

INTERVIEW WITH
LTG SAMUEL V. WILSON
BY DR. J. W. PARTIN
RICE, VIRGINIA, 11 JULY 1988

**US Special Operations Command
Command History Office**

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JWP: In World War II you were in OSS and then also in Merrill's Marauders. I wonder if you could give me a quick synopsis of what you did in OSS, the kind of training and whatnot, and then why you decided to volunteer for the Marauders.

SVW: I had just been assigned to OSS and just initiated training when the officer who put together the 5307th Composite Unit Provisional, and who later was to be its Deputy Commander, Colonel Charles M. Hunter--a classmate of General Merrill's--invited me to go with him on an unnamed escapade that sounded pretty mysterious. I didn't know what or where it was going to be. Hunter had been my boss, once removed, at Fort Benning. I had graduated from Officer Candidate School in August 1942 and had been selected to remain behind as an instructor. I spent about two-thirds of my time on guerrilla tactics, light infantry tactics, raiding by infiltration, patrolling, ambushes, and things like that. Hunter had come from Panama where he had been the Adjutant of, I believe, the 14th Infantry. He was a lieutenant colonel and, obviously, an extraordinarily capable officer. He gave me all the responsibility as a young lieutenant that I could handle. So when he asked me if I would like to join him on a rather dangerous mission, there was only one answer. I had just been assigned to, briefed into, and had begun training with the OSS when I went with him-- somewhat to the consternation of my new associates in OSS. So that is how I got into it. You may have read the book by Charlton Ogburn called The Marauders. It is exquisitely accurate.

I was initially an executive officer of a rifle company in the 1st Battalion; then I was selected to be an intelligence and reconnaissance platoon leader--it really was a kind of composite detachment as much as anything--and was used a great deal by Merrill and Hunter to screen the movement of the six columns making up the three battalions of Merrill's Marauders. We reorganized along the Chindits line because we had trained with the Chindits and had assumed until the very last that we were going to go in with the Chindits forces. So we organized into six separate combat teams--we called them columns--with two columns in each battalion.

My job was as an intelligence and reconnaissance officer, operating much of the time anywhere from 25 to 100 miles ahead of the six columns. All of us were behind the Japanese lines at the time, moving to seize or destroy very important operational objectives, if I may make the distinction between tactical, operational, and strategic. Most of the objectives that we went after were of the theater-type importance, not just local, tactical importance. So that, in essence, was my role. I

was fortunate in that I had been teaching a lot of the things to officer candidate students and basic officer students at Fort Benning at the Infantry School for about a year before I went into combat to try to confirm the validity of what I had been teaching.

JWP: Were those courses in guerrilla warfare a result of World War II or were they offered before the war?

SVW: We dealt a little bit by way of establishing the setting with historical antecedents of our work, but we plunged very quickly into contemporary application. These courses also were field-oriented. We taught them out on the sides of the hills or in the swamps and marshes along the Upatoi Creek on the Chattahoochee River. There was very, very little actual class time and not a whale of a lot of bleacher time. We'd teach a while on the side of the hill with circus-type bleachers and very quickly get the class out on the ground and start going through formations, pairing off elements of the class, and working them against each other. It was very, very much hands-on, and it stood me in good stead in Burma.

JWP: In India, you had another rigorous training session.

SVW: We had a three-month training session with Major General [Orde C.] Wingate and his force, which also was extremely valuable because we began to pick up some things from the British and their way of doing things. They were much leaner, more conservative, in what they carried and in what kinds of external support they expected. In fact, we were sort of, by nature, a little spoiled. They tried to do more with less, so that was a good lesson for us.

JWP: Did you participate in that last 140-mile hike that Colonel Hunter put his people through?

SVW: Yes. In fact, I led the hike. That was the hike across the Ledo Road into North Burma. I went in some days ahead of the rest of the others with my platoon, scouting the road, selecting bivouac areas and watering points, and so on. So I was waiting for the rest of the outfit at Ningbyen. When the rest of the organization closed on Ningbyen, we had been there a couple of days.

JWP: They point to that march as a crucial part of training the 5307th.

SVW: I think that may be a little overrated. After all, we were simply walking on newly constructed road, albeit a very mountainous road with precipitous drops. When there was a hard rain, the road would wash out. There was nothing tactical about it. We were well behind the friendly front provided by the Chinese 22nd

and 36th Divisions in the Hukawng valley, so we were coming over the Nagas hills into Burma. The road was good.

I think they stretched the column out, and made sure that our feet were tough and that we knew how to close on a bivouac area, put up security, and so on. It was pretty much a set piece. As I recall, it had taken us five days to a week, something like that. We pretty well hoofed it. As a matter of fact, I think my unit moved a lot faster than the main columns. It was a shakedown in terms of taking an a well-trained troop, moving them across the stage, and letting them look out and see the audience and the backdrop of the stage and the curtains and so on. It gave us a chance to see ourselves as an organization moving 140 miles, gave us a chance to see if we were carrying the things that we should be carrying, and whether there were things we should discard. It was a shakedown in that regard, but it was not as valuable as the training we had already had during the three months in the central plains of India along the Betwa River, across from the Princely State of Gwalior.

JWP: Did you have training in jungle warfare?

SVW: Mostly training in light infantry tactics. Again, patrolling, ambushing, quick strikes on pre-selected targets, checking out all of our weapons. It was shakedown training. We were a fairly seasoned outfit--at least, the people in the outfit were fairly seasoned when we began that three months of training. It was fine-tuning training. Nothing surprising in it at all, I don't think. We did a lot of swimming and a lot of stream-crossing. We had not done a lot of that. That was important. How to get across a stream a half-mile wide with rapids or deep holes. We lost a couple of people doing it. But we learned how to do it, how to post security, how to select the right crossings, and how to do it well. That probably was something fairly new. We also learned how to take air drops. That, too, was new. The rest of it was light infantry tactics. You never can get enough of that kind of training.

JWP: Air drops. Was that working directly with the 1st Air Commando Group?

SVW: Yes. The outfits that dropped for us from time to time were the 1st Air Commandos, the 10th Combat Cargo, and the 11th Combat Cargo. The 1st Air Commandos supported us some, although their primary mission was support of Wingate and his Chindits. They took Wingate into Central Burma. They were commanded by COL Phil Cochran. His deputy was COL Johnny Alison. We witnessed them several times when they towed gliders at night and made landings. I remember seeing six-foot-six tall Senegalese soldiers all buttoned up and toggled as the British were, with leggings--barefoot! Coming out of those ladders on a moonlight night, jabbering at each other. I remember Phil Wells[?] said, "Local village isn't going to hold this guy any more when he gets back and tells them about what happened to him tonight."

JWP: According to literature, there were SOPs developed for hand signals with very little verbal orders.

SVW: I was a little nutty on things like that. That was something that I had worked on very, very hard at Benning. I've always regarded squads and platoons as football or basketball teams, and you develop certain plays and execute them quickly and well. As long as you don't get too imprisoned by them, you're much better off than if you have to figure out in detail what you have to do once you come under fire. If you come under fire, or something is going wrong, you flash a signal and at least you execute something quickly and in a well-organized fashion. If you can explode in the face of an enemy in that way when he thinks he's got you in an ambush, you can come at him so hard that he doesn't know what has hit him! It comes from the set plays that you develop, and the arm and hand signals that you use to initiate the plays. If you do them often enough, the guys can do them in their sleep. They can do them when they are terrified, they can do them when they are lightly wounded, they can do them when they have been stunned by explosions, and so on. We did a lot of that. We were not just well trained, but well coached in that regard. I think that still applies today.

JWP: It stood you in good stead, too, when you were physically and mentally exhausted going across the jungle terrain.

SVW: Absolutely! Stood us in good stead when we would get surprised once in a while by the Japanese.

JWP: Did you get a chance to observe General Wingate's leadership concept?

SVW: Not too much. Not too much. I was aware of his innovativeness. I had heard him a couple of times making speeches to his troops. He had sort of a high-pitched voice. He was rather Messianic. He reminded me a little bit of a fundamentalist preacher at a revival. He would get kind of worked up. He was obviously a brilliant man, but also a very strange man--very strange, moody, difficult to predict. Probably--and this is a terrible thing to say--to his and history's advantage that he flew into the side of a mountain and was killed before the war was over. He was not the kind of a man who would fit well in a peacetime situation. He tended to be a bit Messianic--had to have a cause of some kind, for sure.

JWP: Would you compare him to Patton, then?

SVW: Yes. Different individual, but some of the same things that I have just said would apply to Patton. He was not quite as flamboyant and colorful as Patton, but as Messianic.

JWP: On the American side, you mentioned Colonel Hunter. How about General Merrill and Stilwell?

SVW: Well, let's take all three of them and let me say something about each one, beginning with Hunter since I talked about him first. Hunter was a dry-witted, laconic, tough, hard-bitten soldier's soldier. Tenacious to the point of stubbornness. An excellent tactician. An absolutely super troop leader. I remember at the Battle of Nhpum Ga the 2d Battalion had been surrounded. It took us some 14 days to break through to them. When he got the outfit back down at Hsamsingyang where we were in a kind of a flat (and Nhpum Ga was up in the hills) and got the outfit back down on an extremely level surface--big rice paddy where we had knocked the berms down--he shocked and surprised everybody by posting security and having us all go through close-order drill. He felt that the people who had been through a lot of shock and a lot of trauma, once you had fed them up and they got their equipment cleaned and so on, he'd line them up and have a kind of parade. He would have them do a little close-order drill and have the squad leaders lead their squads; the platoon leaders lead their platoons; and the company commanders, their companies, and so on. He reestablished the disciplinary infrastructure, the parade ground kind of thing. The guys thought he was crazy, initially, and then it dawned on us that he knew exactly what he was doing. He was reestablishing the military nature of the organization--an organization that had been spread all over Hell's half acre and was about to come apart. By lining us up and standing at attention, saluting, and making guidons out of colored parachutes and so on, he hammered us back into shape for the third mission--which was Myitkyina.

That training procedure was picked up in a War Department official document entitled, "Lessons Learned." The lessons came from everywhere, South Pacific, Central Pacific, Europe, ETO, Italy, so on. I remember years later going through it and finding a paragraph, began to read it, and read it all the way through. It sounded very, very familiar to me. I suddenly looked up and saw "CBI," and I thought, "Dadgum, this is Hunter at Hsamsingyang!" He wrote it in the first person singular, what was done and why he did it.

JWP: That's a War Department document called "Lessons Learned in World War II"?

SVW: Yes.

JWP: That sounds very much like what some of the divisions did in the ETO. Once they pulled them back and rested, they went back to rigorous training to get back into the fighting spirit and be a fighting group.

SVW: Absolutely, absolutely, absolutely--it's sound. For citizen soldiers, that kind of thing didn't resonate, initially, until we saw what it did. Hunter brought the unit over on the Lurline from San Francisco to Bombay to Deolali for three weeks, then up to Deogarh, across the Betwa from Gwalior in Central India, for almost three months. While waiting for a commanding officer to be assigned, he was the acting commander. He put the unit together, trained the unit, got us into fighting fettle, and then we became a political football between the British Southeast Asia Command, Lord Louis Mountbatten's command in Ceylon, and Stilwell's CBI command in New Delhi. Stilwell eventually won. We were assigned to him and peeled away from Wingate, which infuriated Wingate. He had thought he would have us as an additional force element.

It had been our hope all along that Hunter would be the man who would be anointed to command us and carry us to combat. It didn't work out that way. Stilwell sent down his G3--Brigadier General Frank Merrill. Merrill reminded one very much of Franklin Delano Roosevelt. He looked like him, had some of the same mannerisms, including this cigarette holder with the cigarette on tilt. Probably a bit affected because he realized that he looked like and sounded like Roosevelt, so he played it. Why not? Merrill was brilliant, innovative, and probably a better strategic thinker than Hunter. He thought more in politico-military terms, and an outstanding conceptualizer when it came to dreaming up what the outfit might do. He tended to come apart a little bit on execution, where Hunter would take over and carry us through. Hunter and Merrill were classmates--I believe it was West Point Class of 1929. Hunter gave Merrill his total loyalty. Merrill did not quite do the same thing to Hunter. In fact, Merrill, I know, badmouthed Hunter a bit to Stilwell, which was terribly unfair. Merrill had a bad heart, had had a heart attack when they were retreating out of Burma, had to be carried part of the way on a stretcher, but seemed to have recovered by the time he was given this command.

He got through the first major mission to Walawbum with the Marauders in fine style. In the midst of the second mission when things began to go wrong at Inkangatawng and Nhpum Ga, he suffered a heart attack and had to be evacuated. Hunter fought the outfit out of that mess and, as I noted, got us squared away. Then Merrill returned and reassumed command just before we started the march to Myitkyina. Hunter led one of the columns to Myitkyina-- the one that I was with, the so-called H-Force. Merrill remained at Northern Combat Area Command--by this time up in North Burma, a territory that we had succeeded in wresting away from the Japanese--and followed our progress on a map and by radio messages. When we seized the Japanese all-weather fighter strip at Myitkyina on the 17th of May 1944, about 20 minutes from the time we attacked it, Merrill flew in and reassumed command. Once again he lasted only a few days when he had another heart attack and had to be evacuated.

A better name for the outfit would probably have been Hunter's Harbingers or Hunter's Hawks or something like that rather than Merrill's Marauders. But as you know, history doesn't always work like that. Merrill was also very good to me, personally. I worked for him directly. I found him a very charming man--a little given to hyperbole. Hunter, on the other hand, given to understatement. Ten years after the campaign was over, Merrill was dead in a motel somewhere down in the deep South. He had been the Commissioner of Highways in the state of New Hampshire. He died of a heart attack; that bad heart finally put him away.

Stilwell--oh, what a controversial figure. Stilwell sent me back in the late fall of 1944 to take advantage of my fifth consecutive appointment to West Point. Via that action and the steps leading up to it, I got to know him, somewhat. I do remember at Ningbyen, when we first came into Burma, Stilwell came to visit us, wading a stream to the island where we were bivouaced. We were all called together, and he gave us a little talk. I was impressed with what he had to say, with his mannerisms, and so on. Then he went to one side and sat on a log talking to Merrill, alone, while the rest of us sort of milled around drinking coffee. The meeting was over. I noted--I don't mean to sound ego-smitten, this is simply the way it worked out-- I could tell that Merrill was talking about me to Stilwell. I had already done some things during exercises for Merrill that he kind of liked. I was a fresh lieutenant, I was 19 years old, and the world was my oyster as far as I was concerned. I noticed Merrill sort of gesturing in my direction, nodding his head, and Stilwell turned and looked directly at me. I thought, "Oh, oh, they're talking about little Willy, the boy, Nilly." Merrill sort of talked with his hands, Stilwell was nodding a time or two. From that point, Stilwell was aware of who I was.

Given his propensity to be a platoon leader himself, albeit the theater commander, Stilwell would fly along overhead, finally locate where we were, snaking our way down a trail sweating out each bend, and he'd be overhead in an L-5 or an L-1 dropping messages to us. I'd want to say, "Get away, get away, get away!" So I saw him a number of times. His attitude toward me was very fatherly. So in a personal sense, a young officer to a senior general officer, my attitude was one of awed respect and a certain sort of feeling of gratitude and appreciation that he would even--with all of his responsibilities--even notice me.

Here comes a little ambivalence. I realized that he was using us up and that he was wearing us out. In the final analysis, whatever agony he may have been going through in his own head, in order to succeed in what he was trying to do, he would use us right on down to the last remaining individual. That caused him to be hated by some of our people and caused Hunter to develop deep feelings of hostility toward Stilwell. Hunter, a soldier's soldier, felt you protect your men. When they have done all they can do, somehow you pull them to one side and let

them get well, and then they go back and try it again. He regarded Stilwell as trying to do it all on one pitch-and-toss. Stilwell had an impossible job. He probably would have been the most magnificent Corps commander in the United States Army, anywhere, in any theater during World War II. He was definitely not our best theater commander. I think he was more of a tactician than he was a strategist. [END OF SIDE 1, TAPE 1]

Smart as he was, I think he was at times a poor judge of human character, a poor judge of people. I think he overrated Merrill. I think he underrated Hunter. He had one of the greatest collections of incompetents around him on his staff--with some exceptions--that I have not only ever seen, but ever read of. The China-Burma-India Theater was definitely not our priority theater in terms of supplies and combat units. Also not our priority theater in terms of talents at the O7, O6, O5 levels. He had a bunch of boobs around him. Maybe that had something to do with the fact that he did a lot of his own staff work and was a bit of a loner. The kind of staff work that was done for him, to the extent that I was able to get glimmers of it from time to time, was atrocious.

Now, he was wearing four hats. He was the Commanding General, Northern Combat Area Command, headquartered eventually in North Burma. If he had had that job and that job alone, he would have been in his element, essentially a tactical job. He was also the Commanding General, China-Burma-India Theater with its headquarters in New Delhi. With the exception of a few people like then Major Fred Weyand (later Chief of Staff, United States Army), Colonel Dean Rusk (later Secretary of State), and a handful of people like that, the rest of them were boobs, incompetents. I really don't know what they did! I guess that they had a lot to do with moving supplies. Then he was Deputy to Mountbatten--the Deputy Commander in Chief of Southeast Asia Command. He would go down to Kandy, Ceylon, from time to time and wander around as kind of a misfit in that milieu. He was very uncomfortable so he went down there as seldom as possible. By far his most complex, most demanding, and most no-win job, was as, quote, Chief of Staff, unquote, to the Peanut, Chiang Kai-shek. Spread a man among those four different tasks, and you simply have something that is an absurd impossibility to begin with. He should have been able to see it, and he should have done something about it. The ultimate result was his relief; the theater being divided into two parts--the China Theater under [LTG Albert C.] Wedemeyer and the India-Burma under [LTG Daniel I.] Sultan, and whether Mountbatten had an American Deputy or not, I don't know, because I left the theater. Stilwell, a tremendous intellectual; biting sense of humor; very, very incisive to his diary. I've read the Stilwell Papers and Barbara Tuchman's book about him with great, great interest. I still have mixed feelings about him. The primary feeling, however, is one of kind of awed respect for his mind--except where people were concerned--his ability to write, his pungent wit, and his kindness to me.

JWP: You mentioned the misuse of Merrill's Marauders. Was it a misuse of light infantry, per se? Or were you left in the field too long?

SVW: No. The concepts were sound. The concepts worked. There was just the appropriate level of gamble and risk in the things that we were asked to do. We were well-trained enough, cocky enough, and mean enough to pull them off. At Myitkyina, regardless of what happened, we were sort of like a guy at the gaming tables who was going to make one last big splurge when he should have known that he had spent all his luck. He should have pulled every single member of the Marauders, devoted a little time to putting us in a camp back somewhere in the tea plantations of Assam, and given us a chance to put on a little weight, to loll around in the sun, to drink some Bullfight brandy and Rosa rum, and to chase little Indian girls. And then, back on Hunter's parade ground, with a little spit-and-polish, full-field inspections, lining the tents up, and pulling us back into some semblance of a military organization. If he had done that, we could have gone back as soon as the rainy season was over, and we could have done it for them all over again.

Instead, on the 10th of August 1944, there were 100 combat effectives left in the field, and 99 of those weren't very effective. They had simply been used up until there was nothing left. There, I think, was his mistake. I think he was particularly maladvised by Merrill in that connection. Hunter was fighting to save us. Merrill was all for us pulling one more flash. I think Merrill may have been more glory-hungry than Hunter was. I'm not trying to put Merrill down. Merrill was very, very good to me; but I am also recognizing you, as an historian, are looking for as clear and objective a picture as one is capable of giving.

JWP: Did you have any contact with Detachment 101?

SVW: Oh, yes. A lot of contact. Since I was practically always out front, I and a fellow named Weston--who also was a tremendous intelligence and reconnaissance officer--were the first to encounter Det 101 people on the ground in Burma. Jim Tilly and his Kachin Rangers. Later, when I got out of the hospital, I went with Father James Stuart, who was kind of a symbol to all of us and who had been a missionary in North Burma, left the hospital one afternoon and drove down to Nazira, Lieutenant Colonel Ray Peers' Detachment 101 Headquarters, sort of a tea plantation. I stayed there for 30 days. I got to know Peers, and all of his staff, and a lot of his people coming and going from the field. I actually flew into Burma on some drops and so on. I got a good feel for what 101 was doing. It was a classic operation. And we probably have patterned our special forces doctrine more after the operations of Detachment 101 than any other single operation of that type. Part of it because it was classically successful, part of it because Peers documented it extremely well.

JWP: Did you ever have contact with Jim Ward? He talked to the Command about 101. He lives in St. Pete.

SVW: A fine man. Just a fine man.

JWP: He and Danny Mudrinich live, I guess, just across the street from each other.

SVW: I know Jim well. Jim invited me out to talk to the Detachment 101 Association at their annual session in San Diego about 1975, I guess. He invited Hunter at the same time. It was the last time that I saw Hunter prior to his death.

JWP: What do you think of Hunter's Galahad?

SVW: It is essentially accurate. There is a bit of bias that runs through it. A healthy bias cutting all the way through it, kind of a bitter bias, making his own case. Nonetheless, I think that historically, it has some value if anyone wants to understand the operation.

JWP: Was there bitterness--I don't know if that is the right word--that he wasn't remembered . . .

SVW: No. It doesn't come through the fact that he wasn't promoted or given greater responsibility. It was that his advise was not followed, and the unit was mishandled.

JWP: Anything else on the 5307th, before we move on?

SVW: We could talk about it for the next month! Nothing leaps out at me right now.

JWP: Its applicability to today's Special Forces Group or special operations forces?

SVW: It's more applicable to the Rangers. By fortuitous happenstance, it is good that the Rangers have the Marauder colors and the Marauder insignia rather than Special Forces. Special Forces is Detachment 101.

JWP: Yes, sir. So you left Burma and came back and instead of going to West Point because of the physical, you went to Benning?

SVW: Briefly, what happened, I came back and went to the U.S Military Academy Prep School Detachment at Amherst College in Amherst, Massachusetts. I had amoebic dysentery, mite typhus--the scourge of our organization--and

malaria. My malaria continued to return. I lost a lot of weight, was very weak, wasn't feeling good, so I went to Westover Air Base. I arranged a West Point type physical off the record and flunked it in spades! At that point, requested relief from the program. The doctor said that if you ever take a physical in this present shape, they're going to put you out of the Army immediately. So I said, tear it up. I requested relief from the program and reassignment to Benning. I went to the Infantry School where shortly thereafter, I got the job of teaching combat leadership at the Infantry School.

JWP: Then you developed a course and taught it. Did you base it heavily on your experience in Burma?

SVW: Initially, yes. But the task was so broad. The course had been taught by a lieutenant colonel of World War I fame--Congressional Medal of Honor, Distinguished Service Cross, several Silver Stars--by the name of Cy Parker, a North Carolinian. Cy Parker could give some peptalk-type lectures to young officers, like a football coach talking to a football team. He was revered, loved, and was just totally effective telling his own stories--how you get soldiers to do that one thing that they are trying to avoid-- go forward under fire. I realized that the subject was too complex for my own limited personal experience so I talked to every successful platoon leader, company commander, battalion commander, regimental commander that I could find, and I took copious notes. I developed about 60 hours worth of lecture units based on finding people who had tried things that worked, trying to analyze them, put them together, group them, organize them. Colonel Red Reider came down from West Point, took all my lecture notes back to West Point, and made it the basis for instruction at the Military Academy. That, to me, was a very great compliment. It was quite a task for me. I wasn't schooled as a researcher. I was just out of high school when I got in the Army. Probably the first big research job I ever tried to do. Anyway, it was a successful course. I gradually built the leadership committee up to six or eight people. I simply became one of the junior instructors. I left Benning in late summer of 1947 and went into the Russian language and area program.

JWP: You became a Russian FAO, and then from 1948 to 1951 you were in Europe in doing various things.

SVW: Yes. I can't go into it even now in great detail. I spent a year and a half at Columbia University Graduate School, and then three years in Europe as a student in a little outfit they called Detachment R. During 1948-1951 I was in student status, but doing all kinds of crazy things that were furthering my knowledge and understanding both of Russian and European languages and my knowledge of the Soviet Union. I traveled as a diplomatic courier around the periphery of the Soviet Union, sometimes taking considerable liberties with "periphery." Johannesburg, South Africa, was hardly on the periphery, nor was Manila, but there was a chance to take a pouch there and so I did. I took

advantage of a chance to transit from Moscow to Vladivostok. I audited classes at Moscow State University until they spotted who I was and kicked my fanny out. We'd go into Moscow and arrange for shift couriers. We would take a little leave in Moscow and stay there sometimes as long as six weeks before we'd have to bring the bags back out. I also worked liaison duty out of Potsdam with the Soviet Group of Forces, Germany, liaison duty out of Vienna with the Soviet Group of Forces in Eastern Austria, and escort duty with the Soviet Repatriation Mission in Salzburg, Austria. I was associated with CIA operatives in an informal, semi-structured kind of way, spotting, recruiting, and assisting in some operations with the objective to get the agent assets on the Soviet soil. I got involved in that on a part-time basis. That was the closest to special operations. These were operations supported by the old ARC Wings. I think you're familiar with that.

JWP: Yes, sir.

SVW: You put unmarked C-54s over some very strange territory during that period. I was involved part-time in that. Later, it turned out to be extremely valuable experience for me.

JWP: It was intel collecting and then developing a network . . .

SVW: Intel collecting and developing, yes. In effect, I was working on a part-time basis for the CIA. They were training people and getting them into the Soviet Union. A very rough infiltration problem. Infiltration being one of the primary stages of a special forces operation. I learned a lot about it, first-hand, and in about the toughest circumstances in the world.

JWP: You mentioned that you audited classes at Moscow State University. You literally went and sat in on the lectures?

SVW: I'd just go in and sit down. I would be wearing an old, East German suit. I'd sit down and carry the same kind of notebook they were carrying and listen. I wasn't trying to collect intelligence or do anything embarrassing to the United States government. I wasn't trying to offend the Soviets. Every once in a while--I've done this subsequently--the Soviets would give public lectures, both indoors and out in the parks, and I've always loved to get in a group of Soviets with my little notepad and listen to those. Listen to the comments from the crowd as well as what the fellow is saying. It is good language practice, too!

JWP: You then had an assignment in the White House and then, also, the Agency for three years after that?

SVW: The White House assignment was actually at 708--I believe it was--Jackson Place. On the square in front of 1600 Pennsylvania Avenue with the OCB, then Operations Coordinating Board, later pulled into the NSC structure. Back in those days we had the Psychological Strategy Board, and then it was changed to the Operations Coordinating Board during the Eisenhower days. The head of PSB and then OCB was Nelson Rockefeller, and then Elmer Stots. In fact, I had two offices at the same time. I had one in the Office of the Secretary of Defense and had an office over at Jackson Place with the OCB. My title was Consultant on Soviet Affairs. So I would read papers, write papers, do research, and so on on things that people were concerned with as they bore on the Soviet Union. It was a busy job. It was a little over my head, frankly, and I tried not to let it go to my head.

JWP: Probably hard to do. [Laughter.] Did you get involved with reviewing plans or something for the Special Forces Group which had been established by then for partisan resistance?

SVW: Earlier. Prior to the job that I've just described, I spent two years with the Army General Staff with then Office of the Assistant Chief of Staff, G2. It's now DCSINT. During that period, I was in the so-called Special Projects Section of the Eurasian Branch. We had a lot to do with hand-holding and debriefing Soviet defectors. We helped people--potential customers to gain what they needed to know from us. I had set up a little room in the Pentagon as a debriefing room; by using the special status of our activity, I got it very tastefully furnished with a rug and pictures on the wall and all that sort of thing. It had no windows, it was small, but very, very tastefully done. I'd sit there with, oh, a Soviet major who had come across, a few weeks or few months earlier, and people would come in and talk to him on my schedule. I would act as interpreter. I would take him to my home for dinner, trim the Christmas tree at Christmas time, and all that kind of thing. I worked with the CIA in terms of handling those kinds of folks.

I also served the group we called the Soviet Consultant Group on the eighth floor of the old Post Office building, at 12th and Constitution. It included a former Soviet chief of staff of the field army, a former Soviet chief of staff of an air army, a former Soviet chief of staff of the Baltic Fleet, an ex-division commander, an ex-regimental commander, and so on. We used them in a somewhat similar fashion although we fed them with Soviet periodicals so that they could be updated. These people had come out of World War II, had been taken prisoner by the Germans, and had not wanted to go back. Incidentally, the success of that operation was what got me the kind of attention necessary to pull a young major into the lofty recesses of the Operations Coordinating Board and the Office of the Secretary of Defense. It wasn't that I knew so much, but I knew people who knew things and how to get at them. I was beginning to develop some skill as a writer--not enough, but some.

So those two years, and then the Advanced Course down at Fort Benning to get reglued, and then I was on orders for Korea when I was yanked off those orders and assigned to the Office of Special Operations in the Office of the Secretary of Defense. The Assistant to the Secretary for Special Operations then was General Graves B. Erskine, US Marine Corps, retired 4-star. His deputy became--after I left--then Colonel Edward G. Lansdale, US Air Force. I had a year and a half in that job and then the OCB. Then I was assigned to the CIA for the period 1955-56-57-58, roughly a three-year period.

JWP: When did you work with Lansdale?

SVW: I worked with Lansdale on two occasions. I worked with Lansdale from the end of March 1958 through the end of June or early July 1958. A period of 90 to 120 days, something like that. I was en route from a completed tour with the Central Intelligence Agency to the United States Command and General Staff College at Fort Leavenworth. So that was kind of a snowbird assignment in between these two. That was the first occasion I worked with Lansdale. I worked for Lansdale a second time from 15 June 1961 through 29 June 1963 when Lansdale was then the Assistant to the Secretary of Defense for Special Operations. I was the Deputy Assistant.

JWP: He was the SACSA then?

SVW: No, SACSA was a totally different animal for the Chairman. There was great competition between SACSA and ASD Special Operations or the ATSD Special Operations.

JWP: ATSD--?

SVW: SO.

JWP: SO. Like our ASD SO/LIC of today.

SVW: That's right, except Assistant to as opposed to Assistant.

JWP: Let me back up and ask you one thing. You said you did work with some of the Special Forces Groups--I guess it was probably the 10th--in developing plans for resistance and--

SVW: The two years I was on the Army General Staff as a special projects intelligence officer, I worked very, very closely with the office of the chief of special warfare, General Robert McClure. With Wendell Fertig, LeRoy Stanley, Russell Volckmann, Aaron Bank, and there were three or four others in that office.

I had worked my way into the innards of Army intelligence in the Pentagon quite well, knew my way around. I offered to General McClure to give him and members of his staff a weekly briefing of 30 minutes to an hour on matters in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union, primarily, although we didn't neglect other parts of the world, on intelligence of possible interest to special warfare. I asked him if he would like to have that and he said, "Would I! Absolutely." So I then went chasing down to Major General [Alexander R.] Bolling's office and informed the lead horseholder there that "General McClure has asked me if this can be done and I think it is a good idea." [Laughter.] They were delighted to have an additional customer, so they thought it was a good idea and fine. He took it in to Bolling who said okay and put a big "B" on it. There we are. We put things in one end of the pipe and then run around the other end for it to fall out and say, "look what just came out of the pipe!"

These were all source briefings. I remember we were particularly interested in the resistance situation in Poland. I devised a series of acetate overlays--one for each month to plot wherever a guerrilla-instigated incident would occur. I put these overlays on a map. After about six months, you could almost draw the areas of operation for the separate groups. [END OF SIDE 2, TAPE 1] Once in a while there would be some sort of strange anomaly, which I, in my excitement, was inclined to overlook and which proved fatal because it turned out that the Poles had infiltrated what was initially the beginnings of a genuine resistance movement. They eventually assumed control of it and turned it into a magnificent strategic deception. We bit lock, stock, and barrel! And I was one of the leading masticators. I learned a lot. I have been hung up on the subject of deception ever since. I think we flub it very badly, but that is a separate subject. There was an elderly civilian, a guy by the name of Dr. Robert McDowell. I think his first name was Robert--the last name I know was McDowell. Bullet-headed, bald man who had been with Tito during World War II, and was also up in OCPW, McClure's shop.

JWP: Was he in OSS?

SVW: Yes. So I did spend a great deal of my time during that period of August 1951 to August 1953 working with Bank, Volckmann, McClure, Stanley, in both the psychological operations as well as Special Forces arenas--largely in a supporting capacity. Initially on a voluntary basis, but I got myself so enmeshed that it became part of my job. I was their intelligence contact point on the Army General Staff. They were under the G3, who for part of the time was Maxwell D. Taylor; I was under the G2, who for part of the time was Alex Bolling, later Partridge--Major General Richard C. Partridge. I kind of created that job, and then it became official. I also acted as the link between us and the Chief of Psychological Warfare, and this group of Soviet consultants that I created in the

old Post Office building. When they wanted things they would come to me because they had learned that I could facilitate them getting them.

JWP: Current information?

SVW: Largely information of a doctrinal variety, interpretive analyses of trends and things that had taken place in the Soviet Union. We'd sit down and we'd read Red Star and not understand what we were reading. I would hand it to them and say, "What does this mean?" They'd read through it, and I'd get a one-hour lecture as to where this come from, what it meant, and what it portended for the future. If someone were to bring you a copy of "Army," with a think piece--somewhat futuristic--and a guy looks at it and says, "I can't make any sense of this, what do you think of it?" I'd read through it and say, "Well, I think these are historically the antecedents for this development. Here are some of the problems they are going to run into, here is where its headed, and here is where there is going to be some resistance. These are the people who don't like it." If I can sit here and can do that, then a man who had spent 20-25 years in the Soviet army and had gone through all of their schools, could take a similar Soviet document and do the same thing. It worked. It was sound.

JWP: What did you think of the mission of the Special Forces Group in the early 1950s?

SVW: In East European terms in those days, a valid mission. Let's try to keep it unclassified. Let me simply say this without going further, not a valid mission today. Times have changed.

JWP: That's something we might want to have you come down and talk to the Command about it then. I think it would be kind of interesting to compare the two. You mentioned you went back to Fort Bragg, at the Special Warfare School, in 1959-1961, to help develop a course on CI warfare. Can you talk a little bit about that? That was really before President Kennedy had pushed the Special Forces in the CI direction.

VW: Yes. I mentioned that for about 100 days in the spring of 1958 I worked for Lansdale. I had come back from clandestine services in CIA and was in transit to the 1958-59 regular course of the Command and General Staff College. During that 100 days I worked very closely on a personal basis with Lansdale who had become Erskine's deputy in the Office of Special Operations. Lansdale loved to tell stories about his Philippines experiences and his experiences with Diem in Vietnam. I would sit with him by the hour. We took a number of trips together. I spent a lot of time in his home. His wife and my wife were good friends. I guess that 100 days was probably the most educational 100 days I've ever spent. It had an emphatic impact on me. His philosophy about small wars; about

politico-military affairs; soldier with his rifle slung, working with his hands and helping the people. Those sessions haunted me all through those ten months at Leavenworth.

JWP: Didn't hear much of that out there, did you?

SVW: No, no. That was during the "Iron Man" McGarr days. We were nuking everything in sight with tactical nuclear warheads. So much so that I had to spend an additional six-eight-ten weeks becoming a nuclear weapons employment officer, which was simply a ticket you had to have punched in those days. So I learned how to join them in broadcasting nuclear weapons around. But, once again, I was placed on orders for overseas; but this time, my wife was ill and my retarded daughter was ill. So I had to ask for compassionate consideration from the Army and an assignment where I could be with my family and have them near a major military hospital. So they quickly changed my orders and assigned me to Bragg. I was assigned to the Special Warfare Center and was appointed to the position of Director of Instruction of Special Warfare School. It was a peculiar kind of thing because I had just been promoted to lieutenant colonel, and I wound up junior to a number of the people whose chain of command--was through me! Little awkward, initially, but it finally worked out well because I worked at it very hard. I always found that if you treat your subordinates with respect, you gain a lot of respect in return. A couple of these guys became full colonels and still insisted they didn't want anything changed--still wanted to work for Sam. I'm not bragging, but it just made me feel so good for that to happen.

JWP: I'll bet it did.

SVW: Anyhow, psychological operations, Special Forces operations, unconventional warfare--a chance to really dig back into those things in depth and in exquisite, consummate detail. Lean days. Castro had just taken over Cuba and was beginning to export his revolutionary notions south. Things were happening in Indonesia. Things were not totally dormant in the Philippines. It began to be clear that things were also beginning to happen in Africa south of the Sahara, the Belgian Congo. It was clear the Soviets were exporting revolution and we were behind the curve.

My boss--the commanding officer of the center, and the Commandant of the School--was a Colonel George M. Jones. He had been an airborne regimental commander in the Pacific during World War II. Splendid gentleman. The Assistant Commandant was a Colonel Newman Smith. Jones was not a brilliant man, but he was one of the most active listeners I have ever run into. He wasn't the sort of individual who wanted simply to preserve what we have. He was always striving to improve upon what we have. There lies a very--as far as I'm

concerned--a very deep psychological notion, that is, not to preserve but to improve. I really, really cottoned to that kind of thing.

We began to talk about the fact that the wave of the future was probably going to be Communist revolutionary warfare--subversion and aggression that would be as much political and economic as it was military. There was a total gap between the Department of State and the Department of Defense because we didn't know how to put military and political together in the kind of mesh that Lansdale was always talking about. So I began developing some course concepts that I thought we should be teaching about the soldier with his rifle strapped. I'd sit down craft out statements such as, "In many of these developing societies, the only non-atomized government can be found in the country's armed forces." It was the only element capable of decisive action of any kind. These armed forces prepare for war, but like fourth of July firecracker salesmen, seldom find themselves where hot lead is being exchanged. So there is a lot of latent energy going to waste. They should be harvesting fields, building roads, teaching kids in the barrio schools, doing other constructive things for their society, and being a true brother to the people by forging a bond between themselves and the people. In that way, the overall welfare of the society can advance. That's Lansdale-kind of philosophy.

Why do the Communist infiltrators and subversives find it so easy to stir things up in these countries? Because there are needs and wants that are unmet and unfilled. Because the rotting, historically anachronistic, governmental infrastructures of despots, which were blind to the true needs of the people, need to be changed! The world was changing, and only people who can adapt to change are those who are going to survive. On and on and on in these kinds of things. I drew diagrams, illustrations, pulling together the same kinds of anecdotal material that I did for the leadership classes at Benning 14 years earlier. We didn't know initially what to call the course. We couldn't have called it the counterrevolutionary warfare or counterrevolutionary operations, or counterresistance operations, which has the wrong kind of smell. We settled initially on counter guerrilla operations, recognizing that that was only the tactical part of the overall problem. Finally one night at 2 o'clock, in building 3004, I was in my little office, working with a couple of officers, drawing on the blackboard, and trying to figure out what we're going to call this course. I was writing possibilities on the board; I wrote, "counter-insurgency." And I said, "Whoa, we can go home, now." I drew a circle around it, and said, "That's what we are going to call it." That became the term, then, throughout government for a time. Now "Foreign internal defense," and we have also called it "stability operations" and referred to it as "nation-building." The "counter-insurgency" and "nation-building" terms I still like.

JWP: FID is too antiseptic, it really doesn't convey anything.

SVW: Much too. Anyway, some Foreign Service Officers came through on a tour, a predecessor to the Senior Seminar. For some reason, they wanted a briefing on special warfare, and Jones decided they should hear our briefing about my new course. I worked almost all night, got all my slides and drafts together, and gave it to these guys. And they went ape! They absolutely went ape. The next thing I knew, John N. Irwin, II, the Assistant Secretary of Defense for National Security Affairs, was down with a group of people also to be briefed. He said, "I want this course taught." The Department of Army said, "We're not interested. We don't want to get into this. This is foreign to our mission." Irwin said, "All right if I buy it and have it run?" "Be our guest--put up the money, fine."

The first course was taught for Foreign Officers only. There wasn't a single American officer in the course. Members of the class included people who went on to positions of importance in a number of countries to include a Vietnamese colonel by the name of Nguyen Van Thieu, another one by the name of Nguyen Duc Thanh, who became the Minister for Revolutionary Development. Thieu, of course, was president when the government fell. There were a number of officers who became province chiefs in Vietnam. The next time that it was taught, it had already attracted the attention of President Kennedy and there were a lot of American officers in it. Unfortunately, when the course was actually taught, it was taught by my old buddy, Logan Weston, from Burma. I was off in the Philippines making a movie with Warner Brothers called, "Merrill's Marauders." I'd written it, but wasn't even on the scene when it was taught. By the time I got back, I had been transferred to Lansdale's office in the Pentagon.

JWP: When you were establishing the course and developing it the course, did you go back and look at the manuals that Volckmann had written based on his . . .

SVW: I looked at everything I could find. I talked with Blackburn about his experiences in the Philippines. I looked at everything Volckmann had written. I looked at everything Bank had written up to that point that I could get my hands on. I went back through OSS files that I could get my hands on. I talked in great depth and detail with Ray Peers and got Ray Peers to come down and give some lectures at Bragg. Peers was a full colonel at the time. I talked with more junior officers in the 77th Special Forces Group who had had some experience in World War II with the Jedburghs and with the Maquis. I talked to people like Bill Peach. I never talked to Colby during that time; Colby was not available. I wish that I had, wanted to, knew of him, knew that he would have something definitely to contribute. Funny, I was reaching for him and couldn't find him; and years later, I became his Deputy. Anyway, I went around and talked to as many people as I could, and I read as much material as I could get my hands on. Early on when I started putting this course together, there wasn't too much I could find. It was based as much as anything else on the Lansdale philosophy when the Lansdale philosophy was the other side of the coin of Giap's "People for People's

Army." Just turn that coin and you've got Lansdale looking at you with what you do about "People for People's Army."

JWP: When you talked to General Lansdale, did he ever tell you how he developed his philosophy and his doctrinal views?

SVW: No. I think it was part of the man's personality, a part of his philosophy of life. It all began to develop as he found himself in circumstances where he either had to act or advise others to act in situations where this philosophy would work. His most productive period--and it was a miracle of the two coming together--was spent with [Ramon] Magsaysay. He first met Magsaysay when he was an obscure Philippine Congressman, and the two of them formed a fast friendship. Lansdale, again, was one of these people who was a tremendously good listener. Probably above everything else, he was a political psychiatrist. Chiefs of state in the Far East would come in, lie on his couch, and tell him, in effect, what their problems were. He would sit, listen, and ask questions. He would probably give them very little in the way of advice, but ask them some very, very penetrating questions. And they would walk out for some reason, walking on air. Here was a guy with round eyes and a big nose who knew how to listen, ask good questions, and give them a feeling of worth. I've seen him do that so many times for people like Nguyen Cao Ky, Thieu, Le Nguyen Khanh, but particularly in the Philippines. That was really the area in which he was super. It wasn't something he had studied, wasn't something he had sat down and sort of figured out, and written out as a treatise a' la the Communist Manifesto. It was sort of the man, himself. He did things, said things, responded to things, went back after the challenge was over, reflected on it, and then he would write some things down. It was experientially evolving.

JWP: There is a professor at the University of South Florida that has written a biography of Lansdale, and it will be out this fall. October, I think. Evidently he was able to sit down and talk with him three or four times before he died. I'm hoping it's going to be good, but I don't really know.

VW: I hope it will be. It deserves to be good.

JWP: I wonder if Fort Bragg would still have your course outline, notes, and whatnot?

SVW: The guys at Hurlburt Field told me the other day that they are developing some kind of course. I said, "Why don't you go up to Bragg and find my old course notes; they'll help you a lot." They said, "Which one?" Because I developed two courses--I developed that one on counter-insurgency in 1959-60, and then I developed another one in 1968-69 on military advisor operations-- the Military

Assistance Officer, the MAO. The MAOP, as we called them. But that was almost ten years later. Some of the same thinking went into it, without question.

JWP: Do you know if they still exist?

SVW: I haven't found them, and I don't have them myself. I would say the chances are good that the MAOP course--which was a six-month course we called the Command Military Assistance Officer Command and Staff Course--should still be around.

JWP: In 1961, then, you went to ATSD-SO. By then had the OSD officially incorporated CI as part of special ops?

SVW: Initially, we had kind of an anomaly. The Erskine office-- called the Office of Special Operations--still existed. It had become involved in sensitive intelligence operations, principally, as were already beginning to occur in 1958 when I came through there and spent some time with Lansdale, working especially in the SIGINT field. When Lansdale's office was set up, it was focusing on Vietnam. Lansdale went to Vietnam and visited Father Warren, a Catholic priest who led a bunch of Catholics down the middle of the Delta sort of like the trek of the Arcadians, you know? He set up a fortified village. Lansdale visited them, spent some days with them. This was in February 1961, after Kennedy had taken office. The Saturday Evening Post published his article entitled "The Village that Refused to Die." Lansdale had written it as a report, and then it was published in the Saturday Evening Post. It is a good piece. So Lansdale was oriented on the war in Vietnam and on our advisory efforts in countries in the throes of Communist-inspired and supported insurgency. He was very, very much was a point of Kennedy's plow as Kennedy began to talk about counter-insurgency and beefing up the Special Forces. Erskine's office was eventually phased out. Lansdale's office was expanded slightly. Counter-insurgency became the magic bandwagon that everybody was climbing aboard. Next thing we knew, a special office was being formed in the Joint Staff, sort of cheek-by-jowl with the Director of the Joint Staff, and the title of the incumbent was Special Assistant to the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff for Special Activities.

JWP: SACSA.

SVW: SACSA. The first incumbent was a diminutive Marine major general by the name of Victor H. Krulak--nicknamed, "The Brute." "Brute" Krulak. Krulak set out systematically to destroy Lansdale's office. Lansdale made a couple of mistakes, himself. Krulak eventually succeeded. Lansdale's office was dissolved in November 1963. I had left in June of 1963 to go to the War College, but it was clear then the shop was on shaky legs. Lansdale never established a dialogue with McNamara. Simply was not there. McNamara finally reached the point that

he wouldn't spend one second of his time with Lansdale. Lansdale would come in and talk about the X-factor in war, and McNamara would want to leap out the window. If you couldn't weigh it, measure it, thump it, add it up, or something like that, McNamara didn't want to hear about it.

JWP: Was it personalities then?

SVW: Different chemistries, different personalities, speaking different languages, different concepts, wavelengths, everything. Crosswise. Square and round--wouldn't fit. So I dealt with McNamara and Lansdale didn't. He rarely ever did, and when he did it was in writing. Gilpatrick was the Deputy Secretary, and I dealt with him all the time. I worked a lot with Al Malinski, Joe Carfano, tremendous amount with Cyrus Vance--a lot with Vance. I found that he was an individual who understood these things and was brilliant, compassionate, caring, concerned, and hard-working. Vance was an individual who wasn't trying simply to preserve but to improve. I worked a lot with CIA, a lot of work with the White House, the NSC staff, and a lot of work with the Department of State. [END OF SIDE 1, TAPE 2] In 1962 I came out on orders to the National War College. Lansdale said, "You can't go now, you'll have to be deferred a year." We were just getting into some very important things. He felt like he couldn't possibly spare me. He got McNamara to agree I would have my choice as to which war college. I wrote the personnel system again and requested to be deferred from National War College 1962-1963. You'd have thought I'd put a handful of feces in the middle of the personnel officer's desk. So, in the fall of 1963, at my own choice, I went to the Air War College. Now that was influenced by north Burma. We would not have survived, let alone fought successfully, but for the fantastically effective air support that we received in north Burma, behind the Japanese lines, in so many different guises. I simply wanted to go down to Maxwell and find out a little more about air power. So I had a very comfortable year. I didn't know it at the time, but it was more of a gentleman's course than the courses at the other war colleges.

JWP: Did they actually have a course on support to guerrillas, or anything like that?

SVW: Nothing even remotely resembling it. I think we did have Johnny Allison down giving a lecture on one occasion about how they did it in Burma, but nothing else. We had a lot of political strategy, a lot of national strategy. Averell Harriman, Brzezinsky, and others coming down and talking about the future of the United States in the world at large. It was probably good for me to have think big questions.

JWP: Any of them talk about Vietnam?

SVW: Very little.

JWP: Our national interest, there?

SVW: Very little. 1963-64 was before it heated up. Once again, because of family illnesses, I was looking for a place that could . . . I had had some very rough assignments, and my family had been the tail of my trail around the world. Although the Army had always been very, very good to me, I didn't take some of the traditional ticket-punching assignments--the unaccompanied tours--that I should have. I'd get an off-beat kind of assignment in an out-of-the-way place, and I'd tuck my family in pretty close to me while I was going through it. They probably wound up being subjected to more stress and strain than if I'd had normal sentence. Anyway, I was on orders to remain behind at the Air University Air War College as the Army member of the staff. I had already picked out our house on Colonel's Row.

I got a call to go to Washington and be interviewed for a job in Vietnam. It was the very thing that the Army had helped me avoid--because of the family situation. The number three fellow--Rufus Phillips--in the US AID Mission in Saigon had gone out of the country and come back to the United States to bury his father. While he was gone, Ambassador Henry Cabot Lodge pulled his visa and said, "He can't come back, I don't want him any more." Phillips had been the Associate Director for Rural Economic Development. It was becoming a very hot activity area.

They were looking for a replacement. I was considered primarily due to Lansdale's influence, and to a degree [SECDEF] McNamara and Gilpatrick, and some of the folks I had worked with in CIA, State, and USIA. I'd never worked with anyone from AID before except when I set up the course down at Fort Bragg. This is a digression but it should be filled in quickly. I set up the course down at Bragg, and, as I said, the Foreign Service and ASDI became excited about it. Next thing I know, a senior CIA officer, a USIA officer, class 1 Foreign Service officer, and a senior officer from AID--four--came down to help us put the finishing touches on the course. A development that just warmed the cockles of my heart. These were name-brand kind of people. The CIA guy had been the fellow who had run the successful operation in Honduras earlier. The State Department Class 1 officer was Hank Ramsey, kind of a name-brand Foreign Service officer, an old pro. They all came down, went through my program, and made suggestions. We tightened, revised, added things, and so on. From that point on, at Fort Bragg, there was always a State, USIA, AID, and CIA rep, which was good. I don't think they have them all now, and there have been some lean periods when we have had some people who have been a bit of a waste of time. Once again, the Lansdale idea of meshing these different schemes is part of the same problem in government. Through those kinds of contacts, my name had been surfaced as one possibility to take Phillips' place in Vietnam.

So I went to Washington and was interviewed by Bill Sullivan, Mike Forestal, and a number of other younger members of the Kennedy clan. Eventually, I was selected and went on a Participating Agency Service Agreement (PASA), which is a legal provision allowing an individual to be loaned by one agency or department to another and at whatever grade and pay rate he can gain from the gaining agency. So I went to Vietnam as a lieutenant colonel with my uniform in mothballs and my military service continuing for retirement and promotion purposes only as a Class One 1 Foreign Service Officer. I landed in Vietnam making more money per month than Westmoreland was making--a lieutenant colonel! [Laughter.] And I then wound up with a personal rank of "Minister" on top of that which made me protocol-wise, senior to every lieutenant general in the country. They never let me forget about it when I finally came back to the Army and put my colonel's uniform back on.

JWP: Before you go on, can I ask you a couple of clarifying questions? When you were working for General Lansdale in OSD, there is no formal inter-agency group or anything like that that brought in the State Department, the CIA, and all the other people that would be involved in . . .

SVW: There were two NSC level groups. One was called simply, "The Special Group." Its terms of reference were NSC 5412/2. That was the group that later became the WASAG, or the 303 Committee; it has had various nomenclatures. They considered sensitive activities of a politico-military nature, covert nature, and so on; and then offered them to the President for recommended approval. I staffed that group for McNamara and Gilpatrick. Deputy Secretary Gilpatrick was the one who normally attended representing the Department of Defense. The other group was chaired by General Maxwell B. Taylor, Military Representative to the President. It was called "The Special Group/Counter-insurgency." We called it "The Special Group/ CI." It also had CIA, AID, State, and so on representatives. Now, those two groups, at that level, meeting once a week, were the groups that coordinated on matters pertaining to counter- insurgency, overseas military interests. They did not get into questions of strategic nuclear exchange and into questions of Soviet armored divisions thundering through Fulda Gap. Anything below that level fell into those two groups' prerogatives.

JWP: Would those two groups, then, be comparable to the Coordinated Board for LIC that the NSC is supposed to have now because of the legislation?

SVW: Exactly. Exactly. Exactly. That's why incidentally we put it in.

JWP: One other question about that time period. You mentioned that Lansdale was focused primarily on Vietnam from 1961 to 1963.

SVW: No. I said that his focus--as his office was set up--was Vietnam. He became--by the fall of 1962--very heavily focused on Castro in Cuba and Operation Mongoose.

JWP: Is that the infiltration of Cubans back into for intelligence gathering and whatnot?

SVW: That was part of it. Operation Mongoose had to do with how we overthrow Castro.

JWP: Do you know a guy named Grayson Lynch. I think he ran a lot of those missions. Lynch is his last name, but I'm not sure of his first name.

SVW: I know the name; I cannot place him right now. It doesn't bring a picture. The CIA representative to the Lansdale working group on Operation Mongoose was Bill Harvey. You probably heard of Harvey. Part of the time, Desmond Fitzgerald--and several others. Lynch was not at that level.

JWP: I think he was an operations . . .

SVW: Ted Shackley was CIA chief based in Miami. I went down to see Shackley a number of times.

JWP: When he was looking at Vietnam, what were his ideas or goals for Vietnam as far as American military assistance or security assistance?

SVW: He was trying to replicate some of the things that he had done successfully with Magsaysay. But Lansdale, unfortunately, was an anti-bureaucrat. He never took the trouble--and he could have done it with the little finger of his left hand--to oil the cogs of the bureaucracy as he sort of moved along with it. He always wanted to confront it, combat it, and he was very combative, in a quiet, chuckling sort of way. Nonetheless, he would go for the jugular very, very quickly. So he made a lot of enemies. It doesn't make any difference how good you are because bureaucracy can eat you if you don't learn how to go with the flow at least part of the time. He didn't. He didn't go with the flow very well. That got him, eventually.

JWP: So he was really looking at a small American presence working to develop an economic, political, social . . .

SVW: Yes. He was concerned with the other war in Vietnam. He was very intent in the spring of 1964 that I should go back. He and I became older brother/younger brother. We really became very, very close. Very intent that I should go to Vietnam and take Phillips' job, and carry out the kinds of things that

he and I--Lansdale and I--had talked about so much. I should put it a little differently--that he had been telling me about. I was normally in a listening mode. He only listened to me when I talked to him about Soviets because he knew nothing about the Soviets. When I started telling him stories about the Soviet Union, he'd sit back and listen and smoke his pipe and laugh. But let us get to the Pacific, it was always my turn to listen. So, he was responsible for my going out and being in Vietnam 1964, 1965, 1966, and 1967, working the forerunner of what became the [Robert W.] Komer and then the [William C.] Colby operation, CORDS [Civil Operations and Revolutionary Development Staff]. As a matter of fact, responsible for the creation of CORDS, which was a development that was easily 10 years if not 15 years, too late. If it had occurred a decade earlier, history would have been written differently.

JWP: What kind of resistance did you find when you tried to set up the CORDS program?

SVW: MACV wanted to run it. I always get along extremely well with Westmoreland, especially if I let it be known very clear that I was going to be responsive to his control. Sometimes I would sort of say, "Well, you tell me what you would really prefer in this area, and I'll try to work it that way." At that point, he would become milk and honey. But if I were involved in something that didn't quite fit some of his grandiose notions--and I'm not putting Westy down because God only knows, he was good to me--he tried awfully hard to get me promoted to general officer, but a fellow by the name of Jimmy Breslin took care of that for a couple of years. I don't know if you've ever seen the Breslin piece of not.

JWP: While you were in Vietnam?

SVW: While I'm thinking about it, let me get you the Breslin article. [BREAK]

JWP: The article by Breslin--I just read it. It was very interesting. I can see why you wouldn't be too popular.

SVW: Yes. I felt like a "blank" in a punchbowl.

JWP: About Vietnam, can you summarize how maybe special operations forces were used during Vietnam and the problems operating with conventional forces?

SVW: There for a period, the only real show in Vietnam of a political-military or military nature, from the American side, was the Special Forces show. From the fall of 1962 to around, I would say, early 1966. As is so often the case, and this is a classic and it happened again on the end, Central Intelligence Agency, on the ground, gets involved with irregulars of one kind or another--paramilitary types,

dissidents. It is determined back at the level of the NSC Special Group/Counter-Insurgency, yes, it is in our interests to provide support for those people. Support is provided. The operation begins to evolve into something broader and more complex in scope and scale. Sooner or later, it outdistances CIA's administrative personnel and logistical and communications capabilities. It can become too large for their ability to run in terms of their capability to conceive of operations beyond a certain very limited scale. In other words, if an operational concept begins to embrace a lot of territory and a lot of people, it just runs off their map. They can only think in terms of a few people, and normally for a fairly short duration. Although sometimes they can support them on a long duration basis.

But there is a dividing line. We've never found it. Maxwell Taylor wrote a National Security Action Memorandum back in July 1961 saying that there has to be a dividing line, and we have to find it! Tremendous series of NSAMs. If you don't have them, you ought to get them. NSAM 54, 55, 56, 57, and 58--all July 1961. You want an historical reference point to where people were really focused on . . . especially this one that pertains to when an operation gets big enough, CIA has to turn it over to Defense; and Defense has to be ready to handle it.

JWP: I'll see if I can track that down at the Pentagon.

SVW: Some of them signed by the President, some of them signed by Taylor for the President. I remember them vividly. I was there in Lansdale's office on a Saturday morning when the whole package was brought over by a courier. I signed for them. I opened them up, and I was the first guy in the Pentagon to read them! I remember that very, very well. Anyway, Operation Switchback, in Vietnam--have you run into that term?

JWP: No, sir.

SVW: Where the CIA transferred their advisory responsibility, their funding responsibilities, their logistical and communications responsibilities to the US Army Special Forces to run the base camps with the Montagnard. CIA conceived and initiated the first string of base camps. The CIA ran them with some active duty military, mostly retired military, and CIA professionals. It began to get too big for them. They said, "Hey, Special Forces, here is a job for you." So with General Bill DePuy on the American [Army?] side--then a colonel--handling most of the negotiations, and with . . . I forget who on the CIA side, they worked up a very intricate turnover arrangement. I think George Morton was the 5th Special Forces Group Commander at Nha Trang, at the time. (Morton is in Walter Reed right now with cancer.) He was handling it on the ground. CIA eventually phased out completely except for liaison contact. Special Forces took it over lock, stock, and barrel. The takeover period and the whole operation to hand it from

one to the other was called Operation Switchback. It was exactly the kind of thing Taylor was talking about in 1961. Now this is 1963 when this is taking place.

This was when DePuy was the Deputy Chief of the Office of Special Warfare in the Pentagon, as a colonel. His boss was Major General William B. Rosson. DePuy was on the Army staff, having just come back from Vietnam. This was before DePuy went to Vietnam as the G3 of MACV. DePuy was handling the turnover-- the development of the policies necessary for the turnover back at the Washington end--not in the field, but in Washington. Morton was doing most of it in Vietnam along with the G3 of MACV who, at that time, was--Well, I'll think of his name in a moment.

Anyway, as the Deputy Assistant to the Secretary of Defense for Special Operations, I was monitoring, watching, and getting reports and so on on how this was working out and providing support as necessary and getting McNamara's "thumbprint" when necessary for this entire process--keeping him and Gilpatrick advised. I visited Special Forces base camps a lot during the 1964, 1965, 1966, 1967 time frame. In Vietnam, I had a hand in the initiating of the Revolutionary Development Cadre, a couple of initial, basic models that we established up in the northern part of South Vietnam. I had a hand in the development of the so-called Provisional Reconnaissance Units (PRUs). One each assigned eventually to each province. These were elite, scout-type units operating mostly at night and then on their own self-generated intelligence. The PRUs remained CIA-supported and CIA-advised. They were never turned over to anyone else. That was a very effective special operation. It became a part later, under the Colby, the Phoenix Program, and it got pretty bloody and attracted a lot of negative publicity. I think you have to control that kind of thing very, very carefully, and monitor it very carefully. All in all, in that type of war, at that stage of it, it was a very necessary program. [BREAK FOR LUNCH]

JWP: [During lunch.] In that type of war, how effective do you think those base camps were? It had become a conventional war, more or less.

SVW: They were effective enough to maintain--or come close to maintaining--stalemate, in that particular area. These camps by themselves were not enough to win anything. Carefully coordinated program involving the base camps and their patrolling and using flying units ARVN as tactical reserves--if it would have been well coordinated and if intelligence had been exchanged well, it could have been an effective way to hold the enemy at bay. It would have been then necessary for programs such as the one I was working on in my role as Associate Director for Field Operations of our AID mission to try to make local government more effective, more responsive to the needs of the people. So, we could have taken advantage of the kind of security that these other operations

could have given. We were developing health programs, public health programs, education programs, agriculture programs, irrigation, farm-to-market roads, better fertilizer, better seeds, better livestock, economic support, local police programs, and so on. I did a six-month experiment before I came home in Long An Province. [END OF SIDE 2, TAPE 2] My title was United States Mission Coordinator. I was a deputy and a chief of staff to Lodge who fancied himself the senior American representative in Vietnam in charge of our entire effort. Westmoreland would, in a sense, acknowledge this during meetings of the Saigon Mission Council each Monday morning. The rest of the time Westmoreland thought that he, not Lodge, was in charge of the war and that Lodge was his political advisor. The two of them never straightened out that misunderstanding. Anyway, with Lodge's acquiescence and Westy's grudging acquiescence, I went down south of Saigon to Long An Province armed with some unusual authorities. On the American side, the whole countryside was stovepiped. Every agency had its own lines running back into Saigon. The Vietnamese had the same thing. The USIA guy, if he didn't want to, wouldn't speak to the AID guy, in the same province. The MACV province military advisor wouldn't speak to the CIA advisor if he didn't want to. So each was fighting his own separate, little war. This was the fall of 1966. I said to Lodge one day, "This is crazy. Will you let me go down to a province, and you and Westy give me some sort of authority over all these things, and let me show you how it should be done for six months?" His Deputy Ambassador, William Porter, said, "I think that is a splendid idea." Lodge said, "Well, what am I going to do? Who is going to take your place?" George Jacobsen had wanted my job for a long time, and I said, "Give it to Jake, he'll have a good time." He said, "What am I going to tell your wife if anything happens to you?" I said, "It won't."

So November 1966 I went down to Long An Province and stayed for six months. The resultant briefings at about the end of that period to President Johnson at Guam caused him to say, "That's the way I want it done everywhere in Vietnam." Lodge pulled a little bit of a twist on Westmoreland, and then Westmoreland turned around and got that whole responsibility, however, for CORDS, which was created out of it and placed under MACV. He regained control of what was going to be a runaway movement. That's how CORDS was born--out of that experiment.

JWP: Was it successfully able to centralize things at a provincial level?

SVW: CORDS?

JWP: Yes.

SVW: Yes. With some minor exceptions.

JWP: Did the CIA stay out of it?

SVW: In some areas. Some of their very sensitive intelligence operations remained stovepiped.

JWP: Was there some on the military side that went to SOG?

SVW: There was some of that. That applied especially when the SOG operation was into areas where there was no province presence or when it was cross-border. There was no way on earth for cross-border operations being placed under CORDS just by the very nature of what was going on.

JWP: CORDS was really started, as you said, 10 or 15 years too late. Even at that late stage, could you see any improvement in the situation?

SVW: Yes. Does the name John Paul Vann mean anything to you?

JWP: I've heard it.

SVW: There is a book coming out in September written by Neil Sheehan. It has already been selected by the Book of the Month Club as their choice for the month. There were four installments that already have come out in successive issues of the New Yorker.

JWP: I haven't seen it.

SVW: I think I can lay my hands on the first one right now so that you can look at it. You'll need all four, and you'll find them infinitely worthwhile.

JWP: Then this book is about Vann's experiences?

SVW: Yes. Vann was in Vietnam during the early part of the war as a senior division advisor with the 7th Division in the Delta at My Tho. When he came back to Vietnam, he worked for me for a considerable period of time in the provincial operations. He then eventually reached a point that after the Ambassador and the commander in chief of the Military Assistance Advisor of Vietnam, he probably the third most important American in the country. Vann was killed in a helicopter crash about 1974, maybe even 1972, 1973. Lots of the things you're interested in, Vann was involved in. Sheehan is a very capable reporter, a capable writer and picks up on them very nicely in his four installments in the New Yorker. That will probably be covered in even greater detail in the book. Sheehan told me on the phone the other night he was going to send me a copy. Lansdale's book, In The Midst of Wars, is well worth reading.

JWP: Did you have a feeling that special operations were kind of a side show over there in Vietnam?

SVW: Yes. Special operations, as a conflict expands, inevitably and increasingly become a side show. They seldom, almost never, are the decisive element in a major conflict. Almost always, they are a contributing element. That may be one of the reasons why, in the past, they've been looking upon them and one of the reasons why promotions in the past have been somewhat limited over in the special operations arena. I've always felt that-- and this is sort of an abstract observation. When we look at some of the spectrum of conflict divided into the three thirds of high-intensity, mid-intensity, and low-intensity conflict--give them whatever titles you like--that Special Operations Forces play a three-star role at the lower end, a one-star role in the middle third, and a two-star role at the other end. Their primary playing ground is within the envelope that we refer to as low-intensity conflict. When low-intensity conflict gets spread to the point that there are lots of conventional forces thundering and rumbling around, then special operations and the significance of their contribution tend to diminish. That happened in Vietnam. I would say about the time we passed the 80,000 mark in terms of numbers of troops in Vietnam. By the time we got past even three divisions, it was too big for special operations to be the decisive factor any longer because the character and the dynamic itself began to change when you get that many forces involved.

JWP: Extrapolating from that, then--and we'll talk more about this later--you would say that the US Special Operations Command should be focusing on LIC to a great deal?

SVW: Yes. We want to make sure they don't confuse special operations and LIC. One is an activity, the other is an activity arena. There is a tendency on the part of too many people, still, to oversimplify it and use them synonymously. That is a terrible mistake.

JWP: Do you find that in Congress when you worked with them?

SVW: Yes. I found it when we were drafting the legislation.

JWP: Did you have any involvement with MACV-SOG?

SVW: Only to a limited degree. I was aware of who they were and what they were doing. I had no command responsibilities in that area. I knew [John K.] Singlaub very well. I knew [Donald D.] Blackburn very well. I knew a lot of their subordinates and would see them from time to time. We would chat. I never pried. I knew [Charlie] Beckwith. Folks in the Mike Force and the other special operations elements.

JWP: Dick Meadows?

SVW: Oh, yes. I've known Dick for years.

JWP: Yes. He is a part-time consultant to us, now.

SVW: Yes. I know that. I was sitting with Lindsay when he was talking to Dick. Dick Meadows is one of the bravest men I think I have ever known. A fellow Virginian, incidentally. He is from the western part of the State of Virginia. He was placed in bondage by his father when he was 12 years old, sold to another man.

JWP: Is that right? I hadn't heard that story. I knew he joined the Army very, very young.

SVW: When he was 15, in order to break his bondage.

JWP: Is that right!

SVW: I was helping David Martin when he was working for Newsweek on a story Martin was doing on the KGB. Just for the hell of it, I set it up so that Martin was leaving my suite at Fort Myer as Dick Meadows was coming in. Martin--now the CBS Pentagon correspondent--never misses a face or drops a stitch, saw him and began to go back into the room, and I shooed him on out, "You're on your way, friend." He was so curious because he knew who Meadows was and knew what Meadows' role had been in the Son Tay Raid, and wanted to know what was going on.

JWP: When was this? After Desert One?

SVW: After. This was fall of 1981, I guess. He asked me a couple of times about seeing him, and he said, "This guy is a hero of mine." I said, "You don't know the half of it." I said, "I'll tell you something you can't do anything with--all right?" He said, "Yes." "He was in Tehran waiting for the guys to come in, sitting there for three weeks, and had prepared a safe reception for them. He stood out in the middle of the desert pointing his antenna toward the satellite and was told, 'Stand it down, we're going home.' So he had to make his way out of the country as best he could." "Jesus," he said, "What a story! Why can't I use it?" Because, of course, it's not available, yet. "Would you let me know when it might be?" "Yes," I said. I'll have to admit I was playing games with him, but I like the guy and he'd come down and talk to my classes at Hampden Sydney College. So finally, it was clear to me that bits and pieces of it had leaked enough to the point there was no reason to hold it. I called Meadows and told him that Martin is going to be getting in touch with you, and if you talk with him, he is probably going to do a

cover piece." He said, "Will that be good or bad for me?" I said, "Both." So he wound up talking to him, and if you recall, he did a cover piece on Dick Meadows. He wound up being very tough on Beckwith. You may recall that part of it. But Charlie ran his mouth, and you saw what Martin did to him.

JWP: Any views on the effectiveness of SOG?

SVW: Against the backdrop of history--we are now between a decade and two decades away from the American involvement--as the years pass you increasingly diminish the strategic and political significance of SOG. You never know because one of these operations can prove almost critical. You gamble that that might be so, but it is rare that it does.

JWP: Have you seen a book by Major Krepinevich, Army and Vietnam, where he talks about the Army not learning anything from Vietnam--the insurgency/counter-insurgency lessons weren't learned. The Army doctrine didn't change after the war.

SVW: I haven't seen the book. I believe he's the young fellow who was a West Point instructor. He's the fellow who reports that [General George H.] Decker, after meeting with the President, said President Kennedy wants us to go counter-insurgency, but it will destroy the Army so we're really not going to do it? I haven't seen the book, but I'm aware of it. I've got to get my hands on it. What I have heard about it sounds right.

JWP: So there is institutional resistance to looking at LIC-- what we call LIC, now--counter-insurgency, revolutionary war, that type of thing. Have you encountered that?

SVW: Yes. I think I have a fairly balanced view about it, however. I'm not Messianic as far as special operations are concerned. In 37 years mostly in Service, I've had a lot of maverick assignments and fully a third of my time was spent in special operations or special operations-related things. I've also had to play a lot at grand strategy, have had to become totally familiar with war on the Eastern Front, and the Soviet strategic doctrine and their world outlook. I have had enough to do with the exercise, manipulation, and application of military power in the gross sense, that I recognize what gives us this constraining ceiling on holding down the level of military confrontation, that is, in terms of scope and sweep. It is the existence of the strategic nuclear capability and the existence of what you termed "heavy forces." Without them, the needle would jump all the way back up, again.

The analogy is not perfect, but at least it is suggestive-- they are the police force and the fire department. They keep things held down to where you worry

about the stray arsonist, and you don't need to turn loose your whole police force and your whole fire department trying to run him down. You try to do it with intelligence and a couple of people keeping an eye on your suspects.

They used to try to say that at Bragg, particularly when we came back from Vietnam and felt very strongly about the advisory operation business. People who were effective military advisors were just as valuable to the United States of America as people who were effective military commanders. Thereby, the really good advisors needed to be rewarded in a professional way. So we kind of went to work on that. I used to say to them, "Look, you lampoon these guys who are professional soldiers and who are killers as being uncouth, musclebound, crude, cold, and so on, but without them, you probably wouldn't have anybody to advise. They are what pushes the action over into your area, so don't knock them. Be glad they're there." If we get in a big war, from Korea on up toward World War II, we must never forget that it is going to be won by the grunts, by the dogfaces. It won't be won by special operators. It will be won by the infantry guy who gets out there, crawls across the ground getting shot at, eating dust and dirt and mud, digging holes in the ground under continuing artillery fire and so on, and hanging on by the skin of his teeth holding terra firma and saying, "This is ours-- we're not going to give it up!" And then reaching out and getting a little more and a little more--occupying territory! They are the guys who win major wars. I told the students at Bragg that we don't win wars. I said, "Never forget that. Don't knock them. Understand that they are just as valuable as you consider yourself to be and that we have to work together. When we get the 'We-They Syndrome,' we're just killing each other." That still applies.

JWP: Yes, very much so. After you came back from Vietnam, you went back to Fort Bragg?

SVW: Yes. A very interesting, very fruitful period. A chance to be innovative. I was at a crossroads. I could have stayed in the Foreign Service as a Class 1 Foreign Service Officer. I had been offered the job with tenure, so to speak. Or come back to the Army. I chose to come back as a colonel. I had been promoted in absentia, as it were. My first promotion ever, on the outstanding list. All of the others have been regular time. I took over the 6th Special Forces Group, oriented toward the Middle East. We were the only group that was really training. We were understrength and being post-detailed all over the place, picking up pine cones and that kind of thing. People were saying, "If you can't train, forget it." We trained. I had the Orbit Wings series of exercises until USREDCOM got excited about the fact that we were working with the Air Force, not under USREDCOM auspices, and jumped all over us. Each year I would have my group strung from Montana to the Mexican border down through Monte LaSalle National Forest south of Salt Lake City, Sunspot, New Mexico, and down in the gorges just south of Fort Huachuca. We'd rip and tear and try to get troops

out to play the part of counter-insurgents. We'd go out and organize the countryside. I would actually wind up running the whole maneuver--both insurgents and counter-insurgents. My guys would infiltrate rival used car dealerships and drive off from separate lots in pickup trucks that they had borrowed to work against each other. We stirred up the countryside. We'd really get the natives involved. We found the natural areas of conflict and confrontation and competition, get in and play along those lines, like a football quarterback. We'd just have a ball. You can get a little drunk with power that way, sometimes, when you see how easy you can do it even when you're doing it on a maneuver. It worries you a little as to what would happen if you were doing it for real, playing those kinds of games.

We used to have pocket exercises with the 3d Special Forces, the 6th Special Forces Group. About every other Saturday afternoon, evening, and early Sunday morning I would get all the cooks, bottlewashers, clerk-typists, personnel clerks, and so on, and run them through a night exercise, down below the Gabriel demonstration area, through the so-called Vietnam village that had been built down there. Oh, man, they hated me. We'd get all bedraggled, muddy, and worn out. By the time the sun was coming up we'd be in the Gabriel demonstration area in the bleachers. I'd have the kitchens come down with doughnuts and coffee. We'd sit there in the pre-dawn gloom and critiqued what had happened, what we had gone through, what had been learned, what mistakes had been made, and where things went well, and so on. I cited people by name who had done well. About the time it began to get light, I'd say, "Well, that's about it. Let me just do one last thing. How many of you expect to be in Vietnam in the next six months?" Scattering of hands, of course. "How many in the next twelve months?" More hands. "How many in the eighteen months?" Almost all the hands would be up. I'd say, "Well, that's why I took your Saturday afternoon, all your Saturday night, and this part of your Sunday morning. Go home to momma now, clean up, and don't hate me quite so much." I got letters over the years from these guys saying, "I hated you. But I am so glad that you made me crawl through the mud that one night because later when I did it, I knew what it was like." So, that's kind of what it's all about.

After 18 months of commanding the Special Forces Group, Flanagan--then a brigadier general, shortly to be promoted to major general--had me come up as his special assistant to write a new course of instruction to be called the "Military Assistance Officers' Program Command and Staff Course." It was kind of an updated version, a successor to the old counter-insurgency course. It was broader in scope and had more things in it. It was a foreign area specialist training course in miniature. It was the kind of course [END OF SIDE 1, TAPE 3] that I would like to have had between Columbia University and Detachment R--my three-year training program in Europe. It was designed to give an officer who was going to be a foreign area specialist some sense of the grand strategy, some feel for the

political, economic, and military mix, cross-cultural communications problems, cultural barriers, culture shock, and a very, very heavy dose on psychological implications of functioning in an advisory capacity. How do you advise people who are insecure, xenophobic, suspicious of you? How do you advise when all they want is your money? We worked on that very hard.

The first course was run in the fall of 1969, I believe. I said six months. I think we finally got it down to only 23 weeks, if I'm not mistaken. It was a successful course. Some fine officers went through it. I run into them even now. It was continued up until recently. It had been truncated down to two or three weeks by TRADOC, which said we can't afford that much time for these sort of frivolous things.

I then became the Assistant Commandant, running the whole school. Once again, there were three colonels who were senior to me. Finding that, Flanagan asked them in one by one and said, "Are you willing to work for a man who is junior to you?" LeRoy Stanley said to him, "Sam?" Flanagan said, "Yes." Stanley said, "Sounds good to me, it would be an honor." I never had anything that made me feel so good in my life. The other two said essentially the same thing. So there I was exactly where I had been ten years before, except that at least this time, I was a colonel--not lieutenant colonel--with colonels working for me.

Anyhow, then lightning finally struck! Despite Jimmy Breslin. I was selected for promotion to brigadier general and assigned as the Assistant Division Commander for Operations of the 82d Airborne Division. Two hundred days worth. Having an absolute ball. Just more fun than a barrel of monkeys. Very, very simple, straightforward kind of things. Sure, we had personnel problems, logistical problems, and a lot of personnel turbulence and drugs and larceny and all that kind of thing. But you take them in bite-size chucks and work them out.

Telephone rang one day, a familiar voice on the other end of the line says, "Greetings, the United States Ambassador in the City of Moscow awaits you." I hung up! Phone rang again, it was now-retired Lieutenant General Danny Graham saying, "Hey, don't hang up, Sam, I'm serious. You're being sent to Moscow as the new Defense Attache." We hadn't had a defense attache in Moscow before. I would be the first general officer there since 1950. I told 18th Airborne Corps commander, Lieutenant General John G. (Jack) Tolson. He said, "Sam, for the last time in your life we have rescued you. We have reglued you. You're on your way. You're a sure bet for four stars. Why do you want to throw it away again and go chasing off on some sort of wild, reckless maverick kind of scheme?" I said, "I go where I'm sent." He said, "We can break this for you. We can keep them from getting you." I went home, talked to my wife about it, stayed awake all night long agonizing, and then called him back and said, "General, let the folks in Washington call the tune. I'm not going to try to manipulate this either one way

or the other." He said, "Well, we just lost you. You could retire as a brigadier general, you know that, don't you?" "Chance I'll have to take."

JWP: You were there for two years?

SVW: 1971, 1972, 1973--two years, a little over two years.

JWP: Then you went to DIA?

SVW: To DIA first as the Deputy Director for Estimates and then the Deputy Director for Attache Affairs where I ran defense attaches around the world. Then I became Deputy to the Director of Central Intelligence for the intelligence community. The DCI wears two hats: he commands CIA, but he is also the mission's senior intelligence officer and has a responsibility for the rest of the community. Well, I was his Deputy in that latter job. When Colby was fired, George Bush took over. I immediately handed in my resignation to clear the deck for Bush to pick whomever he chose. I was asked over to the Pentagon as Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense, Intelligence Programs and Resources. I held that job for two months and was appointed from that to be Director of DIA. I retired from that job on the 31st of August 1977.

I retired at Fort Bragg. They gave me very, very fine sendoff. I flew back into the local town--Farmville--by sunset. I went to my brother's house up on the hill, changed clothes into something like this [indicates the jumpsuit he was wearing], walked downtown, hung my retirement medal on the little plaque in the courthouse lawn with the names of kids who come from this area who died in World War II. I walked across the street, rapped on the door of the old armory where it had all begun for me--nobody answered, of course, it is an insurance agency building now. I turned around, said, "That's thirty." I walked the seven miles back in the opposite direction, walked up on the porch of the old farmhouse over the hill, here, said, "I would like a glass of tea, please, ma'am." That was the end of my military career.

JWP: You went full circle, then, so to speak. When you were in CIA and DIA . . . on the topic of covert operations, did you see a need to, you know, cycle military units through that or be cognizant of that special training or anything like that?

SVW: Let me broaden--in my response--your question. I worked very, very hard to improve intelligence support for special operations of various kinds--be they white, grey, or black. I also worked very, very hard to raise the priority of intelligence requirements as they concerned instability in the Third World nations--specific Third World nations where the priorities had been very, very low. From the Washington level, the primary focus is, and always has been, the Soviet Union in the strategic and the major conventional sense. I didn't want to neglect those.

Indications and warnings were still at the top of my list because of the cataclysmic results if you go to sleep at the switch, there. I was responsible for intelligence training in the Defense Intelligence College and tried to ensure that people going through there were sensitized to this low-intensity arena where I felt things were happening. I've been stuck on Khrushchev's speech ever since I first read it, from the time he gave it on 6 January 1961 to the Supreme Soviet, as I recall. Talking about "voini natsionalenovo osvobozadeniya," the "Wars of National Liberation." That's where it had been for some time when he gave his speech and that's where it has been ever since. I was a little voice crying in the wilderness in the Pentagon and at the interdepartmental level, pushing this. Nonetheless, I tried not to be strident about it, but to make sure people didn't overlook the fact that things happening in this arena were causing the political coloration of the world map to change. Not the latent strategic nuclear threat or the threat of a major conventional attack, be it in Korea, the Middle East, Southwest Asia, or Europe. Things were going on right now and have been for twenty years where countries were being painted from blue to white to red--and remaining red! We were not paying enough attention to the fact that our influence was slowly being whittled away. While at the same time, we were becoming increasingly dependent on strategic mineral resources from Africa south of the Sahara. We could no longer build a jet engine or computer without resources that had to come to us in ships' bottoms. We were a maritime nation, and we had things to protect abroad. We couldn't suck our gut in and plan only for the big bomb. This was a day-in-and-day-out kind of thing. We may have come wretching and vomiting out of Vietnam saying, "Never again," but the only way it would be never again would be if we attended to Vietnam type of problems while they were still in their incipient states. I got some listeners, not too many. It wasn't where the big bucks were and wasn't where the headlines were.

JWP: Did you run into any Congressmen or Senators who were interested in that at that time?

SVW: Oh, sure. My old friend Dan Daniel, from this District, always listened. From the time he visited me in Vietnam, we went around the countryside, and I tried to educate him as to what the war was all about.

JWP: Is that where his interest in Special Operations Forces came from? Or did it precede that?

SVW: Partially, at least. I would say it was no older than that. I talked to a lot of Senators and Congressmen, but Dan in particular. Dan and I had a running kind of gambit. He was going to stand down and wanted me to run to take his seat in Congress. I always thought it was a joke until the last four or five years when I realized he was serious. As a matter of fact, I have his voice on the answering service right now, calling to tell me, "I'm stepping down. I want you to meet me at the local hotel and we'll have dinner. Let's plan your announcement

to run. I was just recovering from my wife's death and had a lot of things to work on. It just didn't feel right, and so I backed away from it. I helped select the guy who ran after Dan died suddenly. Dan was simply going to retire as of this November. The guy won in a walk, so I know that I would have won, also. It didn't feel good, and wouldn't feel good if I was sitting there right now in Washington. I'm more comfortable for the moment. Although it is still a little frustrating. . . . I'll back up a little and be more specifically responsive to your questions.

JWP: People who have heard your talk on planning special operations in the SOS course said that you have ten or twelve points on how to go about planning for special operations missions. I wonder if you could briefly go through those?

SVW: It would be difficult to go through them in an ad hoc fashion and do justice to them. That's a very tightly packed three-hour lecture which really should go for about five. There are things that I leave out that I just don't have time to get to. I really should work on them and make time for them. One of the things I will sometimes do is use a fake scenario, which I pretend is real, that it just happened. I've had people leave the room to check to see whether the Embassy in Katmandu, Nepal, had just been overrun with two hundred Americans, including some from the local community, being held in the basement of the American Embassy. The DCM had been beaten up, and the CIA station chief killed, as well as the Defense Attache. I named them by name and so on. We learned this from the British Embassy through London and passed to Washington. NSC now in emergency session. This is going on, that is going on, here is what is happening here. We may be interrupted while we're talking. I finally wind up saying, "I'm lying like a rug. But let's put this scenario in the backdrop and let's talk to it." So we wind up in talking about a direct action special operation.

Then I back off and talk about special operations in general trying to give some appreciation for what they are. I do not give a textbook definition--the paragraph that says, "This is the quintessential definition of special operations." I try to develop three sets of assertions to help place special operations in context. The first set of assertions is the principles--like the principles of war--especially applicable to special operations. I list some ten. I ask the class, for example, "What is the most important principle for a successful operation?" A number of hands will go up. What is it? They'll say, "Surprise." Right, it is. Probably the key one. But to get surprise, what do you have to have? Security. Okay, we've got two. In order to get surprise, you are implicitly exercising another principle, what is that? The initiative. You can string them up like beads, that way. Set those to one side.

Then I talk about characteristics of special operations. High risk, high gain. Nearly always involved pitting a small force against a larger.

Intelligence-dependent and intelligence-driven. There are some 22 characteristics applicable in a particularized way to special operations. I set that series of assertions and anecdotes to one side.

Then I talk about the requirements, fulfillment of which is essential to successful special operations. These are backdrops for the principles, characteristics, and values. The forces have to be joint. No one single Service has enough capability to address all of these characteristics or apply all of these principles. I pointed out how the aborted mission to Iran came apart because we had neglected that complete jointness. This is something that I kept screeching about when I was helping put together our capability to combat terrorism. It is like having a cavalry squadron here without horses. It won't work. That's where it come from.

With the establishment of US Special Operations Command and with the office in Washington, we have at least in a more realistic way addressed the jointness. Now, I also imply in the characteristics and requirements discussion, that we have to lick the interdepartmental problem, here. As you can see from what we have been talking about today, that is an area where I have probably spent more time than any other one. Special operations, by their very nature, are more political than they are military and at least as economic and psycho-social in their consequences as they are military. They're not only joint, but they're interagency and interdepartmental. So if you don't have an infrastructure, the rubric, to bring together interdepartmental considerations in a carefully coordinated, understandable fashion, you're not going to get there.

Another big point that I try to make early on in that presentation--and I think that this is a fundamental one, one that your Command hasn't fully grasped, yet--is that special operations and Special Operations Forces fairly neatly can be broken down into two categories or two subdivisions. One wing is those forces involved in direct action missions such as raids, heists, in wartime assassinations, kidnappings, retrievals of pilfered nuclear devices, taking down terrorist-held plane or an embassy--the list is endless. Direct action involving the younger, more athletic kind of guy--the military's version of the National Football League All-Star who runs 25 miles, scales a 500-foot cliff, does 50 push-ups, and dashes off to war. The modern-day gunslingers. Finely honed, finely trained; the surgeons to be used very discretely-- spelled both ways.

The other wing--indirect action. Advisory actions. People, some of whom graduate from the earlier direct action group, maybe a little paunchy, thinning, a little grey on the temples, wrinkles, can't gunsling quite as fast, may not be quite as accurate, eyes may be going bad a little bit--but canny, clever, wise, with well-contained, well-controlled egos. They will work quietly in the shadows, eat a lot of crap, and be patient. The kind of advisor I was talking about earlier. A man who

can make things happen without his hand ever showing. I've seen a number of those over the years in Special Forces. And I guess there's not a model in military uniform that I admire as much--certainly not any more-- than that old Special Forces master sergeant or Sergeant Major with his third CIB and a couple of purple hearts, face weather-beaten, wrinkled, walking with a limp, talking with a kind of slow drawl, twinkle in his eye, patient with the kids, tough, stubborn--but patient, and wise beyond measure. If you put a guy like that in the bush with a bunch of little brown men, or little yellow men, or little black men, he becomes a granddaddy in a hurry. He has got to be philosophically very deep. If he's not religious, at least he's got to have something in the way of spiritual convictions or spiritual philosophy to sustain him. He can't be just a killer. That won't carry him. He won't be able to meet what he has to deal with. We don't have to have a whole hell of a lot of them, either. We have to pick them and take care of them like antique automobiles, really give them hand-by-hand care. I don't mean to spoil them, but protect them, save them, let them know they are valued. Onesy's, and twosy's, or threesy's, or maybe six or eight or ten, in the right place with a fairly carefully conceived and clearly understood mission, these guys are your preventive medicine specialists. They can save you from sending three divisions to that area later on to protect something that you need to protect for the United States. That's not very dramatic, not even romantic, except to people who think deep. But we need them, they exist. We probably may be a little short on brains as to how best to use them in terms of strategy and the ability to use them in a long-range sense. With our revolving-door kind of government we want results just like this [snaps fingers rapidly]. Results that occur in someone else's Presidential administration don't count. We have to be able to think over those boundaries into two and three administrations ahead. We don't do that very well. Unless we can think that way, we won't make best use of this asset. But it is a priceless asset. These people do exist. They're my favorite heroes. They're the Gary Coopers of "High Noon." Guys that don't want to fight. Peace oriented, but get them in a corner and you never want to take one on! Like I say, might not have the endurance he had when he was younger, he may not be quite as fast snapping one on, but he is a lot smarter than he was as a kid. You don't want to take him on. If he has to, he doesn't mind dying because he believes in what he is doing. He has to believe in what he is doing in order to be effective. Well, that is the second wing. I don't know whether your Command sees him or not, you know. You see the first one clearly, identify very well with the first one. Whether you see the second one and believe in him, I'm not sure. [LeRoy] Suddath saw him, but it was something he felt, but couldn't express.

JWP: How about his replacement?

SVW: He won't see him because Guest has primarily a hot-war orientation vis-a-vis AirLand Battle, TRADOC-oriented.

JWP: One of those things that I don't understand is how these TRADOC-USSOCOM links to SWC are to work.

SVW: This is a sensitive intramural issue. You want to be careful with this tape so that it doesn't fall in the wrong hands. We don't want to add to any of the strife that exists already. But that is a very sensitive, painful, and pointed issue right now. It could hurt what it is that we are trying to do.

JWP: At Bragg and Monroe?

SVW: Yes.

JWP: What do you think the prospects are for continued support in Congress, particularly since the death of Dan Daniel?

SVW: The window of opportunity has all but slammed shut. It's going to get some fingers when it slams, regrettably so.

JWP: I talked to staffers on the Senate side last week who seem to think that there's still one or two Senators interested, but there is no one on the House side to pick up the mantle from Dan Daniel.

SVW: Cohen is still interested. Whom else did they name? Rudman?

JWP: Rudman has an interest in it. He's not on the SASC, I believe. Nunn, to a certain extent.

SVW: Warner?

JWP: I don't know. I didn't really get any indication that he is very interested because Warner, I guess, was trying to kill the Bill or at least make it a "Sense of the Congress" resolution rather than mandatory legislation.

SVW: I kept him from doing it. I don't mean to sound like Mr. Big, but I know him real well, known him a long time. I went to see him, talk to him. He's always been very effusive in my direction. He was effusive in the presence of others, and in this case, he made some commitments that he wound up having to keep!

JWP: Desert One was always cited--along with Mayaguez and Son Tay, to a certain extent--but Desert One, Achille Lauro, and Grenada were cited by Congress and the staffers for reasons that compelled them to pass mandatory legislation to set up a unified SOF command.

SVW: The requirement for jointness that we talked about earlier.

JWP: The people on the Hill refer to the string of mistakes and foul-ups, to the bureaucratic resistance to correct them, to set up a command and control structure, and also to set up a policy-making board or policy-making apparatus on the OSD side and also at the NSC level. They cite the problems with the lack of doctrine, lack of interoperability, training, and these other things. When did you get involved in the process on the Hill side that led to the legislation?

SVW: I had calls a couple of times from two of Lunger's staffers who wanted to come by here and talk. I said, "Sure, let me know sufficiently in advance. I am very, very busy and I've got a lot of things going on, but let me know ahead of time, we'll arrange something." They never came! Then I had an alert call from Ted Lunger that Dan Daniel was going to call me and ask me to help with the final drafts of the legislation.

JWP: This would have been in summer or early fall of 1986?

SVW: Early fall. So Daniel called and I said, "Sure." He said, "I'd like you to spend at least a month." I said, "Twenty-nine days. If I spend a month, I'm going to get in trouble with my retirement pension." So I went up the middle of September and stayed until about the middle of October on a paid consultant status with the House Armed Services Committee. I knew generally what was afoot, and I had been tracking through various sources how things were working out. On the 16th of June 1986, I testified before Dan Daniel's Readiness Subcommittee following the Chairman of the JCS and the Assistant Secretary of Defense, ISA.

JWP: Armitage and Admiral Crowe.

SVW: Yes. Crowe on first, Armitage on second, me on third. That, of course, is in the Congressional Record. You can see what is there. Obviously, I supported the legislation and tried as tastefully as I could to decry its necessity. One, that the Armed Forces had made it necessary because of the deplorable--not the deplorable--but the inadequate readiness state of our Special Operations Forces. Thereby, the Congress was stepping into an arena where you should move with some temerity and on the basis of total exception where they were mandating to the Executive Branch to do something which should be totally the prerogative of the Executive Branch to do or not to do. It shouldn't have to be mandated. I still feel very, very sensitive about that.

I am a professor of political science at Hampden Sydney so I watch this tug of war between the legislative branches over a span of years, including the present period, with a great deal of interest. I hate to see it get lopsided either way. I

think it was a natural outgrowth of that testimony. In mid-June I was called back and a further call in August when arrangements were made to come in September to get with the staffers on both the Senate and the House side. Up there, as I'm sure you have spotted, the mice, in fact, do run the house, especially on the Senate side. To use Diem's phrase, "The mice are running the house." The Kenny Johnsons, the Jim Lochers, and the others, in some regards, are very powerful people, especially when they have something convincing to say to their bosses. Their bosses listen to them.

The situation when I arrived in the middle of September was the House and Senate staffers were at loggerheads. Ted Lunger was hard over pushing for some very, very tough stuff [the NSOA concept]. The Senate staffers were convinced that their bosses would not buy something as tough as what Lunger and company wanted. This was a situation kind of made to order for "Little Willy, the Boy, Nilly" to move in as an arbitrator, peacemaker, moderator, and compromiser. A person armed with a modicum of credibility in special operations could walk into this situation and say, "Hey, you're stuck here like a couple of stags with your antlers locked together. Let's fix this in a hurry and get on with it. You know you're crippling the whole thing." So it didn't take but a couple of days to get them backed off and make a few judicious changes. Clarity may have suffered a little bit in the process, but it was a mild price to pay for a real logjam that would have kept things from moving.

JWP: Ted Lunger was really behind Dan Daniel's bill, then, to create an NSOA?

SVW: Oh, yes, absolutely, absolutely. It was Ted, not Daniel. Daniel didn't know very much about the subject. Ted was sort of his Rasputin, his Duc de Richelieu, his Svengali--the guy in the shadows. Daniel was signing what Ted would write. Ted was masterful at it, and Daniel knew it was right and he trusted Ted. But his [Daniel's] grasp of the subject was very elementary, really. Very elementary. And Ted was hard over. He was being extreme in what he was insisting on. The Senate guys felt it just could not be sold that way. Ted wouldn't give an inch. So I got in the middle of the crowd, told a couple of funny stories, made a couple of suggestions, then people began to nod, and the first thing you knew we came out of the session and Locher had agreed to do a new draft. We came back, we quarreled a little more over the new draft, and he went back to do a second one. At that point everybody said, "Fine, let's just concentrate now on fine-tuning."

JWP: The second draft essentially was the Senate bill plus the House provision for MFP-11, a separate budget?

SVW: Exactly. That's exactly right. Daniel said had seized on some key issues. He said to me, "Whatever we get, I want a CINC with a checkbook. I do not believe it will work if that CINC doesn't have money. He has got to have his own

money. I want a CINC with a checkbook." He'd just repeat that one over and over again.

JWP: When was he telling you that?

SVW: Well, I saw him a couple of times during the summer of 1986. He'd come through here and call me. We'd have lunch together, a meal together. He also told me that when I showed up in September to be there for a while. He and I were just very close, personal friends. Frequently, he would call me on the phone and we'd talk. I would talk to Ted Lunger and find what was going on. Ted would keep me posted as to the state of play so that when Daniel would call I would know generally what was motivating him or what was causing him to question certain things or to be petulant about something else. So, I've been given a lot more credit as far as the legislation is concerned than rightfully belongs to me. There are folks who have had me as the drafter. Yes, I wrote some language, but it was language to be inserted to break the logjam.

JWP: Jim Locher was the principal author?

SVW: Jim Locher was the principal author and a very capable author. [END OF SIDE 1, TAPE 4]

JWP: Did you have the impression that Dan Daniel was using the NSOA (6th Service) proposal to force the Executive Department accept the unified command?

SVW: I think when Dan was convinced to try something, he moved from multiple motives. He was a very complex fellow. He wasn't necessarily a dumbbell, although he'd never graduated from high school . . .

JWP: Is that right? I didn't know that.

SVW: No, I don't think so. I think for a while he thought the sixth Service idea might be a good idea. I argued with him about it a little bit. He kind of fell off. He said, "You really don't think so? Well, maybe I'd better take another look at it." Those weren't his words [the NSOA proposal], you know, these were things written for him.

JWP: By Lunger?

SVW: Yes.

JWP: With your experience as head of the DIA, if there had been a National Special Operations Agency, would you have foreseen that it would have been frozen out from the establishment?

SVW: It is having a hard enough time right now working while it is completely subordinated to the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, in its present position as a unified command. Had it been a national agency, it would really have been frozen out. The armed forces community simply would not have accepted it. There would have been a higher level of resistance and resentment than currently exists, and the resistance and resentment in the present circumstances are slowing things down terribly, right now.

JWP: Did you talk to any of the other Congressmen or Senators besides Daniel?

SVW: I talked to [Earl D.] Hutto, talked to Daniel, talked to [John R.] Kasich, talked to [John W.] Warner, talked to [Sam] Nunn, talked to [Warren B.] Rudman,--

JWP: Cohen?

SVW: I talked to [William] Cohen in some depth and detail. I talked briefly to [Edward M.] Kennedy and Warner, in great detail.

JWP: In those conversations, did you get a sense of why Congress felt compelled to do this and what they were trying to do?

SVW: Cohen, Hutto, and Daniel--possibly Rudman--seemed to be convinced that this was the arena of greatest hostile activity for the United States foreign affairs, national security interests. The low-intensity conflict arena. They seemed to feel that these kinds of forces were more finely tailored and best qualified to deal with these problems and that we had allowed our readiness level to slip badly. Conventional commanders tended not only to disregard these types of forces but to view them with some disdain. That happens to be, I think, a correct appraisal. It was one generally shared and expressed--sometimes maybe not as cleanly as that--but generally expressed by each of the individuals that I have named. There was some reluctance, particularly on Nunn's part, to go this far in telling the Department of Defense what it had to do. He said, "I just don't understand. You would think the President of the United States, along with the Congress, says to the Secretary of Defense, this is the way things should go. If the President says this is the way things should go, he would do it, and people down below him would follow his lead and carry it out. I can't conceive of a situation where the Secretary of Defense has told me he's going to do so and so, and I have to assume he's going to do it." I said, "Senator, purely by happenstance, I happened to be in the Chief of Staff's office when shortly after General [George H.] Decker [CSA, Oct 60-Sep 62] came back from a meeting of the Chiefs with the President on this business of increasing our capability in the counter-insurgency area. To paraphrase him, he said to his staff, 'To do all of this would destroy the Army so we're just going to lean forward in our foxholes a little bit.'" Cohen caught onto that, and I've heard Cohen four or five times since then say, "Well, we're just going to lean forward in

our foxholes . . ." And Nunn looked at me rather sharply, somewhat disbelievingly, and then nodded as though, "Well, maybe you've got a point." He is very cautious, however, more so than the others. He's not as committed to this as some of the others.

JWP: I think he used that argument, though, on the floor when he was talking about the SECDEF has told them to increase SOF airlift in a five-year program, and they said, "Yes, sir, we're going to do it." Then two weeks later, they take the funds out of the program. So he realizes that happened at least on the SOF airlift. Anything else about the conference committee process? Any key points that we haven't discussed?

SVW: No. I found the young fellows involved to be bright, alert, highly intelligent, possibly in some ways rather unsophisticated as far as special operations and Special Operations Forces were concerned. As long as the individual talking to them who knew more than they about the business didn't try to talk down his nose at them, they would sit and listen very, very carefully, ask good questions, and if the answers were convincing, act on the answers. It was a very professional experience and a good one in that regard. I came away from it feeling kindly toward these gentlemen and recognizing that they are very, very important to the future of this whole activity. Again, I single out Locher being sort of in a category to himself, a little above and beyond the others in terms of his capability as a craftsman of words and his ability to grasp, understand, and balance factions that have come up.

I'm not sure, today, that they understand the extent to which the whole business is being slow rolled within the Department of Defense. There is some very strong indications of increasing resistance--almost defiance--on the part of people in positions of considerable authority within Defense who have taken the position, as one of them is quoted, "If we can hang out a couple of years, we'll get this legislation reversed."

JWP: I think that was the Chief of Staff of the Air Force, wasn't it?

SVW: [Nodded agreement.]

JWP: Is there resistance on both the OSD side and the JCS side?

SVW: Primarily on the military side, the uniformed side.

The other thing which I find really distressing and which, at a meeting of the SOPAG, I tried to get across to Secretary Carlucci as plainly and clearly as I could is that, while it still has to be worked on, we've got the business of "jointness" in our sights now, and Lindsay is working well to correct deficiencies in

that area. That's on track and we're moving upward. The area of grave deficiency, still, is the interagency arena where we lack an effective coordinating mechanism, an interagency doctrine, and a kind of comprehensible language in the interagency arena that assures that it's not the Tower of Babel--that we understand each other. We very, very much need that Board that was mandated in the legislation--which has never been responded to--and that we very much need the Deputy Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs, which was included in the legislation as a "Sense of the Congress" item. We need that position filled or an individual to assume these responsibilities on a continuing basis so that we start getting on top of the interagency issues as we are now getting on top of "jointness" issues.

JWP: The call for a National Security Council Board on LIC was that your idea or was that in the legislation before you got involved?

SVW: There was some draft language in the margin, as I recall. It had been discussed before, but it wasn't a typed part of the draft, as I recall, when I first saw it. As we sat and talked about it, it wound up being inserted as a more prominent part of the legislation. I felt strongly about it because of previous association with the subject and having seen, on my own backsides, what happens when you don't have it.

JWP: Exactly. Is it disconcerting to you that the Board has never met?

SVW: Oh, very! Very. I regard it as a very grave dereliction on the part of the Executive Branch that that has never been responded to.

JWP: Do you get any sense from the flavor of the presidential campaign so far that either one of the major candidates has a better appreciation for LIC?

SVW: No, not from what has been said. I know Bush very well. He is a personal friend, and I think that he will be amenable to suggestions in this area as long as they're not too dramatic or traumatic. I think he will be more inclined to move ahead with it than Reagan and the Reagan people have been. Reagan and Reagan's people simply haven't raised it in their sights as something important. To them, it has been just a sort of a side issue out there, somewhere.

It is interesting that the national press has never really seized on it, either, as an issue. They could at some point. What will bring it center stage in a hurry is for us to have a major event occur not of our own making. Something that is visited upon us that calls for us to respond in some major way, where we blow it as we did at Desert One. Then it will be front and center with all the spotlights playing on it like crazy. I kind of shrink away from that idea because I think USSOCOM is still not quite ready to mount that kind of horse and ride it.

JWP: The attention of the press and the media is so episodic that they don't even focus on the problems in Panama consistently, the Philippines, or any of these other hot spots. Even the bombing in Beirut didn't elicit a response from the Administration that I thought it probably would.

SVW: A bit fickle.

JWP: Yes. It is curious.

SVW: Fickle, but not capricious.

JWP: Were you strongly in favor of the checkbook--MFP-11?

SVW: Yes, yes. I have seen too many instances where we have needed things, and the programmed buys have slid below the thin red line that separates those things approved for this year's list and those things simply carried forth into the future. We need more priority. We need more visibility. The amounts involved are far, far less than they are in other major program areas, but they are nonetheless important and have to be met if we are going to bring our capability up to snuff.

JWP: Two of the organizational responses before the legislation-- one was a concept by General Meyer for the Strategic Services Command. Were you familiar with that at all?

SVW: STRATSERC. Not familiar in detail. At one point, I glanced at it, but I don't recall how it differs. As I recall, it gave the major role to the Army--possibly too much so. The Air Force has a critical role to play that they have never stepped up to. A fellow who expresses that as well as anyone else is a retired lieutenant general by the name of Jim Harmon--if he is still alive. Originally a member of the SOPAG. For some reason, he attended a meeting or two and didn't come any more.

We're talking about the old and slow aircraft that we can provide, as we did in the case of Vietnam, to indigenous air forces of Third World nations. We need to provide them with "shadetree" mechanics and the kinds of aircraft that can operate from dirt strips hacked out of the jungles that they can fly and maintain. Limited air power, of course compared to what we have, but this lift capability will allow them to engage in very effective civic action measures. It will allow them where necessary to apply air power against an insurgent, as airborne artillery so to speak. It's the kind of airpower that can evacuate wounded and sick and fly doctors around, drop leaflets, and these other things. Today's Air Force has flown out the other end of the pipe, so to speak, with F-15s, F-16s, F-18s, and B-1s. This type of talk is anathema to them. The Air Force needs to bifurcate itself in such a way that it can maintain this element alive and be able to provide, also,

that second wing for the Air Force advisor that I was describing for the Special Forces. I used the term a Special Forces Master Sergeant, but there is an Air Force senior sergeant or an Air Force warrant officer like him has a great role to play in this area, also. The Air Force doesn't think of it. The tiny SOS School at Hurlburt keeps the idea half-alive.

JWP: A lot of the Air Force officers only think in terms of direct action missions, with the gunships and infiltration/ exfiltration. Did you know anything about JSOA? Any comments?

SVW: Yes. I was a member of SOPAG when JSOA was born and when the terms of reference were written and so on. We saw them whittled down, whittled down, whittled down. Initially, we wanted a fellow who reported to the Chairman of the JCS as an agency head, or at least to the Chairman of the Joint Staff; and we didn't like that but that was the way it went. Then we saw him pressed down until he was no longer reporting directly to the Director of the Joint Staff but reporting to the J3. So he was back to SOD, already. He had gone right back to the original water level to a special operations division kind of thing. He had no more clout than the office had in the beginning. His authority was just chopped away to nothing. That process illustrated once again why some kind of legislation was needed to get this thing going.

JWP: Yes. Earlier, you mentioned that having Congress mandate to the Executive Branch how it should organize and what it should do. I didn't quite catch whether you thought that was a good or bad idea.

SVW: I said I decried the idea. I didn't think it was a good idea. In my testimony, I tried to get this across. I despised the idea that Congress would have to mandate this kind of thing to the Executive Department. It was not appropriate. It was an uncomfortable kind of thing. But, the circumstances in this case, nonetheless, justified in extremis that this be done.

JWP: After the law was passed and General Lindsay was eventually named Executive Agent for setting up the new Command, then the new Command was established, there was talk on the Hill about malicious implementation of the law. We've kind of addressed that it has been slow-rolled. Any other comments?

SVW: I think it has gotten more malicious, increasingly malicious as time went on. I think the death of Dan Daniel was a blow to this whole process because Daniel had simply had this one in his sights as one of his major concerns, and he would have continued to natter at the Department of Defense in a way that would have been very uncomfortable if they had been unresponsive. He had a lot of cronies--people who respected him--in the Congress who would have joined him

just because he said, "Hey, I need your help." He would have called in IOUs in order to get more signatures, more people making telephone calls, and so on.

JWP: When the tours of the current Chiefs and Chairman end, do you still see this resistance, this maliciousness? Of course, you don't know who the new personality will be, but I mean, is it institutionalized?

SVW: It is not necessarily personality-dependent. I think it's an institutional kind of reaction. It has been over the years. Someone showed me the other day the endorsement of a lieutenant colonel out in 4th Mech Division at Fort Carson, Colorado. One of his officers was requesting transfer to the new Special Forces Branch. He said, "I am approving this request but with great reluctance. I am doing it only as a favor to this officer. I regard the establishment of the Special Forces Branch as both dastardly and faddish, and I think, in time, it will go away. I regret very much that it is beginning to draw down on some of our best young officer talent." He was speaking a piece that many, many conventional commanders would join in on.

JWP: Were you a proponent of the Special Forces Branch?

SVW: No. I should enlarge on that one very briefly. In the late 1950s, 1960s, when the Military Intelligence Branch was established, I was invited to be one of the charter members, and I turned it down. I said, "I am a Combat Infantry Commander. I'll serve in Intelligence, but as a commander." I will look for people in key positions in Intelligence in whatever organization I have who have been commanders because I think there is great advantage to having been a customer of intelligence when you're a man producing for other customers. I still feel that way about MI, although Intelligence has become increasingly specialized and probably a better case can be made for an MI Branch, now, than when it was created.

I use that as a parallel--as an example. In the case of the Special Forces Branch, Special Operations Forces are already considerably divorced from the mainstream. In many cases there is bad blood between the two elements. It will only make it worse by institutionalizing Special Forces and making it a separate branch. That widens, rather than narrows, the gap. It does not give us the opportunity to be able to transfer in fresh ideas, fresh blood, fresh people, before they return to the mainstream. Now that we have a Branch, were I still on active duty and somewhere where I could input to the process, I would be looking every way possible to ensure that Special Forces officers frequently got other kinds of assignments that will put them in the mainstream. I would try to ensure that a Special Forces Group, X percent were non-Special Forces Branch but were from the other combat arms. That interlace is just fundamentally necessary. That's compatible with some of my earlier remarks, I think.

JWP: One last question to back up on. In this process, you said you testified in June to the House Committee. Did you have any dealings with people in OSD or JCS on this legislation? Captain DeBobes, Admiral Crowe's Legislative and Legal Advisor.

SVW: I never talked to DeBobes. I talked a number of times to then major general, now Lieutenant General Tom Kelly. I talked, I guess, an equal number of times to . . . gee, what's the guy's name--the Deputy ISA, Armitage's Deputy, a former Air Force lieutenant colonel.

JWP: Yes, it's the guy who helped plan Son Tay. I'm drawing a blank.

SVW: Well, I talked with him. I tried to . . .

JWP: Larry Ropka.

SVW: Yes. Larry Ropka. Through those two people, I tried to be completely open with their bosses so that I wasn't going around in the shadows, hiding in alleyways, or whatever. I also tried to get from them their key concerns so that I could make my own assessment as to which of their concerns might be valid, deserving of consideration, and ensure that somehow they were looked at hard over on the Hill. There have been a number of times that I have been consulted by these folks--indirectly by the Chairman through Kelly. On the 23rd of December 1986, Kelly and one of his colonels helicoptered down here, landed in the field out here, went over to the cabin, and sat there for half a day talking about the pros and cons of MacDill Air Force Base as the home of the US Special Operations Command. The Chairman wanted to know from me, from my connections on the Hill, whether or not that could be made acceptable to the proponents of the legislation in the Congress. I tried to list some of the implications, some of the necessary assurances, some of the caveats. We sat there and talked about it in detail, Kelly wrote them all down, and went back. The essence of my response was, "If you do the following things, you can make it work. It isn't ideal. You really need to be closer to Washington, but you can make it work." I realize you save sixty million dollars for fixed costs. You can't keep all your USREDCOM staffers and simply put Special Operations and Special Forces patches on them. You can't do that. You've got to move a lot of them out--most of them out-- as quickly as you can. Even though I recognize there is some hardship involved when you do it, that is one of the prices you pay. The Special Operations Command can't be seen as just USREDCOM with the signs painted over. It has to rise up out of the ashes of a completely disestablished USREDCOM. A number of other points--you have got to have a strong Washington office headed by this kind of a guy at this rank level and so on. They bought most of them and then called a couple of times and said, "Will you check these with the folks on the Hill and see if they'll hold still on them?" And I did. Those folks said, "Well, Sam, do

you feel the Chairman is right? Can this be made to work?" I said, "A qualified yes, it can be." So we avoided, by me being kind of a peacemaker on this one, we avoided that becoming a strong issue. It could have [END OF SIDE 2, TAPE 4] . . . I knew exactly where Tom Kelly was coming from, he knew where I was coming from. We didn't agree on everything, and that was fine.

JWP: General Lindsay essentially has said the same thing--that Kelly was always fair and above board. A lot of people said Kelly didn't have too much credibility because he was an Armor officer.

SVW: He's got a lot of guts. I have an association with the BETAC Corporation in Washington--just a part-time thing. At one point when the SOPAG was kind of down, the President of BETAC, Earl Lockwood, set up his own special operations panel. I don't know if you've met him or not--

JWP: I haven't.

SVW: But it turned out that his special operations panel consisted of the same folks that were sitting on the SOPAG, plus a couple of additional people like Admiral [Robert L. J.] Long, former CINCPAC; [General Paul] Gorman, former CINCSOUTH. Kelly came over and attended one of the sessions, and the whole group pounced on him and just chewed him to ribbons. He sat there, got a little red in the face, but took it. He was giving us a presentation that he was going to be giving the Chairman in a couple of days. He said, "Well, I guess I've never been before a more effective murder board." I just sat there listening to him, thinking, "Man, you've got some guts." It was a classified environment--we were in a SCIF--he was giving us some very sensitive things--

JWP: Was this on the establishment of USSOCOM? Or something else?

SVW: It had to do with subsequent developments and some of the doctrinal issues, command and control issues, things like that. I forget exactly what they all were. Anyway, there were a lot of penny ante things that Gorman and others jumped on him, jeered, sneered, and so on. He sat there with these former 4-stars "pugiling" him around, and his two stars gleaming, took it. "Yes, sir; no, sir; I don't agree with that, sir." So he rode it out. When he finally got up and left the room, I wanted to applaud. I thought he showed a lot of guts, a lot of patience, a lot of self-control. I have time for Kelly. He still very much has the trust and confidence of the Chairman. I believe he's earned it. I can see how. I can see why. I am concerned that USSOCOM is being kind of shut out, to include the Chairman. The Vice Chairman is murder on USSOCOM, the whole concept.

JWP: General Robert Herres?

SVW: Yes. I don't know if you read what he said up at the Harvard Business School or not?

JWP: I've heard about it. Are his comments in print somewhere?

SVW: I think so. I haven't seen it. Others have. The minutes or records of that meeting. [General Larry T.] Welch makes absolutely no bones about his distaste and disdain for special operations and Special Operations Forces, for the most part. The Navy has tended to be strongly conservative from the beginning.

JWP: [Laughter.] That's being kind.

SVW: And the Army has not been all that enthusiastic.

JWP: Supposedly the Chairman has told Secretary Marsh that legislation isn't going to be implemented according to the intent of Congress. I heard that story. I don't know when or where that was said, but it was supposedly recently.

SVW: Well, we asked Marsh about a lot of this. Marsh kind of jiggled and danced a little bit and didn't really give us an answer. Marsh has been good for the program.

I had to go over and talk to him and--this is a personal remark, please. I talked to him on the phone late one night immediately after he had turned down Daniel's request that he assume the ASD responsibilities. Daniel called me and said, "Will you call Jack Marsh and see if you can talk him into it?" I kind of shamed him [Marsh] into it, I guess. Anyway, he agreed finally, that he would do it but only for a short term.

Without his hand at the helm (and Larry Ropka sort of sitting there not getting things moving) without the clout of the Secretary of the Army which, externally, doesn't amount to a thing but internally--in that building--it does amount to something, we would not have gotten some of the things done that we have been able to achieve. He's had breakfast with Congressmen, and he's visited places and talked to CINCs and so on. He's been like the Special Forces Montagnard firebases that held things in place, at least, for [Ambassador Charles S.] Whitehouse. Now, I think, even though Whitehouse has been confirmed, it is going to be too late in this Administration for him to accomplish anything.

JWP: Do you see that as deliberate stonewalling--the reluctance to appoint somebody that is going to be acceptable as ASD?

SVW: Oh, yes.

JWP: In the next Administration, would you have any interest in being the ASD? I have been prompted to ask you that by three or four different people. [Laughter.]

SVW: I have great feelings of ambivalence--great feelings of ambivalence. I recognize that I would bring some things to bear to the interagency aspects of the problem that I doubt that many other people--possibly including Whitehouse--can bring. That is the folks from CIA can't piss in my ear and pretend that it is a gentle spring rain--and they know it. There are guys over there now who worked for me, like the present DDO, Dick Stolts. He and his people could say, "This is our view; we think so and so." It would be very easy for me to say, "Come on, guys, you're talking to Sambo, now. Let's get right down to nut-cutting and get it straight. If we're going to disagree, let's know exactly what it is we're disagreeing on and why. Let's make sure we make sense. We make good cases to each other." They'd grin and eat that. That would help. It would be a very helpful thing to achieve that kind of relationship. It takes you years to develop that kind of relationship.

Similarly, the Department of State folks couldn't pull their diplomatic routine on me because I'd say, "Hey, you're talking to a guy who was one of you--and a successful one of you! Please, don't do that." AID? I'd love for them to pull one of their stonewalling kind of things. In some circles, I'm one of their prizes, one of the alumni that they brag about. USIA? I've run psychological operations programs with them and for the CIA and hold PSYOPS MOSs, and so on. I can talk their language, and know what's going on. I am a member of their clubs--associate member, at least.

The Special Operations and LIC wagon should be driven from the White House, from a high point in the National Security Council staff. If it isn't driven from there, the next best place to drive it from would be the Department of State by someone with ambassadorial rank who has got some clout, understands what this is all about. Third choice--and in the real world apparently the only point it can be driven from for the time being, is from the ASD SO/LIC position. It is bad to drive this wagon from the Defense side because if you're not careful, military considerations wind up predominating and they should not. So the ASD SO/ LIC, when he chairs meetings and so on, has to turn his hat around and be as much a creature of the Department of State, the CIA, the USIA, AID, and the NSC staff. Having worked at each one of those places, I wouldn't even have to turn my hat around; I would just be me. I'm not trying to make a sales pitch because I've never said this to anybody else--I know that that collection of assets would stand me and the overall effort in good stead. So I don't jeer at it, laugh at it, or push it to one side. That alone makes me look seriously upon the prospects.

Another thing that would help a great deal, I believe, is that I think I still have considerable credibility on Capitol Hill and can talk with some of the people

whose names we mentioned earlier. I'd just go over, sit down, and say, "Look, Senator, we know what's desirable, but let me tell you, it won't work that way, and I ask you to believe me. If you force me to try, I'll try, but I'll only try from X to Y in terms of time because there are too many other things to do. I'll keep you apprised of how its going." Telephone calls, quick notes, quick visits, early morning breakfasts, early evening drink or something with one of these guys would be very easy for me to handle, keep smooth, and working nicely. That's not something idly to be tossed aside.

I'm a Democrat. But George Bush is a close, personal friend. He calls from time to time and notes from him from time to time. I got him down to speak at Hampden Sydney graduation several years ago. I was the Director of DIA when he was Director of CIA. We got along like a house afire, although he accused me one time of having deserted him. I said, "Bullshit! You could have invited me back, and I would have come in a minute, but it was going to have to be your choice. You were not going to inherit me. You were going to have to re-invite me back to my old desk. You never did, so there you are." We kind of laugh about that one. He called me when my wife died last summer, and we had a twenty-minute conversation. If he becomes the next President, then I would be in a position to bring this subject to his attention whenever such an action was truly required because he knows I wouldn't waste his time. He'd listen, and he'd respond if I made sense. That's an asset.

I think I have credibility in the Special Operations community. If I don't, then I'm deluding myself. I've been in and out of it over the years enough to know generally what is going on, have some doctrinal appreciation for what is involved, and have some concepts about it. I'm oriented toward the future. I understand the mix of things involved. I think the fact that I'm going into my seventh year teaching in the political science arena, teaching a United States Foreign Affairs and National Security course entitled, "1988-2000 Threats, Issues, and Responses." Rather pretentious! I think fiddling with that in a little rich boys' school year after year, teaching courses in intelligence year after year, staying alive with the SOPAG, keeping me in contact with CIA, and as a visiting lecturer with the Special Operations School, the school at Bragg, Air University, and some of the Ivy League schools, all have kept me in touch with this overall subject area. I'm not like a guy who is coming up out of a mine somewhere, Rip Van Winkle-ish, and having to catch up. There are some advantages.

The disadvantages are that I'm enjoying very much what I'm doing. I'm beginning to write a little bit. Heck, I'll be 65 in September. The prospect of 18-hour days and giving up some of my retirement income in order to take this kind of position doesn't appeal to me at all. What will happen to my farm? That also gives me cause to wonder. I would think that despite the advantages that I have just listed, it is probably unlikely that I would be invited or asked to assume

such a position. Were Daniel still around, whether I wanted to or not, he would be pressing it like the devil. I stopped him while he was pressing for me to be recalled to active duty to take over the United States Special Operations Command. I just headed him off at the pass on that one! I think the kids on Capitol Hill--practically all of whom I am deeply fond of--would like it. I believe that. I think Locher, Johnson, Chris Mellon . . . we left kind of with the warm "fuzzies." I tried to be very straight, clean, and responsive to them, and they made sense to me. There was no phoniness in our relationships at all. As far as I'm concerned that is an open commo link. I know they are real and trying, and they know I'm real and trying. They know I don't have my butt on my shoulders, and I've got a reasonably well-controlled ego, I think. So I live in a world of reality where supermen come along very, very seldom. They would accept a jaded old warrior like myself in that position and figure here is somebody we can make sense with. The hours don't appeal to me. Loss of pay doesn't appeal to me. Leaving the farm and my MacIntosh doesn't appeal to me.

JWP: You mentioned your writing when I came. Doing outdoor stories, still?

SVW: Doing some. And doing some things now that are more oriented to my 37 years of maverick-type experience.

JWP: Memoirs?

SVW: Vignettes, for the most part. I use a lot of anecdotes in my courses, and the kids love them. I'm now writing up some of my anecdotes. They may just remain as separate anecdotes--separate vignettes. Some of them are rather unusual. They make good stories, you know. My college kids come out here sometimes toward the end of the course. Five or six of them will sit here, and we'll have some squeezings of the grape. I'll sit here and start talking, and they'll begin asking questions. The first thing you know is that they've got me telling stories, and it is two o'clock in the morning! I figure if they find it that interesting, maybe if I write them well, others will find them interesting. I'm enjoying fiddling with it.

JWP: I'm sure they would be very apropos to a number of things. I've pretty much exhausted my questions. Is there anything else? I hope I didn't exhaust you.

SVW: No. It took a little longer than I had planned, but that's all right.

JWP: Well, it has been fascinating for me.

SVW: If it has been worthwhile for you, then good, it's been worth the time we've spent.

JWP: It has been fascinating. One other person--I mentioned Noel Koch. Did you have any dealings with him?

SVW: Yes. What about Noel Koch?

JWP: He wrote that letter to the Senate--I think in September of 1986--which was influential in getting the legislation. The staffers say that the Scholtes' testimony was probably what really tipped the scale to the side of mandatory legislation.

SVW: I think his testimony was very important--crucial, critical, pivotal.

JWP: Added to that letter that Noel Koch wrote.

SVW: Yes.

JWP: I haven't talked to Koch yet. I talked to him on the phone and I guess he went out of the country yesterday. So I'll have to try to come up some other time to get hold of him.

SVW: You should talk to him. He is a brash, ego-driven kind of fellow. He wound up urinating in everybody's well in town and rendering himself essentially persona non grata to people whose influence and help he needed. A bridge-burning kind of series of steps. When we went back a second time to testify, I guess it was last summer, to Senator Kennedy's subcommittee, Noel Koch, Shy Meyer, and I testified. Noel Koch's testimony in this instance, was very extremist. Very extraordinarily, radically critical of current efforts. In the long run, I think it probably hurt more than helped.

JWP: Was that Senator Kennedy's SASC subcommittee?

SVW: It's a SASC subcommittee, but I forget its exact title. Locher was the architect.

JWP: In the summer of 1987.

SVW: Yes. Then on another occasion before that same subcommittee, I had been asked to come up but I had a complete collision on my schedule and could not make it. Locher was gracious enough to let me by. In this case, General Dick Stilwell, maybe Shy Meyer, and again Noel Koch testified. Koch was even more extreme, I am told, this time than he had been before. So his last two appearances, of which Locher would be aware, before the SASC subcommittee--I think Kennedy's in both instances--were too extremist, too radical to be constructive. You'll find in Koch now a kind of embitteredness. Noel was an extremely ambitious individual who sort of gambled that he could ride this horse

through the wall. The horse hit the wall, fell back with a broken neck, and tossed him in the process.

JWP: I kind of gathered that from reading the letter and some of his public statements such as when he referred to military bands as being more prepared than a lot of the Special Operations Forces. It may be true, but it certainly doesn't help the cause any.

SVW: No. It's bad in circumstances like this to engage in hyperbole, however tempted one may be. I frequently am tempted, to make a point, to engage in hyperbole. It's bad because it destroys credibility just like that! [Snaps fingers.] The understatement, factual, reasonably dispassionate, carries so much more than hyperbole.

JWP: Well, sir, I really appreciate your time. Thank you so much for your kindness.

