

Luther C. Heinz Oral History Interview – JFK#1, 07/20/1970
Administrative Information

Creator: Luther C. Heinz
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Biographical Note

Heinz was an Admiral in the United States Navy; Regional Director for the Far East of the Office of International Security Affairs in the Department of Defense, 1960–1963; commander, cruiser-destroyer flotilla 12, 1964; and staff, CINCPAC, 1965. In this interview Heinz discusses how he came to work in the Office of International Security Affairs [ISA] in the Department of Defense [DOD]; the changeover in the DOD between the Dwight D. Eisenhower and John F. Kennedy Administrations; Heinz's view of the Bay of Pigs; the regular operations and organization within ISA, including the different regional desks' responsibilities; relationships between the ISA and other agencies; ISA as "the little State Department"; differences of opinion between DOD and the State Department, the CIA, the Defense Intelligence Agency, and the Joint Chiefs of Staff; the debate over whether to put troops in Laos; Robert S. McNamara and Roswell L. Gilpatric; the status of Okinawa; the question of U.S. defense perimeters; and W. Averell Harriman's trip to Geneva and the neutralization solution for Laos, among other issues.

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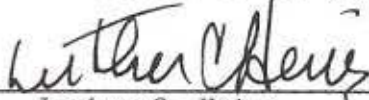
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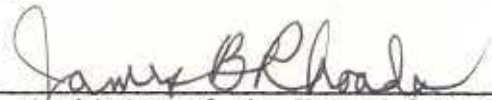
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Oral History Interview

with

LUTHER C. HEINZ

July 20, 1970
Norfolk, Virginia

By William W. Moss

For the John F. Kennedy Library

MOSS: Admiral Heinz, let me begin by asking you, first of all, to more or less sketch your background very briefly, how it was you came to be director for Far Eastern affairs in the International Security Affairs office at The Department of Defense during the John F. Kennedy administration.

HEINZ: I was ordered to that office as my first job as a flag officer. The assignment was made as a matter of routine, in which a group of newly appointed flag officers were sent to the various jobs that needed to be filled. I had had no previous experience in the Office of Secretary of Defense, although I had had two previous tours in Washington in strictly navy jobs.

MOSS: Fine. Now, when did you arrive on the scene?

HEINZ: I arrived in November of 1960 and relieved Rear Admiral Edward J. Jerry O'Donnell.

MOSS: So you were there as President Kennedy was elected in effect.

HEINZ: Yes, I was there for a couple of months before the Kennedy administration took over and had somewhat of a brief understanding of the prior administration and did watch the changeover from my own standpoint in Defense.

MOSS: All right. What did you see in the way of a changeover in the way the new administration was coming in, from the top on down, from President Kennedy through Secretary [Robert S.] McNamara and Paul Nitze and [William P.] Bill Bundy? How were these people taking hold, what briefings were they given by the outgoing people, and this sort of thing, that you know of?

HEINZ: To my knowledge, each one coming in, each man in a political appointment, went around to the various offices with which he was to be connected, the people that he had to work with, and was given a briefing by them. He had a time to take over in his new job, although generally not for very long. In some cases there was a time for the appointee to work into his job while he was waiting for his security clearance. In general, however, I think the turnover was quite rapid and, as I recall, nearly all the political appointees were changed.

MOSS: Now, how were these men taking holding of their jobs? What things were they beginning to do in the way of giving you and others on the staff ideas of how they wanted the operation in ISA [Internal Security Affairs] to be run? Were there new things happening or was it the same thing over again?

HEINZ: To my recollection, there wasn't much of a change in our methods of operation. There were a few extra jobs created, with only a small change in the organization within ISA. By and large, they had to grasp hold of the ongoing problems, work with them, and wrestle with them as did we. The military people in the Pentagon did not change at that time other than by the routine process, so that I didn't find any great change within ISA other than the new personal relationships that grew up with different people.

For example, I got to know Paul Nitze; I hadn't known his predecessor too well since I hadn't been there very long. I got to know Bill Bundy who was quite a different man than Frank Sloan, who as I recall held the job before him. They had different backgrounds, different personalities, but in general, they worked in much the same way.

There was, I think a tendency to take a firmer grasp of the problems by the White House.

MOSS: In what way?

HEINZ: This is a feeling I have, and I'm basing this only on, say, two months of the outgoing administration, so you could expect them to have a type of holding position and not to commit the new administration. I would ascribe it more to this than anything else, other than the character of the president, of course. I think he did set up a stronger White House staff as such.

I don't know too much about how the inner workings of government were under the prior administration. There was a change I think the National Security Council type of paper tended to be downgraded, and it went to a more personal working relationship of the president and his senior advisers.

MOSS: Yes, I've heard this from other sources as well.

HEINZ: There used to be a set of regular National Security Council actions or memoranda which were the basis of actions within the government, and a formal organization had been set up. This hadn't been working too well as I understand it and, by and large, this formal process tended to be degraded. I would say it wasn't really resurrected until just recently, in the last couple of years.

MOSS: There was no resurrection of it after . . .

HEINZ: I think [Lyndon B.] Johnson tended to work more in this formal process.

MOSS: I was thinking about post Bay of Pigs because everybody sort of got caught off base after dismantling everything on that one.

HEINZ: No, I don't have a feeling that they changed because of the Bay of Pigs. This was something that had been done. I wasn't in on the planning of that at all, but I got in when the action started--just as a spectator.

MOSS: How did you view it as a spectator? What recollections do you have of that?

HEINZ: My own view was that as long as we undertook this action, and certainly we did support it and work it up, we should have taken direct action and used our aircraft, which were ready at the time.

To have gone that far and then stopped courted disaster, and it came there.

MOSS: Right.

HEINZ: I've watched a lot of these actions being taken over the period of the last ten years. I think in so many things if you jump in hard earlier, you can accomplish your purpose with much less effort, much less force than is required later. No question about it. I think about ten aircraft sorties over the Bay of Pigs at that time may have changed the whole course of events. It's hard to speculate what would have happened then. I don't know.

MOSS: Right. Let's get back to Paul Nitze and the operation itself in ISA. How did Nitze run the shop? What was his daily routine like, or weekly routine, if you will? Did he have regular staff meetings and that sort of thing, or what were the operations?

HEINZ: There were weekly staff meetings which were rather a go around of items of current and common interest. We had all our own offices plus JCS [Joint Chiefs of Staff] represented. All our deputies participated, the heads of the regions, senior civilians within ISA. But other than the weekly staff meetings, there was no formal way of operating. We read the traffic in the morning, and then went to our daily problems. Then, of course, we had free access to both Paul Nitze and Bill Bundy. I dealt directly with Bill Bundy in much of my work. It's hard to lay down a pattern of routine that would be different, say, than any other office. You handle your problems and get them worked out.

MOSS: As the problems arose, you simply faced them.

HEINZ: We faced the problems. We had planning to do for the political military situations. We were all connected with military assistance. We had to cover the various crises, minor and major, that arose, and keep the paper moving.

MOSS: Okay, let me ask you about the relationships with other agencies, then. To what extent were you directly or indirectly in support of the National Security Council? I'm particularly interested in whether there was a special relationship there, of course, with Bill Bundy and [McGeorge] Mac Bundy.

HEINZ: Well, of course, you couldn't avoid a direct relationship between Bill Bundy and Mac Bundy.

MOSS: Right.

HEINZ: But I don't know that this really affected the way things were handled. We worked very closely with [the Department of] State and had representatives from State in the Pentagon for various meetings, although more often I was over in State. In connection with these problems we got to know the AID [Agency for International Development] people as well as the State Department people rather well because the military assistance and the economic assistance groups always worked closely together. We tried to mesh them as closely as we could although the objectives sometimes differed, country by country.

MOSS: In what way?

HEINZ: I thought of that when I said it, "Now I've got to come up with an example." The objectives we had for military assistance varied from country to country. In some cases I would say there was almost purely a political rationale behind our military assistance; in other cases we were more interested in getting a better military organization.

In Korea, for example, we wanted to have a strong military organization. In Burma we knew this wasn't possible and there we had more of a political rationale. In Cambodia it was more of a political rationale. When we got to Vietnam, here we had our military policial rationale. So it changed from country to country. Economic assistance, I think, always was very clearly looking for economic improvement in the country. It was meshed with military assistance, for example, in Korea. In Vietnam, we were both working to stave off the rising insurgency. I think there the administration tried to mesh them very closely and carefully. There's one thing In looking back on it I came in at the time that military assistance was on the downgrade, excepting for Vietnam. So we were always closing down the throttle rather than opening it up, except for Vietnam, Thailand and Laos.

MOSS: This is looked at on a couple of different levels; one, in the sort of new left position in which they look on any merger of military and purely economic assistance as a kind of devious, insidious attempt for the military to intrude into something that's not

their business. At another level, you have the inter-departmental jealousies, State believing that it really understands the situation, and Defense, on the other hand, really understands the situation. How much of this comes through in your dealing with it from the ISA end?

HEINZ: Well, I was somewhat in the middle, in that we always had the JCS looking at military assistance more or less from a military viewpoint, State looking at it from the political viewpoint, and AID wondering how it was going to affect their program. Of course, in a certain way we and AID were competing, because military and economic assistance were combined in the same foreign assistance bill. I think that the people handling it in ISA had a good understanding of what the objectives were in every country and didn't look at it as a buildup of military influence. I think we would have liked to have had more influence in some countries because this would have helped the country politically.

MOSS: Simply from the point of view of stability?

HEINZ: Well, where we could influence the military people, I think, by and large, we always tried to influence them toward a closer relationship with the U.S. because this would help our country in international relationships. We wanted to have, say, Indonesia on our side, a country of a hundred million people. Our country was interested in stability and in preserving the freedom of Southeast Asia. Since in many countries the military are so influential, we thought it was to the best U.S. interest to have a good rapport with them. There was much more of this feeling than any idea of building up a military establishment because we thought they should have one, or that, its "good" to have one. I didn't find that at all.

MOSS: What about, back on the Washington end? ISA has sometimes been called the little State Department and the question of whether or not Secretary McNamara was taking too many initiatives in foreign affairs, and so on, away from what was normally State Department prerogatives and this kind of thing? How do you view that?

HEINZ: I think there's no question but what that McNamara got into areas which previously had been purely State Department business. He did have an influence on it, but he took the position--again,

this is as it developed in his tenure--that he was running an organization which had a budget of, say, some seventy billion dollars or sixty billion dollars, whatever the number was at that time, and three and a half million people, and certainly he would use it to the best interests of the United States in whatever way he could, as the president wished.

MOSS: — All right, now did this have any reaction from the State Department side that you know of?

HEINZ: No, I don't think so because we did work very closely together. They always knew what we were doing. We did, I think, in ISA, have an influence on foreign policy because we were working so closely with the State Department.

MOSS: Okay. Now what I'm looking for, and really fishing for, is a kind of identification of position by DoD [Department of Defense] and another by State that might be different, in which you came to some difference of opinion.

HEINZ: Well, there were many. Sometimes they're small, and sometimes they're large. I remember one of the early differences of opinion, and this is perhaps a minor matter. We gave Laos, as I recall, something like six or eight T-6 aircraft. They were old trainers. They can carry all of about two one hundred pound bombs. We wanted them to use bombs. We thought that would be most effective in stopping the Pathet Lao. State said no; they didn't want to use bombs. They could use their machine guns, they could use rockets, but they couldn't use bombs. This went all the way up to the president, as I recall. To me this is rather a silly thing to be worrying about, particularly in retrospect. But this was a point of difference. I can remember another point of difference later in the game in Vietnam, talking about the use of defoliants. The most efficient way, the quickest way to spread defoliants would be by just spraying it from a helicopter. But State decreed that the Vietnamese who were spraying the defoliants in VC [Vietcong] territory could do it from a truck or from a tank on their back, but they couldn't do it from a helicopter.

MOSS: What was the rationale on this, do you know?

HEINZ: I never did find out.

MOSS: Curious sort of thing. All right. How about the same sort of thing with CIA [Central Intelligence Agency]?

HEINZ: There I can't give you any example of differences because I didn't get into working out problems with them that much. As a matter of fact, we got very little into the covert side of what CIA was doing and we were more or less working strictly on the intelligence aspects. Of course, there were differences in intelligence estimates as there always will be, but these were always worked out, as you would expect, in the normal course of events.

MOSS: And with DIA [Defense Intelligence Agency], pretty much the same sort of thing?

HEINZ: DIA was started up while I was in the Pentagon.

MOSS: How was the idea received?

HEINZ: I think generally, the military didn't particularly like it because they didn't believe that it would save this many people, in the first place, or that possibly we would get a much better a brand of intelligence. But, again, I wasn't involved in this so I am speaking strictly as a spectator. It seemed that we might do better. However, it was advertised as not being just better intelligence but more economical, and this didn't work out because the services still had to keep their own intelligence organizations.

MOSS: Yes, I was sitting on a board of national estimates preliminary meeting, working out one of these things about three years ago, I guess, and not only did we have a DIA rep but we had army, navy, and air force reps as well.

HEINZ: Yes.

MOSS: Yes. Now how about your relations with JCS? How much did you act in support of JCS? How much were you an entirely different operation?

HEINZ: I can illustrate how we were a different operation from JCS in that at the start of my tour there I sued to sit in on Sec. Def. Secretary of Defense - JCS meetings as a spectator, which State came into. It was a weekly conference. The secretary of defense was there, but we acted as staff for McNamara rather than being in, say, opposition to JCS or in support of JCS. We did try to work closely with them. I worked with their representatives very closely, and frequently we worked out papers together, as a JCS-ISA position. I can give you one name in that regard: General Paul John Fontana, a Marine with whom I worked very closely. I had to, in ISA, as did anyone else, prepare the Sec. Def. action on JCS papers and, if necessary, send them over to State. At times we would take no action on them, depending on the circumstance. In some cases they were informative, in some cases they recommended actions, which we had to staff for the secretary.

MOSS: Across the government I see several key figures, each of whom is supported by an approximately similar staff. You have the secretary of state who had his regional people and his Bureau of Intelligence and Research supporting him. You have the director of CIA, again with a similar thing. You have DoD and you have JCS, all of them with pretty much parallel organizations.

HEINZ: And we all knew each other.

MOSS: And you all knew each other.

HEINZ: Surely.

MOSS: What were the knotty problems over which you had some differences of opinion on issues and so on amongst these, Admiral? Where did each of these organizations stand on a subject like, say, the question of whether or not to put troops into Thailand and the Laotian situation?

HEINZ: Well, that was a decision that was taken very quickly by the president, to put troops in there.

MOSS: All right, let's back up and say troops into Laos itself.

HEINZ: That was a stickier one and on that one the JCS themselves were not in agreement as to whether it would be a good thing or not. I don't recall the positions taken by the individual secretaries or the chiefs, but I do recall that the question arose, should the U.S. do it, or should it not, not, say, do it now, but as a basic policy. There was a complete cross section of opinion on this within the government. As I recall, even State wasn't in agreement among its various people as to whether or not it would be a good idea. This was finally settled by the president on the basis that we would not put troops into Laos.

MOSS: How much effort is there to get a . . .

HEINZ: Although we did make a study on this--on what would happen, what the situation might be if we did go into Laos and the Communists came down from the other side. Logistically, it seemed as if there was some line in the middle of Laos where we came to a logistic standoff on their ability to support forces and our ability to support forces.

MOSS: Was it the river [Mekong River] do you recall?

HEINZ: No, it was not the river which is the southern boundary of Laos, but rather somewhere along the present general dividing line of Communist and Laotian controlled areas.

MOSS: Let me ask you how people in the military, particularly in DoD in your area looked on the arrival of a new Democratic president, particularly President Kennedy? How did you see this?

HEINZ: As a normal change of government. I think that we saw it only as we may have voted. If you voted for the opponent, you think it's bad; if you voted for him, it's good. I would say there's no other reaction than that.

MOSS: Okay, fine. How about Secretary McNamara? This is a little different. It affects people in DoD a little more directly.

HEINZ: Well, I can remember everybody wondering what he had done before and remembering the so-called "whiz kids". The major problem that developed there was his own policy planning staff, the

so-called "Whiz Kids" that he brought in, that gradually got so much internal power. They developed into the Office of Systems Analysis, wherein they would make their own analyses, then assume that they had the right answers and defy anyone in the military to disprove them.

MOSS: Was this, in fact, the real problem with him coming in? Because I've heard it from both sides now, and the whiz kids' side, of course, is that, "Well, the military just doesn't understand the way we talk. If they'd only learn our language, perhaps they could appreciate that we've got a slightly different point of view. If they'd only understand it, maybe we'd get along better." And the military, of course, saying the same thing, that the whiz kids don't understand the military point of view. Now where does this all meet, or is it always a standoff? How do you work together?

HEINZ: I believe it's probably a standoff. Certain of these people came in with different backgrounds and new ideas, but it seems to me they started off assuming they knew a lot more than they really did and would take positions which frequently we thought just didn't quite ring true. But it was awfully hard to convince them that we, too, had a viewpoint.

MOSS: All right, what did you do in order to convince them? What sort of things did you find were effective?

HEINZ: I would say that you would get a better answer on this one from someone who was in the JCS, rather than me. It didn't impinge too much on me at that time. It did later in Military Assistance, but again, this is a period that we're not really concerned with. This is 1967-68. But at that time, I think, I wasn't too much concerned with that particular group of McNamara's staff. They impinged more directly upon the services and the JCS. I couldn't give you a great opinion on that really.

MOSS: Particularly in procurement and supply and that kind of thing.

HEINZ: Yes, yes.

MOSS: All right, how about Deputy Secretary Roswell L. Gilpatric? What sort of man was he and how did he come off?

HEINZ: I think he was a very capable man. He certainly was a workhorse and took on a lot of tasks for McNamara that needed to be done. I think that McNamara gave him quite a bit of authority; he handled it well. I had a very good impression of his capabilities.

MOSS: What sort of things would he get involved in? Was he more involved in one end of things than another, say in the support function or in the operations, or in the intelligence and evaluations, or what? Or was it pretty much across the board?

HEINZ: I would say it was across the board. Generally, we knew whether or not this was something that Gilpatric would handle or something that McNamara would want to handle. Generally, if it was Vietnam, McNamara was handling it.

MOSS: How would you know this? What were the criteria?

HEINZ: You learned it by living.

MOSS: Just something you feel in the wind?

HEINZ: Yes. Of course there was a paper on this, I'm sure, to say that he'll handle these things. McNamara and Gilpatric were so much of a team that it isn't a clear-cut difference, as I might have inferred for you.

MOSS: Right, right. Okay, in coming down to Assistant Secretary Nitze, how did he operate? How did you view him?

HEINZ: He was a man who could think through problems clearly, understood very clearly the political and the military nuances of the various situations that we got into. He was a very forthright man, who made his views known, and who abided very clearly in any problem with any decisions made by the president.

He handled things very capably and we all had a very high impression of him. For example, the navy was very happy to have him become secretary of the navy.

MOSS: What sort of things was he doing that pleased you? What were the things in which he demonstrated this character or what have you that made him appealing to the military?

HEINZ: I think that Mr. Nitze has a feeling for people, and understanding of people's capabilities and abilities, that he can get the most out of people; he works with them. He certainly is a very personable man, a very delightful man. I think he has the characteristics that we'd like to see in all of our people in high positions.

MOSS: How did you see him with respect to the other assistant secretaries and other people in DoD? Did he have a particular policy line with which he was identified in opposition to others?

HEINZ: I can't recall that.

MOSS: You can't recall anything of that sort. How about Bill Bundy?

HEINZ: No, I can't say that I can Bill Bundy was also a very delightful man, very quick to reach his decisions. He was able to handle a staff very capably, he kept things moving. He knew all the people in Washington very well. He'd been in CIA so he had a good understanding of that part of government. He knew quite a bit about State. He had, I think, some access to, perhaps a little more access to the White House through Mac Bundy.

MOSS: Here was a man with quite some connections, really. He's had his experience in CIA, he's Dean G. Acheson's son-in-law, he's got his brother over at NSC National Security Council, I think people would really be wary of him.

HEINZ: I liked him very well.

MOSS: How did he and Nitze share responsibility in the ISA? Of course, the responsibility is Nitze's, but he has to do some delegation. How did he split it up with Bundy?

HEINZ: Well, Bundy took on most of the military assistance chores for ISA, I would say. For example, later on when we had a new program for India, Bill Bundy headed the group on that. He took on a large bit of the responsibility for Southeast Asia problems and, in general, if it was Southeast Asia business, everybody went to Bill Bundy for it. In other words, he handled some of these things directly for Mr. Nitze.

He handled a lot of spade work, the detail work that had to be done to develop positions. He worked with the JCS people very well. He had an excellent working relationship all over Washington.

MOSS: I asked you if he was identified with a particular policy line. Let me ask it a little differently. Any occasion in which you knew that he had come up against a particularly tough opposition on something that he and Nitze and McNamara were really convinced of, were pushing?

HEINZ: I don't recall anything specific in that line. I know there were differences of opinion, different lines of action proposed, but I don't put these down as, say, being more than you would normally expect to find within different agencies. I think that in any group you always have different ideas. You should have different ideas proposed and worked out and then courses of action decided after good discussion of all factors and opposing viewpoints. So I can't give you, say, opposing philosophies particularly. I don't know that we had opposing philosophies. I can't say that Bill Bundy was always in opposition to State, for example, or with JCS. We differed on points, as you would expect would be normal in any conduct of affairs. Perhaps I keep coming back to this point that there were differences, but by and large these differences are ones you expect or want to be brought out. In other words, if you're going to make a difficult decision, you should know what the various possibilities are, what different courses of action are possible, what do various people recommend; if only one course of action is considered you're not really getting a good background, a good basis for a decision in all cases.

MOSS: All right, fine. I see this and yet I have had some experience from the lower end looking up at this, and there's constant pressure to develop an agency line on a particular thing so that the agency itself goes united to an interagency meeting.

HEINZ: This is true.

MOSS: With a policy position.

HEINZ: Yes.

MOSS: And again there's an effort to get a united position among all the different agencies departments, and so on.

HEINZ: Well, certainly we always tried to work out a defense position on any particular problem,-- based on the thinking of McNamara--and a different viewpoint that may have been expressed by the JCS, say, would not surface at an interagency meeting because we always used the Sec. Def. position.

MOSS: All right. Now, how does the president get the points of view that have not been represented in a Sec. Def. position, assuming he needs them?

HEINZ: Well, here you have to rely on the fact that, in nearly every major decision, there's a representative of the JCS present at the White House meetings, and that the representative has a chance to air JCS views if they are in opposition to, say, a Sec. Def. position. I think there were times when the Secretary deliberately surfaced opposing positions and points of view, so that the president would get the benefit of this, although I don't know from my own experience. In other words, he could have said that the JCS have not supported this. But I think that there was always an opportunity for opposing views to be presented. For example, in interagency meetings with State, I never felt that the JCS representative was in any way held down. If we had a meeting with State on a problem, we always tried to see that an ISA and a JCS man were there, so if there were opposing points of view, they could be brought out.

MOSS: Let me get you to talk for a moment about the organization within ISA. What were the different functions, for instance, of the Policy Review Staff and the Planning Staff? It doesn't look like much difference in the organization manual.

HEINZ: As I recall, there were none. They were the same staff.

MOSS: Yes. Because you have two different posts here, Director of Policy Review Staff, Major General Douglas V. Johnson, and Deputy Assistant Secretary for Planning and NSC, Henry Rowen. Do you identify particular functions with those two people?

HEINTZ: Yes. General Johnson was more or less of an inspector general for ISA, and would take on specific chores, rather than the day-to-day struggle with the problems. His office was abolished in 1961 or 1962.

MOSS: Okay, what about Rowen's function on the planning staff?

HEINZ: Rowen's office handled the policy papers coming in from the White House, although he did a great deal of work in the NATO (North Atlantic Treaty Organization) area. NATO was their baby. Southeast Asia, for example, was mine.

MOSS: Okay. Now, in the regional area, Haydn Williams was the deputy assistant secretary for regional affairs. What sort of approach did he take to the job? I've asked you how Nitze and Bundy operated. How did Williams operate? Was he simply a focus for the regional desk?

HEINZ: He was a focus for the regional desk, yes.

MOSS: Or did he have any policy club? Was he simply a funnel, a transmission line?

HEINZ: Oh no. Again, he was, should I say, the political appointee, the deputy, and had to look at it from that aspect. I had to look at it from more of the military background aspect. I can't recall any particular problems working with Haydn Williams as a man, or in his position. I think that he took a very active part in things. We had a lot of business to handle. Again, I would say, generally, if I had a problem, I would discuss it with him, get a general idea of what his thoughts were or give him my thoughts, attack the problem and come up with an answer, and then work through him as you always do, on up to Bill Bundy and Mr. Nitze.

MOSS: Okay. On the different regional desks, you have General Frederick H. Miller in European affairs, Colonel Thomas W. Wolfe in Sino Soviet, Admiral Elonzo B. Grantham in Near East, South Asia and Africa, and General William A. Enemark in Western Hemisphere, William E. Lang, foreign military rights, military rights, Norris G. Kenny on foreign economic affairs. Now was there any great difference in the way each of these areas was going after its subject, operating? I can conceive, for instance, of the Western Hemisphere affairs, with the exception of some counter insurgency and the Cuba thing, being a rather tame AID situation.

HEINZ: It was rather tame. They had to worry about their military assistance, but this was on a routine training basis. The European region worked very closely with the Policy Planning Staff because they were intertwined with NATO; they handled a lot of NATO work and not much else.

MOSS: How much did NATO considerations dominate, generally speaking?

HEINZ: Well, from my viewpoint, I knew what was going on in NATO, but I was more or less fighting a war.

MOSS: Yes. I'm thinking of two possible examples: the situation with the Portuguese in Angola and the Azores base and the NATO friendship, and so on; and also the West Irian question in Indonesia with the Dutch. Should we back the Dutch, or should we back the rising colonial power in Indonesia that we wanted on our side? This kind of thing. How do you deal with a question like that where you seem to have your bets on both horses?

HEINZ: I think that the way we came out on the West Irian question was that the European region backed the Dutch, while the Far East region backed the Indonesians, by and large. This was true also in State.

MOSS: Yes, I understood that it was.

HEINZ: It was true throughout government, depending upon which area you were oriented toward. We ended up straddling the fence on it, as neatly as we could.

MOSS: If uncomfortably?

HEINZ: Yes. I think both sides of this in government recognized the other side's point of view, and we could all see the advantages of both sides. So we ended up wanting to remain friendly to both sides and, as I say, straddling the fence.

MOSS: I'm intrigued with this because there's not quite acrimonious but accusative talk back and forth within State and so on, the Europeanists don't really understand Africa or they don't really understand Asia, and vice versa. I was just wondering how operative is this really, or are people making mountains out of molehills, bellyaching.

HEINZ: No, you can be as closed-minded on this as you want to be, thinking of your own parochial field of interest. If you've been spending several years working in the NATO area, you tend to think that this is perhaps the most important thing to the United States, this long term international relationship. On the other hand, if you've been working in the Pacific, you may think that NATO can just rock along without much problem and what we really ought to worry about is the Pacific. I think to come to a good decision on this, you've got to be above them both and then hear what each side has to say and then make a decision and do something about it. From my point of view, I could see this nation of a hundred million people which we wanted to be friendly to us. We didn't want them to be opposed to us.

MOSS: This is in the Indonesian . . .

HEINZ: Indonesian, yes. We felt that the Dutch were better out of it. It was costing them money and they weren't getting anything out of it.

MOSS: All right, now how did you take this view on up the line and how did you counter the Europeanists, the Natoists? How did you make your arguments, how did you try to win your case?

HEINZ: I think this was just continual preparation of papers and new papers, staffing them with each other, and gradually working out a position that was agreed upon at the Sec. Def., Sec. State Secretary of State level to go to the White House.

MOSS: Who among your colleagues on the regional desks did you have most contact with? My guess would be Colonel Wolfe on the Sino Soviet desk.

HEINZ: Not too much so, because he was involved almost solely with Russian and Communist Chinese affairs, neither of which involved me. His responsibility was in that area, but I had very little to do with Red China. I think the office in ISA with which I had to work most closely was the Military Assistance group.

MOSS: This was General Williston B. Palmer's.

HEINZ: Yes, General Palmer.

MOSS: Now, what sorts of things was he doing?

HEINZ: He had to run the military assistance program, and had to cut the pie in a way that gave the best allocation of funds that he was granted. As always, he came out with a figure from Congress that was less than he went in for. There are always claimants wanting more for their particular areas and purposes, and we just had to work with him to get the things we needed. There were many cases in which McNamara would direct the use of funds for definite purposes. I remember at one Honolulu meeting, for example, the presentation given on the need for a new communications system. I've forgotten whether the figure was six million dollars or ten million dollars, and McNamara said, "Do it," after perhaps a twenty minute presentation. So there was some money that had to be allocated by General Palmer within the overall program.

MOSS: I notice he is not regionally divided within his area. Does this happen at a lower level than would be shown in the U. S. Government Organization Manual, or does he have regional specialists?

HEINZ: It was not regionally divided, no. He covered the whole spectrum of military assistance although some of his people had more expertise in one area than another. He had one man, or two or three people, perhaps, who did training worldwide, and one that would handle Navy assistance. He had people who developed specialities, but his office wasn't regionally divided the way ISA as a whole was.

MOSS: I'm running toward the end of this tape. We've been at it for about an hour. How much time are you going to give me? We never did really settle this.

HEINZ: No, we didn't. I think I'd like to hold, if I could, to about another half hour.

MOSS: All right, fine. If we don't get through everything, can I make another appointment?

HEINZ: Surely.

MOSS: Okay, fine.

BEGIN SIDE II TAPE I

MOSS: Let me move on into the specific areas of concern. You indicated in our preliminary conversation that you really didn't have much to do with ANZUS [Australia, New Zealand, United States]. Let me ask if this was handled more or less by NATO group.

HEINZ: No, it was handled by my office. I made that comment in that really there wasn't much that had to be done with ANZUS. It was that type of an organization. The treaty itself did not contain the same strength of commitment that the SEATO [Southeast Asia Treaty Organization] treaty did. Furthermore, Australia and New Zealand were firm allies of ours anyway who were also in SEATO together with us. Our problems were SEATO problems and not ANZUS problems. If you have no problems in an alliance, there's not much work.

MOSS: Right. And you said you had very little on the status of Okinawa, but you just recalled this one . . .

HEINZ: I said Okinawa, because this was handled mainly by the foreign military rights people. It was a U.S. base and was therefore handled by those people, and this would be Bill Lang's problem, by and large, rather than mine.

MOSS: . . . you told me the story of a JCS paper on the flying of the flag. Do you feel confident enough on your memory to state that for the tape?

HEINZ: As I recall, we had just gotten this JCS paper. It was recommended that the U.S. not allow the Japanese to fly the flag on Okinawa. I knew that the President had just decided the opposite on a recommendation from the secretary of state. The question was, "What do I do with this JCS stated position?" Of course, the answer was that I couldn't do anything about it because the decision had been made by the president on a political basis. But this was just one instance where, knowing the position in State, or the position the president had taken, you act accordingly with the JCS papers. You always had to give them full consideration and work on them, depend on them for your input, but we also had to consider State's input in our actions.

Incidentally, I think Kennedy was the one who started us on the track of reversion of Okinawa, doing something about it, in that at the time he came in, the position was that, yes, Okinawa would probably revert at some future time when there was no need for us to keep forces there any more. Well, this was so far in the future that nobody could see anything on the horizon. Now we've made several steps since then.

MOSS: Well, the strategic question, of course, where we draw our defense perimeter, is one that's still there. Is it Japan, Okinawa, Taiwan, the Philippines, and Singapore?

HEINZ: No, not Singapore, we never did consider Singapore. We considered that Korea was one anchor and the Philippines were the other anchor of that defense line.

MOSS: Which, of course, gets right into my next question of the whole South Asia flank there, with the Indian Ocean and the Southeast Asian peninsula there, of Thailand, Indochina, and so on. I was going to ask about the question of what to do about that, what to do about perhaps a naval presence in the Indian Ocean?

HEINZ: Well, this has always been desirable from a naval point of view. We would like to have a larger presence there other than the small force that we had in the Mideast, usually just a flagship and two destroyers. They operated, by and large, from Calcutta down along the west coast of Africa and around to the Persian Gulf. We considered at one time stationing a force in the Indian Ocean, and we did have a carrier force make a cruise there at one time. By and large, however, we didn't have forces to spare to put in the Indian Ocean.

MOSS: It seems like a question of budgeting your resources.

HEINZ: Budgeting the resources that we had available. Our forward defense line really was the one I mentioned. I don't think the question ever came up of trying to push it forward past, say, Southeast Asia into the Indian Ocean.

MOSS: Why doesn't it get this kind of priority that would give it the resources?

HEINZ: Well, I would say it's an area that has never been fought over in our time. Our national opposition has been from the Pacific littoral and Europe. This is the old [Halford J.] Mackinder heartland theory, if you go back to it. The Indian Ocean is really on the rim of that, and Latin America is outside of it. It contains a lot of people, but people who have not in themselves greatly influenced the course of events as have the Chinese people, the Russians and the Europeans, and perhaps the Middle East or North Africans. Agreed, there was fighting in Burma in the last war, but to push the Japanese back. The Japanese were the early invaders of the area, not people of the Indian Ocean area.

MOSS: So this includes not only India and Pakistan, but Burma, as well.

HEINZ: Yes.

MOSS: And, you only begin to get into the question of our defense perimeters when you get to, what, Thailand?

HEINZ: Actually, Malaysia. Malaysia, then Thailand and around, but I don't think we've ever considered that our forward defense should be moved to Southeast Asia. No. We just didn't want Southeast Asia to be opposed to us.

MOSS: Yet, in that desire, certain commitments have to be made of a defensive nature.

HEINZ: And that was the SEATO treaty.

MOSS: And that was the SEATO treaty. Under that, several things begin to happen, with the protocol that includes South Vietnam, and so on.

HEINZ: The SEATO nations almost moved troops into Laos under the SEATO treaty. This was using the umbrella of the protocol states. We never agreed, and it was the U.S. that held back the action. The U.S. did not want to get U.S. troops committed into Laos.

MOSS: Right. Can you recall the meetings or the thinking on this, the arguments that were going back and forth on whether or not to go?

HEINZ: Those who somewhat favored sending in troops felt that with troops we could get the situation cleaned up quickly and get out again. There were others who felt that if we ever got in there, we'd never get out. They didn't want to have a long term military commitment in there. No one really wanted that. There were those who felt that our people didn't belong in this territory at all. There was also the consideration that there really wasn't a viable government in Laos, and there wasn't; there were just factions. You had some almost comic opera stories about Laos, of big battles in which the troops shot in the air and then fell back. It was always a big battle if more than two people got wounded. So that no one had much confidence in the abilities of the Laotians on either side, on any side. Remember that an army lieutenant, Kong Le, marched into Vientiane with about two hundred troops and took over the government for a while. Then they talked him out of it. Another leader was Phoumi Nosavan, who seemed to live by grandiose statements and ideas, I remember him making a visit to the U.S. At his presentation to the JCS he told how he was going to take two Laotian divisions (FAR) Forces Armee, march up to the Plaine des Jarres, and take over the whole country, licking the Pathet Lao. This was obviously impossible.

I remember a meeting, and this was just before the change of administration, in which Phoumi was down at--Saravane? He wanted to head north and take over the government. He seemed to have some idea of fighting and nobody else did, so we said, "If Phoumi will fight, let him fight." And he did. We gave him some assistance and told him to go. After a few so-called battles, he won.

But I think we didn't really want to get involved in this. We were willing to help him with a few advisers, with some limited arms, with expertise, but not with troops. A feeling that we would get enmeshed in something that we couldn't afford and that this was too far away for us governed our decision.

MOSS: All right. Now, this is what in effect came out as the U.S. policy decision.

HEINZ: Yes.

MOSS: You said that there were some people who had other opinions as to what ought to be done. Could you identify some of them?

HEINZ: There were advocates of using air power to accomplish their purposes.

MOSS: Could you identify some of these people or the offices they represented?

HEINZ: No, I can't. My reason for saying this is that it was not identified with, say, a service, the army, the navy, or the air force, because there were differences within each service. The navy and the Marine Corps, I think, had differing views on this. There was one case in which the service chief and the secretary were violently at opposite ends of what we should do. There was a very great divergency and spectrum of opinion on what the policy should be in regard to Laos. I don't recall clearly enough to state reliably who was who. I think there was the same divergence in State. There were those whom you now would call hawks and doves. We didn't have those terms then, or at least didn't use those terms. I'd hesitate to name anybody because I don't recall who was who in this particular argument.

MOSS: You talked about the question of committing U.S. forces to Laos. What about the question of committing forces to Thailand, to try and force a settlement in Laos?

HEINZ: Here we already had a base setup as a contingency in case we should ever get into fighting there, since we did have a commitment under the SEATO treaty to come to their aid if they were attacked by Communist forces. This was Thailand itself. The protocol states were different. Since Thailand was clearly a member of SEATO, we could put troops in there as a precautionary measure without committing them to action, but having them ready for action for a political purpose, shall we say, or to achieve a political end. Early in my tour in 15A we did move troops there, we kept them there a short while and then withdrew them, because we didn't want to get them committed on a long term basis. Nor did Thailand want them there on a long term basis.

MOSS: As I recall, there were marines brought down from Okinawa?

HEINZ: They were marines, yes.

MOSS: Do you recall if there was a second level move from FMF /Fleet Marine Force/ back in Hawaii out to Okinawa?

HEINZ: No, I don't recall. I don't know.

MOSS: Now, one of the things that happened in Laos, of course, is the neutralization solution, so-called, that was engineered supposedly beginning by Kennedy and /Nikita S./ Khrushchev at Vienna. At least, they both staked their cards on this solution at that point, and then /W. Averell/ Harriman at

Geneva later. How was this viewed at your end of the line?

HEINZ: As I recall, when Harriman went to Geneva--and I had one of my officers with him during those long sessions at Geneva--my own feeling was that he went there for a fairly high level poker game, but that he had almost no cards to play, and he had little or no money to play with them. He did a superb job with the backing and the resources that he had. Our position was that we were backing a rather diverse group of people who were on our side of the Laotian government. The Pathet Lao were much more combined. I think they had better local organization. Although our side had been pushed back, we still didn't want to commit any of our troops there. We really wanted to stay free of commitments in Laos. So we really had little bargaining power, and SEATO had shown that it wouldn't move in to Laos. Now as long as SEATO wouldn't move in, and we weren't going to physically get in there to throw the Viet Minh out, Harriman didn't have many cards to play at Geneva. We tried to work out a solution which would, for example, end up with a neutral Laos, as it were, with a tripartite government, but the Laotian people we had to work with weren't strong enough.

MOSS: What was the estimate of the different people, given that they were none of them very strong? You have Souvanna Phouma, you have Phoumi, you have Kong Le, and so on. How were these people regarded as individuals? How did you distinguish between them?

HEINZ: I think the most pitiful of them is Kong Le. He was a Meo, and as such, not of the dominant tribe. The hereditary princes had the power, more or less, and their hereditary position. They were also closely allied with the French. They were the only educated people, the very few educated in the country, and therefore could run the country, more or less as a favored group, although none of them could obtain loyalty from the country as a whole. The only one who could hold his troops and he didn't even have them, was Kong Le. He rose to the level he did on his ability, whereas the others were hereditary princes.

MOSS: What about the other side of the fence? What is it that Souvanouphong has that the others don't have?

HEINZ: Not much more except the backing of the Communists and their kind of operations.

MOSS: Do you think after being in the situation that you were that, in fact, it takes a military or political dictatorship to make one of these countries stable and viable?

HEINZ: Yes, I think so. It does, in that a participating democracy requires that the participants must not only be aware of what their government is doing, where it's going, and have opinions as to how it should go, but also must want to and be willing to participate in that government. Then you can have a democracy. But where you have a country with so many illiterates, a very small ruling class, a very small group of educated people, where the people are more concerned with existence than anything else, they do not and cannot really participate in the government. This was the case in Laos. Everything was run for the favored few. To get it run for the many, you have to have someone who can run it, first of all. There were and are very few people in Laos who have anything like this capability. This is the problem in a country like Laos. There just weren't enough literate people.

MOSS: You praised Harriman when you spoke of him a few minutes ago. There are people who, unkindly, I think, called the Ho Chi Minh Trail the Averell Harriman Memorial Highway. How do you react to a statement like that, or a characterization implied of that sort?

HEINZ: Well, I think Harriman, as I recall, gave away some goodies in the Geneva agreements, but I don't see how he could have done anything better than what he had. I think the issues were decided by power politics. We weren't really in a position to force any other solution, since the North Vietnamese were willing to pour people in there, and did. As long as we weren't able to get in there and stop them, the Laotians couldn't do it. They don't have the organization. They're not the type of people. They were not a nation as such. There were capable individuals, yes, but as a country, certainly, the North Vietnamese were so much better organized, indoctrinated and trained. They could move. The Laotians couldn't.

MOSS: Okay, fine. I've used up a half hour, so I'll break it off here.

HEINZ: All right.