targets than defenses, so I went to General [Merrill A.] McPeak] and said, "Your guys are going to die because you're flying right through the wrong places." They went back and looked at it some more. It didn't take very well. The Air Force and the Army at that time were both used to separate the intelligence meetings from the operators and never the twain shall meet.

In the Navy they're all riding around on the same ship. The operators and intelligence types worked together because otherwise we couldn't protect ourselves.

Riley: But these were big ships.

Jeremiah: They don't look that big when you're trying to land on one at night. I don't know if I answered the question or not.

Riley: You actually did, but let me refine the question now. Having seen that the trajectory doesn't seem to be the right word when there is so much back and forth, tell us about the specific circumstances associated with your nomination then as Vice Chair. How, specifically, did that come about, and if there are any relevant roots to that, let's delve into those and tell us about that.

Jeremiah: I guess I would start with the story that Carl Trost, who was the Chief of Naval Operations at the time, told me about two years ago. That was the first time I had any knowledge of anything at all like this. I began to get inklings that something was going on when—I'm going to go back to the time when the Commandant of the Marine Corps stopped by and called on us. The Commandant of the Marine Corps is never called on by the Commander in Chief of the Pacific Fleet. The Commandants typically never acknowledged any relationship with the Pacific Fleet Commandant.

We had a nice chat. He left. That was interesting. I don't know what the hell that was all about, but I'm not worried very much because it's okay, I knew him from before. Then a retired CINCPAC, Bob Long, showed up on my doorstep at my quarters in Hawaii. I knew he was here. He stopped in for a drink. We chatted and he left. What was that all about?

I had one presumption, because I had had a mild heart attack in about '88. So I decided that this was a health and welfare check to see if the blood was still running. I don't know what the message would say, "Is it really him or is it somebody in the background?" So we had an entertaining discussion, 20 minutes, half an hour, and he went on about his business. At the time, I don't know what I thought. Now back to about two years ago. Carl Trost had a dinner. He said, "I don't know if you know this or not, but before you were nominated to be Vice Chairman, Colin called and said, 'What are you going to do with Dave Jeremiah?' I told him I thought we were going to nominate him for Chief of Naval Operations."

"Colin said, 'Well, I'd like to have him be the Vice Chairman.' I said, 'Well, we really do need to have a CNO.' Then Colin said, 'He can be the CNO if you want, but no other naval nominee for a joint position will be accepted.' 'Oh.'" [laughter]

So all right. I guess Trost acquiesced and Frank Kelso became the CNO. But I never knew that until a couple of years ago. The first thing I knew then was when I got a call from Colin Powell, who said, "I'd like to have you come and be my Vice Chairman. What do you think about that?"

I said, "I don't know, I'm pretty happy where I am." I was running out of air speed and altitude there as far as the length of the tour was concerned. I spoke to Connie [Jeremiah], called him, and said, "Let me at it." Then we went through some odds and ends, how did this all come together? At any rate there was a dialogue with my predecessor because it was one of these silly things but it counted. He was living in a house that was quarters for the former Deputy Chief of Staff for Personnel for the Army, and the Army desperately wanted that back.

So they set it up for me to go to Fort McNair instead of Fort Myer. You know Washington—Fort McNair is over there across the bridge. The Chief of Staff of the Army, the Chief of Staff of the Air Force, the Chairman are all up at Fort Myer, and so was the Vice Chairman at Fort Myer. My predecessor asked if I had received his six-page letter about all this, which I had. It recited a whole history of the houses and what happened and who did this, that, and the other thing.

He said, “They’re going to try and put you in Fort McNair and they’re going to put you next to the Vice Chief of Staff of the Army, but you’ll be next to his house. His house has cannons in front of it and yours won’t and it’s a terrible place to be from an operational perspective, getting to the Pentagon quickly, talking to the Chairman, and so on and so forth. The Commandant of the Marine Corps and the Navy are both on that side of the river, so back and forth.

Finally Colin called again and he said, “What do you want me to do about the house?” I said, “What he said makes sense to me, so I’d prefer to stay in the same house.”

He said, “Okay, I’ll go break some legs,” which he did. There’s a reason why all this came into play in the first place. I won’t go into that because you don’t need it. So then we got all that straightened out and then it was what do you do—now it is time to tell the President—Dick Cheney signed off on it, “Tell the President.” He put the nomination forward and Colin is bugging the Secretary and nothing is going on. So they get to the end of the line and we’re going to either go to a hearing in the next couple of days or Congress isn’t going to be in session until after my predecessor’s term is expired and he is retired, which he intended to do. He’s got a job working at the USAA [United Services Automobile Association].

We’ve got to do something. So Cheney goes over to the White House, maybe he’s already in the White House, goes up to the Oval Office and he talks to the dragon at the gate and says, “I need to see the President.” “Sorry, the President is engaged with so-and-so.” Cheney says, “This is really urgent.”

She says, “Well, maybe I can arrange—if you can hang on a few minutes, we can call in from the outer office to the Oval Office.” So Cheney is cooling his heels. The President calls out, “What do you need?” Cheney said, “You have Dave Jeremiah sitting in the wings to be the Vice Chairman and you’ve got to sign off on it or I’ve got to be sure that you’re going to sign off on it.” The President asked a question in a kidding way, which I’m not going to tell you on the advice of counsel.

Riley: I may have to have a conversation with you. [*laughter*]

Jeremiah: The President says, “Okay, then, that will be fine.” So that’s how I ended up as the Vice Chairman. We went to the Hill and had a conversation with all of our learned representatives of Congress, the Senate Armed Services Committee, Sam Nunn, who was a wonderful guy, very gracious. He had some conversations about things that the department owed them and hadn’t delivered. “What are you going to do about that?”

Strom Thurmond asked his question, I answered it. Everybody fell down in a faint. You’re not supposed to answer Thurmond’s questions. That was the confirmation for the first two years. You understand the drill. You can have three two-year terms. So just to go ahead again, we went through the next confirmation hearing. When you read it here it’s just obvious that the first time

around I was doing what I was supposed to do and saying the right kinds of things, and the second time I was going back at them, just talking.

Nunn held me until afterwards. He said we had some classified material and we have to close the session. He said, “What are you doing with GE [General Electric] stock?” “What?” “GE is a major defense contractor, and you’ve got stock in GE according to your financial disclosure.” Almost less than you could see.

I said, “Senator, it didn’t even cross my mind. This is financial stuff over here, this is my business over here. I buy the things they recommended, and General Electric makes refrigerators and stoves and stuff like that.” It’s not like nobody told me, but we hadn’t even thought about General Electric as a major contractor. So we had a little Jesus discussion about that. I said I would divest the stock as quickly as possible, and I did. We didn’t buy anything but mutual funds after that. That was the confirmation process. That’s how I got there.

Riley: Why don’t we take a break.

[BREAK]

Riley: We’re back on. It’s obvious from the account that you just gave us that Colin Powell had a very high regard for you.

Jeremiah: I can’t imagine why.

Riley: Professionally.

Jeremiah: I had met him once. We had one lunch with the military assistants when he was still a colonel. I hadn’t seen or talked to him in the intervening time.

Riley: No kidding. That’s a surprise answer. I was expecting you to tell me that you had a long-standing personal relationship, and that’s not the case.

Jeremiah: No.

Riley: Then that poses this question. You went through the confirmation process, were there any adverse wrinkles? You mentioned the stock thing the second go-around. The first go-around everything was okay?

Jeremiah: Yes.

Riley: So you come in in early 1990. Tell us what you find when you get to Washington. In particular, how do you go about learning the Chair style? Is it a misconception to think that you have to conform what you’re doing to the satisfaction of the Chair of the Joint Chiefs?

Jeremiah: Well, that was a subject in the confirmation hearings. Am I going to give independent advice to the President? Yes, of course. The facts of the matter are if every day you wake up in the morning, go into work and say, “I don’t think the Chairman has the right idea about this,” you probably aren’t going to be doing very much. But that said, we worked very well as a team. He was Mr. Outside, I was Mr. Inside. That’s pretty classic in the CO/XO [Commanding Officer/Executive Officer] kind of relationship.

Riley: Tell me what you mean by that.

Jeremiah: He did National Security Council, I did Deputies Committee. He did Congressional stuff, I did some, but really very little, which was fine. He did Europe, I did the Pacific. I did South America and South Asia, he did Middle East. Not defined boxes; I can go to Europe, but that was basically the way it broke out. That’s what I mean by inside and outside. I did inside stuff, JROC [Joint Requirements Oversight Council], the DAB [Defense Acquisition Board], most of the intelligence, all the budget, at least at the working level until we got up past the SecDef and we get into the budget issues at the Secretary level. Then he got into the act as well. Does that answer your question?

Riley: Yes it does. Barbara, you had something you wanted to—

Perry: Yes, I see in doing my reading here that this position of Vice Chairman was only started in 1986 by legislation.

Jeremiah: Right.

Perry: So was that helpful in the sense that you could create the position as you wished? You only had one predecessor who had just been there I guess three years. So in a way you were writing on a blank slate?

Jeremiah: My predecessor had been the J6 on the Joint Staff and he went to a command and came back. He had some particular areas that he worked that I wasn’t particularly interested in. the Chairman and I didn’t parcel out the work. When the Congress asked us what are you going to do with this and that—aside from the ones that were legislatively required, we did whatever we felt best at. That seemed to be complementary and worked well. I’ve lost your question.

Perry: Just that you were writing on a blank slate because the position had only been in existence a few years prior to your getting there.

Jeremiah: One of the questions you asked at the tail end basically was that: What did you think your major accomplishments were? I think one of them was to legitimize the Vice Chairman’s role. What is he doing? It’s silly stuff. Legislation says I’m the second senior officer, but all the Chiefs go to certain kinds of things, Vice Chairman wasn’t on the list. Where is he on the protocol list? That’s where everybody goes to look. I’m not on the protocol list. We don’t know where he goes. I’m in the State Department on the protocol list. Somebody has got to tell the State Department that this is where they belong. It was countercultural to me to be essentially aggrandizing my position, but it had to be done if the position was going to be in fact anything other than stuck in the corner.

I can give you an example of what I'm talking about. When Colin retired and [John] Shalikashvili was nominated to come in as Chairman, NATO [North Atlantic Treaty Organization] suddenly woke up and said, "Uh oh, General Bobdehop is the deputy at SACEUR [Supreme Allied Commander Europe] and he really can't do the job." Probably it wasn't quite like that, but it was very close. "There's no way in the world that we're going to end up with him as Acting SACEUR," and this is the Brits talking. "He was supposed to just go there and be a four-star and go home. We can't let him run NATO, particularly if he doesn't have a deputy yet." So that's how I ended up being the acting Chairman for a month or a month and a half, waiting for a new SACEUR to be confirmed, other than just a situational acting Chairman.

Bakich: Out of curiosity, how did the other Chiefs respond to the, in your words, the "aggrandizement mission" of your job?

Jeremiah: Most of them were supporting. Until Mike Mullen got there as CNO—and it wasn't the CNO or anybody responsible—the system couldn't come to grips with the idea that there could be a naval officer senior to the Chief of Naval Operations except for the Chairman. The legislation was very clear, but that was part of the problem. You could find all kinds of things. I was seated with the vices, not with the principals, that kind of stuff. Just petty nonsense. But if you didn't make it happen that way, you had to go around and do it again and do it again, and kick people and so on and so forth. Then when Mike Mullen came in as CNO he said, "This is who the senior guy is. If he's a Navy Admiral—" and in my case he still was "—then he is the senior naval person on all the lists that go out."

Interestingly enough there is an annual meeting of retired four-stars in the Navy, and it's preceded by the meeting of former Chiefs of Naval Operations. Now where would you expect the Vice Chairman, who is the second senior officer in the military—would you think he would be with the CNOs? No. That's okay. But it's still there. I don't think that the other services had as much trouble with that as the Navy seemed to. Maybe it's just because I was sensitized to it.

So legitimizing the job was very important. There was never any question—I beg your pardon—you know about the Deputies Committee, there were six of the real principals—then came a change of administration. [William J.] Clinton appointees show up, everybody in the world shows up at a Deputies Committee meeting. The deputy from New York, from the UN [United Nations], people from the economic world, all kinds of stuff. What are you guys doing here? Bill Studeman, who by that time had replaced Dick Kerr as the Deputy CIA Director, and I became backbenchers sitting around the sides of the room. As for all these other people—it took three or four months for the Administration to discover that most of them didn't know what we were talking about and could not speak for or commit their bosses, so after a while we got people weeded out, created a domestic security Deputies Committee meeting, and got all that sorted out.

Andy Card told a story about the Deputies Committee when I was talking to him last night. [Brent] Scowcroft was on a commission that reviewed after I don't remember what the incident was, but they decided that we ought to have a Deputies Committee and so on and so forth. Then when Bush came into office and Scowcroft became National Security Adviser and Andy Card was the Deputy Chief of Staff and Scowcroft said, "We don't need you, you shouldn't be here, this is not your bailiwick." Basically counter to his recommendations once he was high in the saddle, "No, no, we don't need that."

Bakich: So there was a movement to begin with the original formulation of the Deputies Committee under Bush to have it be far more streamlined—earlier recognition that it should be smaller, streamlined, more focused than under Clinton’s initial attempts?

Jeremiah: Yes. Colin when he was National Security Adviser had a Deputies Committee, they met for an hour. Everybody can have their say, but it was going to be over in an hour. So if you were going to say something, don’t plan on having 45 minutes of that hour. That got straightened out and that worked well.

Bob Gates was fabulous as the chairman of the Deputies Committee. It was a very powerful committee because Bush saw it as the vehicle to get things done and because we all had the authority to speak for our principal. I don’t remember any incident where one of the deputies got cross-threaded with his boss on something that we had done.

Riley: I’d like to get you to talk a little bit more about Colin Powell and what you were finding out about his working style. You said that he was Mr. Outside; you were Mr. Inside. But because he is important to the story in the 41 administration as well as later on, how are you finding out how to work with him? What are you finding out about his personal and professional characteristics? How is he structuring things? Just a general character portrait of him as you’re learning to work with him in 1990.

Jeremiah: He was already in office for four months I guess before I showed up, so he had begun to put his mark on the system. But do you recall that we had a Joint Staff that was an entity unto itself, because the staff worked for the Chiefs, basically, really for nobody. Many of them were retired in place.

So the previous Chairmen, in order to figure out what was happening, had a Chairman’s staff group. He had his own public affairs officer and the staff had a public affairs officer. We had redundancies across the board. So Colin started cleaning that out. He was pretty far down the line on that by the time I got there, but he was still a newbie. There was a lot of foot dragging. “Don’t we need a lawyer on the Joint Staff as well as a lawyer for the Chairman?” He said no. It was all part of pulling the thing together.

We scheduled—historically, the Chiefs would go in on, say, Tuesdays, Thursdays, maybe Wednesday, and they’d have tank sessions. Tank sessions were wonderful theater. Coffee or tea or seltzer water or whatever the drink of choice was, a candy jar with whatever the candy of choice was, in the old days an ashtray with cigar or whatever. Beautiful. Everybody sat down, everybody had their staff position, and they would settle up defending their staff position that had been worked up through their individual service staffs.

Riley: Okay.

Jeremiah: The product was not of any particular consequence. That’s a little harsh, but we continued to have staff meetings, tank sessions scheduled, and then we’d release the time block. So that was a pretty good deal. “Gee, I can’t go to the following silly meeting or conference because I have to go to the tank. The chief has a tank session on that day. You’ll have to wait for some other time.” Then we’d exit out and the Chairman and Chiefs got two hours to look after

his own service needs that he didn't have before and the service staffs could mill around doing some other things instead of getting ready for the tank session.

We met in the tank a lot but we met in Colin's kitchen a lot, sometimes in my kitchen, sometimes in other places, often in the office. Get the Chiefs down, everybody popping in, and we'd talk. He would tell the Chiefs what was going on, what the issue was. "What do you think about it?" He pretty well knew what he wanted to do. "Let's talk about it." Sometimes it got vectored a little bit differently, but when it came out it didn't take up a lot of staff time trying to fool around with the issue. If the issue required a lot of staff time, the staff ought to take care of it. If you really wanted to know something about it and do something about it, then we should be able to deal with it at the service chiefs' level without having to mess around with the whole process.

Bakich: This was new, this type of—I don't want to tag it—informal—

Jeremiah: Yes.

Bakich: Was this a new invention that Powell stumbled upon? Did he work this out with you?

Jeremiah: No, it was just, "I think we need a meeting on that, do you?" "Yes." "Makes sense. Get some comments, get the Chiefs together." Or, "You just came from the White House and this is what the deputy said to say? Let's get the Chiefs down and you tell them what's going on, where it's headed," something like that.

You didn't really have time to get yourself entrenched in some staff decision. You had to think about what you knew from your position. You should have known a lot about it, and if you didn't, then we'd tell you. We knew what the issues were and why. If it was something where we thought we needed to worry about this a little bit, then we went off and worried about it and then did some staffing to find out what's going on.

Every bureaucracy has a process, and it usually starts with an action officer of some kind whose product is reviewed by somebody else who may tweak it a little one way or another and then he sends it to his boss. His boss may or may not do something to it. Then it will go to the principal. So it goes through a lot of wickets. Sometimes the action officer does go to a meeting at which the issue, this product, is discussed. We observed that nine times out of ten while the three-star was telling us the school solution that had come from this process, Colin would start asking questions or I'd ask questions, and you could see the action officer who had started this thing over there nodding his head. "Yes, that's right, that's what you should be doing." That's not what came out of the process.

So for a while we just said, "Why don't you just send the action officer up and relieve yourself of this problem?" That was a good idea for about two weeks and then everybody said, "Wait a minute. If that's the case, how will I know what's going on? And, by the way, why would I be necessary?"

Riley: You just made yourself redundant.

Jeremiah: Right. So then the action officer would come up and brief it, but his boss would be sitting there.

Perry: Can you give us some examples of the issues that you were discussing in that manner in the first few months that you were on board?

Jeremiah: Base force was a 25 percent reduction in the Department of Defense. How are we going to do that? What are the piece parts? That was the proposed talk. Put together something, there was a straw man. Tell the Secretary that you're working that problem. "Here's the idea." The Secretary didn't think much of that idea. "Let me work on it for a while, tune it up some, talk to the Chiefs. Okay, here's the deal. This is the way it's going." And we can either be told or we can say, "Here's what we want to do. So what do you want to do? Let's figure out how to do it." Get that staffed out, did get it staffed, back to the Secretary, finally convinced him that that was a good thing to do. Tried it out on the President, who was not all that hot on it. Then tried it out some more, finally briefed him on it completely, and that's when he went to Aspen, just before the Gulf War started.

Perry: On August 2 of 1990 he gives his Aspen speech.

Jeremiah: Right.

Perry: You said when they were briefing the President. Were you there as well or was that General Powell doing the briefing?

Jeremiah: Powell and Cheney.

Perry: You said there were some things you were having to convince the Secretary of specifically?

Jeremiah: This is self-immolation. Go up, take 25 percent.

Riley: Exactly.

Jeremiah: Well, what's right about 25 percent? Why not 20 percent or 2 percent, because it's a big deal and there is a sea change in the way it should be performed. We needed to restructure the military. It's got too much stuff in it right now. Happily we didn't get very far with it before Iraq started and we had to stop a lot of people who we were getting ready to release. We set the process in motion to release a lot of people and all of a sudden they had to be returned and go the other way. But that was the way the base force was intended.

We were intended to move towards 25 percent reduction. But along the way, and what Cheney insisted on, was that we have off-ramps so that if it turned out that the Russians weren't being as nice as we thought they were going to be, well organized and so on and so forth, if something happened we could off-ramp at a level and never get ourselves so far ahead of the problem that we couldn't get back to a level where we were able to deal with what was happening.

Bakich: I'm curious. At this point was there a substantial amount of pressure or inertia for each service to take a quarter cut or was this strategy-driven?

Jeremiah: Strategy-driven. We have I believe a myth about one-third, one-third, one-third. It may come out that way, but it is never top-down that way. It's decided issue by issue and you don't get so far down the line and say, "Oops, it looks like the Army is not getting enough. Let's give them back some of this," or something like that.

These are the issues. This is what the decision is. How did it all come out? It came out like this. It generally was plus or minus 2 or 3 percent—it turned out around one-third. How could you get very much different from that and still have a viable military? In sum, take a 35 percent cut out of the Navy or take a 35 percent cut out of the Army and everybody else is going to get 15? I don't think so. It won't work. This is an accumulation of a lot of barnacles, but it's kind of where you are.

Riley: It won't work politically or it won't work strategically, that imbalance?

Jeremiah: Strategically.

Riley: Because politically it's understandable.

Jeremiah: Oh yes, everybody understands it. It doesn't make any sense, but everybody understands it. It's like the mindless cut. You say, "Okay, we're going to take a 5 percent mark across the board," that's just usually Congress avoiding specific decisions and handing the problem back to DoD. That's different from saying in DoD [Department of Defense] you want to look at a program that has a 5 percent reduction and each of the services gets 5 percent less. Then you look at that and see if you want to rebalance some things. That happens a lot. Here's the boogie. You take out 5 percent—this is what Gates is doing now—then the decision maker puts that in his bank to see how things are happening. Then he says, "I really want a Trident submarine," or this or that or the other thing so you can use that 5 percent to buy those things that the decision maker really wants as opposed to fender skirts for an F-22.

Riley: I want to ask a much more general question because you're in a position to really help us understand something that has great historical importance. That is, you're looking at the collapse of the Soviet Union during the period of time that is on your watch either while you're in Hawaii still or when you come to Washington. Describe for us what it was like in the military services at the time. This is a catastrophic success, right?

You got a piece of wonderful news that nobody expected to happen. And yet what you're ultimately asked to do is to find a way to accommodate changes that are going to end up completely altering, maybe not completely but substantially altering, the way that the services are constructed. I'm particularly interested in your perspective on this because everybody's attention is on Europe and that sector. I think people have less of an understanding of how that might have looked from where you were. Again I think you were in Hawaii at the time, before you come to Washington. So let me throw out that general question and get you to tell us a little bit about what life was like and what you were struggling with and these big historic questions as they relate to your everyday work.

Jeremiah: I was in the Navy for 39 years. I was a flag officer for almost 12 years. I was intimately involved at a level that was department-wide in budget program, budget decisions for

about 25 years. There was never a year when we weren't faced with the worst budget in history. [laughter]

Riley: Okay.

Jeremiah: It's silly. You'd think you'd be driven by tactics, strategy, and all the rest of that stuff. Unfortunately—you'd like to think that strategy drives the budget, but budget drives the strategy.

You'd like to think that you have a strategy and that strategy says, "Here are the kinds of aircraft we need, these are the kinds of Navy ships we should acquire," and these things will all add up to packages that will allow us to do great stuff. But as an example of what really happens goes back to Admiral [Arleigh] Burke, who says, "I'd like to have a nuclear-powered submarine in five years." Admiral [Hyman] Rickover says, "I'll go to school and find out what nuclear power is all about," which is literally what happened, "then I'll try to do that." Then Admiral [William] Raborn says, "Well, gee whiz, if you can take that nuclear submarine to sea, maybe I ought to try to figure out if there is a way to launch a ballistic missile from it, because that would really be a big deal, wouldn't it?"

So yes, we had to think about that, and we then had a Polaris underwater launched ballistic that today has evolved to the Trident ballistic missile system. That all came about because it seemed like a good idea at the time to have a long endurance submerged underwater launch platform for ballistic missiles. From that capability we developed a strategic missile strategy. We developed the Tartar, Terrier and Talos surface to air missile systems and then generated their strategy.

The Army always needs more and better tanks. That's always a good idea. They never buy enough helicopters. Each service tends to build a capability and then develop the strategy to employ it. So anyway, all of that doesn't go very far to answering your question. I've gotten off the track again.

Riley: That's quite all right. What you've described is an environment where the budgets never looked like you wished they would, but there is objectively this remarkable historic development in 1989-90 of the near evaporation of an enemy that we had been preparing to go to war with for two generations or so.

Jeremiah: We searched hard for why are we here? What is it we're going to do? Don't know. Been doing it the other way for 40 years or so and now we have to find a bad guy. How about China? It was kind of hard to make them believable.

Riley: Because of the economic and technological differences?

Jeremiah: Because they were just not much. I went to China after I retired. I talked to the CO of their Surface Warfare School. He said, "You see these youngsters out here?" They were like Naval Academy midshipmen. He said, "I'm not just teaching them to be able to go to sea on ships. I'm teaching them how to lead fleets thirty years from now." Big deal, very eye-opening statement. But he did it. So they got there faster.

While the military was searching for a mission, it was very awkward to put China up as the bogeyman because diplomatically we're busy making China not the bogeyman. We're trying to do the right thing, which is figure out how to cooperate, figure out how to—when I was in the consulting business, we came to the term we called “coopetition.” It's an agreement to cooperatively compete with each other, generally speaking, in economic, intellectual and technological ways.

By the time I was in the Vice Chairman's job, we worked our way around to talking about capabilities-based instead of threat-based force structure because you don't know what the threat is. The phrase I used in a lot of speeches was we moved from having a rifle shot at maybe two targets, Russia and China, to a shotgun against multiple smaller targets. We now have to use a shotgun because there's all sorts of stuff happening that was all suppressed by the big potential for nuclear war between us and the Russians. Now that big war threat has gone away and all these other things are springing up globally and we have some responsibility but we don't know how much or if we're going to do anything about them. But we do know that even in a capabilities based force analysis in order to cover the ground you ought to have about this many carriers and support ships. How do you man them and should they be military or military sealift command assets, or how else do you handle your transportation of things, how do you get that done. So we evolved from specific targets, a particular threat, to multiple targets, none of which were necessarily identifiable except as a category like “anti-access.”

Then the force planner says, “Well, if I have a problem, how do I size my force?” One of the things I have to size is how much I can get there and how soon. I need to test against that as far as I can go. There's a description in your briefing material that I'd already forgotten. [Paul] Wolfowitz had asked us to lay out four or five scenarios, the objective of which was to test the system and see if it could do something at that range. You needed to say what area that might be, what's the scenario, so you could figure out what you're going to test. Country names were required in order to flesh out the scenarios.

Of course it got out to the press, and the Hill had not been informed so I heard a lot about that study at my second confirmation hearing. So force sizing based on capability is where we are today, although it's beginning to coalesce back towards China a little bit. Like Iran, but Iran is not a very good force builder. It's very hard to find a force builder today that will justify the force you almost certainly will need. I mean you can go all day long and talk about how our military is larger than about 28 countries all combined, but as long as the policy maker chooses to make policy or wants to decide to do something, then you've got to have the capability to do it, and that often requires more than a 28x military.

Now if the policy maker says, “I'm no longer interested in South America,” or “I'm no longer interested in the Middle East,” then you don't believe it, but you can say, “Okay, these are the consequences of not having to do that. you will never have the flexibility to do that in the future.” The Brits have gone through this whole process, tamp it down and tamp it down. I think they're way past the point where they ought to be if they're going to be a credible military force. The Canadians have become a police force, that's all they are. They're not a military, they're a police structure. The French are pretty robust. China is pretty robust. Russia is becoming a much better force than it was. The ships are clean, they work, they are deployed. They couldn't do that five years ago. So there's something to speak about.

Riley: You had indicated that the policy makers make the decision about this and then the department had to react to what the policy makers claim. If I'm not mistaken, there was some resistance within the department to believing that the changes in the Soviet Union were real when they were first coming down the pipeline.

Jeremiah: Yes, probably. Cheney in particular. That was part of why he was not necessarily on board. Paul Wolfowitz, the policy guy, had the same kind of problem. But Mike Mullen said it recently; our major enemy today is our economics. We have to deal with the deficit or it doesn't make any difference what kind of force you think you want to have because you're not going to be able to afford it.

This is jumping ahead I think, but let me take on the policy maker deal because that was what was behind the November discussion about Somalia and the bridge between two parts of the world.

Riley: All right.

Jeremiah: It is 1992 and we had been discussing and discussing and discussing what was going on in Somalia forever in the Deputies Committee. By this time Jonathan Howe was running the Deputies Committee, not Bob Gates. This kind of thing Gates would not have tolerated. He would have said, "We will either do this or we will do that. What do you want to do?" Jonathan Howe, a very bright guy, very competent officer, I liked him a lot, but it was much harder for him to make this bag of folks, the Deputies, all trundle off together to do something. Somewhere in the back-up material you provided someone said, "We can't let 50,000 people die." It wasn't 50,000 it was 500,000 that were going to die, but we only had to keep them alive for '93, '94, by which time their crops could be re-established. I don't know, but it just seemed that getting things done was really tough.

I had previously scheduled a trip to the Middle East. I was going to Turkey and down to the northern part of Iraq to see—Operation Provide Comfort—the operation President Bush initiated in northern Iraq to provide relief for the Kurds and to keep them safe from Iraqi forces. Then I went down and did a swing through the Gulf countries. I wanted to see what was going on in Somalia, since I was going to Kenya. I flew into Somalia to one of the places where we were flying C-130s. after we landed I was met by the village leader. We went around with the village team to see the feeding stations. We had 45 minutes or something like that on the ground. I've been to pretty tough places and I'd never seen anything like that. It was just unbelievable.

Riley: Unbelievable in what—poor?

Jeremiah: A lot of ways. We went to a food distribution place. It had been a building of some form, windows and doors and all that kind of stuff, but when we got there we just drove through a hole in the wall that had formerly been the doors. There were a lot of people there waiting to get food. No roof. No windows. Everything had been stripped to be used for something else. There was very little food because the technicals, guys running around in Toyotas with guns and stuff like that, usually relatively small children, 12, 13, 14, 15-year-olds, they would steal the food. Food became monetary—

Perry: Currency.

Jeremiah: The currency. They were stealing; they were taking it at gunpoint. Anyway, we went into this station and you'd see people on the way there drinking water that was mud, I mean that color. The Marine one-star who was there, Frank Libotti, told me, "Don't touch anything. When we get back to the plane we'll get sanitary stuff to wash your hands and strip your clothes and we'll get you back your regular clothes." The prevalence of disease, things I would never have been exposed to, was just too much.

We went in, we saw what was going on there. I was in a jeep with the village chief and half a dozen other people in the jeep. There was a truck behind with some of my staff officers and a bunch of security people. We went roaring off through the gate, the truck came behind us roaring through the gate too close to one side. One of the guys was hanging on [*hands slapping*] killed him. They didn't stop, just went on down the road.

Life, it was kind of irrelevant when it was so marginal in the first place. But there was a village structure there; there were people there. When we landed there were four, five guys in some kind of funny-looking rag-tag uniform. Looked like Revolutionary War guys. You know how we were kind of rag-tag. Somebody had bandoliers or something, looked like they were in uniform but not really. That's what these guys looked like. They were the remnants of the police that the Italians had trained when they were in Somalia. It was a very good organization. These guys were all thin. There was a cadre there. There were village women who were clearly organized and had views on how the world ought to be.

You could see that there was a nucleus of capability there if it could be permitted to build itself. Someone said, "You came on these, it would take you forever to get them on their knees let alone on their feet," and he's probably right. But you could do things. They had crops at one time; they had goats. There was all kinds of stuff sitting there in the harbor but you couldn't get it to anybody because of these irregulars who would intercept it, interdict it, take the food, and then go off and use it for currency. So that's what I saw.

We came back to Washington, D.C. Everybody is sitting around the situation room, drinking water, saying some people from—what's his name—Andy?

Bakich: [Andrew] Natsios.

Jeremiah: Yes, very emotional, very knowledgeable, very competent and engaged but everybody else is looking at their cards and saying what their staff has told them to say. We just continued to screw around with this. Finally I said, "Look, the military can do anything you want them to do." Because we could at that point. You are policy makers and you're supposed to make up your mind what you want to do and tell us what to do. You're not supposed to ask us what we'd be happy to do or if we think it is a good idea or whatever. You guys are supposed to make up your minds and we'll do what we're told to do.

This got translated into "the Joint Chiefs are in favor of doing this." I doubt that they were. Colin and I talked about it. It was silly. People were dying and the United States could clearly do something about it and we weren't. The television, the CNN [Cable News Network] effect was going hot and heavy. So you've got to make up your mind what you want to do, Mr. President, through his proxies. We said that. "Mr. President—" he is one of the kindest, softest-hearted

guys in the world and he brings out the tears all the time. He is a real humanitarian. At the same time he can become very firm when he thinks about something. He wanted to do something. So we had a series of meetings with him. We went and did. My point is this is a long discussion. I'm sorry—

Riley: It's all very good.

Jeremiah: Policy needs to be made. When you want to employ the military, if we can't do it then we're obligated to tell you why, or that you have to give us this much to do it with. You've got to allow us to send this many men or this is the way you have to do this. But whether you do it or not is not ours to decide. It's yours to decide and you weren't deciding.

Bakich: To what extent were you able to determine whether the President was driving policy on this or whether—

Jeremiah: He was not. He was sympathetic to it when it was presented to him. Nobody had come forward. In the Gates era, "You could do this or this or that, maybe this. This is what it is going to cost you, this is what it's going to take, what do you want to do?" Check, go back to the drawing board and give me something else. When John got there—I don't know this, but the way it looked to us was, "Mr. President, we've been looking at Somalia. It's a terrible thing. I don't know quite what to do. It's obvious that this is something that is not necessarily in our strategic interest or anything else, but we're trying to deal with it." But nobody said, "Look at this and give me an answer on what to do." That did happen in the Gulf War and other times. In the end we were able to frame choices and alternatives and relative costs.

Riley: Did you have a follow-up to that?

Bakich: No, that was very enlightening.

Riley: Was it your perception that the fact of the delay on this—and it's understandable why there would be delays, because it is very complicated. There wasn't an easy answer. If there had been an easy answer it would have presented itself earlier. Did the fact of the delay make the intervention later more complicated? Was the problem becoming more difficult to arrest the longer we waited before intervening?

Jeremiah: No, I don't think so. We were able to move. The problem was we were post election. Bush wanted to intervene. He did not want to have the problem carried over into the Clinton administration. Clinton should not have to deal with that problem, so go figure out how to solve Somalia. Can't do it. Cheney and Colin both told the President, "We cannot get the stuff there in time to meet the change of administration. We'll do the best we can, but we can't meet that. We'll try." So we tried. We did pretty well.

Riley: Sure.

Jeremiah: But the problem was, we dug up a coalition and we got people to come and help, the typical African nations. It says here a thousand bodies. "They don't know anything, but we want \$5,000 a day for them." "Okay, fine, thanks for your contribution." But we got it done. We got stuff in there. We got roads secured. We got things out to the population. We bought goats and

sheep in Australia and airlifted them. You've got to have seeds to grow plants; you've got to have stock to build more stock. We'd turn them over to the village people and they were able to do things. We suppressed the technicals and provided security for the people on the ground.

The deal was that then we would turn it over to the United Nations and we would be a participant in that. The United Nations, right, uh-huh. "Okay, well we'll provide some police, or maybe not. We haven't got very many people around to staff that. I don't think anybody really wants to go to Somalia out of the UN offices. You've just kind of got to do the best you can." You just keep banging on them and banging on them. We had a Joint Staff officer, a one-star who was up there all the time talking to—

Riley: Kofi Annan.

Jeremiah: Kofi Annan. We were able to get that going. Change of administration. Jonathan Howe decides to go off and be a UN guy and run that. Everybody is happy. We had a great Turkish general officer, really great guy, who became so—it was just awful, I'm sure it ruined his career. Nobody would help. Jonathan still was plugging in where he could to talk to Joe Hoar. He talked to Colin, talked to me to try to get us to do this and that and the other thing and we're saying, "Well, yes, Jonathan, but we're not supposed to do that, we can't do that. Nobody wants to do that." So he was emasculated. The UN was feckless, no other way of describing it. The people he was sent were terrible; they never manned up their positions over 50 percent I would say. So we got into the rhubarb at the end after Black Hawk Down, 18 soldiers killed, dragged through the street. That was my first day on the job as Acting Chairman.

I spent the worst week in my life daily in the White House doing foreign policy 101 in the Roosevelt Room with the newbies in the administration. People would come in and offer advice from time to time who knew nothing and then they'd go on about their business and check in on us every three or four days. Now we were at the stage where the Congress was banging on us to get out at the same time they were banging on us to put tanks in to protect people who were deployed on the ground so that they could evacuate.

We were not about to put the tanks in there, then you've got to have infantry to be with the tanks so you're creating more targets. You want less targets and yadda, yadda, yadda. So this went on and on. I don't recall exactly the date and time, but Clinton called me in. We were there in the White House in the Roosevelt Room. He stuck his head in, listened a little bit. Then he asked me to come over to the Oval Office. I went over to the Oval Office, went into the infamous little room.

Riley: The study.

Jeremiah: The study. We had a one-on-one conversation. He said what do we do? How do we get out of this? At the risk of being parochial, "I have a carrier battle group in the North Arabian Sea, I have a Marine amphibious group in the eastern Mediterranean, and a Marine amphibious ready group in the South China Sea and we can get them there, the carrier first and the others next in a little over a week."

When we originally went into Somalia, Colin Powell persuaded Ambassador [Robert B.] Oakley to come in from retirement as he was well-known and respected by the Somalis. We developed a

pattern so that when the F-14s showed up, the villagers knew that within a day behind the F-14s Oakley would show up, and behind Oakley were the Marines, and food would show up and people who were otherwise going to die in three or four days hung on. We did do those things and there was recovery. That went on throughout most of the time as long as the Marines were deployed there. Then when the Marines and Navy pulled out, the Army and the UN forces took over. But we had created an understanding on the part of the Somali populace that Marines were tough and good and the irregular outfits were not going to be allowed to screw around or interfere with the food supply. The Somalis, good and bad, respected the Marines. We didn't have to put them ashore like the Army unless we wanted to and only for as long as it took to control a particular situation. Then we could bring them back offshore.

We could move supplies in and move people out and we could get the UN forces evacuated and the U.S. forces evacuated and then recover Marine aviation and the carrier aviation that was immediately available. I told all this to President Clinton and he told me to make it so. We did.

So we got out. I thought that was a tremendous demonstration of what kind of flexibility you get from a maritime force that has the ability to do those kinds of things. I don't know how we would have gotten out of there any other way except doing another Dunkirk kind of action. I get emotional about this one because I think it was so important. I got emotional about Somalia at the front end because I was so frustrated with our decision-making process and got emotional at the back end because we couldn't come to grips with what to do, how to do it.

Riley: Let me ask you a question about this because it's something we pick up on when we're doing interviews on Clinton, that there was said to be a frustration on the President's part about "mission creep," that the mission had evolved from the point at which troops had been inserted to something very different. I wonder if you could comment both on your sense about how the mission had evolved and also on your sense about President Clinton's own engagement with this issue. As I understand it, there were people in the White House who were in fact engaged on this on an ongoing basis, but it really wasn't something that the President himself had paid a great deal of attention to until the episodes that you talk about either just before or at the point of Black Hawk Down.

Jeremiah: I went down and briefed him in Little Rock right after the election on Somalia and what was going on and what we intended to do so that he was not surprised.

Riley: Did you go alone?

Jeremiah: No, I had a staff officer with me. He had [Samuel] Sandy Berger and Vice President [Albert, Jr.] Gore and some others in the room.

Riley: Tony Lake?

Jeremiah: Yes.

Riley: You didn't get push back or hostility from them about the intervention?

Jeremiah: "Thank you very much for the briefing," which is really all he could say. I believe they never really were engaged until that sequence that I just described after the Black Hawk

Down. They expected to kind of muddle through. They had way too much faith in the UN, and that was across the board. The new White House staff was way over enthusiastic about what they could expect out of the UN. They thought we would all get together and kumbaya, and that wasn't going to happen at all.

Riley: Sure.

Jeremiah: Then they get engaged. He got engaged and did the right things. But nobody in the staff; that just wasn't on the table. They were in campaign mode; they'd continued in campaign mode ever since the election. It took about six or seven months before they began to get into the governing mode. The issues started with the first meeting with the President and the Chiefs on gays in the military. There were a lot of other things he might have thought of doing first. Colin had told him that. "Okay, that's a big issue. We need to work our way into it."

Then he was shocked. I told him, "Mr. President, I was at your inaugural ball last night. I saw two guys in tuxedos dancing with each other. That is not going to work in Fort Bliss or in the Naval Club and places like that." He said, "They were?" I mean he didn't have the concept that that was the way it was going to be and that was going to be very hard for the military culture at that time to deal with. I think it's kind of ho-hum now, properly so. But you couldn't do it then. It was blowing way too high to deal with.

Riley: Sure.

Bakich: May I ask a question going back to Somalia?

Riley: Can you hold onto it? I just want to follow up on one thing, and that was on the question of "mission creep," that it moves from, as I understand it—and I'm throwing this out there as a conception to be corrected—it moves from essentially an humanitarian mission into a police action where there is an effort to capture [Mohamed Farah] Aidid. Right? I guess that's where the—

Jeremiah: Yes, that's where the special forces guys got into the act, but that was all part of what essentially was nation building. There's two kinds of creep. One of them was you need to go north. We said, "No, we don't need to go north," because there was a splinter group that was creating a problem up in the north and there were minefields and they wanted us to go over there and de-mine the area and so on.

Riley: Who is pressing to go north?

Jeremiah: The UN.

Riley: Okay.

Jeremiah: Then the other pressure, or creep, was as you described. The third was nation building. The UN wanted us to do this, do that, let's get a government in here and all that stuff. That wasn't what we set out to do. Jon carried some of that burden.

Riley: Shali?

Jeremiah: No, Jonathan Howe, for tolerating the mission creep on the nation-building side.

Riley: Okay.

Jeremiah: You know, you look at it and say that's what you have to do in order to make this all work right. But Somalia was a different animal. If someone could provide security to keep the people who could do something safe; the police, the women, the village elders in each of the villages, then over time that could be built from the villages up into something that was more like it was in the Italian days.

Riley: Okay, understood.

Jeremiah: It wouldn't be wonderful, but it would be a whole lot better than they are now.

Bakich: It sounds to me like there were two major things that you've described. One is a political will problem, certain people had it in abundance, other people did not. There's a process problem, which allowed for mission creep. I'm curious about a potential third, and I'd like you to speak on it. To what extent did we understand the irregular structure that the warlords—the situation on the ground. Was there an intelligence problem that the United States stumbled into to the extent that we didn't know what we were getting into, or was that not an issue?

Jeremiah: Let me first say that the cooperation between the CIA and military operators and intelligence officers was excellent. We didn't expect much intelligence beyond immediate tactical information. At the strategic level there was little force level beyond individuals and technicals. Because of other demands globally and in the first Gulf War there were few assets and little reason to put in place in advance our most necessary requirements: human intelligence. With all that said, I think we had a very clear picture of what we were getting into.

The organized structure in Somalia, which is kind of a non sequitur [*laughter*], but they were not really the problem. When UN forces first arrived there were several armed factions. It was the disorganized, independent activities of lots of these irregulars in Toyotas with 50-caliber machine guns in them that we called "Technicals." So they were really the problem. I mean they were, but you could control them with organized military and protected convoys. So you had to have real security to make sure that those food convoys got through to the villages and that they had the opportunity to distribute it. The warlords became important at the end when they were fighting for who is going to be in charge when the UN pulled chocks.

In Mogadishu the Marines had a very elaborate system for security. Every outpost could see another. So if somebody started coming at the outpost they could react to support each other. As the responsibility for security in Mogadishu shifted to the UN, those troops were less willing to be in outposts and tended to stay closer to enclaves. You ended up with islands instead of a connected structure. So you could get overwhelmed; someone could overwhelm that island pretty easily when the Pakistanis and others were out there. That's why the UN wanted tanks, so they could drive a tank out with some degree of freedom of action and protect those isolated outposts. But they should never have been isolated in the first place. They didn't have the force structure to sustain it and they didn't know how to organize it to collapse into—reverse the inkblot.

Riley: I've got to keep us on schedule, which means we're due for lunch break now.

[BREAK]

Riley: Admiral, I wanted to ask one more question about Somalia before we leave. If this prompts any other discussion, that's fine, because it's an interesting case. When you were making a recommendation or when this was originally presented to President Bush as a recommendation, was there presented to him also an exit strategy, or was that left for another day?

Jeremiah: The exit strategy was get out of Dodge as quickly as we can so we can handle the transfer to Clinton as a completely finished project or nearly so. The way to do that was pass the banana to the United Nations, and there was every reason at that stage of the game where you would expect they would be happy to take it. Turns out that they weren't.

Riley: So there was too much optimism about the UN as the ultimate guarantor of Somalia security.

Jeremiah: Exactly. Then the get-out strategy became to pass this to the UN. Somehow we always like to try to do this, trying it in Afghanistan and it's working, kind of, and Iraq, but get the country to pick up itself and carry on. The Somalis weren't in any way, shape, or form able to do that without a whole lot of assistance for a long time, which is exactly what the JCS felt, that this had the potential for hanging on forever.

Perry: I have a question about criteria for knowing when the United States should become involved in humanitarian crises. I noted in so many of your public speeches that you had mentioned that being able to respond to humanitarian crises would be part of this base force operational capability. But obviously there are humanitarian crises going on around the world, I'm sure at any given time. So what were your thoughts then, and Colin Powell's thoughts at that time? Was part of it security related? Because I noted that you had mentioned in your speeches demographics and demographic shifts in poverty around the world.

Jeremiah: I was trying to set the scene for what the world will look like and therefore what should we be doing in my speeches. In this one there was no national security issue, Somalia could have turned into even more of a desert and it wouldn't make any difference as far as U.S. national security was concerned. The CNN effect was high in Somalia and it was high in the Highway of Death and end of the Gulf War. With someone like President Bush it was just not possible, I don't think, for him to stand back and see people die when we could do something about it.

I speculate that had we said, "Okay, we're not going to get out on 20 January," and the Clinton Presidency, had they had a year's experience under their belt under the same circumstances, could very well have said, "No, we can't get out in the short period of time, but we can undertake to do what is necessary to permit us to maintain the security, keep the technicals under control so

there is a secure environment so that people can create some civic structure, feel safe enough, are not starving, and will begin to create government, even if it is government at a lower village level, but a government.”

I think it’s possible it could have turned out differently. The old African hands say Somalia is the end of the world; it will never be able to get straight. So far they’re right. But we didn’t really do a very good job of following through as a nation when it was apparent that the international bodies were not going to do it. Maybe we shouldn’t have. But you kind of hope we could believe that we could have.

Riley: Anything else on this?

Bakich: Not so much on this, but my questions are now starting to run in the comparison between the way in which decision making occurred with respect to Somalia and Iraq, the Persian Gulf War.

Riley: The first.

Bakich: Yes.

Riley: That’s our focus.

Bakich: But I don’t necessarily know if we want to—

Riley: Hold onto it and let me ask you at the appropriate juncture to pin down, because I think the comparisons are important. What I’d like to do is for us to move quickly into a discussion of President Bush as you came to know and understand him as a decision maker. If it is easier for us to talk about this in the context of the Persian Gulf War then we can go straight to your question, but maybe I ought to just bring this to the Admiral. Do you want to talk about President Bush as you’re coming to know him and his approach to issues and the way that he liked to receive information? Your general sense of his operating style as well as what you saw in the man who was playing an incredibly important role in the world at that point in time, because this is a world in transition.

My senior colleague, Jim Young, who did a lot of the early Bush interviews, one of the things that he has always talked about in the interviews is the extent of remarkable improvisation that has to occur in the American foreign policy establishment during the course of President Bush’s Presidency because of these global changes that were coming about in ways that if not impossible to predict, were at least largely unpredicted.

I’m happy to throw out this cluster of questions and let you proceed with any piece of it that you find interesting, or if you want us to take the Gulf War as the case in point then we can bear down and deal with it that way.

Jeremiah: Let’s see where it goes.

Riley: All right.

Jeremiah: First of all, while I was Vice Chairman, I really did not have a lot of interaction with the President. It was with the chairmen of the Deputies Committee and what they said to the President. Particularly Gates, and Andy Card, when they formed the library committee, according to what he told me yesterday, recommended to the President that I be the representative of one of those outside bodies, the Pentagon, on the library committee.

I've been told by President Bush and I've been told a lot of times by the others that he had a very high regard for what I had to say, even as compared to the other people on the Deputies Committee, all of whom were extraordinary in my view. So whatever snippets I give you will really be snippets and will represent almost the totality.

Riley: Okay.

Jeremiah: My favorite snippet occurred one day when the President had had the Chiefs over for lunch. President Bush is sitting there at the middle of the table, I'm sitting immediately on his left, the rest of the Chiefs are around the table and Colin was on his right. The President was talking. I'm sitting up like this and he's a little further back. I lean back in my chair to better see him or maybe even say something and the chair cracks. Faster than you can blink an eye the President said, "You know, my brother did that same thing yesterday. I'll have to take a look at that chair." I'm sure it was a lie. That's story one. He is a gracious guy who will avoid at all costs embarrassing somebody.

Much has been made about the way President Bush looked at photography contrasted to the way Lyndon Johnson looked at photography during the Vietnam war, the classic picture of LBJ [Lyndon Baines Johnson] sitting on the floor with photos of targets and picking out exactly which to go to and which not to go to and so forth. I don't know anything about that beyond what I just said. President Bush told us in general the kinds of things we should not hit, mosques and so forth. That was it. But he had an intense interest in what was happening.

The Deputy J3 is in the command center and it's early in the morning, 5:00, 6:00, something like that. The White House has been calling over and asking for this, asking for that. The phone rings again and he is really irritated because the White House seemed to just be bugging him. He picks it up and says, "Now what do you want?" The voice at the other end says, "Oh, I'm sorry. If you're busy I can try and call back."

"Oh, no, Mr. President, what can we do for you?" The President says, "I just wondered if you had any photography you could send over." True story.

There was always humor. In the Bush Library committee meetings that we had, I had much more of a relationship after he was President than I did while he was President. The combination of the President and Mrs. Bush is just unbelievable. They go back and forth with each other. Barbara [Bush] just pops up with pithy comments and they have you rolling in the aisle almost immediately. We had our meeting up in Kennebunkport one of the first summers that we convened. They had a video that someone had made of George and Barb and they're interchanging dialogue. They played it for the assembled library committee. It was hysterical. It was Tina Fey, "I can see Alaska from my heliport" kind of stuff. It went on for a half an hour. It

was an absolute showstopper. They could have gotten an Emmy or whatever the right award would be for that presentation. They continued to do that.

But you can see where George W. gets a certain part of his personality also. It's Barbara's; it comes through in a lot of his personality. Connie always makes it a point to introduce herself, whenever she is going someplace like that because people like that see thousands and thousands of people. Who is this? So she always says, "Hello, Mrs. Bush, I'm Connie Jeremiah." She did that up at Kennebunkport and Barbara looked at her and said, "I know who you are, but keep doing it, because there will come a time when I won't." [laughter] The graciousness is there in both of them. They're just wonderful people.

How he comported himself as President, as I said I don't have a good feel for that except for secondhand stuff I've gotten from the library, and you will have many more things from them than I can possibly provide for you. But as far as his relationship with the military, it was rock solid. It's not like he just did everything we wanted, because he didn't. He firmly rejected a couple of things. But his management style was, "You come in and talk to me." He listens and he'll decide what he wants to do and he'll tell you. Or he won't, and he'll tell you, "Here's what I need to know before I can make a judgment on that." Very straightforward.

For the kind of atmosphere you described, where so many different things are coming at you from different directions, there is no one who was better prepared to handle that than George H.W. Bush. He was in public service all his life. He was in so many different places and contexts that it is just astonishing. He did some dumb things, we all do. Or some things happened to him like throwing up on the Japanese Prime Minister. There's not much you can do about it.

Riley: Not without a towel.

Jeremiah: But everybody else is an amateur compared to him. That's not really fair. He and Scowcroft played back and forth beautifully, and still do. But when you watched that administration go out the door and the Clinton administration come in, it was jarring. I think that would have been true with any other administration given the years away, 12 years between the Democratic administrations. Anybody who has been out of the saddle that long—good people will know what they know, but they won't know how that life is and what happens.

Riley: Sure.

Jeremiah: It took them a while to get up to speed, quite a while. When you go into the library there is a piece on the Gulf War. They showed us what they were going to do in the library early on in the library committee. The first thing—we got to the part about the Gulf War and we were told they were ready to lock it in. They had video displays showing stuff going on, burning oil fields, Saddam [Hussein] sitting, firing a shotgun, and those crossed swords in Baghdad. I said, "Wait a minute, this is George Bush's library, not Saddam Hussein's, because the war was Saddam Hussein." That's how people thought about it.

I said, "What we need is a picture of George Bush on the telephone and a list of all the nations that he talked to in the run-up to that war." That's what they did—I don't know what they did this time around, but it drifted back into let's talk about war. Fires and missiles were going off

and stuff like that, that's always more entertaining than a guy on a telephone. But that was the real story.

[BREAK]

Riley: Let's see, you were talking about the library exhibits and the importance of coalition building.

Jeremiah: Yes, he was able to do that because he knew all these guys. Someplace in his life he had met practically all of these people. I know you've heard this already, but the mantra of "you die, we fly" was absolutely the way it went. He was flying to every national capital going to funerals and representing the United States, during the Reagan administration in particular.

Riley: Take your time. I think it's important for us to hear the things that you had a chance to reflect on out of the topics list.

Jeremiah: We talked earlier about the evolution from pre-Cold War to '90, '93, and I talked about shotgun versus a rifle, but that evolution was messy. It took us a long time to get through the threat and the rest of that stuff.

As to policy-making authors, my comment there was there were a lot of policy-making authors after the war and people said, yes, they did just what I told them to. But it was really "Stormin' Norman" [Schwarzkopf], Chuck Horner, the chairman, Wayne Downing, John Warden and the "Jedi Knights," those are the people who started policy, and Wolfowitz, Cheney tried to bring in the western approach, the western excursion. That was such a bad idea, almost irresponsible. We killed that.

Riley: What was the rationale behind that? Evidently it was not a purely military—

Jeremiah: No. It was intended to prove how weak Saddam Hussein really was by a deep insertion into the Western Desert by coalition forces, and see, he can't even protect his own country let alone Kuwait. Of course it opened up the whole can of worms about going to Baghdad and all that. It would have preempted all of our allies, and the Arab nations certainly would not have crossed the line into Iraq.

Bakich: That was Henry Rowen's idea, if I'm not mistaken.

Jeremiah: I'm sorry?

Bakich: Was it Henry Rowen's idea, the western excursion?

Jeremiah: Yes, I imagine that he—I don't know. It's the kind of thing that Henry was doing, the kind of thinking that he was going through. Whether he thought of it or Cheney asked to have

somebody think about a different way of doing what was going on that was more innovative than just up and straight ahead.

Bakich: I'm curious. There were a lot of things floating around. Clearly the October 11 briefing that Schwarzkopf had was a nonstarter with many of the principals, that straight up the middle. Scowcroft in particular was not impressed, if I'm not mistaken. Can we get your reaction as to the level of detail that the Secretary of Defense was willing to play in pushing, shaping, strategy, and operations? Clearly the western excursion, you're uncomfortable with it, many people were. But that clearly is an indication that the Secretary of Defense has a particular way in which he wants military missions to unfold. I wonder if you could speak to that in this context and in general.

Jeremiah: I'll come at this a little obliquely, I think. It was obvious that we were going to go to war. We looked ahead to the place in November where you either kept on going or trailed off. Cheney said, "I need to know more about how he'd fight." Colin said, "Okay, we'll set you up with a briefer." Cheney said, "No, no, I'm going to have to go before the country and talk about what their sons and daughters are doing and I need to understand what that all means. So I want to know what and how you did breaching, how you use caterpillar tractors, bulldozers, in an assault. Tell me all about the infantry maneuvers and how you set up ambushes, how you do this."

So we went to infantry school for maybe eight to ten sessions with him that were an hour, an hour and a half in length on very explicit subjects. How do you do chem/bio defense? What happens when you do that? It was that kind of thing. He was involved at a very detailed level, way beyond anything that Colin thought he ought to be interested in.

Bakich: Right.

Jeremiah: But the reason was good and it transmitted in fact when he did have to go before the people, before the country, and tell them what was happening. He didn't have to hand off and hand off. He obviously handed off to Colin and he handed off to Mike McConnell from time to time. Parenthetically, Mike McConnell was my guy, by the way, comes under the general heading of people who you mentor and grow. Mike was my intelligence officer in the Pacific before he came to the Joint staff. So that's the way Secretary Cheney performed.

He was always intensely interested in Russia. Before the Gulf War and after we had Saturday sessions, would sit down for an hour and a half and listen to somebody who was a scholar, academic, somebody who had been intensely involved, maybe somebody from the agency who really had his arms around that particular kind of thing, the Russia economy, stuff like that. He was very engaged in that. There were probably 15 or 20 of us who sat in on that.

He went to every daily staff meeting during the war, before the war actually, from the time troops deployed in Desert Shield on, we had a daily staff meeting early. We'd go down to the briefing room next to the JCS command center, cram a whole bunch of people in there who all thought they were important. He had his own center, but Wolfowitz never bothered to set it up. They much preferred to come down to where the Joint Chiefs were. It made sense.

He'd look at what was going on, listen to the briefers, ask questions, and make observations. "I think we ought to look at this," or "Can we do anything about that?" We'd get done with the morning staff meeting and everybody would go off and do whatever actions were required based on the dialogue at the morning meeting. It was very efficient. I think that's all I can tell you about that, but it reminds me about something else.

The use we made of video conferencing, classified. We hooked up the CIA, Joint Chiefs, OSD [Office of the Secretary of Defense] separately, and the sit [situation] room. Gates usually hosted from the sit room. Treasury would sit in or sometimes we'd have other people if they were a relevant expert. We talked—I don't know if we talked daily, but it was pretty close to that, sometimes several times a day. It was on short notice often. It was very effective. It was like a Deputies Committee meeting, but it was a larger one because principals had off-camera staff.

Riley: They passed notes, just for the benefit of the audio. At least they would be there as providing—

Jeremiah: They were backup. Sometimes, okay, I've got General So-and-So here, come over here. Let's get the camera pointed at him and let him tell you about it because he's the guy who knows the most about this subject. That's a sidebar, but it played a tremendous role.

We did have an amusing incident. Bob Gates was in Kennebunkport with the President and the rest of us were in a regular Deputies Committee meeting in the sit room. Gates didn't have video, so it was just voice, the voice of God. *[laughter]* We were making faces.

Riley: Do you know whether those secure video conferences were recorded, were taped? Would the library have those?

Jeremiah: It's worth a question. I don't know.

Riley: I pose the question in the few 43 interviews we've done, because obviously it becomes a huge mechanism for them later on. Nobody has had a definitive answer for me. There are some people who have said firmly they would have never recorded it to people who firmly said of course they would have. So I don't know what the answer is. For historical purposes it would be unbelievably valuable.

Jeremiah: Well, history suffers terribly. Example: Schwarzkopf and Powell talked to each other a tremendous amount. Schwarzkopf needed a lot of hand holding because he was so frustrated by the job he was in, trying to get all these puppies back in the cage. Colin told him once, "Go to Bahrain, get a bottle of scotch, come back in three days and we'll talk about it." That's probably not right, it might have been bourbon. But it was Bahrain. Get out of Dodge and go someplace where you can have a drink.

Riley: I was just asking about whether there would be a record of those conversations, whether it was too sensitive to have been recorded.

Jeremiah: They've got classified stuff in the library, lots of it.

Riley: I'd at some point, at one of your board meetings, find out?

Jeremiah: Yes, I'll talk to them. You don't want to wait until February.

Riley: Well, we're not in a position to—

Jeremiah: I forget you're an historian.

Riley: Can I ask you a question to elaborate on the point you just made about Schwarzkopf and his frustration? Was that mostly an inter service frustration? Or was it a frustration with alliances that he is having to deal with, or is it a frustration with the civilian leadership? The puppies that you described, the metaphor that you used, I'm trying to figure out who those puppies are that he's trying to—

Jeremiah: All of the above.

Riley: All of the above, everything.

Jeremiah: This is a terrible job, I just want to go fight a war. The French—

Riley: Well, there you go. Period. Let's go on.

Jeremiah: They have an airbase. So they've got their own airbase and they're flying airplanes out of there and so forth. The Syrians move in next to them. The French were not having any part of any joint combined operation. We're here, we're with you but not part of you.

Riley: Okay.

Jeremiah: Schwarzkopf is trying to bring them inside the fence and they're not having any part of that. So the Syrians show up and they get allocated to an area and that area has the French airfield within its geographical boundaries. The French look at that and say, "Oh, wait a minute, I'm not putting my airplanes inside the Syrian air defense system. I'm getting inside with everybody else."

So there are different kinds of ways of persuading people. Perish the thought that that was a deliberate act. It certainly was coincidentally useful. It was just—I told you about his reaction to the intel [intelligence] people, that they weren't giving him good information—and so forth. One of the great failings I think is we did not have wide surveillance of the area. We should have been able to and can now look at a large field of regard simultaneously so you can physically account for all of the tank divisions and so forth. You count them all up, they're all there inside the area. Or whoops, somebody is missing, where have they gone? But we had to patch them together piece by piece over time as different aircraft made passes. So you were never really sure that you hadn't double counted or missed. That was a problem.

First of all, he had to deal with his counterpart, the Saudi Arabian commander, and he had to deal with the Saudi Arabian National Guard commander who had a lot of trouble dealing with the Saudi Arabian commander. So there was an internal fight inside the Saudi Arabian lines. Then just this mass of the unwashed here and there that had to be put somewhere under the guidance of somebody who knew what they were doing. Then what he perceived as override from Washington in some cases, sometimes failure to respond to urgent needs in other cases.

So Colin did a lot of handholding during that period. All of that stuff occurred on secure voice. When either Colin or I talked to him, it was all on secure voice and the two individuals were the only ones who knew what was said. There were no monitors on our side.

Riley: There is no record of it.

Jeremiah: No monitors on the other side. There's no record of it.

Riley: So there wouldn't even have been a note keeper in your office? You. Okay.

Jeremiah: And Colin.

Riley: Were your notes archived after you left?

Jeremiah: No. I don't think we were—it's interesting. When I got there I thought it would be useful to keep a little bit of a diary and notes of what was going on and so forth. Colin told me I should not do that because those are subpoenaable and we don't need to have somebody looking over your shoulder for your personal observations about what is going on. So I was interested that he found out how to write 500-plus pages with amazing accuracy after the fact. *[laughter]* But I think that was good advice. People still won't keep diaries. It was probably not a good thing. But once again the historian suffers from that.

Riley: Of course. I have a couple of questions. We had asked you earlier about your sense of the President in some of these things and you told us about that already. But I've got some general questions, particularly as related to the Gulf War, about your perceptions of relationships between people and so forth. One was about the jointness or jointedness of the armed forces as you were watching the experience. Did it work well during the Gulf War, or were there problems at that interval?

Jeremiah: I think as a general rule the guy in the field working with somebody else gets on, and they do pretty well. The further away you get from the field, the more parochialism shows up in the system and probably reaches its peak in Washington between the joint facilities and services. I think there was a fairly significant degree of parochialism, Marines trying to get into the act and then once in the act being unable to do the things that they needed to do. Marines not being permitted to launch an amphibious assault but being used as a feint instead of actually doing the physical assault. We saw afterwards in a sand table how the Iraqis would defend against a seaborne assault. It would have been a pretty formidable problem for the Marines.

Schwarzkopf, in charge of the Army component as well as the Joint Commander and Combined Forces Commander, in the beginning at least—was reluctant to turn loose, but it was obvious that he had to have help. There was just too much stuff. But it was very difficult for him to give it up. He really never let the Army go completely as far as I can tell. All of that said, it was much better than you might have expected even though the jointness was trivial compared to the degree of jointness that we have today; it is just dramatically different.

I mean it's in the head. The [Barry] Goldwater-[William] Nichols legislation has permeated the whole process. The old way of doing business is way behind us. I think these guys are doing a terrific job today working in a joint way, but there is still some service parochialism. To some

degree you'll never make it go completely away. Everybody has got his thing. If they didn't believe in their service, what are they in it for? But they're not always absolutely the best solution.

Example: Colin is an Army officer. Troops on the ground are very important. Air Force officers were convinced they could win this war without any help, no problem. That wasn't true. I'm sitting on the sidelines telling Colin Tomahawk cruise missiles do work, they will get there and hit the targets. They have some interesting payloads that have never been used and haven't been used since. With those payloads you need not worry about an effective electrical system in Baghdad, but within a matter of weeks we can restore the grid. We can do all that.

Okay, but just to be sure, unbeknownst to me—I think Colin, I've never asked him, but I believe that he was party to the idea that okay, they can do that, but let's just bomb the hell out of it so we know it is disabled since we can't tell any other way, except the lights all went out and everything went black. Pretty sure that power grid is no longer functional.

But the Air Force went in with 117s and other stuff and hit all the key elements of the electrical grid. Horner did that later on when we had the problem with how do you know that you've killed the hangar, go in and just get a kill and you destroy the hangar. So we wasted a lot of stuff. We created a huge problem for ourselves by knocking out the power grid. It was years to put it back together again instead of weeks.

Bakich: Are you suggesting that these cruise missiles had EMP [Electromagnetic pulse] capabilities that could have done the job without the damage?

Jeremiah: Not EMP, but they could have easily, they did, take out the grid. The story is you can't get 117s all over the place. You can saturate with cruise missiles, with the warheads that we had. That's about as far as I want to go.

Riley: I had asked about jointedness earlier and I think you've dealt with that question. What about your evaluation of the civilian-military relationship during this phase? Were there substantial conflicts between the civilian and military leadership during the course of the Gulf War that were explored?

Jeremiah: I think the answer is no, but there were a few incidents—personalities—Wolfowitz, for instance, was often looking for different ways of doing things, thinking we ought to do more of this, we don't need to do that.

Riley: Refresh my memory. His position at the time was?

Jeremiah: Undersecretary of Defense for Policy.

Bakich: And on the Deputies Committee.

Jeremiah: And on the Deputies Committee. But those discussions were mano y mano with either Wolfowitz and Powell or Wolfowitz and me. Every once in a while they leaked a little bit outside that, inside the department, but not across the river.

Riley: Again, just to be clear, his pushing was in which direction?

Jeremiah: In different ways, but generally more adventuresome beyond the reasonable capability, committing forces that you really didn't have.

Riley: Are you familiar enough with the dynamics outside the Defense Department to talk about the civil–military relations? In terms of the White House itself? The National Security Council? Things that you might pick up at the deputies level that you might speak authoritatively about?

Jeremiah: By that time the Joint Staff had migrated from the old style Joint style to the new style Joint style. We had really good people. There was no staff at the time that could lay a hand on the Joint Staff in terms of quality, responsiveness, the whole damn thing. That led to a lot of frustration on our part with State, almost chronic, had been going on forever, continued thereafter because they're different entities, they do different things.

Riley: Elaborate on that a little bit, since it's a persistent thing.

Jeremiah: Sometimes State—first of all we had the dollars and the resources. State had some access. If you wanted to go do something you had to go beat up on the military, the Department of Defense, to get enough people, dollars, logistics, mobility, whatever you needed to go do something, most of which were not things that were inside our view of what the military was all about. In general terms that is the kind of issue that is forever going back and forth. It got particularly bad I think while we were in Somalia because State was trying to help Jon without committing themselves to anything. We did all of the work at the UN; they did very little.

Riley: Really.

Jeremiah: They obviously will say that's not so. We did a tremendous amount of work and nobody knew anything about it. But that's a fundamental difference in what your mission is.

Riley: Sure.

Jeremiah: I was on the Quadrennial Defense Review this time around, the new panel for the review. One of the things that we suggested is we need to rethink how you handle, how you talk about national security. Instead of having appropriations for the Department of State, the Department of Defense, the White House, and intelligence agencies, you wrap that all into a national security appropriation and you allocate your resources so what the intelligence guys are finding is applied to the kinds of issues that are necessary and you let the Department of Defense and the State Department feed back into the intelligence community. So you develop a coherent national posture on the same thing instead of one guy going this way and one guy going that. Really it is jointness writ large again to get the whole national security apparatus.

If you think about it, Gates is a proponent of this; you really need to think about how you allocate the pie. If you do the job right in the State Department, much fewer resources will be required in the Department of Defense. But what you do in State has to be a continuous thing. Over time you can pull it down in DoD, but you have to prove the point that you can do things preemptively to change the course of international relations. To me that makes a lot of sense.

But you get up against 46 Congressional committees. What is it, Homeland Security has 263 people that must clear whatever they do, because of the heritage of all of the different agencies that were mashed together to form the Department. Congress has not adjusted their committee structure to the 21st century.

Riley: One more question on this. President Bush famously had a long relationship with the Secretary of State. Did that in any way complicate, in your recollections, the Defense Department's way of going about doing its business? Was there perceived to be a special relationship between State and the White House that was a complication?

Jeremiah: After [Caspar] Weinberger and [George] Shultz? Piece of cake.

Bakich: Actually I'm curious. After the mid-October Schwarzkopf briefing, what I've read describes Colin Powell as having to play a crucial role in pushing, facilitating Schwarzkopf to think about the war plan in a radically different way. I was wondering if you could speak to that. Russell, I think your last question about civil and military relations, this is one where in the White House the plan was put forward—Schwarzkopf may not have been happy with it to begin with, but at the very least this is where the civilians say, "No, go back, we want something different." I wonder if you could describe—

Jeremiah: This is the reaction to the western—

Bakich: No, I'm thinking prior to that—

Jeremiah: Oh, the first—

Bakich: The first iteration.

Jeremiah: When he got sent out again.

Bakich: Yes.

Jeremiah: I wasn't in the White House for that presentation and I did not—the fallout from that was the comment that Norman was over there and we went through it and the White House sent it back, said, "This is inadequate." So I can't really speak to that very authoritatively at all.

Bakich: Fair enough.

Perry: According to the briefing book you were with Secretary Cheney when he briefed the President on the western approach, is that correct?

Jeremiah: I don't think so, I may have been, but I don't remember it. As a matter of fact when I read the western approach I thought, *Wait a minute, we did the left hook*. Then I went over to Colin's book—actually I Googled it and said, no, no, that's something else entirely. Where did you see it? I read it also.

Perry: It's definitely in the briefing book. The way I made notes on it was it said you had gone with Secretary Cheney to brief President Bush on the western excursion operation. Then it

explained of course what that was, but that then President Bush rejected that approach. It might just be in the timeline.

Riley: I think it is. I'm looking.

Perry: But the timeline is always created from the sources.

Riley: It's from the [Michael] Gordon and [Bernard] Trainor book.

Jeremiah: Oh, that accounts for that. *[laughter]* I do not believe I did, I may have, but I do not believe that I did.

Perry: So I guess I have a question. Maybe this is going too far in terms of tying off the bookend of the war, but you had mentioned, Admiral, that there was a point of no return in terms of the buildup prior to the war that we read about of course and the history thereof. So as a nonmilitary person I'm thinking of this with an accelerator and a brake. There is a foot on the accelerator for going beyond the troop buildup to the actual invasion, but there is a foot on the brake for the western excursion idea. Then obviously there is a big foot on the brake for in the end going all the way to Baghdad and removing Saddam Hussein. I guess my question is, whose foot is on the accelerator and on the brake at these really crucial turning points, for the beginning of the war, how to fight the war and how to end the war?

Jeremiah: The President's foot was clearly on the accelerator at the beginning. He was neutral on how to fight, with the exception of, "I don't like that idea." I think in ending the war, at the 100-hour point, that was the CNN effect, the Highway of Death and the general feeling, at least my feeling, and I transmitted it to Colin and he agreed and then we pushed it upstairs, saying I thought that we were too close to the place where the citizenry of the country, and the world was going to say this is a slaughter.

We fought the biggest battle of the war after that, after we were done, but it was a turkey shoot beyond what people could sustain, we thought. That's how I would answer the question.

Bakich: Now if I could actually fill in a little bit in there, this comes from the Haass book, where he has an extended discussion of three memos that he is urged to write to the President by Scowcroft, making the case why we could not go to Baghdad. The backdrop to this section in Haass' book is that the President is at the point where he, in effect, can't stomach the fact that Saddam Hussein is going to remain in power, can't stomach the fact that someone who had become, in Bush's mind, a clearly bad actor or who was a clearly bad actor, would remain in power. According to Haass' recounting, President Bush needed to be persuaded not to expand American war aims to go in to try and take Saddam out. I was wondering if you had any comment about that.

Jeremiah: Richard was there for whatever he was talking about and I was not, so I don't know. But everything I've ever heard had it as Cheney, Powell, and Scowcroft, the President, I don't know who else was in the room. I think that was it. I guess Richard was. It was almost a consensus group thing that we had come far enough. Yes, maybe it would be a good idea to go to Baghdad, but it would be totally impractical because we'd lose half the coalition. The Arabs will

not cross the line into Iraq. And we would be the proud possessor of Iraq. So we deferred that for ten years.

Riley: The 51st state. You mentioned a couple of times the CNN effect. I want to be clear about this. Your perception was that the public images of destruction on the Highway of Death had had an effect on the policy makers at the time. You're nodding yes.

Jeremiah: On the policy makers, yes. On the policy makers' perception of the public perception.

Bakich: Okay.

Riley: What we're constantly trying to do as scholars is gauge the effect of images on television. Not so much on public opinion, because you can go out and poll that, but more importantly on how public policy makers are perceiving the reality that the public is getting. There's a bigger question about the influence of TV on all kinds of policy, but in this case on foreign policy, and it seems pretty clear that it has a profound impact right now, although maybe not a defining impact because you were suggesting that the diplomatic reality was such that if we decided to take it much further we were going to lose too much of the coalition.

Jeremiah: Not because we needed them particularly; we needed them politically.

Riley: Not in the military sense. Were there members of the coalition who were pushing us to go to Baghdad?

Jeremiah: No, not that I'm aware of.

Riley: Were the Israelis?

Jeremiah: No. I mean they had their hostages. [Lawrence] Eagleburger and Wolfowitz were safely in Israel. They were okay with that.

Riley: That was a potential flashpoint.

Jeremiah: Oh, yes!

Riley: I hope the vigor of that "oh, yes" gets registered in this mundane black and white. Since I seem to have touched a nerve with this, may I ask you to elaborate a little bit?

Jeremiah: The Israelis were looking down the barrel of a very big gun and a guy who clearly did not have any use for them and was blowing up markets and towns and things like that with big weapons instead of the stuff that was coming out of Gaza and Lebanon. They felt that their national survival was threatened. They had their view of how the war ought to be run, which was blow up Baghdad. We were pretty sure if the Israelis got in the war we would lose all of the Arab side of the coalition and probably access to bases and all the rest of that stuff. So it really was a "can't do that." The Israelis said, "We're getting shot at, you guys are sitting back in Washington, sipping from your coffee cups" and so forth.

A lot of intelligence went there to tell them what we really thought and what was really going on as far as we could tell, and Eagleburger and Wolfowitz, as I said, were basically—they had their flak jackets and helmets and gas masks and all that. Gas masks, a terrible problem.

Riley: The reporter?

Jeremiah: The Ambassador, he was the Ambassador to Saudi Arabia.

Bakich: Charles Freeman.

Jeremiah: Charles Freeman. Well, what about gas masks. The military is coming in with gas masks. Are we going to give gas masks to the American civilians that live here? Duhhh, mumble, mumble, we haven't got so many of them. Really? Maybe we do. Okay, fine. But what about our allies, the Saudis? Going to give them to the Saudi troops? Mumble, mumble. What about the civilians working at the oil refineries you guys are so excited about? Everybody nodding, how can we get rid of this guy? It's imponderable. What are you going to do, give gas masks to the entire population of Saudi Arabia? I don't think so. How about Saudi Arabia, they had a buck or two, maybe they should buy their own but nobody in the world had that many gas masks. So that problem just went away after a while, the war was over. We never solved it. Never solved it the second time around. Nobody addressed going in the second time.

Bakich: How so? Can you speak to Chas Freeman's effect on policy at all?

Riley: For those of us who are not in the know, what's the issue here?

Jeremiah: Chas was a very smart guy who asked very hard questions. Most of the time people didn't have the answers to them and they'd like him to please go away. Maybe send him, how about Mexico? Brazil? Whatever. Where did he go after that?

Bakich: I don't know.

Jeremiah: He did go someplace kind of remote. But he is a very bright, smart guy and he's abrasive, a characteristic sometimes of very bright, smart people.

Riley: But you probably saw plenty of those in the government I would think.

Jeremiah: Some.

Riley: To what extent did your portfolio include relationships with counterparts in the region and in other countries?

Jeremiah: I have an answer for that. Why don't I see what I said. I think the question was asked about my relations. That's what you just asked. Then it says how did the end of the Cold War and the Gulf War change these relationships.

Riley: Yes.

Jeremiah: So I took the coward's way out and said I wasn't there at the end of the Cold War. The way I answered this was first of all, this was the second year, the second term for the Vice Chairman. To some fairly significant degree other countries did not have an equivalent. So there was either an undershoot or an overshoot. When I visited I ended up talking to the senior guy in certain countries or to some two-star or some three-star in some other countries who was the near equivalent. In no case did their equivalent have the same responsibilities, power, and authority as I had. Everybody else was sort of a deputy. When I described how Colin and I operated I'd draw the box, and in the box was Colin and Dave and then there's the rest of the staff and so forth. In their box there is the chairman and then there is somebody else, maybe the director of their staff or maybe he's called the Vice Chairman, but what he has is no command authority but runs the staff. Of course I didn't have any command authority, nor did Colin, but we had a hell of a lot of influence.

Riley: Let me reframe the question then and let me ask—

Jeremiah: Wait a minute. I failed to answer the other part. That was, let's see how you asked that.

Riley: What was your relationship like with your counterparts in the Soviet Union, Russia, and China and major European states during your tenure, and then how did the end of the Cold War and Gulf War change that?

Jeremiah: Obviously there was massively increased respect for the American military, frighteningly so in many cases. The famous quotation from the Indian general who said, "You can only go to war with the United States if you're going to go at them with a nuclear weapon." China took that on board and paid a lot of attention to it. A huge amount of respect, particularly in South America, which was transitioning to democracies, and in South Asia, India, Pakistan, Singapore.

We split things up. I think I'd said earlier that Colin did Europe and Middle East and I did the Pacific, South Asia, and South America.

Riley: Right.

Jeremiah: Sometimes we obviously did different things. He even got around once to the Pacific side, but I would be in and out of there more often. Neither one of us traveled very much during that whole Desert Storm to the end of the war period.

You asked about what happened at the end of the Cold War in terms of the work—the military balance and how did we react, deal with the loss of jobs, and things like that. We talked about what needs to be done to the force structure. It was not our task to deal with the impact on the various communities' jobs, bases. You have a civilian hierarchy to deal with those kinds of questions and the Department of Defense. But that was a Defense issue inside the country, and overseas it was State and Defense and it would be sophomoric to pretend that we were not engaged in parts of that. But it was not our responsibility. We were basically staffing. That's all I have to say about that.

Riley: Okay, let me pose one other question that I had, actually there were two other questions about the Gulf War in particular, but you could expand on these if you like. Particularly in light of what happened. My question was about the military sense about the quality of intelligence, some of it related to military's own intelligence-gathering capabilities, but obviously when you're getting prepared for war you're borrowing whatever intelligence—assets is not the right word, but you're getting intelligence from whatever sector you could get it from. Did your experience in the Gulf War lead you to feel that the intelligence community was in a healthy place or not?

Jeremiah: Nobody has ever said they had more intelligence than they needed. Few people have said they have adequate intelligence.

Riley: Okay.

Jeremiah: Policy makers want you to tell them this is what's going to happen. The intelligence community doesn't know what is going to happen; they know what indicators suggest. Sometimes they miss the indicators. I think that when Schwarzkopf came back from the war complaining bitterly about the intelligence he was provided, it is not clear why that is so. My intelligence guy, Mike McConnell, was pimping Schwarzkopf's J2 to ask things of us so we could give them things he knew we could get. Sometimes, often, Schwarzkopf was not interested in having that answer, in asking that question. He didn't need to know that. We thought he did, but he didn't think so. We do the best we can with what we've got.

The key thing, the really sensitive thing, was for God's sake, don't bomb some of those bridges, because the bridges had the cables where all the intelligence ran, and if you bomb the bridges then the cables are parted and we know even less than before. Somehow that message didn't get across and nobody understood why they shouldn't bomb the bridge and they bombed it. There were other kinds of things like that.

I guess you're going to have to put me in the category of a fan of intelligence. Colin was not, Schwarzkopf was not. Colin was completely convinced he could get everything he needed to know from the *New York Times* and six other newspapers that he always read before 7 o'clock in the morning, and to some significant degree he was right.

Riley: Back then, no longer.

Jeremiah: Possibly.

Riley: There are no more bureaus, no more foreign bureaus.

Jeremiah: Right.

Riley: But that's a commentary about the state of the newspaper industry, not the intelligence community.

Jeremiah: But there's other media.

Riley: Sure.

Jeremiah: Like I said, we didn't have good wide-area intelligence. We really didn't have very many good people on the ground early, and in other places in the world we have very good people on the ground. A big mistake the nation made after the Cold War and Gulf War was when we went into the 25 percent reduction and among other things the system took down intelligence funding by 25 percent. When you are reducing your military, why would you also reduce your early warning? It doesn't make any sense, but that's something to remember to think about after the fact. You say that's really stupid and we discovered just how stupid it was in subsequent years trying to rebuild the intelligence capability broadly around the world after knocking it down. That was a terrible mistake. Everybody knows it and I don't think we'd do it again. It seemed like it was okay at the time.

Riley: I think I know the answer to this but I want to ask it anyway. There was a decision taken by the White House that the U.S. wasn't going to take action without getting Congress involved, meaning Congressional authorization for the actions. Do you recall having any reactions to this, or was there anxiety within the Pentagon about the potential consequences of going to Capitol Hill and getting authorization on this point?

Jeremiah: At that point the Pentagon wasn't concerned about Congressional authorization. We were marching to the President's orders and he seemed to think he had all the authority he needed. I happen to think it was—probably foolishly—the Senate's finest hour to watch their debate and see the people who were anguishing over having to make decisions like that and what they had to do to vote against their predisposition in many cases. They wrestled with the problem and I thought it was terrific. So I was okay with it.

I want to come back if I may to a question you asked some time ago on who said what in the beginning on how to fight and so forth. You prefaced that—I thought you were going one way and you went another, and it is described variously in the books I've read, but when we started, we had Desert Shield, which took about a couple of hundred thousand people. If you go to Desert Storm, as it became known, you're talking about 400,000- plus, and the President had to make up his mind early in November.

When I read Colin's book he talks about it as being in October. But what he was doing in October is he was pinging the President that—I remember clearly that that is what we were doing, that he had to make that decision one way or the other, because it would be almost impossible to stop the flow of people and resources if he waited longer to see if sanctions would work. If we were going on the offensive then we needed to keep streaming forces. There was the whole question of effectiveness of sanctions and the pressure that the President seemed to feel about sanctions, that his timeline on getting this thing solved was different from the timeline associated with sanctions becoming effective. So it was almost a nonstarter.

He had to tell us which way to go by the early part of November so that we could keep the flow going or stop. That was a very big deal and it was sort of a breathless event. Today? Tomorrow? When are we going to find out? Then it became, "Press on."

Bakich: So when Scowcroft brings Powell to meet with Bush personally and he lays out two paths, one we can let sanctions go and the other we need to know if we need to start planning, and the President says, "I don't think there's any real political option available for following the

sanctions route alone,” that was the signal that the uniform officers were looking for, that you folks were looking for?

Jeremiah: No, we were looking for an explicit—

Bakich: An explicit yes, okay.

Jeremiah: We were pretty sure that we knew what the answer was, but we were looking for an explicit statement, kind of like what I was talking about in Somalia. “Okay, you’d like to think that you don’t have time for sanctions, but you’ve got to tell us.”

Bakich: So when was that decision crystal clear?

Jeremiah: It was announced after election in early November, but made the last day or two of October, something like that, in that timeline. I think he began that discussion with the President and showing the troop buildup in two curves in October.

Riley: I want to ask one more question about intelligence. This is about the extent to which there may be something in the literature about this that I’m not familiar with, so forgive me if this is some well-plowed territory. That is the degree of surprise within the U.S. military intelligence community about the fact that Saddam went into Kuwait in the first place. Was that eventuality planned out? Was there an off-the-shelf plan for dealing with Saddam if he did something like this or not?

Jeremiah: No, the intelligence guys had been kind of pimping us that something was going on. McConnell came in and talked to us about the number of troops around the border and so forth. There was no good reason for that. The only guy that was flat-footedly out there was Charlie [Allen], with the agency. He’s an icon.

Riley: The CIA?

Jeremiah: Yes, he’s the intelligence guy over at Homeland Security now. Anyway, he flat-footed told Dick Kerr, “They’re coming, they’re going to invade.” Can’t be anything—but these are like hours ahead of time.

Riley: Right.

Jeremiah: Richard Haass describes this as a sort of—telling Scowcroft, “Looks like this is something going on. We need to do something about it.” They were wrestling around with it when someone came in and told them that they had crossed into Kuwait or Oman. I don’t know what the sequence of learning about it was in different places. Some people clearly did not know and said they did after the fact and vice versa. I had people at dinner and I got called and went to the secure phone and they told me that the Iraqis had crossed the border. I said I had to excuse myself and go to the Pentagon, track it to see what was going on. I think Colin was there already.

Bakich: Did you find that any one agency tended to be more on the mark than another? Were you pleased with the product you were getting from DIA [Defense Intelligence Agency] in general?

Jeremiah: Every part of the intelligence community loves to tell you what's going on. The in basket is a very tall pile of stuff, hard to sort it out. Until maybe the last year of my four years as Vice Chairman I was not privy to the President's daily brief. Then I think they shut down briefing the PDB to VCJCS again during the Bush administration. I don't know where they are now.

Bakich: Did you get the senior executive intelligence before that?

Jeremiah: No. But I had the J2. I had the whole load from him. But he was telling it lightly.

Perry: I have a question to go back to something we addressed this morning. That was in February of 1992 when the report was leaked. I think it was called Defense Planning Guidance, and that was the one of course with the various scenarios for war. One of those I know was for Iraq. Since this was in February of '92, obviously the first Iraq war was over. I think this relates to my question about how things ended with Desert Storm, not going into Baghdad for all of the good reasons you suggested.

What were you thinking would be the next scenario about Iraq, and then how did that relate to the way the first Gulf War did end?

Jeremiah: February of '92.

Perry: I guess what I'm asking is was there a fear that by having left Saddam in power he would make mischief inevitably again in that part of the world?

Jeremiah: Yes. Since it wasn't addressed, there was high potential that it would have to be addressed sometime. I'm not sure where we thought we were at that point with nuclear weapons, whether we thought they did or did not have nuclear weapons. I would guess that we thought they clearly still had the capacity to build nuclear weapons in the timelines that the intelligence community was giving us, that was three or four years. But those scenarios were exactly that—they were scenarios, things that could be. That was a good place to say how would we employ our forces. What would we do, what would it take to do something there?

In fact, it was kind of an anti-force builder because we had forces there. We had people pre-positioned and equipment pre-positioned. We had pre-positioned ships in the Diego Garcia that could react fairly quickly with bigger loads. We had people operating in the Gulf, so we were better positioned to deal with something fairly quickly than we were when the first Gulf War started. And when we threw the 82nd Airborne in there, that was good for three days, now what do I do? Somebody has got to land on the beach and get there. We had to resupply them or they're out of luck.

Perry: Was there any fear at this time? Again I'll just use February of '92, since that is when this report was leaked about so-called blow back about having our security and our troops there in that "neck of the woods," as we would say in Kentucky.

Jeremiah: You always have a concern about how vulnerable a prepositioned force might be. You had to have a force that was big enough to take care of itself so that you didn't get overwhelmed and you were able to "hold until relieved," a famous phrase. That's why we had

rotators in there also. We would rotate people in for exercises. They would rotate in for an exercise and then rotate out in a month, 60 days, something like that. So that kept a large presence on the ground but it was not a large permanent party. The concern with all that repositioning was what if it gets overrun? You wouldn't want to put too much more in there.

Riley: We'll break and then have about a half hour after that.

[BREAK]

Riley: Let me ask you again, because you made some notes there—we're going to try and run for another half an hour or so—if there are pieces that we haven't gotten to that you think are important for us to get to—we've always got more questions.

Jeremiah: In the backup book you have a piece by [Don] Oberdorfer on Somalia.

Riley: Right.

Jeremiah: I just want to comment that that is a very good summary on what took place.

Riley: Excellent.

Jeremiah: This is about George Bush, and so I would say that I don't know very much about what more I could tell you, but I would like to stay on that as long as you have something to talk about. The one thing you haven't talked about very much, you did in the backup pieces and I could go on ad nauseum about these, maybe not, is what did the Vice Chairman do, what was the beginning of this process for me when I thought that legitimizing the billet was important? I never really told you very much about how it was done.

I would prefer to answer any questions you have with respect to President Bush, but if you feel inclined to talk about that when we have time then we can do that.

Riley: That's fair enough. I think it's completely within our purview to delve into the set of questions about your duties and responsibilities, because people who will come to this record will come for a variety of purposes, some of which relate to President Bush but some related to the administration that you've led, and it is important for people to know what the portfolios are of those that we're talking with. We may interrupt with questions about that, but why don't you tell us a bit more about what the job entailed and we'll stop you as you go.

Jeremiah: When I went to Washington for confirmation hearings there were questions about who'd been assigned to do this and that, and the answer was basically, "I don't know. General Powell and I haven't talked about that yet, but I'll do whatever it is he tells me to do." We did talk briefly and we came to the conclusion, I think I mentioned in passing that each of us have particular kinds of talents and interests, so we decided we would pretty much play it by ear and when something came along it would be apparent who ought to take that.

He wasn't a program budget guy, at least in the detail, and not much interest in intelligence that he was able to get from his sources. He had a strong interest in Europe from his background. We sorted things out kind of like that. For me that ended up being JROC, the Joint Requirement Oversight Council, the Defense Acquisition Board, the DAB, and any number of intelligence panels, almost all of the special access programs, the Deputies Committee, and the Nuclear Weapons Council.

The Deputies Committee was interesting because most of the other stuff—as I explained to you, I'd been there, done that. But the Deputies Committee, for the first six months it was like learning a foreign language. People were saying English words and I didn't understand what the hell they were talking about. I'm fairly coherent, and it was quite bizarre. It was NATO-speak and it was all the language that was used in the NATO forum. At that point in time we were busy doing those kinds of things. I had no idea—that's an overstatement obviously, but what the hell does that mean? What does chapeau have to do with anything? Chapeau goes on your head, I understand that, what the hell does it have to do with military warfare? I don't understand. So it was that kind of thing—the typical grueling process when you come into a new position.

I had two different administrations. Now I'm talking about DAB and JROC. I'm going to talk about the JROC first. JROC, the composition of it, I think—the vice chiefs of each of the services and the Vice Chairman. It had originally started—they describe it in here, so I won't repeat that, but it was an ad hoc thing that got formalized by the Congress particularly with the creation of the Vice Chairman, and it was formalized in '93 legislation.

The JROC became more complex by a lot after I left and one of the authors in here opined that during my tenure it was probably too simple and later maybe too complex. But the JROC was supposed to look at what was being acquired in the major programs and decide whether it should proceed, whether it was important, whether it was well enough justified, whether we needed that for fighting capability and whether there was an alternative that would take care of the need. It was a requirements thing, so we were less concerned about precise pricing.

The requirements process had, over time, become progressively more encumbered with process with no improvement in quality of the product. What was happening was instead of saying, "I need the capability to move 150 tons of materiel in 24 hours 5,000 miles," a requirement was translated into terms that engineers used to describe what a particular product ought to be. To do this, the requirements are that I had to have this angle of attack. It was moved from a statement of war-fighting capability to a laundry list of characteristics. That's okay, but those should be two steps. The first step is define what the requirement is, whether we really need this thing, or if we can buy more of something else that we already have and that will be good enough or whatever.

The F-22 has gone through about five iterations of its purpose. It is the same airplane, but depending upon the issue du jour it has changed its mission from high-altitude, long cruise fighter to multi-point bomber and so on and so forth. But the way I thought the JROC should work, I thought that five of us should sit around the table and look at what a presenter from the program had to say and then make a judgment as to whether we ought to proceed or not. That consumed some portion of individual staffs, but not much, the guy who had to make the presentation, the people who might want to review it before it came out. Now it's an industry.

Hundreds of people are involved in the preparation for a JROC meeting, then the review at some working level, then a review at the one-star level, then a review at the three-star level, then a briefing. Then there are a couple of subcommittees that do things, all intended to relieve the vice chiefs of their crushing responsibilities, which they don't really have. Anyway, that's sort of a defense of my simple-minded way of going on about business. I said we have the responsibility to prioritize things and we can go, "Oh my God, are we going to get the service vice chiefs to say my program is number 22 and yours ought to be number 20," and so on and so forth. Well, that's not going to work. So why don't we just say, "Here are the programs we've got. You tell me which programs ought to be in the top third and which programs ought to be in the bottom third." Then there will be the great unwashed in the middle and we'll see how they come along, which we did.

They could all do that. It's fair play. They could kill somebody else's program or whatever. But out of that you got a judgment about what was important and what was not and that's all you really need, because more often than not, if the program is still viable enough to be in the bottom third, it won't be there very much longer because it's not making it. Nobody thinks it's important. So that part of it goes away. Of course you get a smaller bag, but people keep adding things to it.

I would take that in private, five of us. You give me your individual ranking of programs in one of those three categories and I'll take that and I'll keep it in the lower right-hand corner of my desk in a sealed envelope. I know pretty much then how each of the services feels about these programs. I would tell the DAB I view this as not a program we ought to go forward with, or you cannot take that program out, it is essential to X, Y, Z.

We also used this process because we could leverage things that way that would not otherwise be acceptable. For instance, ISR, Intelligence Surveillance Reconnaissance assets, some logistics programs, communication systems, and training programs were pushed down and out, particularly when something was not service unique. We became the sponsors of the unwashed, the joint stuff that knit the services together and made them work.

I'd go to the DAB with that background. I knew how the other chiefs felt about those things. These guys are smart people. They understand what's going on and they've got a pretty good handle on the relative importance of programs when you don't have to tag them with the service. So that's the way I ran the JROC and then used that product to feed me in the DAB.

I had a very good relationship, particularly with John Deutch in the Clinton administration. He walked in for lunch in my office early in the Clinton administration and said about his predecessor, Don Atwood, "Don said that you and I have to work together because we can make most of the things happen that we need to get done." Bill Perry later on said, in a tank session, "Between Deutch and Jeremiah, if they are for something it will get done and if they are not, it won't, it's just that simple. So pay attention to them." That's pretty good when it comes from the Deputy Secretary of Defense.

Riley: Sure.

Jeremiah: Don Atwood was the Deputy Secretary of Defense during the Bush administration. We would go through the program and budget process, first program, then budget. The issues would crank around and then he and I would decide what to approve, cut, or rarely, kick upstairs to the Secretary. I had one guy in the J8, he came to me and told me where we were in the process and what the issues were. We made judgments about what the PBD [program budget decisions] should be. Then I would take those up to Atwood and I would say, “The comptroller is trying to play a game. We really need this,” or whatever. We did that every day during the budget season. We’d go through the PBDs and that’s the way it came out. Pretty simple. So yes, simple, and guilty as charged.

Bakich: If I could, to what extent did previous QDRs [Quadrennial Defense Review] affect the way you went about making these decisions?

Jeremiah: Previous?

Bakich: The QDR that happened the time before any particular JROC or DAB issue came up. I guess the way I want to phrase this is, the items under JROC’s purview, were they significantly enhanced by judgments or decisions or rulings that were—

Jeremiah: QDRs didn’t really exist.

Bakich: At that time, okay, my mistake.

Jeremiah: But the defense policy guidance did exist and there was then a decision made programmatically on a variety of subjects, which increasingly over time did and continued to grind down into the weeds. There were program management decisions and those decisions influenced how we then reviewed the budget process. The budget and programs were separated. You got the big issues, which was the way it worked in the old days when I was in systems analysis. For example, yes, we wanted the sea-based nuclear strategic force, and there would be issues about how many SSBNs and how many missiles of what throw weight, etc. Then when the budget was reviewed in the fall the OSD comptroller would review the program for pricing, execution, contract compliance, etc. Again I got myself distracted.

Bakich: You were just finishing up how programs and budget were separated and how the program—

Jeremiah: Okay, so now when we combined the programming and budgeting processes, that fudged it up a lot because it was pretty clear that in the programming we were going to do big issues, multi-billion dollar, multi-hundreds of millions of dollar issues and in the budget we’re going to say, “This thing isn’t ready for prime time yet,” and review lots of ten- and twenty-million-dollar issues and we could scrape up maybe three, four billion dollars at that stage of the game. But you didn’t go back and revisit the big programmatics. Now they go all over the whole process so that inter-related decisions are often out of sync. So I think that the process now lacks discipline and that’s true of the whole—the acquisition process was a disaster when I was Vice Chairman and is a disaster today and we said so in the QDR [Quadrennial Defense Review] Panel that we just finished that the solution is very straightforward. All you have to do is assign responsibility to somebody for a project and hold them responsible for it and get everybody else out of the way.

The Secretary's staff doubled between 2001 and 2010 and they're all people who can say no but not yes. You're not going to make much progress in getting things done with that. Better you should have one guy who is in charge of that program who responds to whomever you want him to respond to, the Secretary or his designated guy but not all the underlings of the designated guy. That's the way we did it way back in the days of yore.

Riley: Am I interrupting you by posing a question here or not?

Jeremiah: I can amble on about other kinds of things that I did. The one other thing I guess is Special Access Programs for cutting-edge R and D [research and development]. That's where you got Tomahawk, that's where you got the F-17, that's where you got the B-2. That operates in its own rules, so somebody has to be around to go to the store and make sure that this is all okay. There are several gatekeepers and the Vice Chairman is one of the principal gatekeepers, the guy who probably has more to do with whether something comes or goes or not. I was astonished at the amount of, at the spread and the depth of, what the Vice Chairman was expected to do.

It was a great pleasure after I retired to go back to some of these things and actually look at them and understand some of them much better in depth than when by necessity I was skimming across the top of the water.

Riley: My question is on the general subject of acquisition. There are two interrelated developments after the Gulf War and we spent a fair amount of time talking about that. The Victory Parade in Washington is June 8.

Jeremiah: Something I was not at, although a book says I was.

Riley: The Victory Parade? I just have the general timeline. I don't have whether you were there or not.

Jeremiah: Colin had me in South America.

Riley: That's too bad.

Jeremiah: It was.

Riley: You should have been there. They should have had a second parade when you came back. But you have another year and a half in the Bush administration after a bow was put on that episode. Two interrelated developments that relate to acquisition. One is we've just seen a wartime environment in which technology is doing amazing things. I'm guessing, and I'll ask for comment and confirmation of this, that there is an enhanced push at that point for more complex systems to build on what has happened before. Is that right?

Jeremiah: It may be more of a shift than a push for more.

Riley: Okay.

Jeremiah: There was a clear need, an unsatisfied need, for more mobility, more ability to move things rapidly, and for better intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance. So there was

pressure to do both of those things until the last couple of years to get the ISR piece pushed and they're still not getting them, but there is more going on now in the mobility piece, particularly if they get the tanker issue sorted out, and if we get some fairly high-speed transport stuff that seems to have a lot of legs to it now.

Riley: Okay, the second piece of it is that you've just been through a major battlefield experience where presumably you've expended a lot of munitions and equipment and so forth, although fortunately not a lot of damage created by the enemy.

Jeremiah: Not ours.

Riley: Are you into a reacquisition phase in order to stock back up what has been drawn down as a result of this intervention? How complicated is it for you to build your stocks back up?

Jeremiah: We really didn't because we were executing a 25 percent reduction at the same time we were going through a war, so that attrition won't be replaced. We've got as many as we're going to have. So we really didn't do a lot of that. The Navy for instance had F/A-18s and they still have F/A-18s. The label may have come off on another airplane, but these F/A-18s are really good.

But the Air Force is flying F-15s and A-10s. They're still flying them. They have F-22s now. We're not flying F-14s and we're not flying A-6s. In almost every case where there might be four different models of something we've netted down—the Navy has gone down from an A-6 and A-7 and F-14 and really even an F-8, selected down to the F-18s. We did similar things in the Air Force. They're still living with F-16s, albeit those F-16s are much more modern. But the F-16 the UAE [United Arab Emirates] is flying is a whole hell of a lot different from the F-16 we flew in Desert Storm. The UAE has the most modern F-16 fleet in the world.

Bakich: Not the United States of America?

Jeremiah: No. We exported a better product, the last one we built.

Perry: Can I follow up on these specific, and in a way, behind-the-scenes decisions with the public relations that you're having? That's another war in a sense that you're having to fight it seems to me in the public relations realm. I have a quote—this is from General Powell—that I think just summarizes the statements that you were making in public. He was giving speeches, you were giving speeches, and in the winter of '92-'93 in the Council for Foreign Relations he says, "The American people are getting a solid return on their defense investment even as from all corners of the nation come shouts for imprudent reductions that would gut their armed forces."

Jeremiah: That's pretty harsh.

Perry: It didn't seem that bad to you? I didn't notice that kind of language, by the way, in your speeches, but still—

Jeremiah: My speeches were trying, generally speaking, to make the point that yes, we are reducing the funding in the budget for military forces, but those military forces are capable, the

threat is less capable, and while it is an uncertain future out there, we don't know quite what it is but we think we're okay with it. I was pretty much trying to pull the party line that says this is okay, you Americans should not overly worry about the military, without getting myself across the breakers with not supporting the President.

Riley: Sure.

Jeremiah: That was '93?

Perry: That was, and it said winter—I guess end of '92 over to '93 that was published.

Jeremiah: Colin was in his last nine months, so he is speaking a little more forcefully I guess. I don't remember that, but I didn't vet all of his stuff. What is he saying again?

Perry: “The American people are getting a solid return on their defense investment.”

Jeremiah: Good.

Perry: That's the first half, “Even as from all corners of the nation come shouts for imprudent reductions that would gut their armed forces.”

Jeremiah: Well, there's a move in Tai Chi where you fend off with one arm and block the other and he's, “All's well, we're okay, and don't let those guys get in the back door.” That's what that says.

Bakich: An interesting way of casting the phrase “peace dividend.”

Jeremiah: People really wanted to see big dollars come out of the peace dividends and they couldn't see it because we weren't reducing a lot of stuff. We had already done it anyway. But the big bucks, and today it's a terrible problem, because the big bucks in defense are in manpower. The manpower is eating up the acquisition programs. Jim Webb was fighting the elimination of the Joint Forces command. But sit down and discover what the Joint Forces command has done for world peace and equanimity of the last ten years. Not much. So okay. I think it was an appropriate reduction. It gets a lot of people out, it really hits the economy, often not as much as it could. So yes. Then it becomes a problem.

Riley: Let me ask you this question, again mindful of the time, about the election results in 1992. You've come through an historic experience with the President, an historic victory globally with the end of the Cold War, an historic victory militarily and diplomatically with the events of Desert Storm. All these successes and yet the American people turn out the civilian leadership that was driving that in 1992 for something very different. I'm not asking you about your own partisan affiliation, but I'm just wondering if there isn't a disappointment associated with the election results in '92 as almost being seen as sort of a dismissal of all of those kinds of magnificent, historical victories, or was that not a part of your thinking at all?

Jeremiah: I was extremely disappointed and I wrote a note to the President and said so because he had led the country through some very tough stuff. We were pretty heavily into a recession and that tends to drive the American voter pretty big.

Riley: Sure.

Jeremiah: [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] He got Baker in at the tail end to try and scrape the pieces together to make it work. Baker basically said he couldn't do it before he went in. But I think he was pretty heavily beat up. "It's the economy, stupid" was a good enough mantra to drive the election. Maybe the American people have a penchant for changing things from time to time. Why did everybody give up on Winston Churchill after World War II?

So I don't think—I was disappointed, I can't explain it. It created changes that were not necessarily good or effective in the beginning. I always think that if President Clinton had gone into the first election with what we knew by the second election it would have been a much happier world, but you can't do that.

Riley: Sure. You talked a little bit about your experience with Somalia, but I'm wondering—you're in a unique vantage point because there weren't very many people who were held over from one to the next for a variety of reasons. Were you suspected of being a Bush partisan?

Jeremiah: Absolutely.

Riley: Absolutely.

Jeremiah: That was part of why we were backbenchers. Bill Studeman was a serving four-star Navy officer, I was a serving four-star naval officer. We were both in the Bush administration and we were viewed—not by Clinton, but by his minions as very suspect people. There was that infamous discussion that went on between a staffer and him.

Riley: You believe that happened?

Jeremiah: Oh, I know it happened.

Riley: There was a sort of a culture war going on between the Clinton White House and the military?

Jeremiah: I don't think so. It certainly wasn't going on with Tony Lake. It was not going on with Al Gore. It was not going on with the President. Who else was flopping around out there? In the department we had great relationships with Bill Perry and John Deutch.

Riley: How about Les Aspin?

Jeremiah: Les Aspin was a piece of work. He was the worst possible choice you could have made.

Riley: The worst possible choice?

Jeremiah: Well, maybe not, maybe there were a couple of guys on the street. Les Aspin was a brilliant legislator, smart as hell, completely undisciplined. Had no idea how to run anything.

Brings to mind some things. Morning staff meetings, we'd march forward with military precision, that's the way things go. It's 7:30, the Secretary of Defense gets his intelligence briefing and after that there's a policy meeting and then we go off and do your work but no, Les is out playing tennis, so everybody's schedule is messed up. You got a meeting. The President is an hour and a half late to a meeting. What's going on here? This is the real world, we're adults. We're supposed to be doing stuff. It wasn't happening.

It got better, but not in time for Les. Wonderful guy, very smart. I liked him. He was a superb advocate, I'll tell you, in his way, on the Hill for the military, and that's where he should have stayed. He did a great job there. He asked hard questions that we didn't like because they were hard and relevant and something we should have done something about. But when he had to make decisions, ask questions in the Pentagon, it wasn't done.

Riley: Was the President's—and I'm talking about President Clinton here—was the breach ever repaired with him and the military, or was that first year too much to ever be—

Jeremiah: There were some places—there's military and then there's the Washington military. In the Washington military I don't think there was a breach. Bill Clinton and Colin Powell are two people who can walk into a room and you know they're there even if you can't see them. You can line up the people who said, "I hate that guy" and you put them at one end of the receiving line and you put the whole receiving line here and after the receiving line interview it's 100 percent conversion. [laughter] Amazing. He's really good.

As I said, Perry and Deutch were terrific, they were very good. They knew their business. They'd been there before. The problem was the institutional out-there military. People were pretty close to booing the President when he made his first trip out to the fleet. That's not right. There was nothing the senior officers could do about it. It was over before they knew what was happening. There were certain factions that couldn't deal with some of the things that were going on. I don't know.

Riley: I got you.

Jeremiah: I think the Clinton administration did okay after they settled down and got their act together.

Riley: It's very helpful to have that. Of course our brief here is not Clinton, although it's your career, so let me come back as the benediction and ask you, how well do you think you did with the Bush Presidency?

Jeremiah: The nation is recognizing every day more and more of the positive attributes. It's not just seeing him do things with Bill Clinton around the world. I think there is a much more balanced view that historians placed on it than some of the uglies that showed up while he was the President. The strong right arm, the wimpy domestic left arm caricature of him was maligned by very important legislation that was passed. The Clean Air Act, Disabled Act, and other kinds of things that were done. He got killed on the "Read my lips, no new taxes" when it had to be done. Didn't handle it very well. But I think people are putting all those things in context now and it has changed the attitude towards him. I think he was a very good President for the country.

You guys are the ones who have to figure out how this all really worked out. Forty-three said the other day when he was meeting, “I’ll be dead and gone before the real verdict of historians over the years, after all the pieces and parts have been disclosed.”

President Bush in the library committee meetings, we’re always warned to stay away from talking about legacy. Legacy is not what he’s about.

Riley: Which makes it hard on us historians because that’s—legacy in some respects but certainly history—and from our perspective we’re trying to foster knowledgeable history. In the first place papers don’t exist in the way they used to. You didn’t write that diary. You thought it would be a good idea to keep one; it doesn’t exist. So our successors aren’t going to have that diary. We didn’t keep a record of those confidential telecons [telephone conversations] or video conferences. If there’s no copy of that, then we don’t have that available.

Jeremiah: You won’t.

Riley: We won’t.

Jeremiah: It’s going to be even less unless you can figure out how to get the NSA [National Security Agency] to cough up a lot of stuff.

Riley: I don’t think I’m quite that persuasive. I’m open to suggestions if you have a way; if it’s a question of money maybe we can find the outlet.

Jeremiah: Not that much.

Riley: The fact is that’s why we do these interviews. It’s no substitute for contemporaneous written record, but at least we have an opportunity to get, by proxy, the first-hand experience of people who were there and lived it. It’s just extremely valuable.

Jeremiah: Absolutely.

Riley: I know I speak for my colleagues that it is fascinating for us to be able to sit here and listen to your assessments.

Jeremiah: Bear in mind that those assessments are 20 years later and they may be shaky around the edges, but I think they’re pretty close.

Riley: Even if they are, I think that anybody who uses the transcript at a future time will know that there has been the passage of time. That will have the probability of shaping your assessment through whatever lenses we’ve experienced since then. But there is so much wisdom to be gained from sitting down and engaging with people who have been in the arena, and we have such good fortune to be able to sit here and ask these questions. Folks who come to the document later, I’m sure there are going to be questions, whether they’ll be slapping their heads and saying, “Why didn’t they bear down on this?” which relates to their own research agenda, but we do the best we can.

I always say at this stage of the interview we never completely exhaust all the possible topics we could talk about but we do a pretty good job of exhausting the person seated in the hot seat. So we're deeply grateful, both for your taking the day to come here and reflect—I know not all of this has been pain-free, some of this has been difficult for you, and I appreciate that. But also the mere fact that we're doing a continuation of these interviews is in some respects a tribute to your own questioning of me when I was in College Station meeting with your board. You raised some questions for me at that time in front of the board about deficiencies in some of the earlier work that we had done and my colleagues had done.

I want to pay proper credit to somebody who was responsible for opening the door for us to talk not only with you but with Tim McBride and some others about these experiences and I'm grateful for it.

Jeremiah: I would think, if you haven't, and maybe you can make a judgment on this, but it seems to me that Richard Haass, if you have not talked to him, would be very helpful.

Riley: Sure.

Jeremiah: Not only in the national security things, but he has—there are a lot of eyes—but he was there. He was in the White House. He saw these things and he has a view. There's truth in a lot of it.

Riley: He has done an interview, but I was not involved in it to my recollection. I have to go back and see because there were some of these interviews that we did—you recall that part of the problem that we had was—Haass went back—if I'm not mistaken he went back in in the 43 administration.

Bakich: Policy planning.

Riley: This may have been a case of us catching him at a bad time or something like that. But I will, on your advice, go back and have a look at that interview and see whether we ought to go back and pick up where we left off. But again, I want to give proper credit because there were some deficiencies that you helped highlight for us and importantly created some momentum within that board to help us do the funding for this because that was the big question, whether we'd be able to continue doing this, and that came forward. So thank you for that and thank you for coming to spend the day with us.

Jeremiah: Thank you. I told my daughters who asked me, "What did you do in the war, Daddy, because you were never here. Why don't you write to us about it." I've said okay, I will. I've written a few things about what I was doing as a child. But this will help me.

Riley: Good. We'll be happy to provide them a copy of the transcript once you're done with it. But if there is more to be said, don't let this serve as a substitute. More is always better. So write if you get a chance. We'd love to see what more you have to say.

Jeremiah: That raises the question of—I can't do the PFIAB, it's too—

Riley: With 43.

Jeremiah: Yes, but there is—I may have said all I need to say about the Clinton years unless I get triggered by something like that.

Riley: One of the things I need to clarify on this, because the transcript does become the authoritative record—you should feel free, if you’re going back through this and it helps some additional memories flesh out, sit down and type up a page or two supplement to it and we can easily attach that to the main transcript. That means it can be done at your leisure and you don’t have to worry about the schedule. The other thing is, if you think it would be helpful to do another hour or two at some point, we get back and forth to Washington occasionally, and I’d be happy to slip a tape recorder in my pocket and come by and sit with you for another little while at some point to go over these things. But it would be helpful to know that you feel that you’ve got more to say and for you to flag a few things for us to talk about under those circumstances.

Jeremiah: I worry a little bit because this is an awful lot about me. You said at the beginning—I wasn’t sure that I really had much to say.

Riley: I think you’re understating the value of it. We expect people who will come to your transcript to want to know about everything from defense procurement policy to Presidential psychology. Your document is not the only one in the archival record. What I always tell people is that I hope this is like one piece of a mosaic. If you want to understand the big picture as a user, don’t come in and delve into—even if it’s a Richard Haass interview and it turns out to be 12 hours long, which I don’t think is the case, but you need to go through and sample what everybody has to say because only with that multiplicity of views do you get something that approximates an accurate portrait.

Bakich: I’ve used oral histories before and I can tell you that knowing how, for example, you and Kerr worked out some problem on the Deputies Committee actually is very important to understanding how the President makes decisions.

Riley: Exactly.

Bakich: By proxy it matters a great deal.

Riley: It really does. So we’re grateful it has been extremely valuable across the board.

Jeremiah: It was fun.

Riley: I’m glad it was.