Association For Diplomatic Studies and Training
Foreign Affairs Oral History Project

AMBASSADOR JOSIAH BEEMAN

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

U.S.-New Zealand relations
Operations
Nuclear weapons issue
Government
AUSCANZUKUS organization
Kiwis
New Zealand-Australia relationship
Lamb problem
Trade
Pharmaceuticals
Asians
Ex-Yugoslavia
VIP visitors
Antarctica
President Clinton visit
Pacific Islands
Maoris

Post-Ambassadorship 2000
Chief of Staff, Broadcasting Board of Governors

INTERVIEW

Q: *Let's start at the beginning. When and where were you born?*

BEEMAN: I'd like to say I was born in a log cabin on a freeway in San Francisco, but I was born and raised in San Francisco, California, my home town. I literally grew up there all the way through high school until I went to college.

Q*: What year were you born?*

BEEMAN: 1935.

Q: *Not the best year in the world in the United States – the middle of the depression.*

BEEMAN: No, that's true. My father was a lawyer, so things weren't as difficult for us as they were for many others.

Q: *Let's talk a bit about your family. First, could you tell me a bit about the background of your father?*

BEEMAN: Well, my father was a lawyer, a graduate of Stanford Law School. He was born and raised in a town called Gold Hill, Oregon, which is still around and, as a matter of fact, the house that he was born in is now a museum up there. Not because he was

there, but because the family had been active so long in Gold Hill and they were in the gold mining business. Until just before my father died, we still owned the old gold mine.
Q: *Beeman. Where does the name Beeman come from?*

BEEMAN: Beeman is actually a corruption of Beaumont. The Beemans came to England with William the Conquerer. So anytime you see "Beeman," which is my spelling, or "Beman" or "Bemon," those are all variations of the family name. We can trace our family back to William the Conquerer.

Q: *Why did your father go to Stanford for law, do you know?*

BEEMAN: No. I mean he was a very smart guy and he and my mother went to the University of Oregon, which is where they met and were subsequently married. But I don't know why he picked Stanford Law School. He was absolutely batty about Stanford and Stanford football. He played baseball at Stanford. I went to the University of California Law School, so we were quite competitive in football.

Q: *What's your mothers background?*

BEEMAN: My mother was born in St. Joseph, Missouri, and they moved to Oregon where my grandfather had a ranch, so she went to the University of Oregon. As I said earlier, that is where she and my father met and later married.

Q: *What were her interests?*

BEEMAN: My mother was a terrific woman. A lot of fun, and a very devoted mother, although with a reasonably strict hand. I think she was primarily interested in having fun and raising a family and doing right by the kids. She was never a great cook. That wasn't one of her particular interests.

Q: *Now, where in San Francisco did you live?*
BEEMAN: In Sea Cliff, which is actually outside the Golden Gate Bridge. It's on the ocean side of the bridge in what we call the "fog belt," because you could be immersed and the fog would be there when you got up almost every morning. Then it would roll out in the late morning or afternoon, then it would roll back in in the late afternoon. So we were raised on a very nice street. I go by and look at the house and wish we had kept it, because it is worth about a million dollars now. I remember what we sold it for in the early '70s. We went to a grammar school which was two blocks away. Junior high school was about six blocks away, and high school was about four blocks away. So we all walked to school.

Q: *Do you have brothers and sisters?*

BEEMAN: I had one brother (who is deceased) who was eight years older than me. I had a sister who was six years older than me but died from pneumonia before I was born and before penicillin came along. Then I have a sister living, who is two years younger than I

am.

Q: *How did you get the name Josiah? That's sort of an old-time name.*

BEEMAN: Well, actually, I am Josiah Horton Beeman V.

Q: Who was Josiah Beeman I?

BEEMAN: David Beeman I was a revolutionary war veteran who married the daughter of a Josiah Horton, and their child was named Josiah Horton Beeman. So he was the "first" and fought in the revolutionary war and its been a long line ever since.

Q: How did your ancestors get across to the other coast?

BEEMAN: My father's parents actually came across in covered wagons on the Oregon Trail. My father's family were Oregon pioneers. My father was the youngest in the family. He died at age 73. They had a place in the country that had a big slice of the Oregon Trail on it near Mt. Hood that they kept cleared until my aunt was 95. My mother's family were transplants from Missouri in about the 1920s.

Q: Let's talk about your home life. How did your family operate? I mean, did you sit around and discuss things at the table? Or did everybody do their own thing?

BEEMAN: I think everybody kind of did their thing. My father was very busy as a prominent lawyer in San Francisco in a two-person practice. He was fairly busy, but we did lots of things as a family. We traveled as a family and that kind of thing. But because my brother, who was 8 years older than I, was off in the Merchant Marine during World War II in the South Pacific, at that formative age we didn't see a lot of him. My sister and I grew up together and the family was pretty close in that sense.

Q: What kind of practice was your father in?

BEEMAN: My father was a personal injury lawyer. In those days personal injury, or tort law, was just kind of getting started. But he was very successful and I used to say I was put through college by the Municipal Railway, the Greyhound Bus Company, and the Southern Pacific Railroad.

Q: You said your grammar school was very close to you. Do you recall any of the teachers or courses?

BEEMAN: I sure do. There was a famous story in the family that when I was in the first grade, Miss O'Connor was my teacher. The first day of school she was going around the room calling the roll and asking for the people to raise their hands so she could see who was who. She came to the name Josiah Beeman and she said something like, "Well, what do they call you at home, little man?" I said, "At home they call me Joe, but you may call me 'Mr. Beeman' ." At lunch time she went to the phone in the school office and called

my mother and said “Mrs. Beeman, this is Miss O’Connor, Josiah’s first grade teacher” and my mother said she thought “Oh my God, it’s the first day of school, what is the little brat up to, he’s already a joke?” Then Miss O’Connor told her the story and she fell down laughing. Until she died in 1965, Mrs. O’Connor sent me a Christmas card every year addressed to Mr. Beeman. Apparently I was kind of a precocious kid. Not intellectually brilliant, but just had a strong sense of myself, and I was always interested in geography and history. That’s what I used to read from the public library. I could name the kings of England, the kings of France going back centuries. I devoured all those books and I had some terrific teachers that I remember very well.

Q: So the world opened up to you through reading?

BEEMAN: Yes, reading and, of course, National Geographic.

Q: I was just going to say, the maps and the-

BEEMAN: The maps and everything which my aunt sent me every year as a Christmas present. When I went off to New Zealand in 1994, I finally disposed of those maps in a yard sale. It was quite a funny story. A young woman who was a school teacher came to this yard sale. I had them priced at $2.00 and she bought about 15 or 20 of them. Then she looked at them and said, “But they were only $1.50 when they were published, and you are asking $2.00." I said, “Well, now they are antiques, you see.” I always followed political affairs and world affairs since I was a 5 year old.

Q: Was there a racial mix in your elementary school? I’m thinking particularly of Hispanics and Orientals..
BEEMAN: There were some Hispanics. There were very few African-Americans, but there were sure lots of nationalities. As a matter of fact, one of my classmates all the way through high school was Ambassador Princeton Lyman, who has just retired.

Q: I had a very interesting interview with Princeton, who comes from a Jewish family. I always laugh because he said his father came from a small place in Poland or Russia or something and came and opened up a little grocery store in your neck of the woods. He named his sons Harvard, Princeton, Yale, and Stanford. I think the last one was named Clifton for some reason.

BEEMAN: Well, I didn’t know that one. I knew the other four.

Q: Did you go to that grocery store?

BEEMAN: No, there were closer groceries than that one. Little “mom and pops,” as we used to call them, before the big supermarkets came along, where you did all your shopping.

Q: Well, Princeton later was ambassador in several countries and Africa, and he was the butcher for awhile.

BEEMAN: So it was very culturally diverse. Now when I got into high school, in George Washington High School in San Francisco, or Presidio Junior High School, then there was a much more diverse population. We had African-American student body presidents. We had lots of Chinese. Now-a-days that part of San Francisco is really heavily Chinese. Later in my life, as I got into politics, I knew the racial composition of the district and it was about 0 to 5 percent Chinese and now it is probably about 30 percent Chinese.

Q: By the time you got to high school, what was your experience?

BEEMAN: High school was terrific. I really was blessed by three super, really superb schools with super faculty. Part of that was due to the principal who was a man about six foot five. Otto Schmelze was his name. This was a guy who knew how to run a school. Morale was high; intellectual accomplishments were high. We were always winning awards for being a superior high school, even though we were just one of many local high schools in San Francisco. He just insisted on a high standard of performance and gathered a very high-quality faculty. It was really a terrific place and I am still a devoted alumni, as are lots of others of my peers.

Q: What sort of activities were you involved in in high school?

BEEMAN: I was never a great athlete, although I played a little football, so I tended more towards the civic service kinds of organizations. I was active in student government and I headed up a number of organizations - such as the hall guards - where you make sure there aren't kids wandering around the halls who shouldn't be. I was an officer in the ROTC - the Regimental Adjutant. So I was in more of those kinds of activities.

Q: How about the education you were getting?

BEEMAN: It was top quality. Again, I could give you the names of teachers.

Q: Well, name a few of them.

BEEMAN: Miss Garin was my English teacher, who was really a wonderful person. Mr. - oh I've blanked on his name - he was the social studies teacher. It wasn't Applegate but it was close to it. He was quite a character. My Spanish teacher, Mr. Morton. I mean, they were terrific teachers who were interested in young people and had the ability to inspire them.

Q: Did you get much chance to do both solid reading and writing and discussion?

BEEMAN: Oh, yes. Miss Garin required a considerable amount of writing in civics and current events. They really worked hard as teachers, and you could tell how dedicated they were to the profession. You looked forward to going to class.

Q: Did you have summer jobs?

BEEMAN: I was very active in the Boy Scouts. I was the assistant Scout Master and then Scout Master of the troop. That was all post-high school. So I was very active in my Boy Scout troop. I guess I was blessed by not having to work hard for money. My father always provided whatever I needed. I remember, I worked at Christmas times at Hire's Root Beer bottling plant, which was a very lucrative job. Then I also worked every Christmas at the post office, which in those days was kind of a political patronage job. Just over Christmas vacations helping to deliver the Christmas mail. Again, I have some wonderful memories of that experience, too.

Q: I'm told they get quite an eclectic group of people at the post office.

BEEMAN: You sure do. It was interesting. One quick story: I was working in what is called Rincon Annex in San Francisco, which is the large distribution center wherein the package sorting is one big room - like one big pen - and you were putting these packages in the bags and then you had to close the bag when it was full and haul it away. You had to wear gloves because the rope on the bag would eat your hands alive. I learned that the professionals say "the bigger the fragile sign, the harder you throw the package." Fortunately, a lot of that has changed. They offered a chance to go out and be mail carriers if you wanted to, because they were short of carriers. So a whole bunch of people went out because that was a terrible job in there. Really hard work and physically demanding, so we were all looking for something a little easier. Went up to the window and the guy said "here are the locations we have available" and the guy in front of me said, "Well, none of those are near where I live so I think I'll turn it down." But the guy said, "Well, you'll take one of these or you'll go out the door." So I picked a slot which was a long way away from where I lived. Then my mother loaned me her car. When I got there the first day, I delivered all my mail in an hour and a half; came back and my supervisor said, "Well, get a load of Speedy here." So he loaded me up with some more mail and said, "I don't want to see you for three hours." The psychology in the post office then was "take your time and move real slow."

Q: Did you get much chance to explore San Francisco as a kid?

BEEMAN: Oh, yes. I knew San Francisco pretty well, and I was active in Democratic politics as a young kid, even in high school I put out a Democratic precinct newsletter in my own precinct on my own.

Q: What attracted you to politics and to the Democratic party?

BEEMAN: My family were all Democrats, had a long history of being Democrats. My mother had been raised as a Republican but she switched. My father's family were always very active democrats. My grandfather, who died before I was born, had been an appointee of Woodrow Wilson in Portland, Oregon. Perhaps a combination of history and reading and civics and that kind of thing attracted me; but the notion that politics, the way I define it, is persuading people to do what you want. That is the short sense. It is much more complex. But you are trying to persuade people to vote for you, to do something

you want them to do. To vote for you or for some other person. So there was something about that that attracted me. You know, diplomacy is applied politics. You are busy trying to get the country you are sent to, to do what the United States wants it to do. There is not a great gap between the two. The way one should practice is different but the basic principles are the same.

Q: Now in the late '40s and early '50s, was San Francisco a Democratic city?

BEEMAN: It was more mixed than it is today. We had a number of Republican mayors, but the culture of San Francisco was always kind of progressive, so you didn't elect ultra-conservatives to public office in San Francisco, they wouldn't make it. So even the Republicans who held office there were moderate in nature.

Q: When you were putting out your little paper and getting involved, what sort of issues would grab you?

BEEMAN: Well, one issue early on was fair housing. That became a very important issue in San Francisco. I think I was more attracted to that than I was to issues that people think more about in local government terms these days. Zoning, housing requirements, and construction of public housing were other issues that always interested me in the sense of trying to make sure that neighborhoods had the greatest possible kind of mix of population.

Q: What does "fair housing" mean?

BEEMAN: Fair housing meant that people of color would be able to buy a residence where ever they wanted if they could afford it. Communities weren't "redlined" as we call it today. There were lots of covenants in property deeds that outlawed the sale of your property to anyone other than a Caucasian. Those were the kinds of issues that got me interested early on.

Q: Coming out of high school - you would have graduated in about '53 - did you know where you wanted to go?

BEEMAN: Yes, I knew where I wanted to go. I really don't remember how I found out where I wanted to go, but I wound up going to Reed College in Portland, Oregon, which was noted to be a very progressive institution at the time. Of course, this was during the height of McCarthyism. I remember cutting school, by the way, to watch the Army-McCarthy hearings in great detail. I watched every minute of them. I had a long illness that week. I actually don't know how I stumbled on Reed. I've thought about that in the past, but it was and is a terrific college and it was near my aunt, so I had a place to take my laundry and someone to cook me a non-institutional meal occasionally. I remember the pastor of my church said to me, "Isn't Reed a little pink, Joe?" That was a hot word in those days. But I went there anyway.

Q: You were at Reed from '53 to '57?

BEEMAN: Right.

Q: Lets talk about Reed. I think of it as a small, liberal arts school.

BEEMAN: That's exactly right. It's a little bigger now. It's about eleven hundred students now but it was 600 when I was there.

Q: *How did you find it? Student body and all that?*

BEEMAN: I guess I was always kind of a lazy student. because I was able to get by without too much work. Reed is a school that basically you either get a passing or failing mark. They put grades on your transcripts so that if you want to go to graduate school you are not disqualified, but you don't see those until after you have applied to the graduate school. It was a small enough community that it was good fun, and I was viewed as one of the campus conservatives because I occasionally wore a tie. It was just a terrible thing to wear a tie, but then the school nurse always described me as the best dressed man on campus because I did wear a tie.

Q: Was it a coed school?

BEEMAN: Yes, it was coed. I did a little drama. I was a political science major and a international relations minor.

Q: As you point out, this was during some of the McCarthy area and the residue from it. Did this impact on the studies?

BEEMAN: Yes, it did, because we had a member of the faculty who was in the politically threatening area who could preach Communism under the guise of art. He was an art professor. He was fired by the Board of Trustees for having been a member of the Communist Party. He was a very distinguished professor and superb in his field of study, and of course that raised a considerable amount of controversy on campus. I also remember Al Gore's father, who was a member of the Senate from Tennessee, who came and spoke to the student body during the course of the McCarthy Censure Debate. I remember that just like it was yesterday. The whole political mix was influenced by that. I remember we elected a Democratic senator from Oregon. Maurine Neuberger was her name. She didn't hold office very long, and died quite young. The local politics and the impact of national politics which everybody talked about was very important.

Q: Wayne Morris?

BEEMAN: Wayne Morris, that's correct.

Q: He was one of those.
BEEMAN: He was from Oregon. He was the other Senator.

Q: He was quite a liberal, wasn't he?

BEEMAN: He was a Republican - a moderate Republican who switched to Independent and remained an Independent member of the Senate until he died. Of course, he was an ardent opponent of the Vietnam War.

Q: International affairs. Sometimes when I travel around I find some local papers You can almost fall off the edge of the world because the news is so poor in the local papers. How did you keep up with it all?

BEEMAN: That situation was true then, and I think it is worse now.

Q: I think it is, too. The San Francisco paper is a rag. Just a rag. It's just terrible.

BEEMAN: I used to subscribe to the Chronicle when I was in Washington and read it, but I haven't done that for fifteen years now because it's just a dreadful paper. That was true of the Oregon papers, too, although the Oregonian - at the time there was the Journal and the Oregonian - the Oregonian was the more liberal Democratic paper, and the Journal was the conservative Republican paper. I think the Journal has disappeared. I don't know who owns the Oregonian now. We kind of kept on top of issues through Model United Nations. I was Vice President of the international relations clubs of the Pacific Northwest. So we had all kinds of publications - foreign affairs, and other things that were around - that we relied on for substantial information on foreign affairs issues.

Q: Did you get to travel much with the family?

BEEMAN: Yes, when I graduated from high school, my parents sent me on a trip to Europe. I traveled around by myself because I was always a big guy and looked a lot older than I was, and I guess I behaved a lot older than you would at that age - 17. Then I was involved in things like the World Affairs Council, and I would host delegations from overseas during the summer when I was back home. You would take groups of people, from Thailand or wherever, around San Francisco and show them the city. I went to two Boy Scout Jamborees - one at Valley Forge in 1953. We took a train trip all around the country. We didn't travel much around the country as a family, but we did travel in northern California.

Q: Did Europe intrigue you?

BEEMAN: Yes, it intrigued me because you were still seeing the effects of World War II, even though it had been eight years since the war was over. I remember the food in Britain being terrible. I remember my first introduction to a Wimpie, and boy their hamburger was pretty "wimpy." It was just terrible. We Americans had money and the Brits didn't. Eight years after the war.

Q: When you were getting close to graduating from college in 1957, what were you thinking about?

BEEMAN: I've had this kind of funny experience in my life, which is that I have never ever applied for a job in my life. Except ambassador, that's the only one I've ever had to fight to get. I wasn't quite sure what I wanted to do. I wanted to go to law school, and my father encouraged me to do that. I figured I wanted to work for a year, so I went to work because I wanted to buy a car, all those kinds of things. I went to work for the Social Security Administration. My job was to sort out some very complicated cases. It was really a production line operation. I did it for a year and saved my money, and then went off to law school. I didn't really have a career in mind but all the time I continued to dabble in local politics.
Q: What intrigued you about local politics?

BEEMAN: You ask why one gets interested in that kind of thing, and I'm not sure. I suppose it was a desire to be a leader, again to get people to do what you want them to do. To organize things and make things happen, that has always given me satisfaction. To make things happen. Making things happen, like electing somebody to office, is something that can give you a great deal of satisfaction.

Q: Were you in college politics at all?

BEEMAN: I was in college politics, and was elected to what is called the "Read Union Board," which is the elected board which brings the speakers on the campus.

Q: Where were students at Reed from?

BEEMAN: It's a pattern that really hasn't changed that much over the years. About 20% are from Oregon and about 35% from California. That's about 55% of the student body from those two states, then it moves East in smaller numbers.

Q: Then you went to the University of California at Berkeley?

BEEMAN: At Hastings College of Law, San Francisco.

Q: Hastings was what? Was that a-

BEEMAN: It's actually a very interesting law school UCB - University of California at Berkeley has two law schools. One is Boalt and the other is Hastings. Hastings' faculty was composed entirely of retired professors. They don't work as hard but you wind up with some of the most distinguished law professors from all across the United States. They can teach at Hastings without maintaining a full load, and teach interesting classes. I just took a year, then decided I didn't want to spend three years doing that. After one year I dropped out and went back to graduate school. As I kiddingly said, which is the truth, "If I can't figure it out myself, I can always hire a lawyer."

Q: After a year of this, what did your father say about that?

BEEMAN: He understood. My father was very non-directional. He figured he knew what I was doing and wanted to do. He was that way with my sister and I. My parents were always very supportive across the board to both of us.

Q: So, we're talking about 1960 now?

BEEMAN: Right.

Q: Did you get involved in the very engaging campaign - Kennedy vs Nixon?

BEEMAN: I sure was. I was Kennedy's youth chairman in San Francisco, California, and that was a very thrilling experience. By that time I was in law school, '57 to '58. Then I went to California State University graduate school to get a masters, from '58 to '59.

Q: In what?

BEEMAN: In political science, or government as they called it there, with a minor in international relations. Which, by the way, is where I first met then Professor, now Congressman, Tom Lantos, who was one of my professors. He still looks the same. I heard him speaking on the radio yesterday. Very eloquent, very articulate. That was 42 years ago and he is still going strong. He had an early television program on international relations.

Q: He was from Hungary?

BEEMAN: Hungary, right. Fascinating personal story. Saved by Raoul Wallenberg. He is one of the Wallenberg refugees.

Q: So that takes you up to '59. Were you looking at anything to do?

BEEMAN: No. I'll have to think about what I was doing between 1959 and the time I went to work for the Northern California Council of Churches in 1963. In 1960, it was the Kennedy campaign. I've always been a very active Presbyterian. Had served on several denominational committees, even when I was in law school and grad school. The Council of Churches asked me to come to work as their social issues coordinator. Director of Education was my title. I was responsible for dealing with legislation in Sacramento which was of interest to the churches, and peace efforts, and all that kind of stuff on behalf of the churches. I did that job for three years - from '60 to '63.

Q: How did you find the church organization? I think it was later when many of the Council of Churches began to go extremely liberal on foreign affairs. When you were doing this, was that happening?

BEEMAN: No. While the Quakers - the American Friends Service Committee - played a very preeminent role within our particular Council of Churches on peace issues, it was a very mainline effort. It was not trying to be out in left field.

Q: This came during the '70s I think.

BEEMAN: Actually, it was the '60s. It was an effort to reach the middle and get people involved, make them aware, and so forth. Then again, in San Francisco, in Northern California, that wasn't that hard a task.

Q: What about race relations? Was there a problem with the Asians or with the African-Americans? (End of tape)

You were saying the Rumford-

BEEMAN: The legislature passed the Rumford fair housing law. Byron Rumford was an African-American Assemblyman from Berkeley, California, and the passage of that law turned into a major referendum. You know California has always had this initiative, referendum and recall, that you can do by popular signatures. This issue was taken to the state ballot. It was an extremely contentious piece of legislation, with Realtors and conservative groups coming out strongly against it. All the usual arguments against moving any kind of minority into a neighborhood. I have to try to remember now; I know the initiative was upheld on a State ballot by a very close vote. Those kind of issues were there and got very high visibility during that time in California history.

Q: Was the church supporting this?

BEEMAN: Oh, the church supported fair housing. One of my jobs was to organize the involvement of the churches in that legislation. There was a major welfare reform package in California and my job was to get the churches to support that legislation as it was moving through the State Legislature.

Q: Often the support for mainline churches was coming from fairly wealthy and, by nature, rather conservative people.

BEEMAN: Right. The leadership of the churches in Northern California was, without question, reasonably moderately liberal people. That's part of the process of engagement. That's what I would describe as the political end of it. How do you persuade people to support these kinds of efforts? That's the kind of thing I enjoy. It reoccurred in a later job in my career when I worked with the pastor of the largest Presbyterian church in the United States, which is in Prairie Village, Kansas, with a membership of 8,000. It's a suburb of Kansas City, very wealthy. I took him to Paris with a delegation when we went over to meet with parties on Vietnam peace talks and this guy just did a 180-degree turn. We didn't brainwash him; we just exposed him to a variety of points of view that he had never had before. He goes back and tells his people that they had to question what was going on in Vietnam. There are ways to take intelligent, decent people and show them an alternative point of view. Some will subscribe to and some won't.

Q: While you were doing this church work – you are a young man and I would think you

would be talking to older people. There is a built-in skepticism of a young guy corralling you after you've been around the block a few times.

BEEMAN: Well, maybe - I don't want to sound self-serving when I say this but maybe because I've always had a gravitas disproportionate to my age, I could go up to older people and talk to them.

Q: You wore a tie?

BEEMAN: I wore a tie, exactly.

Q: You mentioned that you started getting involved in national politics, at least in California; could we talk about that a little?

BEEMAN: Sure. In 1963, while I was still at the Council of Churches, the then-Congressman from San Francisco decided to run for Mayor. My dearest friend in politics, Phil Burton, was a member of the State Legislature who wanted to run for Congress. So I became the "get out the vote" chairman or kind of the precinct field worker, on evenings and on weekends. With a staff, I ran the operation that would elect the congressman mayor, thus creating a vacancy in Congress for my very good friend to run for. Well, all of that happened. Jack Shelley got elected mayor and Phil Burton announced for Congress. Then Phil asked me to run his campaign, and then in February 1964 we won the special election. He asked me to be his Chief of Staff. That's when I first came back to Washington. I was building up this two-track career; one in the church and one in politics. So in 1964 I ran the Lyndon Johnson campaign in San Francisco - all this time while working for Congressman Phil Burton. In 1962, I was a candidate for the State Legislature, by the way, while I was at the Council of Churches. In a silk stocking district, as we call it, a Republican district that we never won. No Democrat would ever win, but it was kind of a training ground for young up-and-comers in San Francisco politics.

Q: So you were sort of plugged into the democratic, political apparatus? Going through training.

BEEMAN: In '62 I was a candidate for the State Legislature. During that period I was also State President of the Young Democrats, which was really quite interesting because we called for outrageous, radical things like the recognition of Red China; or the end to U.S. involvement in Vietnam, and this was during the Kennedy administration when you had 600 advisors there; restoration of diplomatic relations with Cuba, were all the kinds of positions. It wasn't just me. There was a group of us that led the Young Democrats into thinking about these things. Almost all of these things have come true in today's world, except for Cuba.

Q: Were there two different countries - Southern California and Northern California?

BEEMAN: Yes.

Q: How did the Democratic Party groups in each one mesh, or did they?

BEEMAN: Well, they did, but to win an election in California the Democratic candidates would have to come barnstorming out of northern California with an enormous margin, which they nearly always did. When they failed to do it, then they lost the election. In those days, we are talking boom time, this was before Ronald Reagan got elected in '66. Pat Brown was governor. We had a strong Democratic majority in both houses.

Q: Was the China lobby dead by that time?

BEEMAN: Pretty much. Republican Governor Earl Warren went to the Supreme Court. Goodwin Knight, who was the Lieutenant Governor, became the governor. Then, in '58, Senator Knowland, who was supposed to be the head of the China lobby, decided he wanted to be governor. So he forced Goodwin Knight out of the governorship to run for the senate, and Knowland ran for governor. Well, the public was outraged by that move and, of course, that is how Pat Brown got elected. The Democrats just swept over everything in sight, including the senate seat. Knowland was defeated.

Q: Tell ne about Phil Burton.

BEEMAN: I worked for Phil twice. Phil was close to my older brother, who was a great basketball player when he was a young man, and Phil was a basketball player, too. Phil and I had a very interesting relationship. He used to call me one of the great political minds in the United States, but he was the master politician. He became Chairman of the Democratic Caucus in the House and lost the majority leader race to Jim Wright by one vote. All he did was politics - he slept, drank, smoked politics. He took terrible care of his health. He was a hard-driving kind of a guy who did nothing but politics - didn't play golf, didn't swim, didn't read books - he was totally immersed in politics.

Q: Where was his power center?

BEEMAN: San Francisco. He was very close to organized labor nationally. He was very close to the black members of Congress. He was one of the few defenders of Adam Clayton Powell. He was anti-Vietnam War. He was one of the 5 original votes, 5 in the House and 2 in the Senate. Wayne Morris was one of the 2 in the Senate. The guy never took a nickel from anybody from anybody in his life. He would not let a lobbyist buy him a meal. He would buy the meal. Hard man to work for.

Q: In what way?

BEEMAN: Very bad temper. He never demonstrated it to me but he did to others because of his drinking. He was big, he was about my size - we were about the same height and about the same build - so they used to say when the two of us came down the hall together, you kind of got out of the way.

Q: San Francisco is now called the gay community; was that a factor then?

BEEMAN: Not really. I knew two gay guys in the Young Democrats, but you wouldn't know that. It was kind of "don't ask- don't tell" sort of thing.

Q: So, it wasn't a group one would focus on?

BEEMAN: No.

Q: You went to Washington when?

BEEMAN: February 20, 1964.

Q: By this time Lyndon Johnson had become president. How did you find Washington?

BEEMAN: Phil and I had this unique relationship. The Whips would call and say "How's he going to vote on 'X?'" Only once in all the years I worked for him did I ever have to ask him how he was going to vote for a bill. I could tell them. I knew how he thought. I knew what he thought. I knew how he would react. It was a fun time. I was a young man working for an upstart Congressman from California who was back there to rattle their cage, and he said, "Joe, what I want you to do is come back here and fight the bureaucrats." So when some poor person was getting screwed on his Social Security or whatever it was, he or I would straighten out those kinds of injustices.

Q: Were you married by this time?

BEEMAN: No. I stayed a bachelor until I was 35.

Q: Being a liberal, it must have been a very heady time to be in Congress. Really, the Johnson revolution, which sort of gets overlooked now, like racial equality, and war on poverty, was going full blast.

BEEMAN: That's right. Yes, it was a very heady time and that's why it was a lot of fun. You could make things happen. Burton really did have a rage for social justice, so he was the author of the Black Lung bill, followed by the White Lung bill. The major welfare reform bill in the history of the United States was his baby. Reagan undid some of that, and Clinton did a little more. Those were the issues that he immersed himself in and he was having a ball.

Q: How did you find the Congressional staff while you were there?
BEEMAN: Our Congressional staff?

Q: Yes.

BEEMAN: Well, that was one of my sore points with Phil. They were smart people but once Phil hired somebody he would almost never fire them. He would hire people who

would subsequently become alcoholics, and he would keep them on the payroll even though they were neither producing nor showing up, but he would never fire anybody. If anybody quit, which I did in 1969, he would labor to get them to come back to work for him. So I did come back when he was elected Chairman of the Democratic Caucus of the house. They had never had a staff in the Caucus, and they asked me to come back and be the first staff director. I did it for a year and realized I had made a mistake. I shouldn't have gone back. I was more my own man than somebody who wanted to hold someone else's coat.

Q: How did you find the discipline of the House when you were there?

BEEMAN: Phil was a wheeler-dealer and I was a wheeler-dealer. I had a great time. We used to have this joke. He was always busy, so if some influential person he knew in the district had a particular problem, he would tell them Joe would help them and I would go to work on it. If I succeeded, I would call the guy back and tell him what I had gotten done. When I would report the mission was accomplished, Phil's line was, "Well, did you mention my name?" Of course, he had nothing to do with it - it was kind of like "did you take all the credit or did you leave 1% for me," so it was a great joke.

Q: How did you find lobbyists? You say Burton basically turned them off.

BEEMAN: Yes, Burton turned them off. They were not a major factor. He could abuse these people mercilessly. He would keep them waiting for an hour or two, then bring them in for a minute and then throw them out. He had no use for them.

Q: How did you find the pervasive atmosphere of the House at that time?

BEEMAN: It was a great time for the Democrats. It was just how far and how fast can we go? The big problem was how to deal with the curmudgeons in the Senate. The Richard Russell and the conservatives in the Senate. I remember when he passed the welfare reform in California in the early '60s, probably '63 I guess, and the then- Speaker, Jesse Unruh, was opposed to the bill. Phil found out that Unruh's mother was in a nursing home and Unruh was having to pay the nursing home expense himself. So he brought the nursing homes into the bill and all of a sudden the bill became law. That's how he operated.

Q: Did you have any dealings with the State Department?

BEEMAN: At that time, no. Phil was big in family planning and the abortion battle, which was just beginning to start. I remember having some dealings with them on family planning issues and funding for family planning in international organizations. Everything else was routine, except when they came by to give us briefings on various issues.

Q: How about foreign affairs, were you involved in keeping an eye on them?

BEEMAN: Yes, because I was more interested in that than he was. He was big into NATO, and for years represented the House of Representatives on the North Atlantic Assembly. Towards the end of his life he was Chairman of one of the major committees there. We had a steady stream of those kinds of people coming through to talk to us. I followed the foreign affairs in the office but he didn't get involved with them as directly except for Vietnam.
Q: A lot of social changes were beginning to happen in San Francisco and Berkeley at that time. Protests of the free speech movement, the anti-Vietnam thing, the drug culture was beginning to creep in.

BEEMAN: It was beginning to creep in. When I was working for Phil, Mayor Jack Shelley appointed me to the Board of Supervisors. After Mayor Moscone was assassinated, and Diane Feinstein got her start. I was serving out Moscone's unexpired term because he had been elected to the State Senate. In those days, the closing of Haight street in the Haight Ashbury district, the hippies, and flower children were all in the middle. I don't think that culture was not of the nature that it is today, I don't think.

Q: It was more kind of fun. Kids indulging themselves and getting a lot of publicity about it.

BEEMAN: Right. That is exactly what it was. San Francisco, being a fairly tolerant community, couldn't get too worked up about it. The old traditional merchants who had stores on Haight Street weren't real happy with this. Those were some of the issues, but they all went away in a few years.

Q: You mentioned that you wanted to be your own person, and there is something about being on somebody's staff that makes you have to take on that person's coloration.

BEEMAN: Right.

Q: So what happened?

BEEMAN: I was never unhappy with Phil's position on issues; he and I saw things the same way. It was really more of a personality conflict. I said to him when I left the first time, "Phil, I would rather be your friend than your employee." He would do anything I asked him to do, and he was very generous toward me when I ran for office and raised money for me. I wasn't going to sit around and drink with him at the end of the day, and I didn't like it when he would take some Congressman and really abuse that person and then couldn't understand, the next day when he had sobered up, why this guy was not a great friend anymore. He was a lot like Lyndon Johnson as a matter of fact. There were two guys with really big appetites, as it were. When he came over and took your coat by the collar and pulled you towards him, and told you what he was going to do to you if you didn't support his bill, it was pretty intimidating. Then he would go out and do it - it was not an idle threat. More guys lost their congressional seats in California in reapportionments due to crossing Phil than you can imagine.

Q: For some reason, I think of another person named Burton. Was there anybody —

BEEMAN: There is a Burton now in the House, Dan Burton from Indiana, who is to the right of Attila the Hun.

Q: So what happened when you made the final break? What did you do?

BEEMAN: To keep the chronology in order –I went with Phil in February of '64, then in December of '66 the mayor appointed me to the Board of Supervisors, and I served there for a year in San Francisco until my term expired. Then I went back to work for Phil in San Francisco and ran his district office. It was nice because it gave me a little distance from him. When he came to town it was very interesting. I sat in on all the leadership meetings in the House of Representatives. I could walk on the floor because he always wanted me around to see what I thought about things, or to get something done, or to tell somebody to do it in a way they knew I was speaking for him. The upside was that I was in on all the decisions. The downside was it was all consuming, and that was one of the reasons I wasn't married. I did that until 1969, when the Presbyterian Church asked me to be their International Affairs secretary. That included being their representative in the U.N. (United Nations), and in Geneva as well. I left Phil in February, 1969. I moved to Manhattan, that was my base, and flew to Geneva a lot. Then about a year later, the Presbyterians asked me to take over their Washington, office which had been kind of languishing. So they asked me to go down and shake it up. I did that for about 5 years.

Q: That's about '70 to '75?

BEEMAN: Seventy to '75. I organized the Southern Africa Task Force, which was interested in the role of American corporations in support of apartheid in South Africa; led an inter-church delegation to South Africa, Zambia. So I was up to my eyeballs in all kinds of both domestic social issues and foreign policy issues.

Q: Did you find, in the foreign policy issues, that some of the National Council of Churches got involved in supporting armed groups. Was that during your time?

BEEMAN: That was during the end of my time, and that was something I was always opposed to. I understand the role of liberation groups, and I had no problem with providing food, clothing and other kinds of assistance, but I have no evidence that arms were ever purchased with church funds. I have an interesting anecdote: One of the things I was doing was organizing the churches in terms of corporate social responsibility, because we have enormous pension and foundation funds. We were pushing companies that were doing business in foreign countries to adhere to standards. As a matter of fact, as a result of that team's visit to South Africa, we went to Ford and found that the manager of the Ford plant in South Africa was lying to his people in Detroit about what they were doing in terms of restrooms and segregated practices in their company. He got fired as a result of our visit there. Then-Congressman Diggs put our report into the

Congressional record; there were hearings held in the House Foreign Affairs Committee. The Executive Vice President of Ford flew out to meet with us, and he was genuinely astonished when we told him about what was going on in his plant. He had someone go out and investigate it and found that what we said was true. Making something happen; how do you produce results from a report as opposed to having it wind up on the shelf? I've always felt I've had an interesting life. I've enjoyed my work.

Q: How did you find the various church representatives on the National Council of Churches? Also within the Presbyterian Church on foreign affairs? It's easy to come up with nice sounding phrases to make in reports you're talking about, but there is the practicality of whether it will cut out employment for South African blacks, or are you really supporting a group that may be making the right noises but actually are going around killing people.

BEEMAN: I've always been a political realist because I am much more results-oriented. I was interested in reports that would provide leverage towards a useful change. There was a committee of International Relations people that I served on, but I've never been comfortable with some of the rhetoric; because I've also been involved in politics all my life, I think you have to bring your people along with you. I've always taken a gradual change point of view. I don't mind those who want to take the revolutionary stance because they do require people to take a look at the issues. There is benefit in what they do, even though it might not bring about change, or the change they want might not be as radical as they would like. I deplore a number of things – there were groups that organized invasions of our offices in New York City demanding reparations. I always thought that was a lot of rubbish myself.

Q: These are African-Americans?

BEEMAN: Yes, these were mostly African-American groups, and they have all disappeared.

Q: Again, going back, it's fun for some activists and unemployed.
BEEMAN: Right. There were some people, for instance, who ran the war on poverty. An enormous amount of money was spent on it, but you can probably count the people who they brought out of poverty on one hand. We used to call these folks the poverty warriors. They made a profession out of it.

Q: It was middle-class relief.

BEEMAN: Right. A lot of people got jobs working in the programs, but the change they effected was zilch.

Q: I have a friend, who is a retired foreign service officer, who is an elder in the Presbyterian Church in Rehoboth, in Delaware, and he talks about the split in the church that has developed over various issues – sort of liberal vs more conservative causes. All the mainline churches have suffered a real attack. Were any of those apparent during the

time you were working for the church?

BEEMAN: No, I don't think so. In the churches today, at least in my analysis, the main fight isn't economic justice issues, or international affairs. It is really over sexuality issues. As I used to say, some people really didn't care what we do about Vietnam; they really didn't care what we would do about African-Americans, or Hispanics. But on sex, everybody has a view.

Q: It is ripping some of the mainstream churches apart. It's the "same sex" marriage, and this type of thing.

BEEMAN: Right, and it's very difficult. I don't think I have a homophobic bone in my body, but at the same time I think there are ways to do it and ways not to do it. I think it is a very unfortunate thing in mainstream churches today, especially my own.

Q: Watching this battle – my wife is an Episcopalian and they are going through the same thing. Well then, after about 5 years we are getting to '74 or '75?

BEEMAN: Right.

Q: Then what?

BEEMAN: In '72, I was on the political track. In '84 I was running Lyndon Johnson's campaign in San Francisco. I was Bobby Kennedy's campaign manager in Northern California. In '72, I was George McGovern's congressional liaison for his national campaign in Washington, because I took a leave from the Presbyterian Church's Washington office. I've always said that George McGovern was one of the most decent human beings that I have ever met and he would probably have been a terrible president.

Q: I have had the same feeling about Adlai Stevenson and Jimmy Carter.

BEEMAN: Adlai Stevenson was probably the person who got me the most. In those days he wrote his own speeches.

Q: I was a young kid and he touched me, but looking back at it I don't think he would have made a very good president.

BEEMAN: I think that is probably right.

Q: I ended up voting for Nixon.

BEEMAN: Well, I've never voted for a Republican for president. However, I've voted for some Republicans for local office, but never for President. I cast my first vote for Adlai Stevenson in 1956 and I have not wandered from the path since. I've held my nose a couple of times. So '72 is McGovern, and then in '75 I went back to be the staff director for the Democratic Caucus. I stayed for about a year, then Jerry Brown,

Governor of California, asked me to be the Chief Deputy Director of Finance for the state, and Director of the state's Washington office. I did that for 5 years.

Q: What did that involve?

BEEMAN: Two things. Basically, you are the state's lobbyist in Washington. You keep the governor tuned in; you deal with some substantial financial issues.

Q: I would think you would be working on the staff members in Congress, more than anyone else.

BEEMAN: That's true, but when I came in there was just me and a secretary. When I left there were 10 people in the office. I really developed a highly specialized- (end of tape)

Over the years I had built the California office up to a fairly large system that gave us a much more widespread capability. It was interesting, because Jerry was not terribly popular with the members of the California Congressional Delegation just because of who he was. Another guy with some major character flaws, smartest person I've ever known in politics, but had major personality flaws that made him a limited-

Q: Could you talk just a touch about him? He ended up with people calling him Governor Moonbeam. What was the problem?

BEEMAN: Jerry lacked humanity. That doesn't mean he wasn't progressive, but he lacked capability for humanity and warmth toward the people he dealt with. Intellectually, he could figure out what the issues were; what the pluses were and what the minuses were, and do that very well. As a human being, he did not relate well, and in politics you cannot survive, you cannot make the grade without the capability of reaching out to people. Bill Clinton was a master at it. Bill Clinton was the best at it that I've ever seen. George Bush has that characteristic. You are a warm human being. But Jerry Brown just didn't have that and couldn't do it. I reported on a day-to-day basis to his Chief of Staff, Grey Davis, who is now the governor. I took time off in '78 for Jerry's reelection campaign. Then he drafted me, I really didn't want to go. His campaign manager in '74 and '78 was a very good friend of mine who really wanted me to be there to help him stay sane, and help him manage Jerry. Then he ran for president in '76, but I wasn't part of that. Then he ran in '79, and I was a part of that. It was one of the most unpleasant experiences of my life. After that, I told him I couldn't stay and I left. Then I became the Political and Legislative Director for the largest union in the AFL/CIO at the time, which is AFSCME, the State, County and Municipal Employees Union. Jerry really screwed me in the end. I had gone back to work in the Washington office, and it turned out that he didn't pay me for five weeks. He just didn't sign my appointment papers for five weeks because I wouldn't go on his suicide mission when he went to Wisconsin in the primaries, and where he got clobbered. That was the end of his race. When I resigned I said I just couldn't work with Jerry and his swami politics - that had a particular reference to something that had happened in the campaign in New Hampshire - so I sandbagged him on the way out the door. Of course there was a big story in all the California papers.

You don't want to get me mad because I do get even at the end of the day. Then I got all these letters from members of the California Congressional Delegation congratulating me on making a very smart decision. After that he ran for the senate in 1980 and lost. Now he is mayor of Oakland, California.

Q: The way he talks reminds me of the great chess player, Bobby Fisher. Very good at that sort of thing, but there is no personality. They know all the right moves, but don't know how to project it.

BEEMAN: I hadn't thought about that, but that is a good analogy.

Q: So what happened to you then?

BEEMAN: So I went to AFSCME for 3 years, 1980 to '83, which was again a fun job. We defeated the congressional constitutional amendment to balance the budget. That was my campaign in 1982. Then I was asked to manage the Democratic National Convention in 1984 in San Francisco. I did that for a year and, at the conclusion of that, I decided I was going to go to work for myself and organize my own lobby business. I got a partner and started in Sacramento, with no clients. A month later we got MCI, the long distance telephone company, in California. Then business started to boom and we had an office in Sacramento, one in San Francisco, and one in Los Angeles. I would be in Sacramento when the legislature was in session, then back to San Francisco when it wasn't. Then we found ourselves with all kinds of clients who had interests in Washington, D.C., and they would ask me to go back and look after them. So I was on a plane once a week to Washington. That got old real quick, so we decided we would open a Washington office, which we did in 1987. We kept the Los Angeles office, and my partner flew to Sacramento as needed for any business we had up there, and the business shifted more to Washington. The State of California was my biggest client; I did all their tax work in Washington. That was what I was doing in 1994 when I got appointed as ambassador to New Zealand.

Q: This is probably a good place to stop but first I would like to ask you about the time during the '80s and up to '94, when you became Ambassador, about doing lobbying work both in California and Washington. I would like to talk a little more about how one lobbies and how one works. The characteristics of the California Legislature and California system. Then the National system and how one operates because this is all part of a governmental process. Then we"ll come to the State Department time.

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Today is the 24th of May, 2001. Tell me about lobbying. You were lobbying in California with the legislature?

BEEMAN: Right.

Q: Let's talk about the California legislature because I think of Willie Brown running it,

and who was the man who had it for many years-

BEEMAN: Jesse Unruh.

Q: Jesse Unruh. I think of him as being the quintessential state politician.

BEEMAN: We jokingly called him "boss" even though he wasn't quite a boss. But he certainly was a very powerful figure as Speaker, and it is a very powerful job in the legislature.

Q: What sort of interests were you representing there, and how did you work within the California Legislature?

BEEMAN: I ran the 1984 Democratic National Convention - as the convention manager - and I decided when I moved back to San Francisco for the convention that I was tired of working for other people, and I was going to work for myself and be my own boss. A young man who had worked for me in the State of California/Washington office and had good political skills -went into partnership with me right after the convention. We opened our doors around January 1, 1984, and had no clients. We very quickly acquired MCI as our first client, by a stroke of luck, because of somebody I knew in Washington.

Q: MCI being?

BEEMAN: The telephone company. That paid the bills, and then things started to build and we brought in more clients. There was a major hospital in San Francisco that was having difficulties with the legislature. I can't remember how they got hold of me, but they asked us to represent them in Sacramento. We did very well for them, and that brought us other health maintenance organizations. Within about a year we had the largest clientele of HMOs in California.

Q: Just to get a feel – you had a major telephone company and you had the health maintenance organizations – how would you operate? What would you do?

BEEMAN: They had both individual issues and problems and then corporate problems – things that were important to them in terms of legislation as an industry. We had two levels of activities. One of them was a client, HMO, plan in the State of California Employees Health Care Options System; just like we offer the federal employees a list of health care plans from which to subscribe, the state employees have the same kind of a system in California. The guy who was the chairman of the board who made these decisions wanted to bounce this plan out of the system. That would have been a terrific financial loss for them. My job was to go to work and stop him, get the Board to vote against him, which they did by a vote of 7 to 4. That was the first time he had ever lost a vote on the Board. A lot of health care plans that were in the audience, because of rates they were setting, said I knew how to work that effectively and decided they should retain me. That brought a lot of business to us; that one incident brought a tremendous amount of business. It involved Jesse Unruh, who at that time was State Treasurer and sat on the

PERS, Public Employees Retirement System Board and he was very helpful to me by overruling the Chair of the Board.

Q: What would your approach to the members of the Board be? Would you go to them individually?

BEEMAN: Sure. We went to them individually. We also had the Chairman of the committee in the legislature that oversaw this Board, who came and testified in front of the Board, which was an unprecedented action. This is the guy, as I like to say, who had his foot on their throat, so when he came and testified in support of our client, it made a significant impression on the board. This all happened in about 36 hours from the time they came to me and said they had this big problem, and the time the Board voted. It was a crash issue. I tried to get Unruh on the phone but was not able to. They came to me on a Thursday night, so all we had was Friday and Saturday morning before the Board met to work this issue. While we were waiting in the hall, I saw Unruh coming into the room, so I met him and told him we had a problem up that day and quickly explained it as we were walking in. I told him that Jake, who was the chairman of the board, doesn't care what you think about this matter. (That's what he had told my business partner.) I saw Unruh's eyes kind of flicker and light up, it was kind of like somebody pushed a key on the cash register and it said "sale." I knew at that point that he was going to help us, he did, and we defeated the guy 7 to 4. It was not that I give big political contributions, but we had merit and I knew these people from a long history of activity in California politics, and they either liked me a little or liked me a lot, and were willing to help me when I came to them with a problem.

Q: When people came to you with an issue, would you know whether it would fly or not?

BEEMAN: I've always played it that way. My view in any job that I have had, whether it was in government, New Zealand, or as a lobbyist, was to give my best advice. If you don't like the advice it is okay, because I don't get upset and stomp away because you don't like my advice. You pay me for my advice, but if you don't like it, that is your business. And I also can't promise a result on any issue. As a matter of fact, it is against the law to promise a result in California. My clients all understood that when they came in. Every time MCI wanted to do something, Pacific Bell or Sprint would be against it. They thought this would work to their disadvantage. You can't go in and whisper in somebody's ear and think these things are going to be a done deal.

Q: Also, often personalities are involved, as you said in this one. When personalities are involved, that can set someone in concrete.

BEEMAN: Right. The art of it is knowing what to say and how to say it. I had a similar incident with Jerry Brown when he wanted to move us into the State of California Washington office. He wanted to move us into the Hall of the States on North Capitol Street. I didn't want to move there; we had just moved into to an office that was two blocks from my house and I could walk to work. The National Governor's Association was twisting his arm for us to move in. Jerry came to me when he was back here for a

meeting and said they really wanted us to move into the Hall of the States with everybody else. I said, "Jerry, if that is really what you want us to do, of course we can do it. But you know, it is going to cost us more money in rent." The minute I said it would cost us more, the window shades dropped and that was the end of that idea.

Q: Let's pick up the lobbying end. You were in Washington lobbying for California. How does one lobby for a state?

BEEMAN: Well, that's trickier, but of course we had an enormous resource, which was the California Congressional Delegation. I think it was 35 members then, and now it is 57 members. You have California members on every committee, in high positions and low positions, and seniority on the committee structure. You relied on the California delegation to make things happen for you. I had a long personal history with most of them, and could get on the phone and talk to or go visit them, and if it was a general State interest and not something they were dead-set against, they would be supportive. They were my first and terrific resource.

Q: How would issues get to you?

BEEMAN: They would come from the State agencies in California, or from the Governor's office. A lot of them were tied into the Governor's political interests. We had an issue which is still going on in one sense, called the unitary tax treaty, which is how you tax corporations. Companies move their profits from high income tax countries into lower income tax countries. If you were in Switzerland and Luxembourg, and Luxembourg had lower taxes, and you shipped something to Luxembourg, your company internally would charge your Luxembourg affiliate less than they would charge an affiliate in Italy. That way you left the money in Luxembourg instead of moving it to Switzerland, where it would be treated as profit at a high tax rate. It was a complex issue. But it was of an enormous financial consequence to the State of California, which applied a unitary tax to corporations that did business there. The U.S. Government signed a treaty with the British Government to prohibit unitary tax treatment, so I went into the Senate and got California exempted from that treaty, which had to be ratified by the Senate. So that treaty did not apply to the State of California, with the great help of Alan Cranston, who was the majority Whip and senior Senator from California. That saved the State of California about half a billion dollars a year in tax revenue that would have been lost.

Q: Would you work on the White House, too, or were you pretty much within the legislature?

BEEMAN: I was doing this during the Carter administration, so for at least the first couple of years we were welcome there and could get easy access because the 1980 election was coming up and California was a key state. So, yes that was kind of a heyday for us and we got basically anything we wanted.

Q: Moving ahead now, what were you doing in politics in the early '90s before your appointment as ambassador?

BEEMAN: At that point I was back in Washington. I had moved back in '87 and set up

an office; the state comptroller, Grey Davis, who is now the governor, was my biggest client so I was doing state business for him. That was more tax related, as well as land and oil royalties because that came under one of his responsibilities. That was more technical but we also had other private clients. The only thing I did in politics was in '92. I was a Clinton supporter and really helped to scuttle Jerry Brown's presidential candidacy. Even though I had been a Brown official, I had a bad break with him, and at that point he was coming on as the "stop Clinton" candidate. Everybody else was dropping out of the New York primary but Jerry was staying in, so I advised the Clinton people on how to handle him, and then became one of their California strategy advisors in the '92 election. That was how they knew me when I decided to go after the ambassadorship.

Q: What turned you towards this?

BEEMAN: Towards being an ambassador?

Q: Yes.

BEEMAN: It was something I had wanted to do all my life. As a matter of fact, when we had been in New Zealand a week, my then-wife was riding around the city of Wellington on a tour bus with one of the women from the embassy when a woman sitting behind her leaned over and said, "Isn't your husband the new American Ambassador?" Then this lady revealed that her husband had taught me in graduate school. Linda called me and told me that Urban Whitaker was in town. I was his student in 1959, and this happened in 1994, so that was about 35 years before and he was no kid then. He must have been in his '70s, but had come to New Zealand to lecture at a school there. So they were our first dinner guests in Wellington. He went back to the California State University in San Francisco and looked up in his grade book from 1958, and he had given me an A+ on a paper I had done on diplomacy.

Q: I usually get two things. Some people say "the call came and I was astounded that somebody would ask me" and other people say "you really have to work for this." Can you tell me your experience?

BEEMAN: I can tell you, you really have to work for it. Fortunately, the guy who was the transition director for the State Department, Brian Atwood, who became Director of AID (Agency for International Development), knew me and I had strong support from Congressman Howard Berman, who had been my best man. He was the Chair of the State Department Operations Committee, on the then Foreign Affairs Committee.

Q: Some years previously, John Rooney who ran the State Department ragged.

BEEMAN: I remember John Rooney. He would close and open embassies with a flick of the wrist. Really ruthless. Howard is one of the nicest human beings I have ever met in my life. He had a terrific relationship with the State Department people, and I became the department's recommendation to the President very early on and that was a tremendous

help. I was the State Department's choice. It took the President a long time to decide whether or not I was going to be his choice, which was typical of the Clinton White House. I remember Howard was going over to the White House, and Mickey Kantor, who was a very old friend of mine and USTR, went over, too, and he stood outside the President's office and said, "I'm not leaving until the President okays Joe Beeman." So Betty Curry went in and told the President that Mickey was outside and upset because he hadn't made a decision on New Zealand and he hadn't okayed Joe Beeman. Out came a little note saying "Okay B. C.," and I became the nominee. It is interesting because Rahm Emanuel, who was one of the President's two top deputies, called one day and said,"Hi Joe, this is Rahm, and you know that thing that Howard, and Mickey, and you were all talking about? It's okay, its been done." I asked if he meant ambassador to New Zealand and he said yes.

Q: Was the problem just that Clinton just wasn't making decisions on these things and this was not a priority?

BEEMAN: Yes. I had no strong opponent. I had first been interested in Ireland because I had been heavily involved in Northern Ireland affairs and worked on reconciliation and peace issues there. They came back with a short list of three, and I was one of them, and ultimately they picked Jean Kennedy Smith. As I said, I had the wrong maiden name. So they came back and said they couldn't give me Ireland, give us a list of other countries you would be interested in. I did and New Zealand was on that list. So that is how I wound up in New Zealand.

Q: You were Ambassador to New Zealand from 1994 to 1999. Can you talk a bit about how one gets ready?

BEEMAN: The State Department puts on what I call "the ambassador school" which is really terrific. I felt I learned a lot about how to run an embassy - the role of the administrative officer, the role of the DCM, and the others. The school was for only a week but it was an intense week. They taught you how to make a speech, which was no problem for me since I had been on television; I had testified before Congress; I had been on radio, so I took to that very quickly. I felt well prepared after the school. I set out to make myself a public figure in New Zealand, and ignored the cautious advice of the PAO (Public Affairs Officer) initially. I know the Department, especially with political appointees, says to keep you in a box so you don't muck it up. Well, I'm a hands-on manager and it took about 6 months after I got there to convince the Embassy people that I was going to run the place. I listened to their advice and built up a terrific staff who were really first-rate, but I was going to be intensely involved until I could have confidence in the people who worked for me. You know, trust is built. In cases where trust wasn't built, that person had to move on.

Q: Before you went out there you talked to the Desk. What did you take with you in your briefcase about things that needed to be done both administratively at the embassy and more particularly between American and New Zealand relations? What were the issues?

BEEMAN: We've always been friendly with New Zealand, despite our differences over the anti-nuclear legislation which has been a burr under the saddle for a long time; it sticks in our throat and it sticks in their throat for a different set of reasons, and it is still there. Now they have a different kind of government that is not as interested in having warmer relations with the United States right now; it wants good relations, but isn't interested in warm relations. That was the number-one objective, and my general path was to see if we could take that and if we couldn't change it – to fence it off so we could enhance New Zealand's capabilities to be supportive of our foreign policy in an international global crisis. That was really my charge. We didn't have any really hot trade issues.

Q: Beef, butter-

BEEMAN: They had more issues with us than we had with them, and still do, because they are a small country and depend heavily upon their agriculture exports, and we still create problems for them. I had very few issues that I had to go out and change. So the defense issue was the biggest problem. I basically fenced it off. You know, the Secretary of State does not get up every morning and ask how things are in New Zealand. With a terrific deputy in Strobe Talbot; Stan Roth and Win Lord, the two assistant secretaries I worked with, both liked the Kiwi people, liked their attitude, which is very can do, not pretentious; they are down to earth and like Americans and we like them. I have always said that an American could drop into Wellington or Auckland and feel like you were in Los Angeles or San Francisco very quickly. The only difference was they drive on the left hand side of the road. An American culture really prevails in New Zealand and taken over, so the country was already shifting from its traditional allegiance to the Queen and to the United Kingdom towards the major power in the Pacific - the United States. I walked into, basically, a good climate and I think we turned it into a great climate in five-and-a-half years.

Q: Getting a DCM (Deputy Chief of Mission), which is quite important, how did that work out for you?

BEEMAN: I inherited a DCM, who should remain nameless, that I had a very difficult time with, who was a terrible manager of personnel, and also thought that she was the ambassador.

Q: She had been Charge for awhile.

BEEMAN: She had been Charge for a year and a half.

Q: That can ruin-

BEEMAN: Well, it does. I remember one particular incident very clearly. I said I wanted to meet with Sir Geoffrey Palmer, who was a former Prime Minister who used to teach law at the University of Iowa six months a year. She said, "Oh, no, you don't want to meet with him." When I asked why not she said he was a lobbyist, he's in private

business.

Q: She hadn't done her homework.

BEEMAN: Boy, she sure hadn't done her homework. But then, I would give particular instructions in a particular case, and she would call down and countermand the instructions. That was really a no-no. I called her in and said "Hey, you countermanded my instructions. Don't ever do that again or you will be on the next plane out of here." The Director General advised me to discuss the situation with her. Finally, she did it again, and I told her this was not working out and I felt that she should leave. I reminded her that I could send her home or she could ask to curtail. She had a curtailment on my desk in an hour or two, and the DG backed me 100%. I had done everything I should and it just didn't work out. I had three DCMs while I was there. The second one was good. He had a little bit of "I should be running the show" attitude, but he was good. He served his whole three years, then he went on to be the Political Counselor in London.

Q: Who was your third DCM?

BEEMAN: Terry Miller, who is now doing diamonds from Sierra Leone in Liberia, so he has a lot of action going on where he is now.

Q: Was the Department of State dealing with the problems of trying to curtail rebel forces?

BEEMAN: Right, financing the rebel forces by the sale of diamonds, is a major issue. He is just a great guy, and he and I could not have hit it off better. He knew exactly what he could and should do and he knew when he needed to come to me and separate out those kinds of issues in a way that was helpful. He took the time to build trust so that I felt comfortable that he would come to me when he knew there was something I was interested in. I was always interested in what color they were going to paint things around the place. I hated embassy white, so we painted the offices and corridors different colors and everybody loved it, but if it had been up to the Administrative Officer they would have been embassy white.

Q: Let's talk about the people you were dealing with. The New Zealand government. You had been dealing with the California legislature and our government, so how did you find dealing with the New Zealand government?

BEEMAN: Terrific. I think diplomacy is applied politics, basically trying to get somebody to do what you want them to do. That being – doing what the United States wants them to do. So it was to the great envy of my colleagues that I built a personal relationship with the Prime Minister, Jim Bolger, who subsequently became their ambassador to Washington, and also with his chief of staff. If I wanted to see the Prime Minister I would call his Chief of Staff and tell him I need to see Jim about such-and-such. He would say "how about 3:00 o'clock tomorrow?" I didn't go through the Foreign Minister or 18 bureaucrats or put a request in writing. If I wanted to know what was

going on in a negotiation, I would have lunch with the Chief of Staff and he would brief me on what was going on. It was interesting because the permanent secretary of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade was basically an unfriendly guy. The United States was the big bully who was pushing all the little guys around – clear foreign service guy. The Foreign Minister was a pro-American guy, and I remember the permanent secretary introduced me to an American, who was the Deputy Director of the World Trade Organization at that time. When he introduced me to him, whose name I have forgotten now, he said, "This is Joe Beeman, the American Ambassador. Now Joe doesn't like to come to us in the foreign ministry. He prefers to deal with the Foreign Minister and the Prime Minister directly." I didn't quarrel with his introduction because somebody once said to me "go to the horse's head, not the horse's ass." I went to the guys who made the policies, not the people who recommended them. So the relationship we built was incredible. Because of their anti-nuclear legislation, no New Zealand Prime Minister had been invited to the White House since 1984. So I told Jim I was going to get him into the White House, which was something he wanted to do. So when I went to them about the multi-national force in the Gulf, they sent one-third of their Navy. They steamed all the way from New Zealand out to the Gulf to help with the interdiction against Iraqi shipping. He did a lot of other things for us, too, and in 1997 he said he would like to go to Washington and see the President. I was able to tell the President that New Zealand had done everything we had asked them to do. The approach I've always taken has been to try to script both sides. I would tell the Kiwis what they needed to say and do to make Washington look upon them favorably, and I would tell Washington what they needed to do to make the Kiwis cooperate. So Bolger got his visit with the President.

Q: Sticking to the anti-nuclear issue, was it imbedded in concrete by this time that no American warships could come into port with nuclear weapons? Was this something you just had to work around?

BEEMAN: No. I continued to plug away at that and made lots of speeches on the subject, but I took a slightly different tack. We were assisted by the fact that then-President Bush, Bush 1, had taken all nuclear weapons and nuclear capability off of our ships in 1992. That really wasn't an issue any more but it was in New Zealand law, and the U.S. Navy had never forgiven them for it and didn't want a U.S. ship to visit there until they changed that law. But they weren't going to change that law. Even the conservative National Party, which was in power during the time I was there, was afraid to change that policy, because this was really embedded in their psyches now so it wasn't an issue. So I would work on the nuclear propulsion issue. The second part of the legislation barred any nuclear propelled U.S. ship, and of course 40% of our fleet is nuclear propelled and there has never been an accident in our history. So I talked to them about the logic of their policy and the fact that that logic has kept New Zealand out of ANZUS. So I made speeches on it, but not to attack them; I just pointed out this policy lacked logic and I got good press and correspondence on it, but it really didn't move the government to tackle the issue. That's why I said we should just fence this issue off because they were not going to change. I asked one of the Admirals who was briefing me before I went out if we had any desire to send ships into New Zealand and he said "none whatsoever." So we worked on the other things that we really cared about.

Q: In talking to people who dealt with New Zealand early on, I understood that for some time New Zealand had had a significant immigration from the United Kingdom of blue collar, or labor people, who brought all the prejudices of the left-wing labor types. Had that dissipated by *the time you got there?*

BEEMAN: Yes, that had pretty well dissipated; in fact, the current Labor Government has been very careful to steer the middle-ground. But if you put the New Zealand political beliefs in the spectrum of the United States, it is definitely to the left. There is no comparison even with the National Party, which is supposed to be the equivalent of our Republican Party. They would be kind of moderate Democrats there, and the Labor Party would be to the left of them. The whole political spectrum is to the left of the United States and the people that came were, as you said, from the lower classes. They are more bourgeois now; they are more middle-class with two cars and TVs, and they look at things differently. But the whole spectrum is to the left of what it is in the United States. And they are also very egalitarian. If the Prime Minister of New Zealand ever rode around in a limousine, or some big black car - he would be in deep, deep trouble. The Prime Minister's car is a Ford. And that is what the ministers ride in, too. You would get your head handed to you if you got too pretentious. That is just not their style.

Q: Did you find this made any difference in how you operated?

BEEMAN: Well, yes and no. We had a big Chevy and that was as fancy as we ever got. It was a big Chevy and low security, no armor in it at all (there is now), but there was none then and of course it was a big black American car so everyone knew where I was at any given time of the day. If I stopped at a market on the way home at my wife's request, someone would say the next day they saw me shopping in Johnny Lee's market. I think it is important to preserve a little mystique around the office, so I was never embarrassed to put the flags out on the car when I was going to a formal function. People would say, "Oh, there's the American Ambassador." All of that effort served to make me a public figure in a thousand different ways. When my daughter was born, she was the first child ever born to an American ambassador in New Zealand. Most ambassadors my age don't have babies in the country they are in, so when my daughter was born she had a press conference on her first day back from the hospital because she was the most famous baby in New Zealand. They all wanted a picture of her, so I said we would do it all at once with a press conference. She was on the front page of every paper in the country, and people all over the country sent her presents, knitted hats, blankets, and sweaters, etc. But the government knew when we got to the lamb crisis, which was the biggest crisis in years, that if it wanted to come out against the United States on some issue, I could get equal time access and I would be right there rebutting their charge against the United States. They knew that for domestic consumption purposes they could not attack the United States and not have the United States defended. At the same time they went to the press in time for the evening news, they would make the charge and I would be right there rebutting it with equal time.

Q: Did you find that the New Zealanders kept an eye on Australia? In Australia we had

listening stations and we had secret installations and this was always a subject of attack by the left-wing. I was wondering if this was picked up in New Zealand?

BEEMAN: Absolutely. All through the time I was there we had the closest kind of inter-relationship with New Zealand. It is called AUSCANZUKUS, that is Australia, Canada, New Zealand, the United States, and Britain. That has been preserved. It was always maintained during the nuclear flare-up in '84. It has always been a steady and on-going relationship, and even the current Labor Prime Minister has said she has no intention of changing the nature of that relationship. There have been those attacks from the left, such as the two listening posts called Whenuapai on the south island, big white domes that are frequently in the paper because some mudslinger will charge they are spying on the people of New Zealand. It is all part of our agreement that we will not conduct covert or overt intelligence gathering in those five countries. That's the deal. But these protestors would charge that deal was being violated, either by their own intelligence authority or by the United States. It is on-going and flares up from time-to-time and some members of Parliament would go down and get themselves arrested climbing over the fence. A couple of guys did climb over the fence one night, and the drapes in the building had not been drawn completely together so they took pictures of a computer screen. There was nothing on it, and there was a booklet lying on the desk next to it and of course that was all over the evening news. It got a good laugh, and that shows you how seriously New Zealand played the security game as opposed to the United States. But the Australian relationship; the fact is that Australia has always had this very cozy relationship with the United States. Australia has almost always had its own special relationship.

Q: After World War II, particularly after the battle of the Coral Sea, when Britain more or less absorbed their army and lost a good bit of it in Singapore, then the Australians realized they were alone except for the United States. That really changed everything.

BEEMAN: You are absolutely right. That is exactly what happened. They looked around and said, "We are all alone, Britain cannot help us. The only people that are going to help us are in the United States." The same happened with New Zealand for the same reason. Older men who had been around during World War II would come up to me with tears in their eyes and say, "Thank you for saving us from being invaded by the Japanese." Of course the Japanese had plans to invade New Zealand and already had currency printed. It is part of that fact that the South Pacific looks to the United States as the guarantor of their security and peace and freedom in that area, regardless of whatever disputes we may have over nuclear legislation, or whatever. At the end of the day they look to us to be their guarantors.

Q: A big day in Australia, which Americans often forget, is Coral Sea Day. Is that a big day in New Zealand, too?

BEEMAN: No. The big day in New Zealand is Anzac Day, and it is interesting how young people are now coming out to Anzac Day. It used to be the old folks. We used to laugh because State always had difficulty producing high level Americans for Coral Sea Day and the Aussies would be insulted if you sent them a DCM or the Ambassador. You

always had to send somebody special from the U.S., and it was always a big wrestling match to get them there.

Q: When Lyndon Johnson came to Australia, he said, "I really don't have time to go to the Coral Sea monument." And either the PAO {Public Affairs Officer] or the DCM said, "Mr. President, you've got to, this is not a matter for dispute." It is so hard to tell a President "you have to" but sometimes there are things you have to say.

BEEMAN: If you didn't go there, you might as well not come to Australia. But the Australia-New Zealand relationship is really a fascinating, one because there are about 3.5 million people in New Zealand now and the population is really pretty static. It went up about 50,000 my last year. So low birth rates, low immigration rates. Lots of elderly Kiwis move to Australia - to Queensland and Gold Coast where it is warm weather all the time. I think there are about 250,000 Kiwis living in Australia. In New Zealand, the weather is distinctly cool most of the time, and wet and damp a lot of the time. But the relationship between the two of them is a very important one. They have a close economic relationship with complete free trade between the two countries, and the Aussies give their social benefits to the Kiwis who move into Queensland without any trade-offs. Obviously, the Aussies spend a lot more than the Kiwis do as a result of that relationship. There is also an intense rivalry - there is nobody New Zealand would rather beat in rugby than the Aussies. So the Aussies have New Zealand jokes, and New Zealand has Aussie jokes, but at the end of the day they are always going to come together.

Q: Did you ever find that the United States got between the two?
BEEMAN: Not deliberately, no. Occasionally they would do something really nice for Australia and then the Kiwis would whinge about it. I would tell them there was no point in complaining. The Aussies do X, Y, and Z. If you (New Zealand) did it you would be the beneficiaries, too. But it was never done publicly, it is just part of their rivalry. We are still negotiating a free-trade agreement with Australia and New Zealand, and maybe Singapore and Chile. The new USTR (U.S. Trade Representative) is working on that - the old one worked on that, and every time the Australians would try to get a separate bilateral deal between Australia and New Zealand, the Kiwis would go ballistic.

Q: Tell me about the lamb problem.

BEEMAN: In my view, retrospectively, this was a blatant protectionist measure on the part of the United States. We have fewer sheep in the United States than New Zealand does. Our industry is extremely weak and getting weaker, and the Kiwis have an aggressive marketing operation for lamb, butter, and dairy. Dairy is the big money earner but lamb is a major one. When the U.S. lamb industry got the FTC (Foreign Trade Commission) to slap a duty on New Zealand lamb because the Kiwis were marketing it very aggressively. The charge was dumping, but that wasn't what they were doing. When the U.S. Government slapped these tariffs on them for several years, that was the most contentious issue I had the whole time I was there. The Kiwis were outraged, and in my view they had a right to be outraged because it was a protectionist measure on our part.

They took it to the WTO (World Trade Organization) and they won. We were found to be protectionists. There had been an interesting little controversy over the origin. New Zealand has a little toy called the "buzzy bee," which is a little bee on wheels that they pull around, and all children in New Zealand have one. They gave one to Prince William when he came to New Zealand as a baby with Prince Charles and Princess Diana, and there is a picture of them on the lawn of Government House. William is pulling this little buzzy bee along. Well, it turned out that apparently the buzzy bee was invented in the United States. They interviewed the widow of the man who had marketed it in New Zealand and she said, "Well, of course it came from the United States." This was kind of like losing your national identity, and losing it to the United States to boot. It was a major deal and that had happened about two days before the lamb deal came. There were government ministers all over the place and I was right there, as well as all three TV networks. I said "I am here today to tell you that the United States is taking New Zealand to the World Trade Organization for the violation of the intellectual property agreements because of your theft of our buzzy bees." The press cracked up and then I said "now, lets get down to the serious business" and we went on to the lamb deal.

Q: Well, how did you explain it? What did you do?

BEEMAN: I said several things. First of all, I said I understood how they felt. I said that, first of all, we should put it in perspective. Because American lamb production is diminishing and New Zealand's is increasing, I believe the lamb farmers and producers will not be any worse off under this tariff than they are now, and indeed will be better off because the price of lamb will rise, which by the way, turned out to be right. They suffered no losses whatsoever. Secondly, I said we have very good lawyers that looked into this, and I am sure that whatever they have done is consistent with WTO rules, which turned out to be wrong. So that is the way I handled it. I said we should put all of this into perspective in terms of our overall trade relationship. We had a very favorable balance of trade with them and we still do. I tried to dampen down the deal, but it was a really big deal. I got floods of letters asking how we could talk about free trade and do this? We would answer them forcefully, but I spent all my energy trying to keep it under control and got lots of jabs about it wherever I went.

Q: What about trade promotions? Did you get involved in trade promotions of American products?

BEEMAN: Yes, we did a lot of that, but there was less than most of my colleagues would have gotten involved in because New Zealand was a really a very free market with a couple of exceptions - shoes, women's clothing, and cars which they eliminated while I was there. They had 25% duties on to protect local industry. They took the 25% off on cars, then agreed to lower the others over the years. We didn't sell them a lot of shoes and women's clothing. We really didn't have that many problems. I would get various companies - California summer fruit did a terrific promotion there, but the most bizarre one was when Jim Beam was introducing a new label and they asked me to put on a little promotion for them, which I did at the residence. Then Jim Beam's grandson came over.

Q: Jim Beam being-

BEEMAN: The bourbon whisky - his grandson and his wife and a friend of theirs came, and we had a bourbon tasting at 11:00 AM at the residence on a week day. I don't drink bourbon in the first place, but all of us were there - my DCM, my Political Counselor, and all the liquor people in New Zealand showed up - about 20 people serving liquor. I would take a little sip and I made sure there was a plant near by that I could pour the rest of it in. It was kind of a fun event, one of those things you laughed about afterward.

Q: Did you get involved in-

BEEMAN: By the way, New Zealand has the highest per capita bourbon consumption in the world, which I didn't know before.

Q: As a true foreign service officer, I used to drink bourbon before I came in but I found it was hard to get and soon I moved to scotch, which I couldn't take, and now I won't touch bourbon because I'm a scotch taker.

BEEMAN: I was always a scotch drinker and never a bourbon drinker.
Q: Did you get involved in pushing, promoting, and defending American tobacco?

BEEMAN: No. There were other issues like that that I really got involved in, which are still on-going, but never tobacco. Never heard from the tobacco companies. New Zealand had a couple of its own tobacco companies and they both went out of business. It was too small a market to get uptight about. The big issue was pharmaceuticals. New Zealand has a purchasing agency for all pharmaceuticals. So basically it buys about 70% of the pharmaceuticals that are used in New Zealand. It, of course, really hammers the pharmaceutical companies down to incredibly low price levels compared to what we pay here in the United States. Only one company ever pulled out and they are all making money anyway, even though they moan and complain that their rights are being violated. There are a few kinds of companies I've found it hard to feel sorry for - pharmaceuticals, banks, and insurance companies. I did my duty, but the Kiwis from the far left to the far right were not going to budge an inch on this. They are not that big a country; they were not about to open the doors of their treasury to the pharmaceutical companies and say to come in and take what you want. So there was nobody across the political spectrum who favored changing that method of buying their drugs. A couple of other countries have now followed. I think South Korea and a couple of others have followed the Kiwis way of doing business. They put things out for bids, then hammer you down for more, so there was really tough bargaining and the pharmaceuticals didn't like that at all. Big problem; still ongoing; but the Kiwis are never going to budge.

Q: Was there much of a immigrant community? You mentioned it was low, but I was thinking of Australia which is going through quite a metamorphoses with Asians coming in. What about New Zealand?

BEEMAN: Similar type of experience. It was interesting that a kind of Xenophobia

arose. When it really started getting serious, a lot of Asians came in from Singapore and Korea and bought land, but there were not an enormous number buying land. I think there was still a hangover of racism - it's okay if an American, Brit, Aussie, or German comes in and buys land, but we don't want Asians coming in and buying up our country. I would find people on the left who felt they should stop that. I would tell them that I had lived in the United States through three major land scares. One was when the Saudis came in and were going to buy up the United States. Well, we got past that - they didn't buy up the United States. Then the Taiwanese came in and were buying up California. Well, they didn't buy up California. Then the Japanese came in and were going to buy up the United States. So I told them they should use the strategy we used which was when we sold the Japanese the Rockefeller Center for about umpteen billion dollars, then we let the land values collapse and bought it back for about 10% of what we sold it for. I told them that was good strategy that they might think about. Basically, it eased off, but they did pass legislation which restricts the amount of land that foreigners can buy in New Zealand to about 10 acres in urban and semi-rural areas and a little larger amount of acreage in extremely rural areas. That is the long answer, but I think that has all died down. Singaporeans came in and invested in industry - motels, resorts, etc. They did it very quietly.

Q: I interviewed Tex Harris, who was the Counsel General in Melbourne, who said during one of our crises in Yugoslavia or Kosovo that there were a bunch of Yugoslav immigrants who came and attacked the embassy. Did the events in Yugoslavia and our getting involved there affect anything?

BEEMAN: Well, yes, but it was really more publicity in the papers. There would be a few Yugoslav immigrants to New Zealand who would go to the newspapers or get on television saying this was terrible, etc. I think they had very little impact and were certainly never any threat to the embassy. During my time there I can only remember two times when the embassy was picketed. One was when we bombed the Chinese Embassy in Belgrade, and ten Chinese students came down from the University in Paunerston North and had a short demonstration outside the embassy and handed in a letter for me. As I looked out my window I saw that all their signs were facing the TV cameras rather than the embassy, so I don't know what their signs said. Then the other time was on the lamb deal, when a bunch of farmers and politicians came up and had ten sheep in a little mini-corral outside the embassy and were marinating lamb chops. The press asked why I had not come out to talk to them and I told them that someone on my staff had received their letter, but on the other hand if they had told me they were grilling lamb chops I probably would have come out and joined them. It was all very friendly. We never saw any violent protests - no, I'll take that back. Actually, it wasn't against us, but during the French nuclear testing in the Pacific there were real attacks on the French embassy and on the residence and on the British High Commission – people climbing on the roofs. The New Zealand government did absolutely nothing about it in spite of its treaty obligations to help protect these embassies. They let them run riot. They dumped manure on the French Ambassador's front steps, but not a lot of damage was done. I made very clear to the Foreign Ministry that if the demonstrators tried to come over our walls that we would defend the embassy . We were not going to let them invade the embassy nor come onto

the grounds. A lot of my colleagues in the diplomatic corps said the same thing. They were very upset with the Kiwis. But that is kind of the way the Kiwis react - they wouldn't wade in like we do with plastic helmets, shields, and batons. They kind of let them go and let the steam out.

Q: The Rainbow Warrior thing had happened long before this. Was it when the secret service had knocked off a Green Peace ship?

BEEMAN: Yes, the French sunk a Green Peace ship and killed a couple of people. They were apprehended and subsequently turned over to the French. To show how vulnerable New Zealand is, the French threatened to totally shut off New Zealand trade with France if they weren't turned over to the French authorities to be dealt with, and the Kiwis gave in. That was the Labor-left wing government that did it, not a right wing government. The Kiwis came and turned them over, and of course they never served a day in jail. That's one of those benchmark events in New Zealand history.

Q: Did Yugoslavia, Kosovo tragedy and the events there play much in New Zealand?

BEEMAN: It played, yes, and got pretty good coverage. Of course, they participated in IFOR at our request. That was one of the other things we asked them to do and they did.

Q: Could you explain what IFOR was?

BEEMAN: It's intervention. I used to know what the initials stood for, but now I have forgotten. Basically, it was the NATO (North Atlantic Treaty Organization) intervention force into Bosnia and Herzegovina to stop the genocide that was going on, and it was very successful in doing that. The Kiwis participated in that at our request. New Zealand received a number of refugee families as a result of that. There were a few Serbs in New Zealand who tried to back-fill on the issue, but I think they were totally drowned out in the New Zealand media by sympathy with the Albanians who were the principle subjects, but not exclusively, of the ethnic cleansing. It got good coverage and there was no quarrel with the United States role in that, that came to my attention.

Q: Well, moving from the tragedy of Yugoslavia to the high comedy of the United States, how did you feel about dealing with the Monica Lewinsky affair with President Clinton and the impeachment trial? This must have been difficult for you.

BEEMAN: It was incredibly difficult. I was embarrassed for myself and my country. But I will say this: the Kiwis, after the initial rounds of jokes in which we all participated, were very genteel about it all. They could have had a field day at our expense, but most of them did not. The prime minister and the cabinet ministers would all kind of make a sympathetic note, because I think they really did not like to see the United States' reputation in the world besmirched by the President's antics. From the left to the right, they kind of went silent on it and didn't ask me what I thought of it. I appreciated that, because I got so tired of trying to explain and defend it.

Q: At a certain point though, did you find yourself getting into the nitty-gritty of it, explaining the constitutionality and the problems?

BEEMAN: Yes, and at one interview I gave I said, "Look, I think the American people are sick of all this, I do not think the President is going to be impeached, and it is time to move on." I remember the Washington Times picked up what I said off of some news service and said it was time for me to be called home because I had lost touch with the immorality of the President and I was a lousy spokesman for the United States. Any time the Washington Times attacks you, your stock goes up about 10 points with the White House, so I knew I wasn't going home.

Q: The Washington Times is the paper founded by the Reverend Sung Yung Moon of the Unification Church, and is a right-wing paper.

BEEMAN: The best part about it is hardly nobody ever reads it.

Q: By the time you got out there in '94, the election had moved the Senate and the House into the Republican side with a very conservative, isolationist view. Did this affect your work?

BEEMAN: Not really. In my first several years I had exactly three members of Congress who came out on a study delegation. One of them was subsequently defeated, one is still there, and one retired from Congress, but it was the first time that anyone had made a political visit to New Zealand in years. Al Gore and a couple of Senators had come out and gone to Antarctica, which was part of my responsibility. But these three guys came out - there was a moderate Republican, a very conservative Republican, and a moderate Democrat. Nobody else showed for awhile. When the Republicans took control of the Senate, all of a sudden - between '94 and '97 - I had 15 Senators, or 15 % of the United States Senate, come out to New Zealand. Some of them twice. The Kiwis would give me an air force plane to fly them around the country. The Speaker of the House came with a huge delegation.

Q: What were they doing? Was this for fun?

BEEMAN: Well, you wouldn't expect me to say this was for fun - they were there on official business.

Q: I might, for the record, say that Ambassador Beeman has kept a very straight face at that remark.

BEEMAN: Well, they were generally in transit to Australia or Indonesia for some purpose. They would come for a day, or maybe two days, but they would have a terrific time. The Kiwis just knew how to do things right. Strobe Talbot is a scuba diver and when he came, the police diving squad in Wellington took him for a scuba dive in the harbor, but it wasn't planned. One of the most conservative right-wing members of Congress from California arrived in New Zealand and, before I even had a chance to talk

to him, he gave an interview saying that we should forget New Zealand's anti-nuclear policy. They loved the place. At the dinners I would give for them, I would tell them their trip there created a tremendous amount of work for both the embassy and the United States government, and ask them to please go back and tell all their colleagues what a lousy place New Zealand was. Of course that would get a big laugh and they would go back and tell them what a great place it was.

Q: When the government shut down in 1995, you must have been caught up. How did that go? How do you shut down an embassy?
BEEMAN: You just don't pay any bills, and some people showed up at work and some people stayed home. They actually created that essential and non-essential list, and that was a lot of fun going around and telling a person "you're non-essential," and the person at the desk next to them is essential. Almost all of our people showed up anyway. At the end of the day they knew they would get paid somehow or other. It wasn't too bad but it was embarrassing. We didn't answer the phones, closed the consulate, didn't give people visas. People would look at you and say "boy, what a screwed up country you've got, when the United States has to close its overseas offices because Congress can't agree to give them money to fund them."

Q: How about the islands? Did you have any representation with islands?

BEEMAN: Yes. I was cross-credited to Samoa, so I was also ambassador to Samoa, and I also covered the Cook Islands, with whom we don't have diplomatic relations because of an interesting legal anomaly where they are still considered part of New Zealand for our purposes but not for New Zealand's purposes. New Zealand kept saying they didn't want to represent them. Ask what the foreign ministry thinks about this matter affecting the Cook Islands, and the foreign ministry would say they didn't know about it and they didn't want to know about it. I spent a lot of time traveling around to Samoa and the Cooks. I remember one time I went to Samoa, and the teachers college there wanted all the four or five hundred students to give me a greeting. I was seated on a big throne up on the stage while the girls and guys were doing dances and on and on and on. Then the president of the student body stated they could really use two SUVs with 4-wheel drive at the school. The principal of the school leaned over to me and said, "Of course you don't have to say yes." And I said, "I have no intention of saying yes." I enjoyed the islands and got really got some interesting things done there. Nuie was another piece of my turf.

Q: This is in New Caledonia?

BEEMAN: It's not far away from there. It's about half-way back to Hawaii from New Zealand. It is this incredible coral atoll that comes right up out of the sea on very steep cliffs of coral. So when you want to go deep sea fishing, you go about 25 feet out from the shore and you are in deep sea waters. There is no slope. They have no economy, it's all coral. They can grow a few bananas and coconuts and pigs. They are desperately poor. I got the Navy to build a wharf so ships could berth at the wharf rather than having to off-load on lighters. Then the wharf was so high up out of the water because of the depth of the water, everything had to be lifted up by crane. So they would lift your boat up, put it

on a trailer and drive away. There was no place to tie boats up. The local guy kept telling the Navy guys this didn't look good to him. The first storm demolished the whole wharf, just washed away like it had never ever been there. A quarter of a million bucks. Before I left, I was trying to get them to rebuild it and do it right this time. But I really enjoyed the natives. Hospitality, again, was the key. You had to be careful and not say "Oh, isn't that a lovely piece of furniture" because you would wind up with it. And they were poor.

Q: Did they have an Antarctica station there? You were in a support position, weren't you?

BEEMAN: Yes, but Christchurch, New Zealand, was our launching pad for Antarctica so my staff had to do all the negotiating with the government of New Zealand over import questions and licenses. It was a very important manifestation of the U.S. presence in New Zealand because at Christchurch. Before the Navy gave it up, we would have 400 guys in U.S. Navy uniforms down in Antarctica. So that was really one of the highlights of my time there, and of course I got two trips to the South Pole. It was a tough place, a very tough environment, so I didn't go there once a year to get the sun. Two highlights of my stay in New Zealand - one was the 40th anniversary of the New Zealand Scott Base - so the Prime Minister invited me to go along with him down on the New Zealand plane for this 40th anniversary ceremony. Ed Hillary, who has become a very good friend of ours, was going along us.

Q: The mountaineer.

BEEMAN: The first man to ever climb Mount Everest, and a terrific human being, by the way. So I took Ed Hillary and Jim Bolger, the Prime Minister, to the South Pole on an American plane. That was an incredible experience having Ed there and having all these young Americans who work at the South Pole during the summer - having him autograph New Zealand $5.00 bills which has his picture on it. I told the prime minister he made a terrible mistake; he should have put his picture on the $100.00 bill because all those bills are going out of circulation and they would have made a terrific amount of money out of this. That was a real highlight. I guess the other highlight for me was the President's visit. Which was just before I left.

Q: How did that work?

BEEMAN: That was absolutely fantastic.

Q: Was he the first president to come?

BEEMAN: No, Johnson had stopped there one day - he didn't stay overnight - just during the daytime on the trip back from Australia, which you referred to earlier. So 1967 was the first president, and then 1999 was the second presidential trip. Clinton just had a ball and spent a whole day playing golf. The Kiwis did a fantastic job of rolling it all out. He did a lot of motorcades and we sent the motorcade through the district of one of the most left-wing members of the New Zealand parliament in Christchurch. Thousands and

thousands of people turned out on the streets.

Q: Was there a little malice aforethought?
BEEMAN: I don't know why we would do that kind of thing. But ever since then, he has really toned down his attacks on the United States. He actually said something nice about the United States recently. He was then leader of the major left-wing party in parliament. The Clinton people told me later that was the greatest trip they had ever had. One of the highlights for me was when my wife, Susan, and daughter, Olivia, who was about 4 months old, were in the receiving line. My daughter had a sweater with an American flag on it and was holding a little American flag in her hand, which I had taught her how to wave. Just as the president was coming down the line, she started to eat the American flag, so I had someone run down and tell my wife to stop her because I felt sure that was a federal offense. Clinton stayed three days. APEC (Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation) was meeting in New Zealand at the time and he was the big hit of APEC, of course.

Q: What was your observation of how New Zealand fitted into the Pacific associations?

BEEMAN: New Zealand views itself as a player in the South Pacific, with the island communities, so they take a very preeminent role and provide a lot of financial support for development. That's where all their aid goes - to the Pacific Islands. It is really Australia and New Zealand together who have to look after the South Pacific. We do zip there. We have a Peace Corps in Samoa, but that is about it, and we have no foreign aid nor aid of any kind that goes into the Pacific Islands. They are desperately poor. They have no industrial future; they have little agriculture; they can't really sustain themselves.

Q: A couple of years ago the Federation States of Micronesia. And yet they are living on American *handouts right now and those are going down. They have even lost the ability to* fish *in their traditional way of life.*

BEEMAN: It's tough. There is nobody who cares about them, no interest in them. They are not of any strategic importance to anybody. The Chinese will come in and build a building but it is way too fancy. That's what they did in Samoa, and the Samoans couldn't pay the air conditioning bill. It's a desperate situation and I can see no easy way out of it.

Q: What about the situation of the Maoris in New Zealand as you observed them?

BEEMAN: Let me start by saying that I think New Zealand has done the most fantastic job that I've ever seen of recognizing the problem and trying to affirmatively and aggressively deal with the problem of Maoris. First of all, there has always been inter-marriage, from the very first time white settlers came to New Zealand. You can see blond, blue-eyed Maori. They are handsome people but, like blacks in the States, they are about 75% of the jail population, 75% of the welfare rolls. They are not integrated into the culture and society to the extent that they should be. They are only 12% of the population of New Zealand but New Zealand really does try to address and attack the matter very aggressively. New Zealand has had a Maori governor general; it has Maori

seats in parliament. I'm not sure that's such a good idea, and lots of Kiwis are not sure either. There is a Maori electoral roll whereby the Maori can be, if they want to be, on their own separate roll and elect a certain members of parliament off that roll. I think they are doing a terrific job dealing with it; it is a very difficult problem. And it isn't just money that does it. They operate as tribes and are very poor. They are proud of their identity and are getting greater pride and being more aggressive in asserting their rights, basically without violence. It's a problem that is going to be around for a long time.

Q: When you left there in '99, did you leave any issues, such as the lamb problem?

BEEMAN: The lamb problem took care of itself because what I said came true. They did very well on lamb. It is almost a non-issue. The nuclear propulsion question is still outstanding; I'm sorry it didn't get resolved. If we were going to do it we had to do it in one blow and make sure it worked. That opportunity just didn't present itself.
Q: What have you been doing since you came back?

BEEMAN: Well, I retired February 1st of 2000 and about a month later I got a phone call from the chairman of the Broadcasting Board of Governors, which runs Voice of America, Radio Free Europe, Radio Free Asia, asking me to be their first Chief of Staff since they became an independent agency last year. I said I would take it for a year, because I'm not sure how long I want to continue to work full time. That year is up and they asked me stay for another 4 months. I told them I'm going to retire from there at the end of August 2001. Then my former business partner called me and asked me to go back into a business partnership, because he had a terrific program and needed somebody with my political skills to manage it. I said I didn't want to work full time; he said that wasn't a problem; so I may be going back into business again. I have to raise money for my baby's college education. It never ends, but I like doing something rather than just sitting around the house.

Q: Okay, well, we'll stop at this point.

BEEMAN: I could not end this memoir without expressing my deep felt appreciation to my wonderful wife Susan and our beautiful daughter Olivia. Susan approached our stay in New Zealand with some trepidation, wondering if she was up to the task of being an ambassador's wife.

I must say that she did a brilliant job. She quickly became beloved by the other diplomatic and embassy spouses and was a roaring success with the New Zealand public.

The fact that our first child - Olivia - was born in New Zealand was a serendipitous bonus. Every time I got on a plane, the flight crew would ask how Olivia was. I mentioned earlier what a wonderful outpouring of baby gifts and cards and letters we received when she was born in 1999. On our first return trip to New Zealand in 2002, we got together with all the families in our parenting class for a reunion.

Susan and Olivia made my stay in New Zealand a joy and some of the happiest days of

my life.

End of interview