The Association for Diplomatic Studies and Training
Foreign Affairs Oral Project

AMBASSADOR ROBERT E. HUNTER

Interviewed by: Charles Stuart Kennedy
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INTERVIEW

Q: Today is the 10th of August, 2004. This is an interview with Robert Hunter, middle initial?

HUNTER: E.

Q: What does that stand for?

HUNTER: Edwards

Q: And I'm Charles Stuart Kennedy and this is being done on behalf of the Association for Diplomatic Studies and Training. To begin, when and where were you born?

HUNTER: The first of May, 1940 in Cambridge, Massachusetts.

Q: Can you tell me something about the Hunter family; let's start with the father's side.

HUNTER: My father was in business, the family was from Quincy, Massachusetts. He was the first person in the family on that side to go to college, he went to Boston University. Graduated the year the Great Depression began. Of course, that was a generation that was very much affected by the Depression and what happened afterwards.

Q: Where did the Hunters come from?

HUNTER: Mostly Scotland, through Nova Scotia. Some Irish, some English, some French, way back. The first ones that show up, on Ancestry.com, I learned only recently, were in Charleston, Mass. in 1636, but we have no family lore on them – as Horatio said, I "do in part believe it!" I know we had some come from Ireland to Massachusetts in the 1740s, and then the next generation left between 1774 and '81 to go to Nova Scotia, which indicates to me they were probably on the wrong side of the Revolution! About the middle of the nineteenth century, they came back to the Quincy area. Some came directly from Scotland, quarrymen. My grandmother's father was a barber. In fact, in the records it says he was a barber, a union organizer, organized the barbers for Samuel Gompers, and a bookmaker – I'm kind of proud of that! My grandfather, the first Robert Hunter, had a house painting business in Quincy, next door to a guy who was trying to make a better ice cream, Howard Johnson.

Q: How about on your mother's side?

HUNTER: My mother's mother was from Illinois; her people were in the US at least from the early 18th century, Tennessee, Virginia. Some came from Ireland, others most likely England. My mother's father was born in Wales, Aberystwyth, on the 16th of March, 1863. The British records were kept in a building next door to the London School of Economics, so I got a copy of his birth certificate. He came to Dakota Territory with his brother in the late 1880s and was a cowboy, later a rancher. He was a banker, founder of the Black Hills Roundup, which is still in existence, in Belle Fourche, South Dakota, on the Fourth of July every year, and he helped organize the Rodeo Association of America. He was mayor of Belle Fourche and a South Dakota state Senator, as a Republican, from 1912-1914. So my mother's parents were genuine pioneers. Ironically, both my grandfathers went bankrupt in the Great Depression, in both cases in part because they refused to collect debts owed to them by people who had run out of money.

Q: Your South Dakota grandparents were sort of the sod hut and all that?

HUNTER: I don't think at that point because they had gone beyond sod huts! But Grandpa Evans did start out as a cowpuncher after he emigrated from Wales. My mother, after university at University of Nebraska, came East and did her Master's at Simmons College in Boston. That's where she met my father and they were married in 1933, Patriots' Day, in the chapel at Boston University.

Q: What was her field?

HUNTER: General liberal arts, also business. My father was an English major.

Q: Did you grow up in the Boston area?

HUNTER: No, because of the war, my father took a job in the government and that was at a munitions plant in southwestern Virginia, in Radford, Virginia, which was built out of whole cloth in 1941, and we lived there for 10 years.

Q: What was Radford like?

HUNTER: It was your usual rural kind of town. It was essentially farming communities around there. I've had different experiences. My first 10 years were in a rural environment and then a suburban environment, northern New Jersey, and then urban environments after that, so I've had kind of an exposure to all three main areas of American life.

Q: Let's talk about the farming environment.

HUNTER: We were isolated because we lived in government housing at this ordnance plant, which I think was one of the world's largest ordnance plants during the war. We were the Yankees in an area of the South in the 1940s; in that part of the country, people were still fighting the War Between the States.

Q: Absolutely. The War of Southern Secession.

HUNTER: I said the War Between the States, I didn't say the Civil War. In fact, the Stars and Bars flew side by side with the Stars and Stripes, most places, in those days.

Q: What about school? Did you go to school there?

HUNTER: In Blacksburg to begin with. Along with the other kids at what was called Staff Village, at the Radford Ordnance Works. My older brother, David, and I were bussed about 12 miles to Blacksburg. For me, that was through the third grade, including in the public school there. Then the government, in its wisdom, discovered that a new school had been built only four miles away in a place called Fairlawn, so we were sent there. It was a major shift. It's one of those things that is probably a positive experience, transitioning from a good solid middle class community in Blacksburg, which had Virginia Polytechnic Institute (now called Virginia Tech), which was then an all men's military school like VMI (Virginia Military Institute), to a school where people were dirt poor. Where you just wore blue jeans and some of the kids only had shoes for the winter time and took off for planting and harvesting. Of course, no blacks. It was very much segregated. Things you learn as a child. They say you learn everything you need to know in kindergarten, and these were formative experiences about what America is about and what it should have been about but wasn't then, and where we are still challenged to meet the promise of the Founding Documents.

Q: How'd you find the teaching? Sounds like a very difficult place to get the kids in place to teach.

HUNTER: I've been very fortunate. One of the great triumphs of this country has been the public school system, which as you may know is one of the great inventions of America, we invented it. The Land Ordinance of 1785 created the land grant for public schools. One of the few lasting achievements under the Articles of Confederation. I've had a lifelong devotion to education, maybe because of watching its impact on various people, and one of the great tragedies of America today is that we are allowing the public school to be destroyed, I hope I'm not putting it too strongly.

Q: Did you find coming from the specialized area, having a family with both of your parents were college graduates and all that, and going to this country school, was this a problem for you?

HUNTER: I think so, at least on the surface. In Blacksburg, it wasn't true because, as I say, it was a town with a lot of educated people who valued education, and then to go to this other school, where I think people valued it, but it was kind of an early experience for them. These were people either doing war work and post-war work because there was the munitions plant, there was American Celanese, factories like that, with people coming from elsewhere. But mostly the local farming kids, many of whom were absolutely dirt poor. Prior to building that school, these kids went to school in a tar-paper shack. The literal one room schoolhouses. The basement of the local Baptist church was a schoolroom. I was at the Fairlawn school for two years, and I guess it's the kind of experience that sticks with you in terms of learning what in this country we've all got to get beyond for there to be a real society.

Q: How'd you find the teachers?

HUNTER: As I said, I was lucky I had good teachers.

Q: I suppose they were all women at that point?

HUNTER: My first male teacher was, I guess, in junior high, maybe even high school. In fact, I had one teacher who was wonderful at an early age. I've developed a great love of history in the course of my life, and it was fostered by my fourth grade teacher, Miss Bane. We read a book called The Story of Virginia, which was the history of the Commonwealth, and I developed a very deep admiration for Stonewall Jackson at that point. She used to dictate to us from her own memory about her grandfather, who had been a Confederate soldier, and I still remember the story about his being at Appomattox. The Yankees weren't going to get his rifle, and so he wrapped it around a tree, and then Lee came out and announced that Grant said they could keep their personal arms. Also, I think being caught between two historic cultures, parents out of Boston, although they were Republicans and not liberal with a capital "L," but liberal with a small "l," there was an appreciation for education, appreciation for people. Deeply anti-prejudice, not something as a creed, but something they lived, and that kind of thing you pick up.

Q: Did you find that when you were in school you had to learn to hold your tongue?

HUNTER: I never learned to hold my tongue. We used to at recess play War Between the States, and there was another kid from Massachusetts and me, and the South won regularly. You only learn your own society by seeing other things that give you benchmarks. So being a Yankee in this part of the South, which was not the Deep South, but the rural South, the Scots-Irish South in the Blue Ridge, as opposed to the Episcopalian Tidewater, gave a certain appreciation. Incidentally, in Virginia there was at least then a deep resentment of South Carolina and some other states that started the War Between the States, but then didn't suffer very much, whereas Virginia, with its various leaders, Robert E. Lee and others who by luck got into it, and then Virginia suffered more than any other state.

Q: Yeah that was a big battleground.

HUNTER: You look at, not maybe then, but afterwards, but Virginia, for which I have a great affection, produced all these presidents and all these great leaders up through Woodrow Wilson, he was sort of the exception, becoming president from New Jersey, and in some ways Virginia still hasn't recovered from the Civil War, in terms of the quality of its contribution to civil society and public life. I remember once when I was five years old, my father and mother, having this great appreciation of what were, I guess I would say, things that matter. I got introduced, I remember, to a man who was going to be running for governor in Virginia, named Ted Dalton, whose son did become governor, and I was five years old and deeply impressed. These things that lead you eventually to take on a public life. I think probably the fact that we were at this munitions plant run by the government, interacting with these people and with the US Army from earliest memories, have had an impact on the direction of my career.

Q: What about living in a munitions factory area? Were houses removed? Were there any problems while you were there?

HUNTER: There was a little community of about 20 houses called Staff Village, they were all standard, government issue, painted white, and were removed from everything else. As I say, we were bussed to school. One of the reasons I never got upset in this bussing controversy was I did that through almost my entire public school education, didn't seem to cause any problems. One anecdote I remember, we left Radford in '51 and I didn't go back for 37 years, and one weekend I said to my wife. "Let's take the weekend and go down and see where I used to live." The transition of Blacksburg, which had been a sleepy little college town, and had become a great dot-com metropolis. All this high tech industry around there. Radford, which had been the big smoke, was a ghost town because the Interstate came by and the place collapsed. Total reversal of roles. When we went to Staff Village, I was stunned to see that it hadn't changed at all in 37 years, except that the screened porches had been replaced with glass! Everything was the same. I remember calling my father and telling him this, and he said" "Why are you surprised? That's the US Army."

Q: While you were a youth were you much of a reader?

HUNTER: My mother was. So my brother and I learned it very early. She read to us from serious stuff. She, herself, read all of Kenneth Roberts, I remember, so it was all the historical novels. We read all the kids books, all the Oz books, Wind in the Willows, Hardy Boys, and moved on, Booth Tarkington, I recall, Lorna Doone, Robert Louis Stevenson, poetry, especially about New England, Longfellow. That part of the country was always the lodestar for us, even though we kids had never seen it until Thanksgiving the year the war ended. Brother Dave and I both sat on Plymouth Rock, snuck under the fence; you can't do that today, I'm sure!

Q: One of the most influential books that I ever read was Oliver Twist because it showed the other side of the revolution.

HUNTER: I didn't get to that, but that's right.

Q: You left there in 1951 and then where did you all go?

HUNTER: A place called Oradell, New Jersey, which is in Bergen County, my father worked in East Rutherford. Oradell is a bedroom community, at the time it was all white and virtually all Christian, which is important to note, because as I moved through life later on and began to appreciate other aspects and became more cosmopolitan, it's a thing to look back on. But it was close to New York, and my parents thought nothing of it, when I was 12, 13, 14 years old, we'd get on the Number 165 bus and go into Port Authority and wander on our own around New York. It was the '50s. Or when I started driving at 17, you'd park your car at Fort Lee and walk across the George Washington Bridge. Try that today. Can't do that anymore. It was a sudden transition from being in this rural community to being in a much faster-paced suburban community. It was like life doubled in terms of speed, just all of a sudden.

Q: Academically did you catch up, or were you ahead?

HUNTER: My brother Dave and I were always very good students, we had our parents' example in terms of reading. My father's favorite thing was, I'd ask about a word at supper, and he'd say: "Go look it up." So the rush to the dictionary. I remember one thing in fourth grade, the worst class we ever had was on Wednesday mornings, we had "definitions." The teacher would give us a word and we'd have to look it up, learn what it meant and memorize that, and we'd have to write a sentence that included it and we'd go out for recess and we'd come back and have to perform, and that was a horror. It was a horror for all of us, you know. I was always way ahead of my year... Not as smart as my brother, but I was always way ahead of my year. When they first started giving achievement tests in 6th grade, I tested as a high school senior, that kind of stuff. But that's only test taking.

Q: In junior high/high school did you get involved in extracurricular things?

HUNTER: Always.

Q: What sort of things?

HUNTER: In junior high, I was editor of the school magazine, science club, a lot of sports, trombone, church choir, worked in a print shop on Saturdays, setting type by hand, California Job Case, the whole works; delivered the mail at Christmas and holidays during high school. Worked every summer and a lot of Saturdays, gas station and car repairs, bottled and delivered soda pop, built machines that made the little bows for the top of liquor packages at Christmas. Boy Scouts, where a group of four of us did our Eagle Scout together, and I found out recently that our scout camp was used for the filming of *Friday the Thirteenth!* One striking thing in moving from rural Virginia to New Jersey was that, in rural Virginia, sports was something we did all the time and it was totally unorganized. You'd call it sandlot. Then suddenly coming to the suburban area, it was all organized, like Little League. That was mystifying. It seemed more for the adults than for the kids. It was all highly organized, and that was stressful. I'm not a great athlete, but I did everything. Basketball, baseball, badminton, and soccer, which was the local fall sport there. Then, of course, I was three years in senior high school, and Oradell didn't have a high school. So we were bussed to Englewood, New Jersey, which is just this side of the George Washington Bridge, to Dwight Morrow High School, which had a big campus. A beautiful building, large, almost like an estate. (Morrow had been a Senator, Ambassador to Mexico; and he was Anne Morrow Lindbergh's father.) It was much more cosmopolitan. It was maybe 30% African-American. My first experience being with Jews in classes. I think all this was a wonderful experience, and creating friendships across every kind of boundary. There, I was president of my sophomore class – but got beat for reelection because I didn't do my job – a great first lesson in politics! – so I worked hard to become president of the school in senior year, and I was first in the class and won prizes for declamation, public speaking. I finally discovered a sport I was good at, which was track, and I was a quarter-miler. My brother had been a two-twenty yard sprinter, but I didn't have the speed, so I became a-quarter miler. I was Bergen County champion my sophomore year, the next year, in the State championships, I finished second to a guy from Teaneck when he set the New Jersey high school record. Also threw the discus, senior year. I ran three years at the Penn Relays, which were the National Championships, and I've been running ever since. Satchel Page said, "Don't look back, something may be gaining on you."

Q: At the high school was there a breakdown in how the African American, the Jewish and the WASP (white Anglo Saxon Protestant) community…

HUNTER: Well, WASP is a term we wouldn't even have known, but I think there was a kind of implicit division between blacks and non-blacks, even though there were some friendships that went across – in my senior year, for instance, I was the only white on the track team. But within the non-blacks, there were no distinctions at all. I think my exposure to Jewish culture was one of the more positive elements of my entire life. In terms of family, appreciation of education, in terms of sense of humor and sense of irony. I remember even prior to that, I read all kinds of stuff as a child, and I remember the old joke books, the old Jewish vaudeville humor, read them all! Try any of them on me, I'll know it. In fact, I always felt I had something of that temperament, which I think has stood in very good stead in terms of being able to look across boundaries. Ever since high school, what happened at Dwight Morrow, I've always been a very multi-cultural person. I hate that term because it's a buzz word for lots of things that I don't think are terribly positive. It's a kind of a thing people wear on their sleeves, but I've kind of lived it. I've never had trouble relating to people of other cultures.

Q: Did you get into New York much as you get older? How about the theater and other things?

HUNTER: We went to the theater, occasionally; I had a friend whose mother had worked at the Shubert Theater, so that opened another window. I used to do indoor track on a Saturday afternoon, take the bus, before I was driving, and go into the 168th Street Armory. Almost all the runners there were black, from the great New York high schools, some of which were Catholic, as you know, the great Catholic high schools, which put a great emphasis on sports, and that was an amazing experience. In my junior year, I even ran the quarter-mile in the national championships in Madison Square Garden. I came so far down I won't even tell you how far. It was fun. That Madison Square Garden doesn't exist anymore. That's gone. I played soccer, wasn't very good at it. Just did all this stuff. To be fair, one reason I got involved in so many activities was that my mother was dying. She had cancer and she suffered with it for more than five years before she died. So a lot of what I did I guess was a way of compensating. She died just after I graduated from high school.

Q: What year did you graduate from high school?

HUNTER: '58.

Q: I guess with your family background you were pointing towards college.

HUNTER: Oh yeah, that was always assumed.

Q: Where'd you go?

HUNTER: I went to Wesleyan in Connecticut.

Q: Why there?

HUNTER: It'd be very hard to explain. I'm not really quite sure. One, it was a matter of getting a scholarship, which was necessary for our family, although I had scholarships elsewhere too. I had one at Yale, Princeton, Cornell. Hard to explain, but a good place.

Q: It was known as one of the Little Three.

HUNTER: I'm here at RAND, and one of the things about it, there's one other Wesleyan person here and a bunch of Amherst and Williams people, so we go at one another.

Q: I graduated from Williams in '50.

HUNTER: Well, that is one more thing to recommend you. Little Three, along with Amherst and us at Wesleyan, the poor relations.

Q: I went down there on the fencing team. In my time it was mostly vets, and it wasn't as fancy as it is now.

HUNTER: That's right, they both had a lot of vets, and Wesleyan had had a Navy V-5 and a V-12 school. I say in retrospect I might have gone to one of the other schools I was admitted to but didn't because… I won't get into that. Let's put it another way, I was fortunate to have some really good teachers. At Wesleyan after my freshman year, I was recruited for a new "experiment" they called the College Program. They decided to try something on what they called the Oxford model, and they started one in quantitative studies and one in the arts and humanities, and one in social studies. I went into the one in social studies, first year it started. It was three 10-week trimesters, no tests except right at the end of the second and third years, no grades. Heavy writing demands for tutorials. We had to write a paper every week, which was excruciating, but the best thing that ever happened to us in terms of learning to write. You know, if you're in Washington, one skill you have to have is to be able to write. So I learned how to do that, although I'll let other people judge if I'm any good at it. I had some very good teachers at the College of Social Studies (CSS). It was cross-discipline. History, government, economics, plus philosophy, plus some other things that you could sample around the university as you liked. I did English literature. One of the things CSS required you to do, because there were no exams and no grades except right at the end, is that you had to learn self-discipline, which was very tough, as opposed to just doing things by rote: Next week you're going to have a quiz, you're going to have a test, do this paper -- you know, the incremental approach, with a grade at the end of each course. I think even though it took me a long, long time to learn, and I'm not sure I've learned it yet, this requirement for self-reliance stands one in good stead. That experience, plus what I learned in graduate school – which had the same "no tests, no grades, no barriers between one subject and another" -- I've come to an appreciation how, particularly in my discipline, foreign affairs, first, so many different disciplines go into it. Second, compartmentalization of learning is a disaster. In fact, I have noticed over the years that most of American training in foreign affairs prepares people to be specialists, and there are very few people whom I would call generalists, those people who are cross-discipline, who can integrate knowledge from across the board. Yet the making of foreign policy, if there is such a thing, has to be that. It can't just be somebody is a Middle East person, somebody is a Latin America person, somebody knows military issues, and somebody else knows economics, because the world doesn't work that way.

Q: I found when I was examiner of people who took the oral exam for the Foreign Service, we'd have people who were Mongolian specialists, or something, coming out of Harvard.

HUNTER: Some people you need who are like that, but not the people at the top making decisions.

Q: But the problem was there just wasn't enough breadth there from our feeling.

HUNTER: One of the problems I think with the Foreign Service is that it often hasn't valued people who are able to integrate knowledge and analyze and think about strategy, all of which are needed to make the really tough decisions. But at the same time, the Foreign Service also doesn't put enough value on the specialists who need to be recruited and nurtured. In order to get promoted, I noticed, you have to check certain blocks and, as a result, sometimes we lose out on some of the key specialties, like a Mongolian specialist, to use your example. I would want to give people with these special skills rewards and promote them and not retire them early, because you need somebody on Mongolia. But that's your business, I'm not a Foreign Service Officer!

Q: Obviously it's a major problem. The election of '60 was a major time for many young people to get caught up in, did you get caught up in it?

HUNTER: I did, but not in the way that you would think. It wasn't a matter of being inspired by John Kennedy, until later, and maybe there a certain…let me explain it in a different way. I've always been a bit of an individualist intellectually. I've always tried to resist fads, tried to resist group-think. In part because I've seen the dangers in myself and others of group-think, and I tend to believe, it's kind of a whimsical thing, that by the time everybody believes what I believe, it's time to move on to something else. Kind of a Daniel Boone idea. On first getting involved in Washington, it was really a couple of things. One was the background I came from and being close to the military when my father worked at Radford Ordnance Works, later called Radford Arsenal. So having had that perspective. I remember, for example, in summer 1945, bicycling down the road from Staff Village to where it intersected with the main road, going into the "powder plant," as they called it, and seeing this great convoy of trucks going past me, these were German prisoners of war after the surrender, being brought in to add new buildings to the ordnance plant for the war against Japan. Here I'm five years old. This is nothing, of course, compared to what any European kid would have gone through, no doubt a lot worse, but my being aware that there was a thing called a war going on. Anyway, my father having been a civil servant, my having gained a very strong sense of public service, even then, for reasons that'd be hard to explain, which I guess I really haven't thought it through enough. There was another, more direct, factor. We had the vice president of Wesleyan, a man named John Macy, who had been the top civil servant in the US government.

Q: He was Mr. Civil Service.

HUNTER: He was Wesleyan Class of ’37. Back when he was Wesleyan’s vice president, I got to know him, got to be friendly with him, he was inspiring. Kennedy put him in the Cabinet as head of what was then called the Civil Service Commission – now the Office of Personnel Administration, and it’s no longer in the Cabinet. It was his inspiration, I think. I took the examination for a management internship, qualified, applied around, and tried various places. Bureau of the Budget, my first choice, wasn’t interested in me, but the Navy Department took me on for the summer in summer of 1961. I was between my junior and senior years. So I came down here to Washington in 1961, spent the summer here and worked in the Munitions Building, which you will remember but most people won’t, which was on Constitution Avenue, next to Main Navy. These were temporary buildings built in 1917 to last the First World War.

Q: I had my tooth pulled out there just after I got discharged from the Air Force. I remember vividly.

HUNTER: Back in those days, the World War II Temps were also there, and they were right below the Washington Monument. We were on the second deck of the Munitions Building, and I got assigned to a thing called the Special Projects Office, which was building Polaris missiles, submarines. Which was *the* number one program in the US Navy and one of the top programs in the military. So a lot of high caliber people and a highly-intense effort. Very high élan. It was a fantastic experience. I went back to Wesleyan and, for my senior thesis, I wrote on the bureaucratic politics of the innovation of the Polaris project. I don’t know if I’ve ever written anything as good as that since.

Q: What were the politics?

HUNTER: This was essentially about when it was decided we needed what was later called second-strike deterrence. Each of the three services had their competitors. You know, these had to be weapons that couldn’t be destroyed in a first-strike. I should tell you, I’m a trained nuclear strategist. I won’t bore you with all that. I spent a large part of my career in nuclear strategy and arms control at the analytical end, and some at the practical end in the government. The Air Force had *Minuteman,* and the Navy tried *Polaris*, and the Army tried *Redstone*. Let me give you a small sample of a very complicated subject, as the inter-service rivalry was going on. The rivalry between Admiral “Red” Raborn, in charge of the Polaris Project, and Admiral Hyman Rickover, father of the nuclear Navy, who detested the Polaris Project, and it was reciprocated. Nobody has ever heard of Raborn, except when he was head of the CIA, but everybody’s heard of Rickover. That’s another story. But one of the things, the Army was going to provide a missile to go on the submarines, and got way down the road in developing it. General Medaris was in charge, I remember reading his memoirs about this, and the Army was way along on the development of its missile for the Polaris submarines. But the Navy suckered the Army by going along with it up to a certain point and then announcing that a liquid fuel rocket couldn’t possibly be put in a submarine! Too dangerous. You have to have a solid-fuel rocket, and we at Polaris just happen to have been developing one! The Army didn’t know what hit it. Suddenly, it was out of the intercontinental ballistic missile business. That’s how it happened. (Sorry, I misspoke, the

Air Force had *Atlas*, first, and then *Minuteman*.) So I wrote about that for my senior thesis at Wesleyan, and they gave me High Distinction. Then I came back to the Polaris Program and worked in operations analysis and some of the foreign programs. The head of my particular office, Captain Richard Shutt, took me under his wing, beginning in 1961. I've been fortunate in my life to have worked for a lot of extraordinary people. I hope I'm able to validate the trust and confidence they put in me at a young age, and I try to do a lot of mentoring of young people. I got this attention partly because I was precocious, I was also noisy and lively. Everybody always tried to tame me, but I've had a lot of intellectual curiosity since I was a child. That's the thing. Tremendous intellectual curiosity since I was a child.

Q: That serves one well.

HUNTER: Can do. So then, in college I competed for the various graduate scholarships, I was lucky to get a Fulbright to England and so set off in that direction.

Q: While you were in college did foreign affairs interest you?

HUNTER: Well, not initially. I went to college to become a chemist. I really liked science. I was very good at it in high school. My best subjects were science and math. I got 800 in the advanced math college boards. I can add my checkbook up, even now. At that point, I had kind of a square-corners mind, and one of the best things that has happened to me has been spending the rest of my life getting around corners of the mind. In other words, dealing with ambiguities, ambivalences. Which is what managing the world is all about, is figuring out how things relate to one another. So I guess people would say the difference is between a mind that works sequentially and one that leaps around, but you've got to have both, in my judgment, to get it right, at least in my field. So I got some education at Wesleyan that helped me later in foreign affairs, but only in the sense that it was part of general background, things you studied. Most of the studies were concentrated on the domestic, particularly in political science, economics, history. But then those summers I had in Washington, which really galvanized my attention, these were the fundamental issues facing our country. I'm of that generation that remembers October 4, 1958, *Sputnik*. And the National Defense Education Act. I remember the day after *Sputnik*, at Dwight Morrow we were all asking: "Where are we as a nation? What do we do?" *Sputnik* had a galvanizing impact. I remember also, I can't remember the exact time, my father had a college friend from Boston University, John Peter Hagen, who was in charge of the first Navy program, *Vanguard*, to put up a satellite. I remember, the poor guy, we were all watching live on television as this thing, I think we were watching television, maybe it was just on the news that night, but the rocket went up five feet and fell over.

Q: Oh yeah, there was a horrible period where nothing seemed to work.

HUNTER: So it was that everything was moving in a direction, a concatenation of events pushing me in the direction of a foreign career, and wanting to do one of these foreign experiences and getting a Fulbright and going to England.

Q: Before we do that, just one question. Why were Rickover and Reborn at odds?

HUNTER: Rickover wanted to run everything. He was a man without whom we would have been a much poorer and less secure country, but there are some qualities that are useful at some times and not at others! So in college, but certainly in graduate school, I read voluminously of the things in international relations, military affairs. Admiral Ernest King, at the beginning of the Second World War became commander in chief of US naval forces. The abbreviation was "CINCUS" at that point. But King said we have to change that, we can't have a commander called "sink-us." His famous line was that, "When things really get tough, that's when they send for us sons of bitches!" Well, Rickover was a son of a bitch, and that was good, up to a point. But maybe he outlived his usefulness. I recall, for example, President Landsbergis of Lithuania, a man of extraordinary courage, he stood up against the Soviets in 1990. He could have been shot. But he stood up, helped his country become independent, then he became president, but I discovered when I was ambassador at NATO, dealing with him, a man I have tremendous admiration for, he had outlived his usefulness to Lithuania, because he was so single-minded. That gave him the courage to do X, but when it came time to govern later on and do Y, he was less effective. Lech Walesa, for example, is a bit like that. An extremely courageous man, but when it came time to create a Poland of a different quality, it became time for him to move on. But without people like that, without the Rickovers… but anyway, the story was that Raborn, who was a very effective manager, a very inspiring leader, a very quiet individual, I guess a Scotsman. The story was, and everybody told these stories, was about his going over to see Rickover to pay his respects the first day, and Rickover looked up and said, "Oh, I see I'm going to have to run the Polaris project, too." Raborn narrowed his eyes and pursed his lips and did his perfect about face and walked out and never came back. Also, Raborn took one of Rickover's new submarines being built, the *Scorpion*, and split it in half and put a midsection in it, to become the first Polaris boat, the 598, the *USS George Washington*. The rivalry was there. A lot of the Raborn people had washed out of the Rickover program, in part, I discovered in learning all this Navy lore, because of the rigor of going through the Rickover selection process. Where Rickover in some ways was correct. It could be argued that the need in a nuclear submarine was less a matter of thinking independently than it was of thinking under pressure and getting it right and not screwing up. Except for the *USS Thresher,* and it's hard to say exactly what happened on that boat. But with the possible exception of that, there's never been an accident in putting a nuclear reactor in an undersea vessel, and Rickover demanded certain standards. But when it came to doing other things, maybe this was not the most important quality. So a lot of these guys who had been rejected by the Rickover program came over to the Raborn program, people who had other kinds of personal and intellectual leadership skills. Fascinating time.

Q: How about chemistry and that kind of thing by the time you're through college?

HUNTER: I went through my first year as a science and math "pre-major." I took an advanced math course, and it took me about three months to realize that I could go a certain distance, but this stuff was beyond me, so I dropped the course. In fact, you learn over time what you’re good and bad at. I’m good at a lot of stuff, but there are three areas I am impossible at. One is statistics. Another is radio. As a Boy Scout I tried to learn it, and I remember one summer at Scout camp, trying to learn radio because there were a bunch of Ham Radio kids, but I just could never get the hang of it. I would get as far as impedance and that was it. Because I have both a linear mind and a nonlinear mind. With my linear mind, I could visualize electrons. But the idea that you can have a wave function that streams out, varying between positive and negative, and yet it’s got to be electrical energy, electrons, whatever it is -- I couldn’t just accept this as a “fact” and move on. So statistics, radio, and languages. I’m no good at those three. My wife, Shireen, is brilliant at languages. I also am never good at remembering names. So, after the first year in college, I also discovered that chemistry is interesting but not my cup of tea. But the great thing about Wesleyan and the requirements they had then was that, even though I was in the science track, I was put into an English course for potential scientists, and we all had to take humanities, and I found I woke up to these things. That’s one reason that I served on the Board at Wesleyan later on. I’m still very skeptical about people coming out of American high schools and, in their freshman year of college or university, being able to decide at that point exactly what they want to do. I believe if you want to go to engineering school, art school, that’s your business. But I think if you’re going to start out in liberal arts, you should be required to sample around and find out, maybe you missed something. Because very few American high schools are going to be able to give you the breadth at any level of rigor so you can decide who you are. This idea that kids are going to be mature enough as freshmen and freshwomen. It’s not a matter of maturity, it’s a matter of exposure. I remember when I was on the board of the university and they said, “We’re no longer going to have 120 credit hours needed for graduation, we’re just going to have a series of ‘expectations.’” And I joked, “Fine, let’s just do it as expectations, as long as you get 120 of them!” I think people miss out by this false assertion, which has something to do with the idea that, because we’re here at Wesleyan, we must be mature enough to make our own decisions about courses from Day One.

In high school, my sophomore year, I had an English teacher who made me read a 976-page book called The Forty Days of Musa Dagh, by Franz Werfel. Maybe I’ve always had a sympathy for the Armenians since then, but that book was a struggle. But it was worth doing. In my junior year, we had a teacher in social studies and history who taught through sarcasm. She would just humiliate kids if you weren’t doing this and that. This was Englewood High School, which drained from four different communities. Oradell which was solid white middle class; Englewood, which included the rich and the poor and the in-between. Plus Ridgefield and Edgewater. Fascinating, different people all coming to the same school. Well, this teacher in my junior year made me read a book which was the one-volume version of The Study of History by Arnold Toynbee, all about interregnums. An interregnum is the period between two other interregnums, right? I don’t know how much I got out of it, it was torture. But kind of thankful for it. Which reminds me, I actually met Toynbee once in the library of Chatham House in London. About 10 years ago, when my wife and I were in Cambridge, England, and I was missing a volume of The Study of History, and I went into the Cambridge University Bookstore and said, “Do you have Study of History by Arnold Toynbee,” and they said, “Who?”

People don't read him anymore. Or maybe it was just because Toynbee was published by Oxford, the rival.

Q: He was one of the most popular unread authors around. I think he appeared on the cover of Time.

HUNTER: That's like Hawking. I've struggled to get through the Stephen Hawking book. He's sold more copies that sit and gather dust on shelves, but that's all right. There are books like that. But, anyhow, by the end of my freshman year at Wesleyan, I had been kicked hard. I had an English teacher named William Coley, we called him Wild Bill Coley, who was another irascible character who kicked us hard. I was irascible as always, and always asked questions. He battered me around quite a bit, he called me the "*Agenbite of Inwit,*" out of one of the early English writers, Chaucer or Spenser, which Coley translated as the "prick of conscience." I won't take that any further. I gained some appreciation of English literature and poetry from him. The advantage of Wesleyan, I guess, was a lot of one-on-one teaching. Mort Tenser, who was a political scientist from whom I got my first grounding in politics, and John Maher, an economist, and Gene Golob, an historian. So somebody said, I think it was Gene Golob, "Why don't you think about this new experimental College Plan?" So I applied and got accepted and went through an extraordinary three-year period of being pulled this way and that. Not by rote, but by being thrown in the deep end and having to swim. As I said, it took me years and years and years to learn how to do it.

Q: I recently interviewed somebody who came through the Hutchins great books type course, and I've often thought that probably was one of the great innovations of education.

HUNTER: I say to people when they ask "What should I study?" I say, well, it doesn't matter so much as long as it's rigorous. The object is learning to think, it's not learning content. You can get the content as long as you can think. In fact, when I teach and think about teaching, there's only one overriding question that one should always ask. The question is "Why?" In foreign affairs particularly, you are always wondering "Why?" If you can't point towards that question, you'll never be able to be more than a journeyman. You'll be somebody who can fix the pipes or do what you're told to do, but you'll never be able to think "outside the box." That's a wonderful phrase. It's always used by people who don't know what the hell it means or who are incapable of it. "Paradigm shift." A similar phrase. People use that without understanding what it really means, and generally people believe it's a nice thing to talk about. The essence of paradigms is, except for very rare individuals, you don't think out of the box, you're shaped by your environment. Take agrarian society, there are certain things, if you are in an agrarian society as, say, we were in the 17th and most of the 18th century, you cannot even think about, such as the characteristics of a capitalist society, because there's no way to do so, you don't have the intellectual instruments to think about it. They don't exist. Somebody might have a lucky hit, or somebody who is dysfunctional in one society may get it, but it's not something you just get, because of the nature of a social framework within which thought is possible.

One of the standard concerns throughout my life has been the risk of becoming trapped in group-think. To jump ahead, I've had two salutary experiences that are relevant. One is about how we all did what we did on Vietnam. I'm not making a moral argument, but rather pointing to how difficult it was to break the mold. Not just war protests, because one didn't want to get drafted, but how does one gain the analytical tools to understand why Vietnam was a mistake and then be able to shift policy. The other salutary experience, a little anecdote I use is that I don't know anybody who knew anything who predicted the end of the Cold War. There were some people who didn't know anything who figured it out! That is, people who weren't in the system. The compulsion of the system was so overwhelming that it either was impossible to think of the alternative, or, even if people did think about it, it was career-destroying. There were no rewards. Everything was loaded against thinking beyond the Cold War framework; and something similar is where we are now with regard to terrorism. There's a struggle going on in American culture about whether we are going to define a new era in terms of terrorism, which is in my judgment ludicrous. Terrorism is difficult and it's dangerous and it's threatening and the rest. But if we allow ourselves to come up with a new structured set of thinking that focuses on terrorism as a central organizing principle, which drives other things out, we are going totally to miss the boat in terms of our own future. So much of international relations is a soft science. What we call the "international system" is about the way of thinking that constructs attitudes, frameworks, and imposes a discipline, which may or may not be real, on the world, and then we operate within that discipline. If you get it right, there's no problem. But if you get it wrong, then there's all hell to pay.

We've been going through such a struggle now. One, nature and politics both abhor a vacuum, but people might build a poor structure to replace the old one. When we lost the paradigm of the Cold War, we went through a struggle of 10-12 years to come up with a new paradigm, and some people have grasped onto terrorism. But I would argue that we have -- I invented this term in 1990 -- a "paradigm gap." We used to have a missile gap, now we have a paradigm gap. I said, "We are not going to have another paradigm. There is nothing comparable to Communism coming along." Maybe something to do with globalization, maybe. There is no military power like the Soviet Union, to which we have to respond and that creates an organizing principle for the world. Maybe China in the future if we and the Chinese are so stupid that we allow it to happen. In fact, we're going back to an earlier era in which things were a lot messier. The human mind, including people in my profession, resists messiness. So a lot of people have grabbed onto terrorism like a life preserver. That rescues us from indeterminacy. I read so much stuff now that is just such garbage. There are very few people who can think this through, I'm not even sure I can. As Will Durant once said, "The purpose of my education is every step I take I realize increasingly how ignorant I am." I get more ignorant the older I get.

Q: My personal prejudice is that we're talking about essentially a police problem and let's get on with other things.

HUNTER: I'm thinking about something even more profound, which is how do we avoid getting ourselves into the psychological requirement of having a simplified paradigm about the world and getting it wrong. One other thing, you see on the wall I've got some quotations stuck up there, one of them is from Nietzsche. In *Use and Abuse of History,* he talks about a super-historian. He says the super-historian who knows everything knows that everything is ultimately futile and thus he will do nothing. The man of action, he argued, has to be able to forget a certain amount of things, including the knowledge of his own ultimate failure, in order to be able to mobilize activity in order to have any human activity that will be successful. Now, I don't accept that necessarily as a constant, but there's a lot to that.

Q: We're going to be here, then, we're not going to be here, and life goes on.

HUNTER: It's more profound than that. It's if you think through everything, you will ultimately not get anywhere. One of my favorite little lines about that is a joke somebody once told. Consider the centipede. Somebody says to the centipede, "With a hundred legs, how is it you manage to walk?" The centipede replied, "I never thought about it." So it thought about it and was never able to take another step!

Anyway, so I got into the College of Social Studies at Wesleyan, and it was a deep-end experience. It was way over one's head. And we swam, and we struggled, and I'll tell you one of the wonderful things in this world. I'm now president of a thing called the Atlantic Treaty Association, which is a moribund institution we're trying to wake up. The umbrella organization for the 40 Atlantic Councils in the Western Alliance. The head of the Atlantic Council in Romania is a young man named Alex Serban. Very bright guy, very enterprising, and they're doing incredible things with their Atlantic Council. I said to him at some point when I saw him last year, "Alex, how do you have such good English?" He said, "Well, I learned it when I was in school in America." I said, "Where'd you go to school?" He said, "I went to graduate school at Columbia." I said, "Where'd you go to undergraduate school?" He said, "Oh, I went to a place you never heard of. It's a school called Wesleyan University." I said, "Really, what class were you?" He said, "1992." I said, "What did you study there?" He said, "I was in a thing called the College of Social Studies." Here was a kid in the exact same program 30 years after me. The good thing is I'd already picked him out as a high-flyer before I knew where'd he'd gone to school. So you see what happens? I was a NATO ambassador and head of the ATA, here's this young man who's doing all these great things, it's all because of the College of Social Studies.

Q: You graduated in '62. This is really before Vietnam intruded.

HUNTER: It was just starting to heat up. It was still not a great preoccupation of people. One of the little things that stick in your mind, Wesleyan was always a progressive place. We were a small New England men's college. But we were fortunate to have some folks with a vision and courage. We were the first college, after I graduated, which involved minorities in a big way, African-Americans. It was the first of the men's colleges to admit women. First in this, first in that, first in the other thing. We had a wonderful chaplain, John McGuire. He used to bring interesting people around. I remember going to hear Malcolm X speak. I remember in our College Program, we were I think sophomores, 1959, and McGuire brought around this young black minister to meet with us, we spent a morning with him. His name didn't mean much to me, but a really inspiring guy, it was clear that this was a big person. His name was Martin Luther King, Jr. This kind of experience makes a lasting impression and helps to shape who you are and what you do in life.

Q: You got a Fulbright, and you went where?

HUNTER: I was supposed to go to the University of Manchester. I'd applied for Oxford. Somebody said be careful what you wish for, you may get it. The opposite as well. I've always believed if you have lemons, make lemonade. Some younger people ask me how I was so successful. I say, first, you're begging the question of whether I'm successful or not. I don't really look at it that way. Then I say, nobody can ever tell you how to follow a pattern. Work hard, do your best, be interested. I say I'm kind of a bumper car. I'll go along and I'll bump into an obstacle and then I bounce off and I go somewhere else. That's why I'm kind of a dilettante in some ways. I bump into lots of obstacles and get up and go somewhere else. What happened, we were in England, and they had a marvelous orientation program for the new Fulbright Scholars. The British took it very seriously on their side. We were still in the era of remembering Marshall Aid and Lease-Lend, as they called it. The "special relationship." It was still at a time before you had the great onslaught of people traveling all the time, travel was by ship, mostly. My first two years in England, I didn't go home at all. Making a phone call was something you did every other year. Telegrams, 22 words in a telegram. I remember some friends of mine back here got married, and I sent them a telegram that said, "There's ringing of bells and singing of birds, what else can I say in twenty-two words?" That's 22 words long, plus the address, and letters you would write on these little flimsy foldover papers if you didn't have much money.

One of the Fulbright orientation meetings we had was a lecture someplace in London on the Common Market. I had gone over to England to be a political economist. I saw that this was a coming field, coming out of my education, to bridge the two disciplines. I said, "That's where we need to be going, what we need to do in the world and do at home." Transformations. In that sense, I had come to Washington for those two summers and, yes, the Kennedy thing in that sense caught me up. Internships, I don't know what they're like today, it was a big deal back then. Kennedy took it very seriously. In fact, I remember that summer of '61, there were all kinds of common intern programs, lots of little meetings all over town. Kennedy instructed every presidential appointee to get involved with the interns. I remember it was either that summer or the next, being in one meeting, where the speaker was Averell Harriman, who was the Assistant Secretary of State for Far East affairs. Even though he had been a governor and a senior ambassador, he decided he would be prepared to be an assistant secretary of state, if that's all he could get, in order to be of service. So he was speaking, and some student got up, I remember this vividly. I'm a great admirer of Harriman. Throughout my education and government experience, I kept running into him, historically. Everything I ever discovered that was important in the development of Atlantic relations and Europe, it was Harriman doing something. Pamela, of course, was a good friend by the end. She was a super ambassador to Paris. I remember Harriman that evening, some kid says, “Tell me governor, why do they call you the crocodile?” A silence fell over the room. Harriman said, “Because young man, I am as mean as you are rude.” It was a wonderful comeback. That was the kind of thing, it was exciting. Something new was happening. You are of that generation, close enough, to know what it was like, and this was when the Peace Corps started, all kinds of things. It was service to one’s country and one’s government. Things that you could do in society. It was coming out of the post-war world in which we’d gotten a certain amount of prosperity, and then people started looking around for things to do in terms of the larger society. It’s kind of hard to explain this to other generations later on. I sometimes think that the tragedy of the inflation and the other economic problems that happened under Jimmy Carter -- at my own university, 85% of my class went to graduate school, went into public professions of one kind or another. But after that inflation hit and the economic fears, all of a sudden undergraduates were doing pre-med, pre-law, and other subjects that would make money. I am pleased to say that, at Wesleyan, students have gone back again to the great Little Three tradition, all three of them, of service. Coming out of the religious foundations and similar backgrounds. The kind of nonconformist foundations of the Wesleyan Methodist tradition, also Amherst and Williams. I’m reading a book now on Oliver Wendell Holmes, about Unitarians at Harvard and other places.

Anyway, so I was in this Fulbright session in London, and it was on the Common Market, and I was fascinated. They had a couple of the really very top people. I went up afterwards, and there was a speaker named Bill Pickles, from the London School of Economics, who really fascinated me. I said “I’m over here, I’m going to Manchester doing political economy, I’m fascinated by this.” I talked with him for a few minutes. He says, “Why don’t you come to LSE and be my student?” I said, “Well, I can’t, I’m going to Manchester.” He said, “I’ll take care of it.” So he went to a truly remarkable woman named Anne Bohm, running the LSE graduate school, and she organized it, and they went to the Fulbright Commission and, by God, I got switched to go to the London School of Economics. It was wonderful, being a Fulbright, when they took it very seriously there. One of the good things, it’s right smack in the center of London, the London School of Economics. It’s right off the Aldwych, it’s this set of gray stone buildings. It’s right down by the Aldwych Theatre and across from Bush House, home of the BBC World Service, right at the bottom of Kingsway. I had a student friend from Malaysia who said that, before he came to LSE, he had imagined it was like St. John’s College in Oxford, and he said he came and he saw these gray stone little buildings on this back street and he said to himself, “This is it?” No campus, not a blade of grass. Anyway, I also got discovered then through this process, since I got involved at Chatham House, the Royal Institute of International Affairs, by a man named Andrew Shonfield, who was the Director of Studies, later head of Chatham House, later head of the European College in Florence. One of the great men of British academic public life. It was kind of a struggle for my soul between him, he was pro-Common Market, and Bill Pickles, who was deeply Laborite-skeptical. That was right at the time of the British application to join the European Economic Community, and then the veto by de Gaulle. So they struggled for my soul. Shonfield won on the Common Market. I recall right off the bat, sitting in the LSE library and going through the Treaty of Rome, line by line, marking it up so I could try to understand it. That's an old habit: to read official documents stem to stern, not just to accept someone else's summary. You'd be surprised what you learn that way! Also, one of the great things about being an American, I'm sure probably happens to Rhodes Scholars, too, but certainly it's Fulbrights who have it, we were treated as being outside of the British class system. We could go anywhere, we were taken seriously, whether we deserved it or not. We had access to institutions, access to the smartest people, all kind of things, from a tender age. So I spent an extraordinary period of time there.

Q: You were there what, two years?

HUNTER: Seven years.

Q: Good heavens.

HUNTER: I set the all-time record for getting a PhD. I just couldn't get my thesis written. I wrote up an op-ed article yesterday in about 45 minutes, I spent another half an hour fixing it. It is almost impossible for me to write books. My wife, Shireen, writes books at about the pace that I am writing op-ed articles! Different temperament. But I was at LSE seven years and two months. I set the all-time record at that point. It's since been broken, getting a doctorate. There are no requirements, except writing a thesis and living there for two years, so it was again being in the deep end, but I got one hell of an education. Integrated studies without calling it integrated studies. Across the lot, learning to think, bringing all the aspects of the discipline together in a way that I don't think there's any place in the United States where it's taught like that. It doesn't exist. It's one reason I think we have a fairly limited range of people who are able to think that way in foreign affairs in this country.

Q: Was there a London School of Economics influence, I keep thinking of Africa and maybe India and some other places, where there seems to be a line there of socialist control, which I think has been a disaster.

HUNTER: It's one of these things where people don't pay attention. A single person defined LSE that way and that was Harold Laski. Obviously, it was founded by the Fabians, George Bernard Shaw and the Webbs, Sidney and Beatrice, in 1896. But at the time I was there, it was not left-wing. Economics was probably center or right of center. Development strategy, Lord Bauer as he's now called, was a conservative development specialist. International relations was conservative. Yes, this was the time of the so-called "troubles" at LSE in 1967, '68, when I was there. That was as much as anything people in the sociology and the law departments running experiments, and there was a great deal of jealousy about student protests in America: "If America's got it, we can have it." But most of the School wasn't involved in the demonstrations. It was one of these things where it had a reputation it simply doesn't deserve. It's staggering. Yes, LSE had a lot of people come from various other countries. Some were socialist, a lot of them weren't. Some got an education and went back, but it was not because of the university they took particular views. It's become a kind of a joke. There was one play I remember in London, in which people were captured by this African revolutionary leader, and they were paraded in front of him in the deepest jungle, and one line is, "So how do you speak such good English?" He says, "Well, of course, I studied at the LSE." Left-wing reputation not deserved. Fantastically high quality. I was fortunate, the people in International Relations in those days were as good as anybody in the world. Some names you would have heard of, some names you wouldn't have heard of.

Q: What were you looking at as far as for your dissertation pieces?

HUNTER: The first year I was just a Research Student and was doing European Economic Community and nuclear strategy. I'd written an undergraduate paper on NATO and looked a little bit at NATO, but mostly the EEC. I started out, as I say, to be a political economist. They took me under their wing. Christmas time, the first time ever going to the Continent, and Bill Pickles arranged when I was in Paris to meet this pal of his whose name was Raymond Aron, who spent three hours with me. You were a 22-year old kid and you're having a chance to be exposed, one-on-one, to one of the giants. I was fortunate as a senior at Wesleyan, doing all kinds of things. Had a small course with a visiting professor who was writing an important book. Her name was Hannah Arendt. It was right at the time of the Eichmann trial and that was a fascinating experience, having a chance to be pounded on in terms of ideas by Hannah Arendt. It was intellectually a door-opening experience. Of course, within the Jewish tradition, she was irascible. Of course, the Jewish tradition in general, in being irascible, is cutting across intellectual and cultural and political boundaries, something I greatly value, interaction with an intellectual tradition that is not just run by rote.

So here I was in LSE, and I got involved with other things. Bush House, BBC World Service, was across the way and I used to... starting when I was about 23, I paid my way through graduate school after the Fulbright ran out, by broadcasting for the BBC, and doing television.

Q: What were you broadcasting?

HUNTER: Foreign affairs, whatever they wanted. A friend of mine, Philip Windsor, who is the greatest teacher I have ever met, and probably the finest person in this business I ever met, said "Never, never, never say 'No' to the BBC." He later claimed he never said it. It was a pound-a-minute ($2.80) in those days. A stunning amount of money. I got involved at Chatham House. And involved at a relatively new institution called the Institute for Strategic Studies, run by another one of the great men of this business, Alistair Buchan, who founded it along with Michael Howard and Denis Healey. Sir Michael Howard, one of the outstanding military historians. At the end of the first year, having gone through this, first time abroad and all the things that happen to you, etcetera, etcetera – an insular American kid dumped in a foreign country and learning about one's own country more than you can possibly learn at home -- I decided, having postponed law school long enough, that I would, having done quite well on the Law School Boards, that I would pick that up again. Got accepted at Harvard Law, paid my registration fee, and then it was about the end of June and Dr. Anne Bohm called me and she said, "We have a new scholarship here. Financed by a trust called the Noel Buxton Trust. It's a three-year thing, it's to study international relations, and I want you to have it." Well, I was kind of feeling intimidated about going to law school. I've always felt that I'm never going to make it at the next level I have to go into. Taking that next step… so I accepted that in lieu of going to Harvard Law School. And, as they say, I never looked back. It was the wrong decision in terms of building the kinds of contacts one needs in a square-corners career, financially, certainly. In terms of learning and being able potentially to make a greater contribution to society, I made the right decision. Noel Buxton came out of the First World War. His family was Truman's Beers. He became a pacifist, some people said he felt so guilty about the origin of his money, he went for temperance, that he endowed this trust. The trustees decided in this particular year that they would found a bursary for international relations. I held it the first time. The second person who held it was a close friend of mine, Adam Roberts, later had a named-chair at Oxford and just got his knighthood last year. Fine human being. Adam came out of the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament (CND), a unilateral disarmer, but he decided that, if you're going to do something about these nuclear weapons you're going against, you'd better learn something about them. So he got himself educated and went in a different direction. He's one of the outstanding people in this business. Anne Bohm was an extraordinary woman. She was a Jewish refugee from Germany in the '30s. Through a sequence of events, she ended up at the LSE and went with it when it was moved to Cambridge for the war, and she got involved with some of the real greats, including the man who was both a University of Chicago economist and LSE teacher, one of the world's leading economists. He was probably there when you were there, Lionel Robbins. He was later chairman of the *Financial Times*. Anne ran the graduate school at LSE virtually by herself, with one assistant. She was one of the highest energy, most active minds, most effective people I've ever met. As I say, she took me under her wing, and she is 91 years old now [at the time of the interview] and we continue to be fast friends. She was one of these people who got people out of Germany, got them jobs, rescued a lot of people. Not just helping German Jews get out, but also others, and also got people jobs so they could be productive in their new lives. I'm a student of the Second World War. These experiences have shaped my life in terms of "never again."

Q: This is of course the cornerstone of what we did with the Marshall Plan and everything, basically to keep the fractioned Germans from going at each other.

HUNTER: People don't understand. The European Union as it's now called was created in order to prevent Germany from going to war again.

Q: I get a little disturbed when I see some of our present foreign policy.

HUNTER: My whole career has been based upon doing the things that will prevent having another Second World War or anything like that. Being a student of it, starting off as a child during the war -- greatly removed, obviously, as an American -- but there was a munitions plant, my father worked on this thing called a "war." I remember being told about the bomb being dropped, I remember V-E Day, I remember V-J Day, and later being told about the killing of this man Gandhi, my mother told me about it, and how it was a great tragedy.

Q: I'm trying to do this in segments. I was wondering, you took this next scholarship and this lasted until when at the LSE?

HUNTER: It was good for three years -- two years and renewable for a third -- and then I went "on the economy." That was after a break of nearly a year when I was back here. I taught at LSE for two years at the end, but in between I lived hand-to-mouth on what little I could earn from lecturing and broadcasting. I did an awful lot of public speaking at miniscule fees, here and there all over the United Kingdom, and a couple of times in Ireland. I found that I could live without structure and could live without a job. There were times I would go have breakfast someplace, John's "Cafe" on Lamb's Conduit Street, and have to think about whether I could spend the extra sixpence for a second cup of tea, that kind of thing. I was always right on the edge. I did a lot of other things, too, in my London years. In the summer of '63, I worked for the Polaris Project again in London. We'd had the Nassau Agreement in which the US agreed to sell Polaris missiles to Britain, and they created a small US Navy office in the Admiralty. If you turn around, you'll look right there, there's a photograph of the office in the Admiralty. There's a statue of Captain Cook in front of it, right by Admiralty Arch, just where that white van is. We had a little four-person office, it was a Navy captain, a gruff Supply Corps office named Phil Rollins, as fine an officer as you will ever meet, and me and a secretary and a civil servant, teaching the Brits about this system they were getting, so I spent that summer with the Royal Navy. It was fantastic. I got a US civil servant's salary and access to the PX, so I was living a wonderful life.

Then, the next year, '64, I decided I would like to work again for the Polaris Project with the US Navy at the Admiralty, but they didn't have room. I said to myself, "Well, maybe I can go back and work in the Pentagon or something like that." I tried that, and got turned down for an internship at the Pentagon, so I said, "What the hell, I'll go home anyway, and spend a summer and see what I can find." I came back and roomed with a couple of friends of mine here, because I hadn't been back for two years, time to renew one's roots. One of the things -- you've lived abroad as a Foreign Service Officer, so you understand that -- when you get immersed in another culture, you've got to keep coming back home, and you've got to keep relating the two cultures to one another, because one thing about other cultures is that, for most people, they are very compelling. That's why they're cultures. If you live in the culture as I did in England and you get immersed in it, you start picking up certain aspects of identity. Then you come back and you relate to being an American, then going back, there's a huge shock going each way. Eventually, you integrate all this to great benefit. That's what foreign services are all about, to be able to interpret the world to us and us to the world, because Foreign Service Officers have a capacity to see the two things. That's why it's a greatly underrated profession. Anyway, about the first of May 1964, I read about a visiting scholar at Wesleyan who'd been there for a year, my senior year, writing a book, named Douglass Cater, who'd been with Reporter magazine. His father had been the editor of a newspaper in Montgomery, Alabama, great civil rights people. So I'd had a tutorial with Cater at Wesleyan. I read in

Time magazine that President Lyndon Johnson had asked Cater to come down to be a Special Assistant in the White House, to run education and other things for him. So I said, what the hell, he'd be an interesting guy to work for. So I wrote to a professor I'd had in the Wesleyan Government Department, Joe Palamountain. He'd gone off to be president of Skidmore, and I wrote, "Do you think this guy Douglass Cater might be interested in my services?" I came back to Washington, rooming with these friends and looking for a job, and somebody forwarded a letter to me, it was from Palamountain. It was a copy of a letter that he'd sent to Cater, and the response from Cater saying to have me give him a call. So I called up the office and I went to see Doug Cater, beginning of July 1964. Two weeks later, I was working at the White House. Spent just about a year there.

[End session]

[Begin session]

Q: Today is the 19th of September, 2005, after a certain hiatus between interviews. So we're in 1964, and you got hired by the White House. Doing what?

HUNTER: Douglass Cater was hired by Johnson to work on health, education, welfare, labor, which were kind of a block of issues, plus some foreign policy. But he was the point man on education. In those days, the White House was a very small place. There were something like seven Special Assistants to the President and each of them, except for the National Security Advisor, had one deputy or assistant, whatever it was, and I was the one for this one person. This was before the inflation in the size of the White House staff, and also grade inflation. It's like in banks, today, every teller is a vice president. In those days, there were, as I say, just seven Special Assistants. Now, of course, you can go three or four grades down and people are Special Assistants to the President, even if they never see him. So the job was essentially to do everything that was required to help one of the top people to the President do his job.

Q: You were in the White House when to when? '64 to…

HUNTER: From July '64 to May '65.

Q: Education was a priority of Johnson's. He'd been a teacher at one point in a rural school. What were you doing? What was your and Mr. Cater doing?

HUNTER: It's S. Douglass Cater, Junior. He had been the Washington correspondent for Reporter magazine, he was a founder of the National Students' Association and lots of other things, he was a very distinguished journalist. He had a great belief in education, and Johnson had it as well. Cater was one of the key people in what became the Great Society. So this was doing everything that one would do at the White House, from overseeing the answering of miscellaneous mail to the President, that is, mail that didn't get routed around to specific issue area, would all end up on Cater's desk. I would do form letter answers, and once in a while we'd answer a letter directly. Quite a few of those. In fact, one of the things I instituted, I'd lived in England and had learned about the concept of Ombudsman, which was totally foreign in America at that point. So I suggested to Cater, and he agreed, that the President needed an Ombudsman. Somebody who would get involved when citizens wrote in and there were problems with the government, so there was some way of actually getting something done at the White House level on a systematic basis for ordinary people with a problem. That led to a position with a less Swedish name, the creation of the job of Assistant to the President for Correspondence. Somebody who was supposed to ride herd on this mammoth amount of mail that came to the White House -- it was then about 100,000 pieces a week, now it's much higher -- to try to increase the interaction between the presidency and the average person. So that was one of the things. I initiated a project to get White House papers published once a week, in a standard format. The project got taken to completion by my successor, Erv Duggan, and they got stapled together and became the annual compilation of presidential papers, you still see them with every president ever since. I wrote some speeches. Sitting behind you on the wall is the first one I ever wrote, July 24, 1964. Cater gave me some stuff to re-write from the Agriculture Department. I didn't know what it was for and I put it in proper English and shortened it by about two-thirds. He ran out the door with it, and 20 minutes later I saw the President reading my stuff on television. So that was a heady experience.

Helping to work on the Presidential campaign, even though it was technically illegal, but we did it anyway in the White House. Went to Atlantic City for the Democratic Convention, one of 7 or 8 I've been to, and worked 18-hour days for a week. Johnson took no chances. He didn't want any speeches given at the Convention that weren't "on message," as the saying would be, today, and so there were five of us who wrote or re-wrote all but the top five or six speeches at the Convention, to make sure they were on message. Totally controlled.

Q: Did you get involved in the delegate battle from Mississippi?

HUNTER: Not me personally. That was high politics. We were doing the speeches, and I was in charge, among other things, of acquainting various speakers with the magic of a new thing called the TelePrompTer, to make sure that their speeches got on the TelePrompTer after we'd written them, and they could stand up there and the podium would be the right height and they could do their job. At one point during the convention, I had to go out and find Hubert Humphrey's hairdresser, to make sure that his hair was going to be in place when he gave his vice presidential acceptance speech. So I was really in the White House doing all the things that one would do to help somebody be effective. Like before every press conference, Cater would say to me, "Think about what the questions are the President is likely to get." So when they had these meetings with the President, which I did not attend, they'd be able to walk him through what the likely questions were. I found I got at least 90% of them, because journalists then and now ask very predictable things. They look at what's in the morning news and ask the President that. There were only a handful of journalists who ever would ask him off-the-wall questions. One of whom was Sarah McClendon, who was very famous. She would always ask some really screwball question about something happening way down in the bureaucracy, and the President and Vice President would do this occasionally, when they got in a tough spot, call on Sarah, so she'd ask some kind of screwball question. Everybody'd laugh, the President would say, "Well, I'll look into that, Sarah, but I don't know anything about it." That would break the mood. But for the rest of them, it was very predictable. We put together a campaign book for Johnson based on his speeches. Cater edited it. Bill Moyers made sure it was precisely right: a young, 27 year-old genius who was close to Johnson.

Q: How old were you at the time?

HUNTER: I was 24. My one contribution to the President's campaign book -- in addition to the chapter on education – the book was all taken from Johnson's speeches, cut and paste, and then editing the result -- was to think up the title, which was My Hope for America, which I did by…. if you're going to be a speechwriter, and I've written speeches now for lots of people over 40 years, is you've got to get inside their skin, inside their cadence. With Johnson it was, "Mah Hope fur 'Murika" (My hope for America), that's how you do it. So we got that out. It was constantly working with the opinion polls and deciding what the right themes would be for the President, and making sure the local color was got right, and helping, through Cater, when Johnson would be traveling and giving speeches. Just a thousand things that you do in a White House. I was also a member of Liz Carpenter's joke-writing group.

One time, I remember, Johnson was going down to El Paso to meet the President of Mexico. Cater asked me to do a memo for the president on the "screw-worm eradication program." That was a way to get rid of a cattle parasite, both in the US and Mexico. I made myself into an expert, drew on all the resources of the government. Wrote 8 pages; I can't remember if I did a summary, I hope I did. It went to Johnson. After the visit, I learned there was someone who knew as much about the screw-work eradication program as anybody else in the world, and a lot more than I would ever know. A cattle rancher from Texas named Lyndon Baines Johnson! I guessed I wasn't such an expert after all!

Q: From '64 to '65 Vietnam wasn't an overriding issue was it, at the time?

HUNTER: I recall being in the White House on the third or fifth or whatever it was of August 1964, when we got the news of the attack by the North Vietnamese on the *USS. Maddox* and the *USS. Turner Joy*. Johnson, of course, gave his major speech and sent up the Tonkin Gulf Resolution to the Congress.

Q: Sponsored by Senator Fulbright

HUNTER: Who years later said he was misled which was just -- I had a lot of respect for him -- but that was fundamentally dishonest, his statement on that. The Resolution passed the Senate 98 to 2, and the two who voted against it, Morse and Gruening, were defeated at the next elections. It passed overwhelmingly in the House. The Tonkin Gulf Resolution was written about a month before the Tonkin Gulf.

Q: That sounds a little bit like the trigger is cocked.

HUNTER: I had already read it back in July. They were waiting for an incident. Well, that was the national mood. We did turn around on it later on as a nation, and I think a lot of us can look back and say that this was a mistake. But at the time, that was the way the nation was going. This started slightly under Eisenhower, it picked up a lot of steam under Kennedy. I don't believe that, if Kennedy had been re-elected, he would have gone the other way, if he'd not been assassinated. Johnson was going along to a great extent with the national mood. Also following the lead of a bunch of Kennedy appointees in foreign policy. They were all Kennedy people, Rusk, McNamara, the Bundy brothers, Rostow.

Q: Was Jimmy Jones there at the time?

HUNTER: Jim Jones was there, yeah.

Q: Because I interviewed him. He was another young guy. This was a very young White House, wasn't it?

HUNTER: Yeah. Of course, Jim went on and did wonderful things. Being in the Congress, head of the Budget Committee. I guess he was Ambassador to Mexico. Very distinguished individual.

Q: He was talking about he was in his very early 20s preparing the reading for the president at night.

HUNTER: We all did that. It was because we were a very small White House. No interns. None of us were interns. We were there as regular full-time people. It was a heady experience, an awful lot of responsibility. You learned very quickly that, if you called up somebody, anywhere in the government, and you said "This is the White House," you got instant respect, and one had to use that with great care. The temptation for a lot of people to abuse it would be there. But there were a lot of extraordinarily fine people in the government. I had the good fortune to meet a lot of them, and a lot also outside the government. Adam Yarmolinsky, who became a life-long friend, was supposed to be a top official in the poverty program, but some southerners in Congress were going to defeat the program if Adam was in it, he'd worked against segregation when he was in McNamara's Pentagon, so he got sacrificed. Cater found a place for him in the White House. And Brooks Hays was someone there I got to know, an Arkansas congressman who got defeated because he supported desegregating the Little Rock High School in the late '50s. Phil Geyelin of the Wall Street Journal, later the Washington Post, one of the best journalists this town has had for a long time. One of the things about getting older, you remember people you knew who now have buildings named after them, like Wilbur Cohen. A whole series of extraordinarily able people. Maybe I was a little naïve to think it, since I've seen more later, but these were people who really put the job first, put the country first, put serving the President first, who was doing good things. You can get a sense of this if you listen on C-SPAN to the Johnson audio tapes. You get a sense that here was a real president who really cared, who took a lot of risks, who never forgot where he came from. Despite Vietnam being a national tragedy, this man did extraordinary things for the country, and I was pleased to have a chance to play a small role in it, and Cater, remember, shepherded all the great education legislation, at the time that I was there. The Elementary and Secondary Education Act, the Higher Education Act. You name it, all the groundwork of today's government engagement in education was all put together then.

Q: At that time you didn't feel that there was as today sort of guidance of political manipulating, image-making, and all that? Was it let Johnson be Johnson? I suppose nobody let him be anything, he just took over.

HUNTER: People didn't think about spin in those days. Put the best face, you're trying to sell a policy. But they were real policies doing real things for real people that we were doing, as opposed to blue smoke and mirrors and shovel the money out the door to your cronies. Johnson had this one guy, Bobby Baker, who somehow got in trouble, and he had to let him go. But what Baker did is a dime-a-dozen today. I recall what happened with Jimmy Carter and Burt Lance and Lance had to go. What he did is like getting a traffic ticket today.

Q: What about the media? Here you are, very small group of people. I would think the media would be all over you to find out what's happening.

HUNTER: Oh sure, I did some interaction, but mostly it was Cater's and he was a pro. But he wasn't out there selling sizzle, he was out there selling steak, because it was a huge steak, spelled both ways – steak and stake -- especially in terms of education. I remember for example, at the Convention, he sat down, I was there in the room, with four or five journalists, AP and the Washington Post and the New York Times, whatever they were, outlining what Johnson was going to talk about at the Convention and what he was trying to do with this thing that he hadn't even yet inaugurated the term, Great Society, and Cater in very slow cadences and very precise was laying out the agenda that Johnson was pursuing, and he was 100% accurate. He wasn't selling you something, he was trying to help build public support for things that were actually going to be done, not to try to mislead people. There were too many real things to sell than to try to go out and mislead people.

Q: Did you have any run-in with foreign policy?

HUNTER: One of Cater's responsibilities was to have a watching brief on foreign affairs. For example, I wrote the speech that Johnson gave to the International Atomic Energy Agency annual review meeting, working with a member of Bundy's staff, Chuck Johnson I think it was; and Cater looked at a few things here and there, including writing some memos to the president on Vietnam, but McGeorge Bundy, who was a deeply competitive person, cut him off at the knees. Anything Cater proposed, Mac Bundy opposed.

Q: Was it egotism?

HUNTER: Egotism and control. In fact, of all the people I worked with or saw in the White House, Bundy was I think the worst in terms of competitiveness and ruthlessness towards colleagues. You can hear this if you listen to the Johnson tapes. He was not a man of great distinction, in my judgment. He was not a person who was genuinely committed to helping the President succeed, rather than to promote his own position. None of the rest of them were like that. Jack Valenti and Marvin Watson and Bill Moyers and Doug Cater and Horace Busby. Most of them might have been Texans, and some of them chewed gum and too much sen sen and that sort of thing. But, by God, they were big people. Big people in terms of the country.

Q: Bundy, he was obviously a Harvard person.

HUNTER: He was a peacock.

Q: Was he sort of carrying the Kennedy torch, or was it more just his own torch?

HUNTER: I have no idea, he was really himself. He was a man of huge ego, didn't have much foreign policy background. I don't think he was a very reflective person. It's interesting, you had many more reflective people thinking about what the best thing was for the country, rather than just self-promotion. This was not just hindsight. Francis Keppel, for example, who was the Commissioner of Education, which then later became a cabinet post, but at the time it wasn't playing an instrumental role. I remember the day in the East Room when the President was going to sign, I think, the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, the great piece of legislation. Everybody was gathered in the East Room, and Johnson was about to come in. I was wandering around and I found Frank Keppel standing in the back of the room, self-effacing. I grabbed him by the elbow and I said, "This is your moment," and I had to frog-march him to the front of the audience to sit him down in front of the President. Because instead of, like today, everybody elbowing to see who can get on camera, he was just kind of "Done my job, now, and now it's somebody else's turn," and I had to make sure that he got himself a little bit of the spotlight. He had it coming. That wouldn't happen, today. See, these were big people.

Q: Robert Kennedy was attorney general at that time wasn't he? Did you get any feel about the tension?

HUNTER: No. I met Robert Kennedy a couple of times, and obviously there was an atmosphere. One knew what was going on, and I remember the day everybody had a chuckle as Johnson played the game of who was going to be the vice presidential nominee, and he said he wasn't going to let anybody in his cabinet be Vice President. Everybody knew who that was directed at. Incidentally, at that level, being assistant to a Special Assistant you don't see everything, but I've always felt that this Johnson thing for Bobby Kennedy a lot of historians have grossly exaggerated. Way out of proportion. I know somebody recently gave me a book he'd written, that claimed that this was the determining influence in Johnson's presidency. That's nonsense. There may be something there, and I'll let other people, those who were present, say their piece, but Johnson wasn't mesmerized by the Kennedy era or Bobby Kennedy. Not in terms of everything I saw, he was getting on with the job of governing. But people like saying thinks like that. It makes a ball game. There's a lot of fun in doing that. But look at Arthur Schlesinger, for example. He had been one of the Kennedy people. He was there helping Johnson, day in and day out, to do what Johnson wanted done. There wasn't any sense that he was there to sabotage him in the interest of a competition or someone else's legacy.

Q: Were there any key senators or congress people that you were sort of in contact with, or was that not your job?

HUNTER: Not directly, but I did rub elbows with them and see them a lot. Gene McCarthy came to see Cater once in a while, when he was campaigning to be Johnson's running mate in '64 – I'm convinced that his not getting the nod was a major reason for his running against Johnson in '68, especially because Johnson chose another senator from Minnesota. Edith Green, who worked hard to get the Higher Education Act. There was Carl Perkins from Kentucky, number two Democrat on the Education and Labor Committee. We had Adam Clayton Powell, chairman of that committee, who was, I think, one of the big people we had in the Congress, flamboyant, and they got him eventually. He was uppity, and the town went against him. A lot of people that happens to in this town. Washington is wonderful, but if you're in trouble, it's a pretty cruel place. It goes with being in the kitchen. Emanuel Celler, chairman of the Judiciary Committee, all kinds of people on the Senate side, the big people on the Senate side, health, education, welfare, labor. Both parties.

Q: Did you find that essentially Congress was going along with the whole idea?

HUNTER: Absolutely. Part of it was a series of factors. One, Johnson very effectively used the legacy of John Kennedy. Kennedy started a lot of things going, but he hadn't been very effective, politically. In fact, the reason he was in Texas the day he was shot was because he was worried about re-election in 1964. Like it or not, Kennedy and Johnson were a kind of a partnership. In fact, I had published an article when I was at LSE, about four months earlier, about what I called the strange partnership: that Kennedy had the ideas and Johnson had the ability to put them into law. That article helped get me the job at the White House, and, frankly, it still stands up, 40 some-odd years later. So Johnson did that. Also, there was the nature of the times, the US had a lot of money, there was the pent-up demand, there was a sense that something had to be done in the country. I was able to play a small role in that period, a time I have never seen since, a period of creativity about things to do in society. You get a lot of it now with NGOs (non-governmental organizations), but you have never had it in politics to the same degree, not in either party since then. The creativity that led to Head Start, that led to all the education bills, that led to Medicare, led to environmental laws, boom boom boom, job training, just area after area, there was a ferment then in the country, not limited to one party. There was the Republican Ripon Society, and a lot of great and dedicated

Republicans, and one I was fortunate to know his whole career in Congress, Mac Mathias. I wrote his maiden speech in the Senate in '69, on arms control. There was a ferment about doing things for this country that has never come back. A casualty of Vietnam and a casualty of Reagan and other things.

Q: '65, where did you go?

HUNTER: I went back to the London School of Economics in May '65 and spent another four years there.

Q: What were you doing there?

HUNTER: I was writing a thesis on the origins of the NATO (North American Treaty Organization) alliance and lots of other things. I did a lot of lecturing, especially for USIS, sadly – tragically? – no longer in existence, killed off by Jesse Helms, as part of a deal with Secretary Albright to get the US to pay its dues to the United Nations. Not a good swap, in my judgment. Including talks in funny places like the Wandsworth Prison Sportsmens' Club, the Workers' Educational Association, lots of British military bases. Conducted student tours across Europe to the Soviet Union, across it, and on to Japan -- I climbed Mt. Fuji. I was involved at the Institute for Strategic Studies and worked with Michael Howard, to help him write what was for a long time the standard study of the Six-Day War. I wrote a lot on the Middle East, lectured all over the country and elsewhere, especially Germany. Did an awful lot of things to earn a living, because I had to pay my way through graduate school. I taught for two years at the London School of Economics, strategic studies, NATO, Middle East, mostly. The last included teaching a course on great powers in the Middle East. One young Iranian student, a diplomat in their embassy, doing a Masters part time, easily the smartest person in the class. Met up with her, again, by accident, 7 years later, and we have been married since 1980!

Q: This is four years, this moves you up into '69.

HUNTER: In '68, I came back and worked on the Humphrey campaign.

Q: Let's talk about the time you were in the UK (United Kingdom). Was there a growing anti-American movement? Or was it anti-Vietnam? Did you see things changing?

HUNTER: There was a lot of skepticism about Vietnam. Part of that was -- and, of course, it was different in various parts of the society -- part of that was concern that the United States was going in a bad direction and that would take away from American engagement in Europe. Of course, there were widespread debates there as elsewhere. Another book to write I guess. There was a combination of opposition to Vietnam, along with a mimicking of the American radical movement and the American societal transformation. One of the things is that we were going through this period of, I don't know how many different elements. The racial transformation, the role of government in society to give people opportunities, the freeing up of the first of the sexual revolutions, and the musical revolution… all of these things were happening at the same time, and then Vietnam.

Q: It was called the Sixties Syndrome, kind of.

HUNTER: Whatever you want to call it, and all of it was good except Vietnam, where the problem in terms of tragedy for our country, in addition to a lot of people dying, which was bad enough, was that the white middle class, which really fueled the Great Society, moved away from the Great Society and from racial issues to take care of their own kids, who were vulnerable to going off and being killed. That's a major reason I'm convinced that Martin Luther King became so anti-war. Not only that blacks were dying disproportionately, but that his constituency was disappearing. They could say the Great Society disappeared, even though ironically, Nixon carried it on. Nixon carried on the Great Society. Put up more money than even Johnson had. It was only well after Nixon, when we got to Reagan, that the whole thing collapsed.

Q: At the London School did you find, I mean, this is one of the producers of I suppose of what the British call the chattering class.

HUNTER: In my case, at least, out of necessity!

Q: Did you find that within intellectual groups there was a strong anti-American feeling? In France there always has been this with the intellectuals.

HUNTER: In Britain, no. Not at all. Sure, there were, I suspect, in some of the academics who were like that always, but there wasn't anti-Americanism, there was concern about what we were doing in Vietnam. There had been a negative attitude towards Johnson because he was a country bumpkin, but there was a lot of respect, and he was compared to what Kennedy had been. I have to tell you, even Kennedy hadn't been that popular in England before the assassination. I was there during the Cuban Missile Crisis, and the popular view was that America was screwing things up, and it was only when Khrushchev admitted what he'd done that it flipped over. When Kennedy died, there was a tremendous outpouring of affection, and I thought at the time that it was even more so because there were the memories of how they had not trusted Kennedy and blamed him for the Cuban Missile Crisis, until the Khrushchev statement. But here along comes Johnson, and the only film they had on television was something shot by a local station, down in Texas, of Johnson riding up on his horse and getting off and pushing his hat back and saying something to the camera for his local constituents. By God, here's this cowboy. But they began to learn that, even though they didn't like Vietnam, this guy was really accomplishing things for American society. Of course, they looked down their noses a little bit at us -- this was the time when the argument was that they needed to be Athens to our Rome! -- but it wasn't anti-American, as such. Anti-Vietnam, not anti-American.

Q: Were you looking at British society because, and this is Margaret Thatcher talk, the. British economic model didn't seem to be working very well, or how was it at the time?

HUNTER: They had a lot of economic problems, and still had the class system, which was slowly being broken down. It's dramatic in the last few years what has happened. Back then, they were still paying for the war. You could go around London in the early ‘60s and, even in the street where I lived, it was gap-toothed. You’d walk along and here would be a building that had been bombed in 1940 and still hadn’t been replaced. They were still digging their way out from under in 1945, ’46, but, as part of the price of US financial aid at the end of the war, we required them to make the pound convertible, and they lost billions and billions of pounds within 24 hours. Bad US economic policies. They were doing an awful lot of things, then, moving in the right direction. One thing, they valued education then far more highly than British society does now. Margaret Thatcher ruined the British educational system, particularly the higher educational system, by totally devaluing it. Yes, they’ve advanced economically, but I wonder whether the price of Thatcher-ism and Blair-ism -- Blair is just a Thatcher in different clothing -- whether in terms of the quality of British society, it’s been worth it. I’ll let somebody who lives there judge that. I had the good fortune, since I’d been a Fulbright, of having doors open to everything. I was in seminars and meetings with high quality people. For example, the LSE used to have these evening seminars on economics and security with some of the greats in the profession, like Alastair Buchan, and I was the rapporteur, doing reports on the meetings. I was in a meeting this last weekend in Geneva, and there were two very senior retired British diplomats there who were in the seminars 40 years ago. Later, they played a major part in building some of the central UK foreign policies. Some of these seminars were on European Union relations, then it was the European Economic Community, at the time of Britain trying to go in and not succeeding at that point. These meetings were held in a room named for Graham Wallas -- ironically, the guy who coined the phrase "great society" fifty years before Johnson used it. So I had the good fortune of being dropped in the deep end of a very important pool and having access to things.

Also, as an American in Britain, you were outside the class system, so you could go anywhere you wanted and, as soon as you opened your mouth, you were recognized as an American, you weren’t upper class, middle class, working class. You could go into the working class part of the pub, where no middle class Englishman could go, and then you could go around and go into the Private Bar, the Lounge. The pubs were segregated. The Public Bar was for working class, and the Private Bar or Lounge was for middle class. That was it. The beer was cheaper in the Public Bar. Literally. It would be on the same counter with a glass partition and it would be tuppence less to get a pint on one side than on the other. That happens here, too, you know. We are in the process of creating a class system in the United States that we didn’t have before.

Q: I remember in the Foreign Service when I called up a British embassy you could almost tell what type of job the person had by their accent.

HUNTER: Of course. The civil service there had three grades: Administrative, which strikingly is actually the top level, and the bottom was Clerical, and the middle one was Executive. It was done by class. If you got a first at Oxford or Cambridge, you could compete for the Administrative grade, and once you entered you were frozen for life. The day you entered you were frozen in that class for life. You couldn't migrate from Executive to Administrative.

Q: It's a different world.

HUNTER: As I said, we are heading in that direction, we are heading toward a class system here much more intensely, and it's tragic.

Q: Money differences, educational differences.

HUNTER: Which go together. The manner in which the American public school has been depressed by people who are sending their kids to private school in order to guarantee that they can have the access to privilege in the next generation. Reagan set out to do that, this current administration [George W. Bush] is doing that with abandon. "No child left behind" as long as his parents are wealthy, even reasonably wealthy.

Q: Let's move to '68. How did you get involved in the Humphrey campaign?

HUNTER: I'd been involved with all the Humphrey people in the Johnson White House. After he became Vice President I wrote a speech for Humphrey, one speech in which I coined a phrase which he used for a long time. He said, "We're not trying to create a welfare state, we're trying to create a state of opportunity." Great man, Humphrey. I got in touch with the people I knew who were working on his campaign, and they said, "Come on back," and so I was one of Humphrey's chief speechwriters for five months in the '68 campaign. Six or seven of us wrote his speeches, to the extent that anybody wrote Humphrey's speeches.

Q: I was going to say, he had a tendency…

HUNTER: He always had a speech text that we had written and put out as a press release, and Humphrey would do a variation on themes of what was in front of him. But he had standard things. He was a man who genuinely cared about the country. Don't see his like nowadays. Except Ted Kennedy.

Q: How did you find the campaign? Because Robert Kennedy was on the other side and I guess…

HUNTER: He was dead by the time I came back to Washington.

Q: So you weren't there for the nomination.

HUNTER: I came back at the end of June, plunged right into the domestic side of the speechwriting. Worked a lot on the task forces, which every campaign has. I remember doing the report for one of them, on crime, which was headed by James Q. Wilson. Well, I wrote it up, and we had something like 78 proposals. Good, solid stuff. Then I reduced it to a text and a speech for Humphrey, which still had a lot of ideas in it. Then Nixon gave a speech on crime, and it had only 4 ideas, and none of them were very good, but that's what the media covered! This was a good object lesson in practical politics. Keep it simple! I was in Chicago with the Humphrey team at the Convention and then all the way through Election Day. So I was part of the team. It's very intense. You come in and the first day you're there, you're already doing stuff.

Q: How were the events in Chicago, particularly outside the convention center. What was the viewpoint from where you were?

HUNTER: Some of us, we predicted it. Three of us in the campaign – myself, Tedson Myers, and Arthur Morse, who wrote While Six Million Died -- wrote a memo to Larry O'Brien, who was running the campaign, two weeks beforehand, that said look, seeing what has just happened down in Miami at the Republican Convention, the way the media is scratching, and the fact that the media were, as a class, particularly television people, angry over the fact that the Democrats wouldn't hold their convention in the same place as the Republicans, so they wouldn't have to move their cameras, we knew that we were set up. Reading the tabloids, and Time, Newsweek, and all, we had a sense that there was going to be trouble in Chicago, and we saw it coming. Not just that anything that happened was going to be magnified by the media, but that there was going to be trouble at the Convention. In fact, I wrote two weeks before the convention a couple of paragraphs to be inserted into Humphrey's acceptance speech in the event of a riot. What we didn't calculate on was that the rioting was going to be done by the police and not by the kids. One of the recommendations we made that was not followed was that there should be hundreds and hundreds of well-trained, unarmed, plainclothes policemen just wandering around. Instead we got the opposite. As Tom Wicker, I think it was, pointed out, it was a class war. It was the relatively well-to do white kids coming from around the country versus a bunch of working class cops, and [Mayor Dick] Daley didn't restrain them and they lost their heads. A group of us speechwriters were out to dinner at the time, we came back and smelled the teargas, so we didn't even see the actual rioting, even though it was in front of the hotel, we were at the Conrad Hilton. But yeah, and Humphrey never caught up after that. There's more, but I'll save it for my memoirs.

Q: During this time, how was Nixon viewed?

HUNTER: He was the enemy. We saw him as a dark shadow. In fact, I tried to get Humphrey to use a line from the old radio program, *The Shadow*: "Who knows what evil lurks in the hearts of men?" He wouldn't do it. But I did get him to call Nixon "the Shadow." He did do that. I wrote a lot of the negative material on Nixon. We just thought that was going to be the end of the world if Nixon ever got in, etcetera. Of course, you look back and you say, despite all the feelings, Nixon actually did more domestically for the country than any of his Republican successors, particularly Reagan and this person we have now. Nixon was a relative giant in terms of doing things. But other things, I remember, for example, we got the evidence that Nixon had seen a psychiatrist, and I kept it from being used. I said: "Look, that's the best thing I ever heard about him. Don't touch it." We just didn't do it, left it alone.

Q: I didn't catch that.

HUNTER: During the campaign. Well, it came out that Nixon, and in fact Nixon later denied it, but Nixon had visited a psychiatrist at some point. Those were the days when you were highly stigmatized if you did so. I prevented the campaign from using that. I said "No, come on, that's the best thing I ever heard about him, leave it alone." They left it alone. We didn't play dirty tricks. We had Dick Tuck who played his little games, but otherwise we didn't play tricks.

Q: After the election when Nixon won, it was a very close race.

HUNTER: I remember. I was in Minneapolis with Humphrey the night of the election. We were a very small, close-knit team.

Q: What was your impression of Humphrey as a person.

HUNTER: The most important thing to say about him, he was a real human being, with all the strengths and all the weaknesses, just about, it is possible to have. But basically emphasized the strengths. He was a huge human being. He liked people. He wanted to do things for his country. I divide people and politics into two categories. It's not rigid categories, because some people are both. The "be" people and the "do" people. Some people say "I want to be President, I want to be Secretary of State." But ask them: "What are you going to do when you get there?" If they're honest, they will say: "I don't know, I'll get there, but I want to be it. I want to have it on my resume." Like the last line of "The Candidate," the Robert Redford film about a long-shot who gets elected to the Senate, when he says, "What do we do now?" That was a real incident, incidentally, about a California Senator. There are other people who are "do" people. "I want to get something accomplished, and I need to be President in order to get it accomplished. I need to be Secretary of State to get it accomplished," that kind of thing. Humphrey was deeply into the "do" category. Ted Kennedy is deeply into the "do" category. I know too many people nowadays who look at it in terms of "I want the job" kind of thing. One of the best anecdotes to demonstrate that is just before Humphrey died -- Mondale's great line at the ceremony in the Capitol Rotunda, "Humphrey taught us how to live and then he taught us how to die" -- there was a tribute to him in the Mayflower Hotel, here, just before he died, and all the Humphrey people and lots of others from Washington were there. Humphrey was out in Waverley, and there was a hook-up. In those days, it was pretty primitive, and he was going to talk on the telephone and it would be broadcast to the audience, but after about the first 10 seconds, the feedback to him went dead, so he had no idea if anybody was listening or not, and he was saying : "I don't know if anybody can hear me." Then he went on, and this is a week before he died, and he was talking about education, he was talking about youth, he was talking about opportunity, he was talking about the next generation, and other things absolutely central to building the country. The guy's about to die, he didn't even know if anybody was hearing him, but this is the kind of person he was. I've known two or three people like that who, right up until the moment they expired, were carrying on with good works. He was a very big person. For a speechwriter he would be frustrating, of course. You never knew what he was going to say next.

Q: Looking back on the campaign, did you and others involved think, "Gee if we'd only done this or that?"

HUNTER: One thing that everybody had concerns about was the war, and very often things become symbolic or symptomatic, and you know at the time that they take on a coloration. Do you take a position on X and that tells you about Y? Even though that may not be true, it gets set up that way. The thing that became the touchstone, the symbolic issue, was whether Humphrey would give a speech for a bombing pause, or a bombing halt, I can't remember which one. Humphrey did give a speech on the 30th of September in Salt Lake City, which was fought over in the campaign, and we all worked on it. Johnson didn't like it. Johnson had earlier turned against Humphrey, and in my strong positive feelings for Johnson, I had very strong negative feelings, because he turned against Humphrey. It was obvious to us he probably preferred Nixon's getting elected in terms of his own legacy. He didn't do anything to help Humphrey. There were some humiliating moments, and in fact Johnson was so concerned about Vietnam, he indicated to Humphrey that if Humphrey didn't stick with the straight and narrow, he, Johnson, would actively work against him. I know what I'm talking about, it's well-established, and I talked with Humphrey later about it. He didn't completely break free of that, even with the Salt Lake City speech. Well, everybody says he should have broken free, but he would have paid a heavy price for it, he probably would have lost even bigger because of what Johnson was going to do to him, because this mattered to Johnson because of what was happening to him. Nobody, in looking back 40 years who didn't go through it, would probably understand what was going on at that point. As Johnson saw what he tried to do domestically for the country going down the drain. He didn't want to be the first president to lose a war on top of it, and the way he was pilloried every day, etcetera. But one of the things I played a role in that finally turned Johnson around is that Nixon gave a speech in which he alleged there was a "security gap," saying there was a security gap in the country. Well, I got advance warning of the Nixon speech, because this is a very interesting town. Lots of people tell you things. I'd gotten an advance copy of the Nixon speech and, as a result, was able to write a counter to it which Humphrey gave within the same news cycle. Here comes Nixon saying, "Johnson has weakened the country in security terms," and there was Humphrey within the same news cycle saying, "I've heard this, now let me tell you what we've been doing to promote the security of this country," boom, boom, boom, boom, boom, boom. Johnson, we were told, was so infuriated by the Nixon speech, at that point he started helping Humphrey in fundraising and doing other things, but by then it was too late.

Q: Did you get any feel for Humphrey attitude towards the Vietnam War during the campaign?

HUNTER: During the campaign, no, he just had to do what he had to do. I didn't deal with him that much directly during the campaign. I got to know him very well, afterwards, because I worked on a series of speeches for him over a two-year period. I was his foreign policy guy and domestic policy guy when he was head of the Democratic Policy Committee and was very close to him for quite some time. His attitude on Vietnam was really kind of how to manage the politics and get through it. I do recall at the Convention, there was the [Eugene] McCarthy plank which became the test case. As I say, things become test cases. I looked at it, and we had these meetings of the campaign staff, and I was one of two or three people who read the McCarthy plank and said "There's not much in here, why don't we support it?" Support the damn thing. There were some outside Humphrey supporters there, and I wasn't in a position to know what role Humphrey was playing. These people said, "You can't possibly do that [support the McCarthy plank], this is a disaster, this will go against the President," all that kind of stuff. I remember two or three people who argued that very strongly, like Bob Nathan, who had been a leading economist in the New Deal, and they won the point. I still believe that if Humphrey had simply embraced the McCarthy plank, that would have had a healing effect. But he had the specter of Johnson having threatened him. Johnson threatened what he would do to him, clearly. I won't go into the details, here, but I heard it directly from Humphrey what happened. There are a number of other Humphrey people who have heard similar stories, or were told similar stories by Humphrey.

Q: After the election, this would have been November of '68 on. Then what did you do?

HUNTER: I went back to LSE, and I was then teaching at LSE and working at the Institute for Strategic Studies, full-time both places. That year I earned $11,000. Four thousand pounds. Which made me, in those days, upper-middle class in English society! That was before the huge inflation. Great disparities. The pound was worth an awful lot. Everything was cheap. I practically killed myself. I finished my Ph.D., wrote a book on NATO, did lots of other things. Went out to the Middle East, all around, then wrote two Adelphi Papers for the Institute for Strategic Studies on the Soviet Union in the Middle East.

Q: You were doing this how long?

HUNTER: I was two years teaching at LSE, and I finally finished my PhD. and came back to DC in December of '69 and kicked around for a while. Worked at the Democratic National Committee, wrote four speeches for Humphrey called the Pillsbury Lectures. It was the 100th anniversary of the Pillsbury Company, and John Stewart and I wrote them.

Q: And of course Humphrey's from Minneapolis.

HUNTER: In fact, these lectures still stand up. I wrote them with John Stewart, who was Humphrey's chief domestic guy. One of the great public servants of modern American history. He was the man who, in addition to Humphrey, more than anybody else pushed through the Civil Rights Act of 1964, and he was the chief issues guy in the '68 Humphrey campaign, etcetera. One of the extraordinarily dedicated, smart people who helped shape the good things that have happened domestically in this country in the last half century. So John got this commission from Humphrey, and he brought me in and he and I, with some advice from a couple of other people, including my LSE friend, Philip Windsor, wrote these four Pillsbury Lectures for him.

Q: I'd like to go back for a minute, from '67 to '69. Institute for Strategic Studies.

HUNTER: Yes, it's now called the International Institute for Strategic Studies, IISS.

Q: What was their role?

HUNTER: It was created in 1958 by essentially three people. Alastair Buchan, who had been a journalist here in Washington for *The Observer*. One of the extraordinarily fine people, with a very sharp mind, a sense of the coming issues, and a tremendous eye for talent. He recruited some outstanding people, almost all of whom have gone on to leading careers in strategic studies, foreign policy. Michael Howard, who ended up as Regis Professor at Oxford -- one of the highest quality military historians -- and Denis Healy, who later became Secretary of State for Defense, with Alastair created the ISS. It was in London, just off the Strand. It was created largely to "speak truth to power," that is, American power. In other words, to have a place, as America's role was evolving, where you could get people, both in and out of government, to talk honestly with one another. The US always had a lot of government support from Britain on US foreign policy, but as we got deeper into the Cold War, the ISS drew in people to help shape American foreign policy by speaking truth to power. As a result, during the '60s, the ISS did I think more genuinely creative thinking about the world than many other places, because they weren't hung up on the ideology. They didn't have to come out with the right answer. The right answer didn't have to be either "be in Vietnam or be against it." It didn't have to have, as we were building up the Cold War doctrines and everything, the patriotic requirement to come up with particular answers. They did extraordinary work. Not many of them are left. Michael Howard is still around, he's in his 80s now. Denis Healy is still alive, but Buchan died a long time ago. The IISS isn't what it used to be, because "speaking truth to power" isn't what it sees itself as doing, anymore. There are a lot of places where that could be useful, but it isn't done. Of course, the strategic profession now is in gross disarray. I was fortunate to be involved with the ISS at that time. I had a lot of lucky breaks, in terms of being able to work with, for, or observe some extraordinary human beings who had a major creative impact on the shape of the world, domestically and foreign. I've been a very privileged fly on the wall.

Q: Of course, one of the purposes of these oral histories is to pick up these flies on the wall. Can you characterize the view from the Institute about the Soviet Union during this period, particularly '68 to '70 or that era? Was it a menace?

HUNTER: Let's put it this way. There was far more analytical emphasis than political or emotional-ideological emphasis. I mean, you've got a problem, and what do you do about it? It's about power, it's about conflicting ideologies. It's not about manhood or fear and that sort of thing. I won't say dispassionate, but let's say a heavy emphasis on trying to figure out what was going on, like there were a lot of people here at RAND at the time doing that kind of thing. One thing we in the US lack today, in 2005, it that we don't have enough people to do that. At that time, the ISS people were part of the development of *détente.* Not from a leftist ideological perspective, but how do you get through these problems? How do you prevent the world from being blown up? The ISS quarterly journal, which came out more often in those days, Alistair gave it the name *Survival.* If you look back at it, extraordinary people wrote for it over the years. *Survival*. In other words, how do we get through this balance of terror, where, whatever you think about it, it has a kind of system to it that, if you get it wrong, you blow up the world? The great and the good came through the ISS. American people from all parts of the political spectrum saw the ISS as a place to pass through, to be engaged with, because there were people there genuinely wrestling with the most important questions. I was fortunate to sit there and watch it happen and even play a small part in it.

Q: You put out that you look at the world and what you do about Survival*, but who was reading this? Where was the impact?*

HUNTER: It was read by just about everybody who mattered in the strategy business. One key publication, then and now, is *The Military Balance*. In fact, I have got copies of the last several annual issues here. The ISS began early on to produce an annual publication called *The Military Balance*, which went through strategic and military issues, nation by nation, showing comparisons, showing the relationships, it had the facts and figures. For particular reasons, it was *the* best source of global military data in public. It became the Bible. Anywhere in the world, if you wanted to have a discussion about the relationship of the militaries of one country to another, beginning with the Soviet Union and the United States, that's the document you worked with. In fact, over the years, I used to run into a lot of Soviets, people from the Soviet Union, who also used it, because they got better information from *the Military Balance* about their own forces, you know, for research, than they could get in their own country. Let's say there were a lot of very senior people around who made sure it was accurate.

Q: How was the role of Great Britain at that time, because it was going down and down? Was there concern that Great Britain was no longer a military force?

HUNTER: It was still a military force. It was a significant force on the Continent, and it had its nuclear capacity. Until '68, the British had the major Western deployments just East of Suez. We look back and, today, we see where Britain is in terms of its military power. One has to realize that, going into World War II as one of the top two or three in the world, we then eclipsed them, and coming out of World War II, they had a lot of problems, but they still were not insignificant. By the late 1960s, British military power was going down, but one has to remember that, just because somebody is relatively less important, now, doesn't mean they were down earlier. So they were taken very seriously, sure. They were the premier American ally.

Q: I remember as a kid, I grew up in Annapolis and everything was Navy-oriented, and I remember a book in which the author was advocating that we would have a fleet that was bigger and better than the British. This is a 1940s book, I think. But wasn't the late 1960s about the time when the British pulled out of East of Suez?

HUNTER: That was in ’68. The East of Suez announcements to withdraw, sure. Where we then picked up the final set of British and French responsibilities. Which haunt us today because, as I argued at the time, through no fault of our own, we acquired all the opprobrium of the British and French colonial misbehavior. We go around saying we didn’t do this, and we’re right, we didn’t do it, but we’re seen in many of these countries as the legatee of British and French misbehavior, and so we have had in some countries to struggle back to square one.

Q: We’re still dealing with the British and French carving up the Middle East right after World War I.

HUNTER: The British, when they created Iraq, followed the historic Ottoman idea, which was to have the majority Shiites dominated by the minority Sunnis, and the Kurds kind of left out in the cold. Saddam picked it up, but it changed when we picked up responsibility for Iraq's future in 2003. Now it's shattered, and we’re in a circumstance where, for the first time in 300 years, it genuinely has to be sorted out, and we have to help do it.

Q: The Syria-Lebanon thing is still up in the air and of course the Arab-Israeli…

HUNTER: That’s another story. In fact, I worked a lot on that. I have worked on that issue off and on for 37 years.

Q: In 1970 you say you came back here? To do what?

HUNTER: It was time to come home. I got a job at an almost-new research institution called the Overseas Development Council (ODC), run by an extraordinary human being named James Grant, who was the world’s best salesman. A deeply enthusiastic guy. His father was with the Rockefeller Foundation, created the first Rockefeller modern Western hospitals in China and in India. Jim had grown up in China. He was head of the UNRRA liaison to the Communists in China at the end of World War II. He said Chou En Lai used to come around to their house for waffles on Sunday mornings. Grant was a true believer in economic development and foreign aid. He later became head of UNICEF. A high energy person, came out of AID. Fanatical about his commitment to development and foreign aid and whatnot. So I spent three and a half years there, and it was quite an exciting experience. Again, a lot of highly-capable people passed through there, and it was good entry to the Washington environment.

Q: This would be ’70 to ’74 about?

HUNTER: ’73. I did an awful lot of writing then.

Q: Was there any particular area that you were looking at for development, that we particularly considered we’ve really got to work on this?

HUNTER: A lot of the ideas. What's the point of development? Why do we need to do this? What do we need to do? Laying a lot of the intellectual groundwork with a lot of other people. I edited a book on development issues with John Rielly, who'd recruited me to work at ODC, who later became head of the Chicago Council on Foreign Relations, and who had previously been Humphrey's foreign policy adviser in the Senate and Vice Presidency. Rielly made the Chicago Council into one of the leading foreign policy institutions in the country, today. Also at ODC was Hal Malmgren, who was a top trade economist, later became Deputy US Trade Representative. I recruited Guy Erb, with whom I'd been at LSE, who went on to lead in development issues in the Carter Administration. So I worked on the full range of so-called Third World issues, plus writing the second edition of my NATO book, Security in Europe, among other things, and also an article for Foreign Policy magazine, called "Power and Peace," which contained the ideas that, a couple of decades later, Joe Nye branded as "soft power." I created an ODC annual publication we called Agenda for Action, which had articles on a wide range of development issues, policy-oriented. ODC kept putting it out every year until it folded. I had been trained as a nuclear strategist and as a NATO person and an EU person, and then to get thrown into the deep end of something that was totally alien, economic development and foreign aid. I picked up a whole new discipline and a whole new set of concerns. Learned a lot about energy and wrote about it, including in the New York Times Sunday Magazine, with the first energy crisis. Again, I worked with an awful lot of people who are still around doing good work, like Fr. Bryan Hehir, now head of Catholic Charities, who has been a leading light on some of the most important moral issues of our time. ODC, unfortunately, folded a few years ago, as financial support for development kind of became unfashionable.

Q: Speaking of you being trained in the nuclear equation side…

HUNTER: Not the technical, but the strategic side.

Q: Well, the strategic then. Maybe we have talked about this before, but there was this period when we were saying, "well, if we have a nuclear exchange, we will only lose 20 million, but they will lose 40 million or something like that."

HUNTER: I remember those debates. One of the things that happened, being in England where there was a certain amount of dispassion, is one came to understand quite early that those calculations were insane. In fact, I often cite, though it may be apocryphal, a supposed exchange between Herman Kahn and Bernard Brodie, both of whom were RAND people at one point in their lives. Bernard Brodie was one of the giants of strategic thinking. In fact, his analysis and writing on strategic issues were probably as good as anybody's in the Cold War. The exchange supposedly is that Herman Kahn said, "If I get to build an antiballistic missile system, I can save 100 million lives!" Brodie responded: "Yes, Herman, but to save 100 million lives, you've got to have a war!" So I guess I became an arms controller, but never fanatical. You know, one of the things is always trying to understand what's going on, because part of it was an early experience of working for a President, where what you try to do is help the President get the best advice, and the extent to which you can provide the truth, so far as you can find the truth.

It's not ideological, it's not grinding your own axe, it's not trying to sell something. It's trying to help this guy with his enormous burdens do the right thing, whatever the right thing is. You have to deal with that from the best analytical and best fact base you have. I will say, sometimes the President may decide to go off and ride in a particular direction, but the first thing you need to know is, to the extent we can know, what are the objective circumstances here? What's the best we can know? Then if you decide you don't want to follow that for some political reasons, for some other reasons, fine. At least you know what you're working with. If you don't start with that, it's like you have no sense of direction, any road will get you there. I learned that very, very early. The thing in Britain, there was the effort to speak truth to power, not having a partisan political stake in the answer, not having to choose sides. I remember some people visiting LSE in '68, a bunch of American Rhodes Scholars who had come down from Oxford, and they were intensely anti-Vietnam, but they were also saying that America was the worst this, that, and the other thing. I had this little insight that the way the debate was being handled was between a bunch of people who were saying that "America's doing the world's best thing in Vietnam, and we're the most moral country," and others saying "We're the most immoral country." The one thing they agreed upon is that we were Number One. We're the best. Either the most moral or the most evil! It was a sense of American specialness. Well, being in England and being trained there, I didn't get infected with that. That doesn't mean I got things right. I was for the war in Vietnam a lot longer than I should have been. A lot longer. I got that wrong.

Q: When you were back here in Washington, was this a time when we were particularly looking at Africa, what to do about it?

HUNTER: Well, I had a major eye-opener, working at the ODC, a place that cared about the Third World, the LDCs.

Q: LDC means less-developed countries.

HUNTER: Yeah, less-developed countries. So I was working in an environment in which this was front and center. An awful lot of attention was being paid to these countries and their peoples. …

Q: Did you feel that there was much connection with the Nixon administration? I'm talking about influence.

HUNTER: Obviously, Nixon was president and AID people worked for him and ODC tried to keep itself non-partisan. Grant I guess was a Democrat. But you worked to try to influence the people who had the power. In my political campaign work, I can be intensely partisan. I think that's part of the American system. But in terms of getting things done, you essentially have to do things on a bi-partisan basis and reach across the aisle. That's how you get things done. So you do it both ways. You fight your political campaign hard and then, when the campaign is over, you pull together. The best people in this town do that. Some can, lots of them can't do it. They carry over their hatreds to the government, which is stupid. It took this president [George W. Bush] five years to get to the point of getting rid of some of the bad apples, the ones who didn't understand that they had to put the nation first.

Q: As you talk about other presidencies and all that, I find it very difficult not to connect to what's happening today.

HUNTER: What goes around comes around. There are certain types of people, certain elements of power, and ways of looking at things. We are a country of very short-term memories.

Q: Again we're talking about the mid-early '70s, the role of the think tanks, which you were a part, of I guess.

HUNTER: They've always been exaggerated. I guess Kissinger said once, you bring with you the intellectual thoughts you had before you came to power. The think tanks, I think, train people. They help to create consensus in this wide, disparate country we have. We don't have the kinds of elites that automatically assume power from the day they enter the civil service. We don't have a civil service that runs everything almost all the way to the top, like the British and the French, the Germans, and some others. American think tanks to a great extent are consensus builders, which often means that you don't get a great idea validated, it's usually the lowest common denominator. Then people go into government and they apply what they learned. But the impact of think tanks on the government in power is extremely limited. Here at RAND, where we do specific subjects for parts of the government because they come and ask -- and they're mostly technical studies – there is an impact on government; but in the grand sweep of things, the think tanks have very little impact. Now, I've been in the government, I spent 13 and a half years at the highest levels of the government, and I've also been in think tanks, so I have some sense of their value. Their value is really delayed, and sometimes that's too bad. You get in a situation where you know that the government is going down the wrong track, and you wish there was some way for outside people to come in and help, but at the highest levels of the government, unless you are involved on a day-to-day basis, and you're "up to speed" and have responsibilities, you really aren't part of the game. It's not possible.

Q: I'm always struck by people I've talked to. Many who've been in the diplomatic field don't have much connection with the intellectual world, reading Foreign Affairs.

HUNTER: I wouldn't hold that up as the best example.

Q: What I'm saying is there's a vast body of literature that's put out on every subject you can think of, including foreign affairs, and I don't think a practicing diplomat samples much of this or has the time or interest.

HUNTER: There's diplomacy as a craft, and then there's policy-making as a craft. There is an overlap, but they're not the same. Very few people are good at both. Kissinger was good at both. I've known half a dozen people who were really good at both. But most are good at one or the other. There are good policy people who don't have a clue how to convince other people to do things or run an embassy. Then there are some fantastic diplomats who couldn't think their way out of a paper bag in terms of basic directions. That's not to criticize either one. I've come to the firm understanding, over the years, that they are two very separate crafts and that very few people are effective in both.

One thing think tanks do effectively is that diplomats and others come to meetings and they get refreshed and they get other ideas, which may not help them in their immediate day-to-day business, but over time maybe they learn something when they go out and they come back, etcetera. Very often, it's the going out and coming back that's very important. The revolving door, in that sense, is very important. The in-and-out system is unique in America, partly because we don't have policy run by senior civil servants and partly because we're challenged by things all over the world. If you're sent someplace, say, Paraguay, the circumstances you face are going to be the same year in and year out, even if you're Britain. But if you're the United States, because of our role and centrality, circumstances are constantly changing, and you have to have this kind of renewal.

Q: Did you find yourself traveling to different countries at all?

HUNTER: Lots.

Q: Did you have any feel for American AID projects?

HUNTER: Jim Grant sent me around the world, so I saw quite a bit of AID's work. It was the time of the Green Revolution, and I'd go out and see actual people working. I remember being in Nepal. I went around with the head of the AID mission, looking at these acres he had, where they were planting hybrid seeds and working out techniques so the Nepali farmers would themselves decide that the Green Revolution, these strains of highly-productive rice, ware the thing to do. You couldn't just give the seeds to them. What the AID people would do is that they would go out and they would grow a couple of acres of rice and not say a word. Then word would get around about the fantastic yield, and then some Nepali farmers would come around and say, "Can I use some of this?" That kind of thing. AID is a rotten bureaucracy, people say, but there are an awful lot of dedicated Americans going out doing these things. That's something which really gets you. I don't have a dog in this fight because I'm not doing this kind of thing, but the number of dedicated Americans who are out there doing useful things, whether it's in our own society, or another society, and they get stigmatized as wearing striped pants or pushing cookies, or something in a negative way. That's just grossly unfair.

Q: I agree.

HUNTER: A statistic I like to quote, we've had more ambassadors killed since the Second World War than we've had generals killed.

Q: And admirals. By a significant number. Normally, an admiral is surrounded by a fleet, and a general is surrounded by an army. An ambassador goes out there and is in the car *with a chauffeur, maybe one bodyguard. Probably a good place to stop at this time. But let's put at the end here, we're talking about 1973, what did you do?*

HUNTER: I then got an offer to go work for Ted Kennedy. He obviously was toying with the idea of running for President, but decided that he needed somebody full-time to work on foreign affairs. I was the first staff person on the Senate side, at least, as a full time staff person in foreign affairs for a Senator, as opposed to working on a committee. Now it's common. One of the others who came to the Senate at around about the same time was Richard Perle, who worked for Senator Jackson, and whom I've known since 1963 at LSE. So various Senators started getting foreign policy people. I got hired by Kennedy and put on the payroll of the Refugees Subcommittee of the Judiciary Committee, and I worked for him until Inauguration Day in 1977 as his Foreign Policy Advisor.

Q: We'll pick this up then in 1973 and we'll just start about being taken on by Kennedy as a foreign affairs adviser and we'll talk about those issues.

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Today is the 12th of October, 2005. Bob, Edward Kennedy has taken you on as his foreign affairs adviser. How would you describe the relationship of Senator Kennedy within the Senate and within the body politick at the time that you came on.

HUNTER: In '73, there was still a thought that he might run for President in '76. He also had apparently decided that it would be useful for him to get greater depth in foreign affairs. He had somebody who was doing it on what I'd call the oddball issues, but not the central issues, of foreign policy and national security. He was not on the Foreign Relations Committee, by choice. He always calculated he didn't have to, in order to have access and engagement, because he did have what he'd already achieved, plus being a Kennedy. He was the first senator actually to do this, have a regular foreign policy advisor, and so it was breaking new ground. What I just don't understand are some perceptions of Kennedy as a controversial figure in the country; this is far less evident within the United States Senate. He's always been, at least certainly at the time I knew him, but probably before, a person who focused on getting the job done. That meant he would deal with whomever he had to deal with on a particular issue. Even today, you'll find him out there doing health care with Orrin Hatch, a dedicated Republican conservative. In those days he would work with Harry Byrd and Barry Goldwater and whoever was necessary on particular issues he cared about, especially in the areas of health and education, particularly health. Welfare. In the broadest sense of the term. Labor. He also had this dedication never to make a permanent enemy. To deal with other people intensely, but with civility. Always being a gentleman towards everyone else and showing respect, which is what you're supposed to do if you're going to be a success in the Senate. So he clearly knew what had to be done, and he did it.

Q: You were doing this from when to when?

HUNTER: Let’s see, September ’73 until January 20, 1977, when I went to work at the National Security Council.

Q: During this period, what were the foreign affairs issues that you particularly got engaged in?

HUNTER: In a job like that it’s across the board. Of course, it was a very active time. Arms control was a major issue, and one of the big ones was the ABM (Anti-Ballistic Missile) Treaty, which weapons should be bought and which shouldn’t be bought. One thing that got him, too, was arms sales abroad, trying to get some kind of control over that, including the Persian Gulf. Middle East issues. Cyprus. Détente. Confrontation with the Russians. China, though he was not able to go to China while I worked for him, in part, I think, because he’d gone to Russia, and the Chinese at that point were “taking names.” Kennedy was only able to go later to China. So I would say you pick a major issue, and the senator got engaged in it. Human rights. Definitely in human rights. But it wasn’t just peripheral things, it was to go right to the heart of the key issues of American foreign policy. The end game in Vietnam. I also did a lot of traveling for Kennedy on my own. Both sides of the cease-fire line on the West Bank of the Suez Canal after the Yom Kippur war; Ben Gurion's funeral in Jerusalem; a week in Cuba at the end of '74, including a four-hour meeting with Castro.

Q: One of the things one associates with him coming from Massachusetts, it’s almost a peripheral issue, but a senator from Massachusetts and the Irish question. Did you get involved in that, or was that almost a local political issue?

HUNTER: I won’t say necessarily a local political issue, because he had very deep feelings and concerns about it. That was handled by his chief legislative aide, a man named Carey Parker. In fact, Carey is still there. He’s been there forever. He was the point man on Ireland. I had a kind of a watching brief on Ireland, but Carey was whom you talked to. You know that Kennedy was the principal organizer of what became known as the Four Horsemen, with Senator Pat Moynihan, with House Majority Leader and then Speaker Tip O’Neill, and with the governor of New York, Hugh Carey. But Kennedy organized that as the Four Horsemen, who opposed organizations like NORAID, which were the ones collecting money that would go to the IRA (Irish Republican Army) to buy weapons. So this was a courageous effort on the part of Irish American leadership, Kennedy in the lead, to say that pursuing the agenda through violent means was unacceptable, to try to de-legitimate it, and the Four Horsemen had a major impact over time.

Q: I’m sure they did.

HUNTER: But the person who ran the Irish issue in the Kennedy office was Carey Parker, and I think he did a brilliant job, on this issue as on all the domestic issues, where he was sort of the 101st Senator.

Q: On some of the issues, for example Cyprus came up in July of '74, and there were a lot of Greeks in the United States. It got very domestically political. How did you…?

HUNTER: We were very much involved in that. In fact, one of my colleagues, Mark Schneider, had a major role in that, and he's now a vice president at the International Crisis Group (ICG). I think Kennedy, as usual, tried to play a mediator's role on that. But, obviously, this was something where there were very intense feelings in the Senate and in the House, and where he was on the side of the issue that leaned very strongly against the Turkish invasion of Cyprus. Prior to that, of course, he was trying to do what one could to help facilitate the fall of the colonels in Greece, but I'd say that consideration for the Greek-American perspective had to be very important to him, just as it is a matter of American politics. I recall that we met with Archbishop Makarios, president of Cyprus, at the Hilton Hotel. He was a guy with the light of fanaticism in his eyes!

Q: I was consul general in Athens for four years.

HUNTER: When?

Q: From '70 to '74, I left just before the thing, but one was very much aware of the Greek-American influence in Athens.

HUNTER: But at the same time, of course, you had the Colonels, very unfortunate for you. I had a little joke, which some people get and some people don't. They ask, "What's going on in Greece?" I say, "Well, the problem is that the word 'democracy' doesn't translate into their language." Then people pause and say, "But democracy is a Greek word!" and I say, "Oh really?"

Q: What sort of role from your observation did Kennedy play in the relations with the Soviet Union at the time? You mentioned we had a series of treaties going on and…

HUNTER: Kennedy obviously was deeply dedicated, like every American, to try and ensure that the Soviet Union didn't expand its reach and to supported deterrence in confrontation as a central part of the policy, but he was also dedicated to trying to find a way out and supporting *détente,* which was something which had a strong bipartisan basis. Nixon and Kissinger clearly were principal architects of it, and Kennedy was one of the supporters in the Senate of that, there were supporters on both sides -- but making very clear to the Soviets that he was going to be pursuing the best interests of the United States. We went to Moscow in April of '74, I organized a trip for him, which was in two parts. One of the objectives of my being on Kennedy's staff was to organize a lot of travel for him to various parts of the world, particularly in Europe and the Middle East – Belgium, France, England, Italy, Greece, Israel, Jordan, Iraq, Iran, Saudi Arabia. On this particular trip, I know we went to Germany, not for the first time, saw the Federal Chancellor, to Romania and to Yugoslavia. Seeing Ceausescu in Romania, that apostate country, and to see Tito. Kennedy had to come home for some votes, and we went back again to Moscow and had a week in Russia, four hours with Brezhnev, just the two of us. Then to Leningrad. The Russians had asked us to choose one other place, and for variety

I chose going to Georgia, Tbilisi. One of the products of that trip was that Kennedy, on the inspiration of his wife Joan, on the inspiration of Leonard Bernstein, who went to Joan, Joan went to me, I went to the Senator, and during that meeting Kennedy asked Brezhnev to allow [Mstislav] Rostropovich to emigrate, the cellist. Brezhnev said, "I thought he'd already gone!" Just as we were leaving the country, they came and told Kennedy that Rostropovich would get his exit visa. So that was one of the concrete achievements. We also did a lot with regard to the Soviet Jews while we were there, and pursued an American agenda which was confrontation plus *détente.* One of the things that Kennedy did when he traveled was we always made sure we followed the cardinal rules, which were, one, you don't criticize American policy when you're abroad, and, two, also to make sure that the US government, the administration, knew exactly what he was going to do, where he was going to go, and, where appropriate, there would be US government representatives in the meetings. But, generally, he didn't like having representatives of the State Department along, because they kind of queered the pitch, made the conversation "official." But we always debriefed immediately afterwards. With the Moscow trip, Kennedy went to see the Secretary of State beforehand and afterwards.

Q: How comfortable did you feel Kennedy was with the Nixon-Ford administration and foreign policy? Because this was an interesting time. Did you feel…

HUNTER: Kennedy is a deeply partisan person when it comes to winning elections. He is not particularly partisan when it comes to dealing with the nation's business, which is, frankly, the way it ought to be. So he would support policies that he felt were serving the nation well, and he opposed policies he'd think that didn't. For example, the effort to build another ABM system, he was one of the leaders of the fight to stop the funding for that. Of course, that was proved almost immediately to be the correct position. We would have been running down a rat hole, because it wouldn't have done anything to protect the United States, in part because it was so minuscule, even if it were completed, and nobody's ever made an effective case that we could protect against a dedicated Soviet first strike. ABMs had to do more than be provocative. But he supported the administration on *détente,* he supported it on different weapons systems that made sense. It was a matter of trying to figure out what was best for the country and going in that direction. If that meant supporting the administration, fine. If it meant opposing them, fine. In fact, a lot of senators are like that, and Kennedy puts the nation first.

Q: Did the recognition of China or the opening to China on your watch?

HUNTER: No, that had already happened. In fact, there was not much active happening on China during the time I was there. As I said, we tried to organize a trip to China, and the Chinese strung it out and strung it out. I was convinced, though we never got the last little bit of what today we call the smoking gun…I was convinced that the direction that Kennedy shouldn't go to China came from the State Department. In fact we used to joke…

Q: That would be Kissinger.

HUNTER: Oh yeah. It was leading up to an election period and afterwards, and Kissinger didn't want Kennedy to get all the publicity of a trip to China. In fact, we had a joke in Washington, at the time, that the visa office for China was actually in the State Department. They decided who could go and who couldn't go.

Q: Was the Panama Canal an issue at this time?

HUNTER: No, that really came up under Carter. When I was in the White House, and Bob Pastor did that brilliantly. Portugal was one of the issues. As I said, we took a number of trips. One of them was to Portugal, right after the election in November of '74. A trip that was opposed by the Assistant Secretary of State, Art Hartman, on the grounds that they were going to go commie and we shouldn't have any association with it. I had had some association with some Portuguese who had been part of the April Revolution of '74. Kennedy, you see, was a member of the North Atlantic Assembly, a parliamentary group, it's now the NATO Parliamentary Assembly. So I'd met these people. One of them, [Francisco de] Sá Carneiro, later became Portuguese prime minister and then was killed, unfortunately, in a helicopter accident. Another man was named [Francisco] Belsamão, who was a leading publisher and who also became prime minister, both democrats. So I organized this trip to Lisbon, and to overcome the worker-bee opposition at State, I got Kennedy to go to see Kissinger. At that point, Kissinger was wondering whether Kennedy was going to be President, and my take on that was that Kissinger looked around and saw that Gromyko could be Soviet Foreign Minister for life, and maybe he'd like to stay on as Secretary of State in a Kennedy administration, so he said "Oh, Ted, go ahead, fine." When we came back, I said to the Senator, "You know we've got to help this revolution. Why don't we put some money in the bill?" He said, "Sure. Put some money in the bill," whatever the legislation was. So I stuck in an amendment for 100 million dollars. The Senate cut it in half and we got 50 million dollars for Portugal. That was before Frank Carlucci went over to Lisbon as ambassador and got the credit. So Kennedy really was the person who turned around the American government in support of the Portuguese Revolution, got them some concrete money, helped to support the democrats against the Communists, and provided the financial basis for the success of Portuguese democracy. As I say, Frank Carlucci came in as ambassador, later, and took all the credit, but it was really Kennedy who got things going, as happens so often.

Q: On Vietnam, how stood Kennedy? Did you go out to Vietnam?

HUNTER: No. This was the end game. In '73 we'd already left Vietnam, and, of course, it was a secondary phenomenon leading up to the '75 final collapse. The Vietnam issue was handled mostly as a refugee matter, and that was under the aegis of Dale Dehaan, who was the staff director for Kennedy's role as Chairman of the Judiciary Subcommittee on Refugees, and his deputy, Jerry Tinker, who tragically died as a very young man of some rare disease a few years later.

Q: How was Kennedy's relation with the Foreign Relations Committee?

HUNTER: Excellent. But he never felt a need, as I said, to be on that committee, because he had access everywhere, anyway, and sometimes it was an effective committee, sometimes not. So not being on the committee never inhibited where he traveled or what he did or what he spoke on. He could speak on anything, could always get an audience. Later on, he went on the Armed Services Committee, because of its direct impact on doing things as opposed to talking about things. No disrespect, but the Foreign Relations Committee, except for dealing with treaties and a few things like that, doesn't really have much legislative function. The Armed Services Committee has the constant legislative function. Relations with those people were excellent. This was a time, of course, in which there were a lot of key issues. There was some tension with the Henry Jackson people and particularly Richard Perle, and he and I used to have a little duel. Every time it came to legislation, I think I won most of the challenges. I've known him for 40 some-odd years.

Q: With Senator Kennedy, I noticed a phenomenon. During much of the period, I was chief of the consular section in Belgrade.

HUNTER: When was that? Under Eagleburger or earlier?

Q: Oh heavens no. Larry and I took Serbian together. We were the same rank. I was chief of the consulor section, he was number three in the economic section along with Jim Lowenstein. Bob Cleveland was the head of the economic. The ambassador was Kennan, when we were there, and then he was replaced by Charles Burke Elbrick, who was later kidnapped in Brazil. But anyway, I noticed there, and also I was consul general in Saigon and then in Athens, that a lot of letters, because we've answered congressional letters, were addressed to Kennedy, mainly because the name Kennedy from foreigners being concerned about almost anything, because they felt he was acting kind of as an ombudsman. At least people from abroad saw the name Kennedy, and you know. Did you get involved in any of this?

HUNTER: It wasn't just that he was the brother of the slain president and the slain senator, it was also because of his own record, and one of the things was to make sure that letters got answered, and to do what one could to be helpful to people. The kind of national casework effort, district casework, but also international casework. It was taken very seriously.

Q: It was interesting because he did act as almost an ombudsman. People would be attracted to the name from all over.

HUNTER: But he earned it on his own, in addition to having the association with his brothers, because of things he did and insisted that we all do.

Q: What happened in '76 with Kennedy? Did he make a bid?

HUNTER: As you know, as you go back, the Kennedys are very much a family and care about the family. Kennedy cared deeply about his kids, does care deeply about his kids.

He would get home every night so he could have dinner with the family. His son Teddy contracted bone cancer in a leg and had a leg amputated. Kennedy that fall decided, I'm sure there were a complex series of reasons, in the fall of '74 not to run for President in '76. So by the time we got to '76, he, himself, was not a candidate and had ruled himself out.

Q: Did you have any contact with the Carter people or was that almost a complete divide until after the election?

HUNTER: No, in the summer of '76, I took a leave from the Senate, at the request of Stu Eizenstat, who was the head of policy for Carter in the campaign, and with whom I'd worked in the Humphrey campaign in '68. I went down there for Stu, to Atlanta, to prepare the briefing materials for the foreign affairs debate. The chief foreign policy person there was Dick Holbrooke, but he was traveling almost all of the time. So I was down there and, in fact, ran the team and wrote most of the foreign affairs materials that were then used to brief Governor Carter for the foreign affairs debate, which, as you know, Carter clearly won, but as much as anything because President Ford got caught in a tongue twister, in which he declared that Poland was free. What he meant to say was that "In their hearts, the Polish people are free," but that's not what he said. We didn't even notice it at the time, watching the debate. It was only the next day when the media picked it up.

Q: What was your role during the campaign?

HUNTER: I was on leave from the Senate, went off the payroll. You had to, because it's illegal to do it otherwise. I was in Atlanta for a month, and then came back to Washington and went back on the Senate payroll. I continued to give advice during the campaign, on my own time. So all the way to the election, I was an adviser to Eizenstat and the campaign on various foreign affairs matters. But the key point was having the major responsibility for writing the TV debate briefing book on foreign affairs, which was one of two I did write a major part of (the other was for Clinton in '92), and to continue ensuring that Kennedy was up to speed.

Q: Certainly from a foreign affairs point of view, you look at the Carter administration and, offhand I would come up with three major things: one was the recognition of China, but even more the Panama Canal treaty and then Camp David. Were these issues that you were working on at the time, or did these develop… well, really, the fourth one is human rights.

HUNTER: You mean during the campaign?

Q: During the campaign. Were these issues that…

HUNTER: Well, obviously all of them. Panama Canal was not an issue. That only came up after Carter became president. Middle East is always an issue. US-Soviet is always an issue. In effect, this was to try to get the candidate focusing on, and up to speed, to the extent he wasn’t already, on fundamental campaign themes, and also to get across to him basic campaign strategy. I’ve played a policy role at the national level in eight or nine presidential campaigns, and the basic rule of thumb in foreign affairs is to ensure that the candidate demonstrates that he has a capacity to be Commander-in-Chief, that’s it. The American people, in general, aren’t going to delve into the particularities of foreign affairs and defense. Individual interest groups will, but the average American is out there saying “I’m not going to affect these things, but I want to make sure that, if this person becomes president, he’s going to keep the nation safe and do the best things for the nation.” So they look at this person in terms of his or her stature. How they behave in a crisis, even if it’s a crisis in the campaign or in their personal life. How they talk about the outside world and America’s role that gives the average American some kind of clue about character. That’s what it’s about really. The rest of it’s fluff and nonsense. So that when the media tries to say that this presidential candidate doesn’t know the name of the prime minister of India, as they did with Reagan, the average American says, “Who cares?” In fact, it works for the candidate, because then they say “Who’s this reporter to ask this guy a trick question like that?” So the objective was to get across to Carter, assuming he needed it in the first place, basic things he had to get across in the debate in terms of American security, in terms of promoting *détente,* in terms of showing that he had the mettle to be president. These are strategic kinds of things in terms of how you campaign. Then getting the issues right, but it’s not about getting the issues right so much and all that, but demonstrating to the American people that you can be President. That’s the requirement. Some have it, some don’t have it.

Q: How did you find Carter? He had gotten, obviously, had been the governor of Georgia, was it the Tri-lateral Commission or something? This was his entrée into the international world wasn’t it?

HUNTER: First, you have to understand that he went to Annapolis. He was in the US Navy. He had, as a governor, done a lot of traveling as a trade representative. He’s got a very active mind, as you probably have discovered. Reads voraciously, everything you put in front of him. Highly retentive mind. But one of the big events was indeed the Tri-lateral Commission. In fact, Zbig Brzezinski, who helped create that, one of the purposes was to involve potential presidential candidates, and he involved Carter in that. No accident that a lot of the people Carter rubbed shoulders with actually came into the administration, later on. So he didn’t have as much preparation in foreign affairs as some candidates have had, but he was streets ahead of some others. Compared to, let’s say, either Reagan or the current President Bush, who had no experience. Many people think highly of Bush in foreign affairs, but he had zero experience in foreign affairs before becoming President.

Q: And little interest either, from what I gather.

HUNTER: The current president, except to go to Mexico, had been outside the United States a total of three times in his entire life.

Q: His father was a consummate diplomat.

HUNTER: His father occupied every foreign policy position he practically could have. Vice President, UN (United Nations), China, head of CIA (Central Intelligence Agency). That's a digression, but Carter, brilliant man, voracious reader, you never had to tell him things twice. I think he had excellent judgment. Had a woods and trees problem, and had a lot of rotten luck. The energy crisis, the revolution in Iran, the invasion of Afghanistan, all of which were totally outside of his control. A lot of rotten luck. The inflationary period, which was an aftershock of a number of things like the oil question of the earlier '70s. But if it happens on your watch, you're responsible.

Q: You were on the National Security Council from January 20th or so, did you go right on?

HUNTER: I was on the NSC staff for four years less two hours and 20 minutes. I started two hours after inauguration and I was, I think, one of the last out, 20 minutes before the inauguration in 1981, when we were required to be out by the incoming people. This is probably the only time it's ever happened, to be off the premises by high noon, all of us.

Q: It was a rather nasty business wasn't it?

HUNTER: Some people say the transition between Reagan and Bush was even nastier, but not by the President, President Reagan behaved very well toward Bush. It was draconian. But that's the game. For example, when I got called in by Admiral Bud Nance, who was the new Deputy National Security Adviser, to be told, as all of us on the NSC staff were, that we wouldn't be kept on, even before he started talking, I said, "Admiral, I will be leaving on January 20th. That is the way the system works, I am a political person, and I appreciate the opportunity to serve my country, but I will be leaving. But I am here to be of whatever help I can be to the nation, to you, the President." He said, "That won't be necessary, thank you anyway." Fortunately, my successor, I was then in charge of Middle East, Geoffrey Kemp, I had been his best man when he got married. Very old friend. He called me in and asked, "What do I do?" and I gave him some advice. You know, one of the ironies, and this will help you with your history, is that the President no longer owns his documents. After Nixon, the law was changed. But all the documents still disappear and go down to the presidential libraries, so that when a new national security team comes in, they have nothing there. It happened when we came in with Carter. Fortunately, I knew my predecessors, and it also happened when we went out. I was allowed to leave for my successor, Geoffrey Kemp – and this was on the last day of the hostage crisis, it was right in the middle of Arab-Israeli negotiations on the West Bank in Gaza -- I was allowed to leave for my successor an unclassified copy of the Camp David Accords. That's the law and the practice. Fortunately, the State Department and the Defense Department are continuing institutions, so the documents stay where they are. For the United States, it is just a stupid way of behaving. Incredibly stupid.

Q: When you arrived on noon on January…

HUNTER: Well, actually, I'd been involved for a couple weeks earlier, not on the payroll, but involved in the transition.

Q: Whom were you replacing?

HUNTER: I was put in charge of Europe. Bill Hyland, who had been the Deputy National Security Advisor under Ford, was kept on for nine months to do the Soviet Union. The way the National Security Council staff was organized under Brzezinski was in a series of what were called "clusters." It was a very small staff. There was a European cluster, which was Hyland, who did Soviet Union, basically, and me who did Western and Eastern Europe, and a couple of more junior people. Hans Binnendijk was just leaving. This man is still bouncing around, doing excellent work, now at NDU [National Defense University]. Denis Clift was then doing Europe, and he stayed on as Vice President Mondale's Foreign Policy Advisor.

Q: What had been your relation with Brzezinski?

HUNTER: I first met Zbig when he spoke at the Institute for Strategic Studies in 1966. In the 1968 campaign, when I was one of the chief speechwriters for Humphrey on the domestic side, there were four-five of us, Ted Van Dyk, who was overall policy coordinator, John Stewart, me, Doug Bennett, that was really the team. Plus some others in a more junior capacity. Then there was the senior political team. John Rielly was Humphrey's Assistant for Foreign Affairs, in charge of the foreign side, and I helped him out. Brzezinski was the key outside foreign policy adviser to Humphrey in that campaign. I worked with him on Humphrey's big speech on the Soviet Union, which we worked over with Humphrey on the plane going to and from the third game of the World Series in Detroit. Obviously, if Humphrey had won, Zbig would have been at least National Security Adviser. So I got to know him then in the form of association. I had seen him regularly after that. When I worked with Kennedy, I arranged for Zbig to come see him from time to time, and I did some things for him. Zbig asked me, I remember, to write a major paper for him in 1976 on human rights. The history of it and where it ought to go, which in my innocence I thought was just a generic interest, but of course he was recognizing the very deep interest that Jimmy Carter had in human rights, and was working on his own intellectual and policy basis for it. So some of the work I did I think contributed to that. When it came that Brzezinski was putting his team together, he asked me to work for him. I think, one, he knew me. More important is that I worked for Kennedy, and he wanted a Kennedy person [laughter]. So I won't say that I was so great, I happened to be well-positioned! His deputy was David Aaron, because Aaron was Mondale's person. When I was in the Senate and worked for Kennedy, Aaron worked for Mondale, he was a former Foreign Service Officer. One of the ironies was that, as we wrote articles for our bosses, I wrote an article for Kennedy which appeared in *Foreign Policy* magazine, which was the number two magazine then, Kennedy having already written in *Foreign Affairs,* a piece I'd written on conventional arms control in the Persian Gulf. I titled the *Foreign Policy* article "Beyond Détente." David Aaron wrote an article for Mondale which appeared in *Foreign Affairs,* at the same time, entitled "Beyond Détente." [laughter] So David and I have been friends for a long time, and, in fact, here it is in 2005, and I work in the RAND Washington office, and David is in charge of Middle East policy in the RAND Santa Monica office. So he's come around here. So Zbig asked me to come out and do the European account, and I began on Inauguration Day.

Q: When you picked up the European account, what were our major concerns with Western Europe, and did this include Eastern Europe?

HUNTER: At the time, yes, it was later hived off, when Zbig divided the cluster in two, but I had all of Europe to start with, except for the Soviet Union, which Bill Hyland did as a transitional thing. Later I had Western Europe, NATO, European Community, the West European countries, and Yugoslavia. Greece and Turkey were handled separately, by a man named Paul Henze, who was close to Zbig, a former CIA person. Then, after a few months, the Central -- or we then called them Eastern -- European countries were handled by some other people. Bob King did this at one point. He works for Congressman Lantos now. Steve Larrabee came on later to handle Eastern Europe, and he works two floors below me here now at RAND. I also served as Deputy US Political Director, with George Vest, the Assistant Secretary of State for Europe, who was the Political Director. That was when we met with counterparts from Britain, France, and Germany, all together, and set the agenda for the foreign ministers' four-power discussions that more or less decided basic policies for the Western Alliance.

Q: One talks about government changing all the time, but I'm always impressed by essentially the intellectual continuity in and out of the government of people. They do go away.

HUNTER: Let's put it this way. All of the senior people in today's Bush administration on foreign affairs, I know every single one of them, except Bush. I suspect that most people in the foreign policy community do. One of the things we do in America is that we ensure that people rub shoulders and go to think tanks, together, and go to meetings, together. It's one of the few ways in which you can create a foreign policy that people can support. We've been doing it for 50 years.

What were the major issues? The first issue was something which I knew how to do, because of my experience with watching Europe and the evolution of American policy. That was to reassure the Europeans of the steadfastness of the United States. One of the wonderful ironies about our European Allies, which is still true after the Cold War, when things changed dramatically, is that, however many problems the Europeans -- I, use that collectively now, you can parse the thing smaller -- no matter how difficult they found a President, as soon as there's a new President, they look back with nostalgia to the person who has just left! Because in the Cold War their security was so deeply bound up with the United States. In the Cold War, the nuclear engagement of the United States with Europe was a suicide pact, where we agreed that, if Western Europe were attacked with conventional weapons, we would initiate a nuclear war, which would have been suicide – indeed, mutual suicide -- because it was based on deterrence, that's it, full-stop. So if you're a European, you want to be very clear what the nature of this new administration is. In fact, on Day 1, literally on the afternoon of Inauguration Day, we were planning a visit by the new Vice President, Walter Mondale, to Europe, precisely to reassure the Europeans about the continuing commitments of the United States under the new President. Obviously, people emphasized in the press that Carter was interested in human rights. But, in fact, this first trip involved all the issues. It was NATO, it was the European Community, it was *détente*, it was arms and arms control, it was the full menu which you have to deal with from Day One. One of the ironies on human rights at this time was that the Europeans had been bellyaching about a year earlier about the Helsinki Final Act, and whether Kissinger really believed in human rights or that we really were going to support this. The Europeans dragged the United States kicking and screaming into embracing what became the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe, now the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE). They were so negative about the Ford administration about whether it would be committed to human rights. Carter comes in and he talks about human rights, and suddenly the Europeans were so concerned that Carter was too concerned about human rights! You wanted to say "Hey, wait a second, what's going on here?" It happened partly because the Europeans were worried about his commitment to other things, and that had to be demonstrated.

Q: Was there a concern, particularly by Western Europe, that Carter might be somewhat weak with the Soviet Union, looking for the good in everyone and all that?

HUNTER: Oh, I suspect there were some people worried about that, as they are worried about every new President. That's a matter of people getting to know a President. I don't know whether you ever met Carter. He's a very steely guy. He's a man of great inner strength and conviction, and you don't want to cross him, and you don't want to think you can get away with something against the interests of the United States. A lot of people misjudged Carter early on, images, you know.

Q: When you had Europe, was Helmut Schmidt the…

HUNTER: That's correct, yes. During the two and a half years I did Europe, yes, he was Federal Chancellor.

Q: How was he initially? Later on, they were not happy campers, Schmidt and Carter, but early on how did this?

HUNTER: My theory about this is that Schmidt, a very able man, very proud man, very arrogant man, who, and I think that's a pretty common view, had this kind of tutelary relationship with Presidents of the United States. He used to look at Gerald Ford the same way, who was a tyro when he came in. People mistake that. He was also…

Q: This is tape 3, side 1 with Robert Hunter. I don't have the previous tape because it's being transcribed, but I know basically where we left off. You were in the Carter administration in the NSC from when to when?

HUNTER: From two hours after the inauguration until 20 minutes before Carter left office.

Q: One of the issues that we talked about was, but we didn't complete, and I think it's quite important to get your perspective on this. One of the opinions I'm getting from quite a few people who dealt with the German-American issue was that, after Carter pulled the rug out from under Schmidt with the so-called neutron bomb, or whatever you want to call it....

HUNTER: I don't agree with that.

Q: That's what I mean. And your perspective, we were talking off mike, could you explain how you saw the relationship between Carter and Helmut Schmidt?

HUNTER: Well, I suspect, since I was in charge of West European affairs at the White House for two and a quarter years, I probably sat in the room with Carter and Schmidt for 50% or more of all the time they ever spent together, and I never heard a cross word. Very often, a meeting would end, and Schmidt would go home, and then we'd get all these reports coming back about the things he was saying about Carter. One, Schmidt was a difficult personality. He was a gutter politician, Hamburg is a tough city, like Chicago, he thought he should rule the world. He used to lecture Gerald Ford on economics, and Ford was smart enough to turn a deaf ear. Schmidt tried to lecture Carter on international politics, he thought he was going to be weak, and, in fact, Schmidt created by accident the Euro-missile problem by calling into question the credibility of American nuclear guarantees to Europe. He did it in a speech at the International Institute for Strategic Studies. I think that was Schmidt's bid to try to show that he was smart, but he got it wrong and caused a lot of trouble.

We also had an overzealous CIA station chief in Bonn, George Carver, who collected every little scrap of gossip that could be attributed to Schmidt about Carter and made sure it was sent back, and there were some equally mischievous people in Washington who made sure Carter heard about it.

Q: This is unfortunately fun for the munchkins who are at different levels.

HUNTER: This particular person, who is no longer with us, used to cackle about that. Made my life more difficult. So there was a certain difficulty built in by Schmidt, who was kind of feeling his oats, who saw this fresh new president coming to power. He had been able to lecture the previous President. The old joke – maybe apocryphal, maybe not! -- used to be that Gerald Ford would sit there in the Oval Office and take a call from Schmidt and say, "Yes Helmut" and lay the phone down on the desk, do a bit of work, and then pick it up about five minutes later and say, "Yes Helmut, you're exactly right," and put the phone down again. Carter didn't do that, Carter dealt directly. So maybe there was a little tension there, but, as I said, never a cross word passed, including times it was just the two of them in the room, plus two note-takers, of which I was one.

Q: Did you see though a change in the relationship after Carter, correct me if I'm wrong, had basically pressured Schmidt and the Germans to accept the basing of this neutron bomb, it was called at the time.

HUNTER: It was called that by Walter Pincus. He made up that name for it in an article he wrote in the "Outlook" section of the Washington Post, and I always told Walter that he should have gotten the Pulitzer for that piece, because he took something called the Enhanced Radiation Weapon – which, incidentally, had already been approved by NATO, it was a low-key thing, it was totally routine -- and he called it the Neutron Bomb, and said it's the bomb that can kill people and not destroy buildings. That shows how images make up political reality.

Q: A true capitalist bomb.

HUNTER: If you go back and look at his "Outlook" piece, we suddenly had a crisis. In fact, I got a call on the Sunday morning from Brzezinski, for whom I worked, and he said "What the hell is that? I didn't know about it." Harold Brown called up Zbig Monday morning and said, "What the hell are they talking about?" What had happened is that Pincus had gone through the defense budget on Capitol Hill and found this thing and Christened it. Then, of course, everybody suddenly paid attention to it. What happened was that Carter indicated that he was very reluctant to proceed with developing the ERW (Enhanced Radiation Weapon), but people in the administration ganged up on him and said it would damage American credibility if we backed off. The President went along, despite what I know for certain to have been his instinct on this. I probably was as deeply engaged in this issue as anybody else except the President, over time. Carter then said, "OK, but I'm not going to build this thing unless I can deploy it." So there was an awful lot of diplomacy, and that meant deploying it in Germany, because that's where the nuclear weapons were based, most of them. The German view was "We won't deploy it unless somebody else does. We need some cover." As luck would have it, that meant the Netherlands, because they also had *Honest John* missiles, or whatever they were, and no other allied country was interested. The Dutch wouldn't do it. After a large amount of to-ing and fro-ing -- it lasted about a year -- Carter suddenly decided he'd had enough. He just said "Ok, I'm not going to build the ERW." Because he couldn't get fulfilled the condition that "If I'm going to build it somebody has to deploy it," because the Germans kept going back and forth: "It has to be with the Dutch," and the Dutch were dithering. Thus there was no closure by the Europeans on willingness to accept the ERW. So, after Carter said what he did, stopping the program, there was a big shock. German Foreign Minister Hans Dietrich Genscher came running across the Atlantic, terrified that this was going to make Schmidt look bad or the German government look bad. Genscher was in a different political party from Schmidt. Carter put to Genscher the direct question, "Are you prepared to deploy this?" The German answer was, "Only if the Dutch will deploy it." Next question: "Are the Dutch prepared to deploy it?" "No." So Carter says, "All right, then you're not prepared to deploy it. That's correct? Ok, fine. Then I'll stick with my decision." The Germans then went out and said Carter had done this, and Carter had done that, and Carter had done the other thing. I've never talked to President Carter about it, but I presume what was in his mind was that enough damage had been done, and that there would be no value in throwing spitballs back at Schmidt. He kept his mouth shut. So Schmidt got away with the argument that, somehow, he had been the white knight and Carter had been the villain. One could understand why the Germans weren't prepared to do this by themselves. One could understand why the Dutch weren't prepared to do it. The ERW probably should have been killed in the first place. After all, it wasn't key to the strategy or the Alliance and didn't really matter one way or the other. The President's initial instincts finally prevailed, and he was let down by the Germans, and I guess you could also say the Dutch. But the conventional wisdom that is propagated by all kinds of people is wrong. I was in a position to know, and I watched it with a certain amount of disgust, but respected the President's decision to take the blame for something that wasn't his fault.

Q: People I've interviewed, this is what comes out of our people in Bonn and elsewhere.

HUNTER: He asked a direct question and got a direct answer, and the answer was "No," so he said, "Ok, I can't build it."

Q: Genscher was in for a long time. What was your evaluation of Genscher?

HUNTER: Hard to tell. He was a person who I think did play a very positive role in terms of inner-German relations, in helping to pave the way for what became the end of the Cold War in that part of the relationship. He, I think, was positively instrumental in the early transition period. He was definitely negative in the positions he took with regard to Yugoslavia. He as much as anybody from the outside world produced the positions that led to the breakup of Yugoslavia, particularly Slovenia and Croatia.

Q: But this is how many years later?

HUNTER: It was later, yeah. I know a lot of people here still look down their noses at Genscher, in part because during the Reagan administration he was pro-*détente.* There's even today a myth that goes around that somehow *détente* was a failure, and it was only Reagan's robustness that succeeded in producing the collapse of the Soviet Union. I think *détente* was a success, one of the small handful of great foreign policy successes in human history, because it took away from the Soviet Union the capacity to argue that countries and peoples in the Soviet bloc had to stay in line, because there was a threat from the big, bad Americans. Along with the Helsinki Final Act and similar efforts, it helped the rot get really seriously going in the Soviet Union. Now, my view after the Cold War is, look, there was great value in our having had strength, purpose, plus the role of the Western economies and the idea of promoting exchanges of information, along with decisions taken in particular by Gorbachev and policies like *détente*. The CSCE (Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe) process was much more important than the Mutual and Balanced Force Reduction (MBFR) process – and I said so very early on -- in leading to the collapse of the Soviet Union. *Détente* was certainly more important than the US military buildup in the 1980s. Reagan's rhetoric, if anything, slowed down change – that is, the effect of the internal rot in the Soviet Union and the communist system -- because it looked again like the US was challenging the security of all these countries: the great Soviet propaganda tool. In ending the Cold War, I think it was far more the pen rather than the sword that did it, but, I said after the end of the Cold War, "Let everybody take credit and move on." Unfortunately, we're now at a time with the terrorism business where that debate has been reopened about what caused the collapse of the Soviet Union, with the hardliners prevailing at this point. I think it's unfortunate the way we're handling issues of this sort. So my take on Genscher was basically positive. I remember a wonderful anecdote. I worked for Ted Kennedy, and we went to Bonn, and the government had just changed, and Genscher replaced another Free Democrat, Walter Scheel, who'd been there before him as foreign minister. I think Genscher had been interior minister or something before, and he didn't speak a word of English at that point. He learned English as time went on. So we're in the room, and he comes into the room, and the interpreter was late. So here was Ted Kennedy without a word of German, and the German foreign minister without a word of English, and for three, four, five minutes, they had to try to make polite conversation with one another without the least comprehension. But they were both seasoned pros, and they had a wonderful time. It was a kind of wonderful moment until this very harried interpreter finally ran into the room.

Q: You mentioned with Schmidt that by his, maybe this is the wrong term, but posturing sort of brought on the missile crisis which dominated certainly the early Reagan period.

HUNTER: Well the Carter and Reagan periods.

Q: Carter and Reagan. This is the SS-20 and all that. Could you explain what you felt Schmidt did and how this worked?

HUNTER: One has to understand, and you can say this boldly now that it's in the past, what the truth was. The truth was that American strategy in Europe was a suicide pact. We agreed that, if there were a serious Soviet conventional military incursion into Western Europe, we would initiate the use of nuclear weapons, and that would be suicide. So deterrence was 100%. In fact, it was organized that there were never enough troops in Europe to blunt a truly serious conventional attack by the Soviet Union, Warsaw Pact. There only needed to be enough troops, at one point it was called "tripwire." At another point, it was called the "pause" doctrine and then "flexible response." They talked about proportionality and the like, the idea that you had to have enough conventional forces to test the seriousness of aggression on the part of the other guy, before the US would use its nuclear weapons, not just what they called the "grab for Hamburg" or "salami tactics," taking Germany one slice at a time. All these terms that fortunately have been consigned to the ash heap of history, regarding probably the most dangerous moment in all of human history, and people on both sides were fortunately smart enough not to let it go to war. The Germans never wanted sufficient ground forces to be able to prosecute a non-nuclear war, because that could make war more likely, in terms of Soviet calculations, if the threat of early use of US nuclear retaliation was not as clearly in the mix; but a war, even without nuclear weapons, was the end of Germany. It would have still meant the destruction of West Germany. So German governments were prepared, as a conscious act, to run a higher risk that any war would be truly catastrophic in order to have a lower risk there'd be any war at all! That was fundamental. Fundamental to that was the idea that the United States would be prepared to commit suicide for Europe. That's primarily why we kept for a while 425,000 or so troops there and later, I seem to recall, 326,272 – I used to know the number exactly -- was the limit for many, many years, plus a lot of civilian dependents. They were all "hostages" to American willingness to commit suicide if need be, in order to deter even a Soviet conventional attack.

Q: I used to be baby birth officer in Frankfurt, my first job, and I was issuing something like 300 birth certificates a month. This gives you an idea of what we were doing there.

HUNTER: Having the dependents there was for reassurance of the American commitment. We always used to say that convincing the Russians that the United States would use nuclear weapons, if need be, was the easy part. After all, the more they demonized us, the more they thought we might actually do this. Since they would be the notional aggressor, they would have to think about what's the value for them of attacking the West if the United States does follow through with nuclear weapons, and what are the chances of America's doing it? The harder part was convincing Allies, in particular the Germans, that we would do it. We always considered that the harder part. This is all mind games anyway, it always was. What happened was that the Soviet Union was starting to build SS-20 ballistic missiles, targeted on Western Europe, not targeted on the United States. They weren't intercontinental ballistic missiles, I guess you would call them intermediate-range ballistic missiles. It was kind of a special category of its own. There was no obvious reason why they were doing it. Maybe they did it just because they could do it, or maybe they were insecure about the survivability of their ICBMs. Remember, the Cuban Missile crisis came about in part because John Kennedy had proclaimed in the 1960 presidential campaign that there was a missile gap. Yes, indeed, there was a missile gap, it was in our favor! Robert McNamara told Kennedy that very soon after he became President. The Cuban Missile Crisis could be seen at least in part as the Soviet Union's trying to balance things off. Whether that's true or not, and maybe it had other qualities, but one of the problems in strategy always is understanding what the other person is on about. One of the problems we're having with foreign policy right now in the Middle East is we're not doing that, once again. We're not trying to think what the other guy is up to. So here you were, the Soviet Union was building these SS-20s, and the argument was that, since these would hit Western Europe and not the United States, even though they would kill a lot of Americans, this would enable the early use of nuclear weapons by the Soviet Union, in ways such that the United States might say to itself "We aren't necessarily prepared to put our nation at risk." So Schmidt, in a famous speech at the IISS, raised these questions, and he raised the ultimate bugaboo of the fundamental strategy – the fundamental commitment. He argued, in effect, that the United States and Europe might be "decoupled" from one another, and the United States might not be prepared to honor a commitment to commit suicide for Europe – though nobody ever used that phrase -- and, hence, that could increase the risks of war or, less than war, of intimidation by the Soviet Union. Now, the irony is that the amount of destruction would still be horrendous. The idea that the United States could sit out any such kind of nuclear war limited to Europe was ultimately ludicrous. Later on, we decided that we needed to deploy weapons in Europe, the cruise missiles, and the Pershing II ballistic missile, to be able to hit Soviet targets from within Europe, as though somehow attacking the Soviet Union from Europe, destroying Moscow, etcetera, as opposed to doing it from the United States, would be reassuring to West Europeans, because it would put the United States less at risk and hence we would be more willing to use them. Even though, as I argued already, there was no way the US could have avoided being dragged into such a war and suffering cataclysmic destruction. Have I lost you in the logic train?

Q: A bit, yes.

HUNTER: Well that's the logic train, and you can see how convoluted it gets. Well, having said that, there was a problem. Not a problem with the Soviets necessarily, unless they were thinking of doing something which would have been insane, but in order to reassure people in Western Europe, particularly Germany. Governments were now being stirred up. This led to a problem, a crisis you can call it, that extended over a period of time. Now, it could very well have been, as one was creeping up to transformations in transatlantic relations and a lot of other things, that something else would have come along to lead some Europeans to wonder about the long-term relationship with the United States, but it happened to be this particular thing, the SS-20, coupled with the Schmidt speech. Now, I'll say something positive about the handling of the crisis. I believe, and I said so at the time, that the fact we had gone through the neutron bomb crisis, which had been a mess, helped us successfully in two administrations, Carter and Reagan, to deal with the Euro-missile issue. It was dealt with successfully. How much risk was involved in it? Historians can argue about that, but it ended up being dealt with successfully. I don't think we would have dealt with it successfully, certainly not as successfully, if we hadn't had the neutron bomb learning lesson first. In fact, at the time I said it's like getting cowpox so you don't get smallpox later on. We were vaccinated. We'd had a trial run on something that didn't matter very much, so then, when something came along which did in a far more significant way seem to cut to the core of the grand bargain, the suicide pact, we did a better job than I believe we would have done otherwise.

Q: When Schmidt started doing this, their bugaboo was that somehow or other the United States might stand by and let something happen in Europe. Ours was, correct me if I'm wrong, that Germany might reach an agreement with the Soviet Union for unification and neutrality.

HUNTER: Not really. There were always some people around who thought about that, but it wasn't serious. Nobody of any prominence or sagacity or significance in the government that I heard of, I never heard it discussed, even though one is always discussing everything else. What Schmidt did – when he gave his IISS speech -- had a long fuse. It took a while to get going. When it did get going, in part because they were questioning the reliability of the United States, I suspect the overall questioning about Carter played into that. His emphasis on human rights, for example. One of the great ironies, and I've been working on this for 40 years, is that our beloved European Allies -- less true now than since the end of the Cold War, but still not untrue -- always no matter how much they have a problem with a sitting US President, as soon as the new President comes in they suddenly decide that the previous president was wonderful, and the new guy doesn’t know what he’s doing. There was always a crisis of confidence. During the Cold War, you could understand it, because their security depended on having US Presidents who would do and say the right things, full stop.

Q: I talked to people who were in Berlin when the Kennedy administration came in, and they were nervous as hell because they thought Harriman was making noises, they were getting wobbly on Berlin.

HUNTER: I’ve been through it so many times. When Clinton came in, I was not yet in the government, I said, "Here’s what’s going to happen, and why you have to deal with it." Then we had a visit to Europe by the new Secretary of State, Warren Christopher, in which he didn’t have any answers on Bosnia and, boom, it happened! I was sitting there, shaking my head, recalling that more-or-less the same thing happened when I was in the Carter administration, when Mondale went over to Europe right after the Inauguration. It was not Christopher's fault, he was inadequately prepared, and I said to his people that you’re about to make a mistake, I’d seen it so many times, it happens routinely. So, then, even before I was formally in the government as ambassador to NATO, I wrote Christopher's "intervention" for the June Athens NATO foreign ministers' meeting, to try reestablishing his reputation in Europe. One of the ironies with Carter was that Kissinger had been in Helsinki in ’75 and was deeply faulted by the Europeans, he and Ford, of course, for not being sufficiently attuned to the human dimensions, and human rights, and all of the rest of these things. Poor old Kissinger, the one time I’ll say something to feel sorry for him, who worked hard on *détente* and got pilloried from the Right for it, even though it was the right thing to do, even though it went against maybe some of the things he really believed, but that's life’s ironies. But, anyway, so Kissinger was getting pilloried for not being forthcoming on human rights and, finally, reluctantly, going along with the Helsinki Final Act, and here comes a President into power who does exactly what the Europeans had criticized his predecessor for being reluctant to do a year earlier, and suddenly that’s not what they wanted! "God," they said, "Carter's going to be for human rights, he’s not going to be for the security things." It was a little like Bill Clinton, who had to spend his entire presidency trying to prove that he wasn’t anti-military, because of things that had happened before he became President, an unfair set of charges. Carter spent his whole presidency trying to demonstrate that he was strong on security. So that I think fed the misgivings that were there on the European side about Carter. But when you had somebody who was throwing gasoline on the fire like Schmidt did, that didn’t help.

Q: When Schmidt made this speech and all, was NSC saying, "Oh my God?" You might say the chattering classes and everything get onto it.

HUNTER: It had a long fuse. It took about a year I guess to catch on, but it put the idea into play, and it then got reinforced. I’m going to say something that’s going to really sound cynical or callous, but an awful lot of strategic doctrine in the Cold War was mind-playing. Partly in the belief that you’re affecting the mind or behavior of the adversary, but a lot of it was affecting the mind or the behavior of allies, and also trying to reassure oneself about certain kinds of positions which, let’s face it, were fundamentally insane. Mutually Assured Destruction was called MAD by some wonderfully unconscious irony.

The way I used to justify it, because none of us were oblivious to this, most people weren't oblivious to it or were thinking about it, is that nuclear deterrence, the threat to destroy the world in order to prevent Soviet aggression, was bad, but it would be worse if you actually had a nuclear war. So one lived with this doctrine and positions and everything built up on it, but you really could not justify it in terms of any kind of proportionality, and thus cognitive dissonance was involved. The only redeeming feature that enabled you to preserve your sanity was to understand that the alternative could very well be worse, to actually have the war, and that would be even more insane! Fortunately, we're no longer in that era. Let me just make one editorial point. People today talk about terrorism, or political Islamism, and things like that, as though they are threats on the order of what we faced in the Cold War, but, in fact, we are in an era that's so much more salubrious than the previous era, where one was dealing with the risks of humankind's final war. When you'd have two Air Force captains sitting in a silo, somewhere, with the capacity to end the world. And a couple of Russians, probably, on the other side. Think about that. That was before the weapons got electronic locks that kept anyone from being able to do that.

Q: One of the things when you had this Mutually Assured Destruction syndrome going and all, were you sitting in the NSC, and others, getting kind of worried about this elderly generation in the Kremlin? Who were these guys, and, particularly after Afghanistan, they're going in '79 into there, were you kind of wondering were these rational people? Because the whole idea of this balance was premised on people being rational, and not saying, "Oh, the hell with it, if I've got to go everybody is going to go."

HUNTER: There had to be a fundamental acceptance that the other side would be rational about his overall national interest, though there were always a few paranoids around here who said there might be some madman over there. But one thing that we and the Soviets were quite careful about was trying to bolster one another's ability to not make mistakes. For example, satellite imagery. We never interfered with theirs, they never interfered with ours. It was one of the most important stabilizing things, so you could see what the other guy was doing and have enough warning time. We then worked on agreements like Incidents at Sea. These were circuit breakers. That's why there had historically been limited wars, like the Crimean War. There was understanding on both sides that there are things you don't do because you don't want to put the other guy in a position where he might make some truly crazy assessment. One reason we're now having issues with the concept of deterrence, in regard to some potential countries that might get the bomb, is because deterrence has as its fundamental predicate that people are ultimately going to be sane, and that you create processes that make it hard, if anybody is insane, actually to use the weapons. That's why films like *Dr. Strangelove* were useful, where you want to take away from a mad base commander in either country the ability to launch an attack. You want to build in checks, you want to build in circuit breakers, you want to have possibilities of communication, so that even if they do something like Afghanistan, that might seem to us to be stupid, or they might have seen something like Vietnam as stupid --- you'd have to ask them -- it doesn't get out of hand. One thing that did happen after the Soviets invaded Afghanistan was the Carter Doctrine, which I first proposed when I was in charge of Middle East affairs at the National Security Council. I had a colleague, Gary Sick, a really highly-qualified Navy intelligence officer, who handled the Iranian account. I did Persian Gulf security and Arab-Israeli. I figured out early that, while all these crises were going on, we needed some kind of broader intellectual framework to govern policy. I collected a team of about four or five people from around the government, and we met in my office from time to time. Bob Murray, who's head of the Center for Naval Analysis, today, was one. Also Bob Ames, who was the National Intelligence Officer for the Middle East at the CIA, who was blown up in Beirut. Outstanding individual. And a couple or three other people, from the State Department, etc. We came up with not just the need, but also the framework, for a Carter Doctrine. I sent a short memo to Brzezinski, and suggested this, and he said, "Do me a memo, laying it all out." So I started to write a memo, and I said to myself, "What the hell," I wrote it as a speech and sent it to Brzezinski. He had to go into a meeting with the President on the 1980 State of the Union. There was a State Department draft, which was put forward as the foreign policy part of the State of the Union, and Carter read the two drafts and said, "I'll go with this one," meaning mine. So I remember going to the White House speechwriter, Rick Hertzberg, who was in a state of shock, because he had to start fresh with what I had written. Then the key operational paragraph -- which says to the Soviets don't screw with Iran, in effect that's what it says -- Brzezinski put in as the key element. I had the inspiration for the doctrine and got the basic framework and basic writing, and then Zbig gave it the direct toughness it required to be real. In fact, on the wall behind you, I have the key paragraphs from the 1980 State of the Union. Here was the remarkable thing about it, a coherent strategic perspective that is disparaged, today, when we are doing so much in the Middle East without a strategic framework. Where propaganda is dominating rather than insight. Here we were in the middle of the Iranian hostage crisis, and here was the President of the United States taking a broader view, saying in effect -- it's couched in less precise language but unmistakable language -- if the Soviet Union moves from Afghanistan into Iran, it'll have a fight with us. And that was a time when the Iranians were ticking us off, but it was still in our fundamental strategic interest. The Carter Doctrine.

Q: You moved from German affairs in the NSC?

HUNTER: From West European affairs. I was director. Today we have a high falutin' name – Special Assistant to the President and Senior Director for Western Europe. Then, it was just a matter of "clusters" that Zbig put together, and I was in charge of the Western European account and didn't have a title. I made up a title as Director of West European affairs, so people would understand it. Since then, it's been grade inflation. When I worked in the Johnson White House, there was the President of the United States and he had seven special assistants, six of whom had one deputy. I was deputy to Doug Cater, and McGeorge Bundy had a handful of people who made up the National Security Council staff. Today, every typist, practically, is a Special Assistant to the President. Grade inflation. [laughter]

So I was the number one in the West European cluster, which also included Yugoslavia as part of the West rather than Central or Eastern Europe. I was involved in lots of things. I kept the green eyeshade people from cutting $125 million a year for Portugal that we'd promised in aid to a thing called the Luso-American Development Foundation, because we don't directly pay "rent" for bases in allied countries, like the one in the Azores. I arranged the first-ever presidential visit to the European Commission in Brussels and created the semi-annual US summits with what is now the EU. They still happen, though now only once a year. I directed the '78 NATO summit in Washington. I ran presidential visits to France and Germany. I did a lot of work on Germany, on Berlin, including one time where a Pole hijacked a *LOT* airliner and made the pilot take him to the airport in West Berlin, in the US Sector. Ordinarily, the West Germans would have just sent him home, but he had shot someone on the plane; so they said to us, “You’re the Occupying Power, it’s your problem!” So I had to organize a legal proceeding, we’d never had to do it before in Berlin, and it got caught up in all of the rigmarole about the end of World War II rights of the Occupying Powers. That got me working on the problems that came out of the war; and I got some of the old laws repealed, like one that only let the US Army – no Germans -- water ski in Bavaria or hunt deer.

I also set the ball rolling to repeal the act which said that no one who had been a Communist could come to the US; this was a way of working against the Euro-communists, in fact. I worked with Dick Gardner, our Ambassador to Italy, on language to oppose the Euro-Communists coming into the Italian government, in a way that the US couldn't get blamed for it, but the process could be pushed forward of separating these people even more from Moscow. I drafted presidential letters to European leaders and Pope John-Paul II. And a friend in White House presidential personnel said to me one day: "Isn't it about time we had a Catholic as ambassador to the Vatican?" I agreed. "Any ideas?" I said, right off the top of my head, "How about Robert Wagner?" He'd been mayor of New York. So that happened. Sometimes it's easy. I also got the president's agreement to return the Crown of St. Stephen to Hungary, to give nationalism a push. The bureaucrats and the naysayers walked it back, so it took another year or so until the crown actually went to Budapest. I got the administration to agree to a joint executive branch-congressional Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe, the only cross-branch body that exists, at least up 'til then. And I was White House backstop to former Supreme Court Justice Arthur Goldberg, who was our representative to the CSCE Review Conference in Belgrade. Three years later, he gave away the bride when Shireen and I got married, on Bastille Day, 1980.

Then Bill Quandt, after Camp David, decided to leave the government just after the time of the signing of the treaty between Israel and Egypt, and Zbig needed a replacement. The irony was what happened with these accidental things: Zbig turned to one of the other people on the staff, who was doing intelligence, Sam Hoskinson, and said, “I’d like you to replace Quandt.” Sam had a lot of background in the Middle East, I think he was former CIA. He said, “Well, gee, thanks very much, Dr. Brzezinski, but I was just about to come and see you. I’m going off to work for Governor Connelly for President against Carter.”

Q: The governor of Texas.

HUNTER: The opposite party. So suddenly Zbig had a problem. He not only had one guy leaving, but the chosen successor was going to go off and work for Connelly. He had to get this buttoned up right away. So he and his deputy, David Aaron, said, "Who've we got?" and so I got called in and told "I want you to be head of the Middle East shop." I said, "Can I think about it?" and Zbig said "No. It's 'yes' or "no.'" I said "Ok, yes." So it happened just like that. In part because I had a very strong background in the Middle East. I'd worked on Arab-Israeli issues going back to the Six-Day War, I'd worked on Persian Gulf, etcetera, so I had a very strong background in it.

Q: When you talk about the Middle East, was there a completely different compartment that was dealing with the Iran business?

HUNTER: No, there were two of us, together, Gary Sick and me. People sometimes find it hard to believe that an NSC staff can be as small as it is, and Zbig's was one of the smaller ones. There were a few folks detailed from other government agencies wandering around, but it was really just two of us handling the Middle East, just as there'd been four of us handling Europe, and that stretched all the way through the Soviet Union. So I was nominally number one in overall charge, but Gary had been handling the Iran account, and he continued to handle the Iran account. I kind of watched what was going on, but he was the one who dealt with it and interacted with the President on Iran. It worked effectively that way. But I had the rest of the region, which was Arab-Israeli plus Persian Gulf security, and also North Africa.

Q: Right after Camp David, this was by all accounts very successful and all, but what were we looking at? Was it just implementing, or how to build on the success and get Jordan and others, Lebanon?

HUNTER: There were different perspectives. President Carter saw this as only step one in fulfilling the requirements of the famous UN Security Council Resolutions 242 and 338, to try to get full peace. He started out with the most important, clearly not the most difficult, but the most important strategic piece, which was peace between Israel and Egypt, where Sadat went to Jerusalem. Some people say, and I was not working on the Middle East at that point, so maybe I have more objectivity, since my own reputation is not at stake. People say, "Oh, Carter had failed with this, and so in frustration Sadat went off to Jerusalem." I saw it at the time; it was exactly the opposite. Because Carter had created a situation which had an opportunity to work, Sadat did what he did. Incidentally, we calculated, we analyzed, whether or not Sadat ever pronounced on this, that he had run the '73 war in order to show that he had guts, so that he could then make peace in order to rescue his country from this conundrum of having to look like he was an Arab in fighting Israel, which didn't really matter much to him. The Egyptians always have this duality. They're Arabs when it's useful, they're not Arabs when it's not useful. I remember being with Sadat with Ted Kennedy, it was about '73 or '74. At one point in the meeting, at Sadat's home at the Barrages, outside of Cairo, Kennedy raised the issue of Saudi Arabia. And Sadat said, "Saudi Arabia? Who are they? They are these people who came out of the desert. But *I* am *Egypt*." You heard the whole Pharaonic thing, you know. So the Israeli strategic calculation was that the only country that could make war potentially successfully was Egypt. If you took Egypt out of the military balance, any rationally-calculated Arab attack on Israel dropped virtually to the vanishing point. I say rationally, there's always irrationality. After all, since Israel had beaten all comers with Egypt in the military balance, nothing was going to happen with Egypt out of the balance. So it was very important for Begin and Israel to do this. Carter saw that as the first step and in fact he, to this day, and you could talk to him about it, has indicated a sense of betrayal. I wasn't at Camp David, but people support what I'm about to say, that there was an agreement by Begin to see real progress on the Palestinian question, and there was supposedly an agreement by Sadat that he was going to go and engage the King of Jordan. Some say in retrospect -- and I can't really judge because I wasn't there, I was still doing Europe -- that maybe King Hussein should have been at Camp David. I'd say probably not, it was tough enough as it was. Well, Sadat didn't go to King Hussein. The thing that Begin had promised Carter was he'd stop settlement activity. That's what Carter says. In fact, during the 1980 campaign, I remember Carter met with a group of rabbis in the Old Executive Office Building. He said it to them directly, "Begin made me this promise." It was kind of a bold thing to say. He felt, at least as far as I can judge, betrayed on this. Carter was bound and determined that he was going to move forward on the Palestinian issue.

So talks were created on autonomy for the West Bank and Gaza, and Carter was shrewd enough to pick somebody who had both been highly successful, was considered a miracle worker, and also came out of the Jewish community, to cover that base, Bob Strauss. As secular as they come, incidentally. Bob Strauss fit the bill. Then when Strauss went off to run the political campaign, Carter brought in Sol Linowitz, another person of distinction. Actually a person of much more diplomatic experience. Different personalities. Both highly skilled individuals. Very highly skilled people. And there was an ambassador, Jim Leonard, appointed to be on the ground as the deputy, and a small team was put together, and I was the National Security Council representative on Strauss' and then Linowitz' team. I went to see Strauss the day he was appointed. I'd had enough background in Democratic Party politics. I'd worked for Humphrey at the National Committee when Strauss was treasurer, for example. I liked to believe I got along with Strauss in part because I had some political sense rather than just foreign policy sense, to the extent I have any of either. Carter was bound and determined to move this thing forward and it was, I guess, a tragedy at the end of his presidency that he ran out of time before he had a chance to move this further. To continue to fulfill what was really an American strategic interest. You can say, if you take a step back, that the real strategic requirement for the United States, the compulsion, was the Egypt-Israel Peace Treaty because, by removing the risk of a calculated, rational war, as opposed to somebody starting something which Israel would just smack them down real quick, the chances of escalating to a confrontation with the Soviet Union went to zero, and that was for us the big strategic requirement. In fact, from that moment until 9/11 and certainly after the collapse of the Soviet Union, US engagement in Arab-Israeli peacemaking was not a strategic but a discretionary act, a good thing to do. Ancillary benefits. But it hasn't been something with the compulsion that it had during the era, where a miscue or war could lead to a US-Soviet nuclear confrontation, as may or may not have happened in '73. Now, after 9/11, Arab-Israeli peacemaking is again a strategic requirement, but there was that period from

’79 until ’91 in which a few things happened, some useful things, but it was because we cared for Israel, we didn’t want people to die, and you wanted to increase American standing, but these weren’t vital strategic issues.

Q: How did you view after Camp David the leadership of Begin and all? Where were the Israelis going?

HUNTER: I’ve been in the game long enough to be a realist. You deal with what you have to deal with in terms of leaders of other countries. In fact, I remember when Begin became prime minister, and he replaced a very popular Israeli ambassador here, named Eppy Evron, with a real hard-liner, Meir Rosen. A lot our people bemoaned that. I said “No, you want an ambassador who is going honestly to reflect the views of the person you’re dealing with, not somebody whom you like and who might try to please you. You want accuracy of information." We suffered from that with the ambassador the Shah of Iran had here, who kept feeding us a lot of phony bumf. Ardeshir Zahedi, who ladled caviar all over town. I used to enjoy the caviar that you’d get when you’d go and dine there, but he was essentially useless as somebody who could have helped his country at that particular time. It’s always very important to have ambassadors who are a true reflection of what the hell is going on. That’s what the term “ambassador” means, after all. In making peace with Egypt, Begin had achieved what he needed to achieve, strategically, which was promoting the security of the state of Israel, and he was deeply committed to it. That’s his job. Obviously, he was less concerned about working out deals with other countries or the Palestinians. Syria would have been a good thing if something could have happened, or Jordan if something could have happened, but the Palestinians -- given the very deep Israeli association with what they called Judea and Samaria, others would call it the West Bank -- clearly this was not something that was driving him. But the autonomy talks were convened, and diplomacy went back and forth, and there was a reasonable college try, but Israel did not have a strategic interest in moving in that direction at the price that it would probably have had to pay. That’s their calculation to make.

Q: How much did the Iranian hostage crisis inhibit what else we were doing [in the region]?. There was so much public attention to this.

HUNTER: Interesting question. Well, it clearly colored how we looked at the rest of the region, because there was a very deep concern about the export of the Iranian Revolution. One of the striking things, today, is that nobody thinks about that. People talk about terrorism and all that, but certainly, if anybody’s going to be a terrorist, it's not by looking to Tehran for inspiration, as opposed to what it may do to support terrorists with practical help. In fact, that went into the waste basket pretty quickly, and it didn’t take too many years, as people suddenly decided they didn’t want to live like the Iranians were living [laughter], so it had a very short half-life, and the Iranians were also Shiites and not Sunnis. Most of the areas that we were concerned about happened to be Sunni, except for some of the oil-producing areas. God gave most of the oil to the Shiites! The Iranian Revolution and the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan were the reasons that we created the Rapid Deployment Joint Task Forces, and why we got some military facility rights in various places and deployed forces and put things into Diego Garcia and did a lot of other things. Then in the next administration, the Reagan administration tilted heavily towards Iraq, after Iraq started the war against Iran. I saw something the other day where somebody had written about Iranian aggression against Iraq. No. Saddam invaded, taking advantage of the circumstances. In the Carter Administration, we were very studious about keeping the hell out of that. It was the Reagan administration that came in and gave all the help to Saddam, including Rumsfeld, who was the guy who arranged for the transfer of germs from the Centers for Disease Control. The US gave Saddam intelligence on bombing targets, we turned a blind eye on the use of gas and other outrageous acts. Then we're stunned when the *USS Stark* was attacked by an Iraqi missile, which I have never believed was a mistake. I believe it was Saddam showing that he was in control. We said, "What a terrible mistake, gosh, apologize and it will be OK." But in the Carter administration, we tried, I think, to have a broader framework for this. The striking thing is that Arab-Israeli peacemaking wasn't affected by the Iranian hostage crisis. It was running on its own steam. It was a tiny team of people, and one of the things that amazed me was in going from Europe to the Middle East. When you worked on Europe, everybody was in your business, everybody wanted part of the action; and also they liked going to the great watering holes on the Continent! But the Middle East tends to be a loser, as a set of issues and as a career, beyond those who make a life's work of it, like the so-called Arabists. Europe is also multi-faceted, so broad. We got into Arab-Israeli policy, and there were eight people who did it. The President, the Vice President, Brzezinski, once in a while David Aaron, but very rarely, Bob Strauss, the Secretary Of State, and the Assistant Secretary of State for the Near East and his deputy, and me. What's that, eight, nine people? That was it. That was the team that did the policy. It was quite an experience, because you go to these meetings in the Situation Room, and sometimes the President was there, sometimes not, and that was the team that did it. Because the President was so deeply committed to it, and he saw it morally. They'd gotten something for the Israelis, he now wanted to get something for the Palestinians, but also it was a fundamental perspective on taking a problem off the table for the United States.

Q: What was your impression of how the president viewed the Palestinians, and a potential state, and the Israeli treatment thereof?

HUNTER: Well, the state for Palestinians was way down the road. It wasn't in play. The methodology then and now is what's called step-by-step, within the framework of UNSC Resolutions 242 and 338, which is that you've got a goal, it's kind of generalized, and 242 was written to be generalized. In fact, there is a famous phrase there, as it was negotiated, that Israel shall withdraw "from territories," English edition -- that can be some of them or all of them, it's ambiguous -- while in the other official UN languages, beginning with French, Israel will withdraw from *les territoires,* from THE territories, all of them, Ok? A totally different meaning, and both are equally authentic. It was written that way to satisfy both sides. Ok, fine. So this is a goal, it's maybe a little UN legal document, but it's a direction to go on. So step-by-step was you do one little piece, people get used to it, then you do another little piece, and the idea is that, by the time you get three pieces down the road, people forget about what they were squabbling about in piece number one, because it gets accepted. So you keep doing this, incrementally. The idea in 1979 was autonomy. If you could get autonomy for the Occupied Territories or Administered Territories, depending on who's saying it -- Israelis said administered, the Egyptians said occupied... Incidentally, the Egyptians did the negotiating, not the Jordanians, because Sadat didn't want the Jordanians to do it, in part because the Egyptians wanted not only to keep control, but they wanted to keep American friendship and the money flowing, you know? They didn't want the money to go to somebody else.

Q: This was a very handsome payout which continues today.

HUNTER: Cheap at the price, some people would say. So the idea was, as you know, even dealing directly with the PLO (Palestinian Liberation Organization) was an absolute no-no. There was the famous incident of Andrew Young, US ambassador to the United Nations, who on a Sunday afternoon was with his son walking past the apartment of the PLO representative to the UN and dropped in for a chat, right? He reported back to Washington that he'd done that, and he got tapped on the wrist. Probably not a good thing to do, but it was just a social call. Then he told the Israeli ambassador to the UN that it hadn't been a social call at all, but that he'd deliberately gone to see the PLO guy and had actually been doing some negotiating. Then the Israeli ambassador was in touch with the State Department, through his mission here, and the Secretary of State said "No, no it was just a social call, Andy told me so." The Israeli said "No, no, he just told our guy something else." Cyrus Vance was not amused. So Andy had to go. That's when Don McHenry took over at the UN. But this shows you the state of play, where you could not have any relationship with the PLO. It's a long way from there to now, where the first President who has taken a clear-cut stand on the two-state solution is George W. Bush, the current president. Bill Clinton floated the idea, but this guy, President Bush, with the Road Map, is the first one that actually said that, in a speech on June 11, 2002. So that's what we were working towards, towards autonomy.

Q: How was Arafat considered at the time you were?

HUNTER: Not somebody we could deal with.

Q: Was it just because he was the head of PLO or was it because Arafat was Arafat?

HUNTER: Both. You know, we didn't trust him, then, and people didn't trust him later. The Egyptians were the ones who did the negotiating for the Palestinians, but everybody knew that when anything was discussed, their people would run around the corner and talk to Arafat about it. We did talk to Palestinians. Palestinians who, in fact, I'm sure some were actually members of the PLO, but, so long as they were part of the Egyptian delegation, no one checked their credentials at the door.

Q: So an Arab was an Arab even if they were Egyptian or Palestinian.

HUNTER: As long as they were Egyptians. In theory, as long as they could be represented as Egyptians or with the Egyptians and, in effect, if I may be ironic about it, as long as they were kosher. Thus nobody on the US side committed a crime or anything.

Q: What about the, I guess you would call it, the Jewish lobby, the Israeli lobby, all that, during this time. What sort of a role, particularly politically, domestically within the States, how did this impact on you at all?

HUNTER: Well, at that particular time, Carter was doing things which were highly popular in Israel and hence highly popular with the Jewish community, here, in terms of helping Israel get peace with Egypt. With autonomy, that process was also blessed by Israel, and so there was no particular tension there. The moment I took over the Middle Eastern portfolio, I did the rounds. I had done this when I worked for Ted Kennedy, beforehand, which is I went to see the leadership of the Jewish community. I saw a whole host of people, so they could see me and talk with me and make sure that they understood where I was coming from and what my views were, and commitments, and being for what was best for America, and here's what we're trying to do and all that. I do that always, because you don't want people to go around wondering who you are and looking at the color of your eyes and the like. A whole host of people. On top of which, there was a representative to the American Jewish community in the White House. There were two of them. Ed Sanders, at one point, who was from California, who was head of a couple of the national Jewish groups, AIPAC and the Conference of Presidents [of Major American Jewish Organizations]. Then Al Moses, later head of the American Jewish Committee and ambassador to Romania, succeeded him. They were on the White House staff handling liaison with the Jewish leadership. I created very close partnerships with them. Incidentally, Marc Grossman, who later became undersecretary of state, was a Foreign Service Officer on detail, I think to Al Moses. Marc Ginsberg, who had been a protégé of mine in the Kennedy office, was also part of it. Ned Walker, who later became head of the Middle East Institute, was also involved in our team. So I worked very closely with Ed Sanders and Al Moses, because the last thing you want to do is have surprises. I have found that, in dealing with various interest groups, including the Jewish leadership, is that if you sit down and talk with people, you tell them what you're doing, you engage them, you bring them in, you schmooze about what the problems are and the dilemmas and the choices are, you'll get as much support as possible. With regard to autonomy [for the West Bank and Gaza], since we were working directly with the Israeli government to make sure something would fly and could work, I don't think we had any serious problems. The serious problem, of course, came with the famous vote at the United Nations on the 29th of February of 1980, I remember.

Q: What was the issue?

HUNTER: Before talking about that....I like to think I was reasonably successful because I've been involved with the Arab-Israeli thing for quite some time, for more than a decade at that point. I had demonstrated certain kinds of commitments, which included the fulfillment of UNSCR 242, and I had good standing with the Israelis and good standing on the Arab side, as well. In fact, I think I'm one of a handful of people who've managed over the years to keep credibility with each side, without getting labeled as a tool of the opposite side. Israel's success and security matter a lot to me, as they do to a lot of Americans. Seeing the Arab-Israeli conflict come to an end and Palestinians being able to live out their lives in a positive way is also something very important. So that was one of the ways I think I was able to be effective at that time. You raised a question about the so-called Israel lobby. One of the things, if you're going to try to get something done in foreign affairs, you've got to deal with reality. The reality is that a lot of things are embedded in our domestic politics. For example, there were the Four Horsemen, who finally were able to get American policy around to a particular point in regard to Northern Ireland and knocked out NORAID. They did so by working effectively with the Irish community. So part of what we were trying to do here was to ensure that, as we moved this process forward, we weren't going to hit any fault lines that would destroy everything. I think Carter was very effective at that.

But the big moment occurred because we were in an election year, and these votes were taking place at the UN, a succession of resolutions. We had an ambassador to the UN, Don McHenry, who was critical of the Israelis and who was quite sympathetic to the Palestinians. I think he got the balance wrong. In fact, he was quite regularly looking for opportunities to take shots at the Israelis in ways that I and others didn't think was useful. The way it often works is that, at the final moment in a negotiation -- and this is the way all these Arab-Israeli things work, including with Begin in regard to the Egypt-Israel Treaty -- was that we laid down a final draft that did it. The argument the President uses at the end is to ask: "Is issue X so important to you as to be worth not getting peace?" That's what you do at that point. But here was this loose cannon up in New York. It got so bad that, I remember, it got to the point they had to require that all of McHenry's speeches and UN statements be cleared at the White House, because some things he was saying just were unhelpful. Diplomats are supposed to do things that are helpful and not things that are going to make themselves feel good or get themselves popular with particular constituencies. I remember one draft speech was so outrageous, the stuff McHenry wanted to say, that I marked it up and took it over to the Vice President, Fritz Mondale, with whom I worked very closely on these things, and had for years, with some suggested changes. Mondale took that draft statement to be made by our UN representative into the President, and the President initialed each of the changes, to direct McHenry not to say certain things which were just explosive and just stupid. So that was quite something. But on this particular occasion, February 29, there was a resolution being considered by the UN Security Council, and, obviously, we would not want to have to abstain or certainly not veto it if you can help it. We wanted to be able to vote positively on some things. There were a couple of offending passages in this particular draft resolution. But I had the assurance from the particular responsible senior person at the State Department, a deputy assistant secretary, who was in charge, that these two passages had been removed from the draft. Somebody who was not straightforward with me, and with the pace of things, it wasn't possible to see the actual text, and so I said, "All right, if those are out, on that condition you can go forward." Well, they hadn't been taken out, and our ambassador voted for it, as he obviously wanted to do, and all hell broke loose, as you know. Carter in effect said "That's not my wish, and I would change our position." Then the critics got him for being inconsistent. It was just before the New York primary, etcetera, it had an impact.

Q: Wasn't there any effort to, if you've got an ambassador who's off the range, and Don McHenry didn't come with any particular political background, he came from the ranks of the State Department.

HUNTER: Yeah, he was career.

Q: I would have thought that they could have said well, let's have somebody else. Wasn't that a consideration?

HUNTER: He got the job because Andy Young had to go, because he misled Cy Vance, and McHenry, the deputy, had just negotiated a standoff over some Russian on a Soviet airliner at JFK, so they just went with him, in part because he was also African-American, as was the guy who just got fired.

Q: During the election period of 1980, did you feel a panic coming on, or concern about the election and how foreign affairs was playing in the game?

HUNTER: No, we thought we were going to win. That's a short answer. The longer answer is quite obviously that the Iranian situation clearly was having a political impact. There's no question about that. Whether people worked harder at the hostage crisis because the President's political fate was at stake, nobody could ever tell. I do know that those of us who were working on these issues didn't wake up every morning and say, "By God, I've got to get this thing solved now because we've got an election coming." We thought we were going to win the election. In fact, the reason Carter lost the election was because of the economy, the double digit inflation, unemployment, and interest rates. Some of the worst things. Yes, it is true that he made a particular announcement on an element of the negotiations on the Iranian hostage crisis on the morning of the Wisconsin primary, and there were some other things done related to the election, but those of us who were working the issue, even though I've got a lot of political experience, we were doing our best just to get these people out. The person who did take the US election seriously was clearly the Ayatollah Khomeini, who held off until he got rid of Jimmy Carter to resolve the crisis.

Q: Did you have any feel for the Reagan people?

HUNTER: Let me just say one other thing. Obviously, as well, the Autonomy Talks closed down as we got into the election season, because there was a political question there, but it wasn't decided by Carter, it was decided by Sadat. Sadat, you can check the date, April or May or whatever it was, called off any further effort on the Autonomy Talks. Most people said, "Oh, Sadat has given up on Begin, blah blah blah." I was convinced that it was quite the opposite. That he was trying to protect Carter from having to take political risks in the negotiations that might cause Carter to lose the election, because Sadat wanted him to win, because Carter was the guy who was most likely to do something effective. In my judgment at the time, Sadat had miscalculated. Carter wanted the process to go forward and was prepared to do what was necessary to see whether he could get some success, he was so deeply committed to it emotionally, morally, and strategically for the United States. Carter was a guy who maybe should have thought politically more often, from the point of view of his own survival. But here's a guy who thought about what's best for the United States. That was his first thing always, and you saw it in everything he did. Sorry, what was your question?

Q: My question was, in something like this, did you have any contact with the Reagan people? The idea of saying this is something we, the United States, are trying to do. Or was this very much a them and us?

HUNTER: Not from the perspective of people in power. That is, our people. As you know, the idea of contacts with the other side, the other nominee, has a very highly regulated history, the way it's dealt with. I've been on both sides of this for many, many campaigns. Which is that, if you're on the outside running against the ones who are in, how much do you want to be privy to what's going on? At one level, you want to be taken seriously. You would like, if you're a patriot, and we presume they all are patriots, to know enough, so you don't do something really stupid, say something really stupid that could upset a sensitive negotiation or something like that. At the same time, you don't want to be told so much that, if you then go out and blast the administration for something it's doing, you can be accused of having compromised secrets. "We already told him something, he knows that's not true." So it's a balance to be struck. Every campaign goes through it the same way. Every administration that I've known about, at least on the Democratic side of the house, if somebody asks, you say, "Sure, I'll give briefings to people." That's what you do. The country comes first. Also, you do want to co-opt the other side, if you can, so they won't say as much. It's true that that's part of it, but also so they know enough so they won't do or say something stupid that could be damaging to the country. I cannot remember whether Reagan accepted the briefings or not. But certainly not any of us worker-bees would have done them. As I say, it's highly formalized and highly regularized, and maybe the Director of Central Intelligence will go and brief, that sort of thing. I've been involved in that in at least three or four campaigns now, the ones I've been involved in, helping to make those decisions and judging what's the relative balance. But any administration that's smart is going to say, "Ok, candidates want to come in, we'll give them a briefing. They've got the clearances." I'd have to think, but I don't know of any leader who has betrayed that trust.

Q: This is probably a good place to stop and we'll pick this up the next time when Carter lost, sort of what did you do in this period until the Reagan administration came in. Your impression of things you were dealing with, how the Reagan administration initially dealt with these things, and how it seized control, and then what you did. Ok?

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Q: Ok, today is the 21st of June, 2006. Bob, Reagan won in 1980. So he came in in January of '81.

HUNTER: January 20th, high noon.

Q: And what happened one minute after high noon?

HUNTER: I don't think I mentioned, I was one of the last people out of the White House. We had to be out of there before high noon, the moment that Reagan would be sworn in. I left about 20 minutes to twelve. In fact, one of my colleagues on the domestic side, Tom Beard, turned in his pass, went out the Southwest Gate and realized he'd left something on his desk, turned right around to go back, and they wouldn't let him back in the gate. In fact, it was striking -- I don't know whether I mentioned this to you before -- the presidency is not a continuing institution. Presidential papers disappear. The State Department does keep its papers. The Reagan people were very scrupulous about cleaning out all of us who worked at the NSC. I actually tendered my resignation because I was political and I considered that leaving was the natural thing. When they called me in to fire me -- Bud Nance, the new Deputy National Security Adviser, who was a vice admiral of towering ignorance, didn't know the first thing about anything that I could see -- I told him I'd already resigned. But there were some people who wanted to stay on who got booted, which was unfortunate. When Carter started, he kept people on. Brzezinski kept some people on for continuity. In fact, with all the presidential papers disappearing, I was allowed to leave for my successor on the Middle East only an unclassified copy of the Camp David Accords, and this was the last day of the hostage crisis, and in the middle of everything else, like the Autonomy Talks for the West Bank and Gaza. Everything else was gone. Fortunately, my successor, Geoffrey Kemp, was a very close friend of mine. He called me in and said "What do I need to know?" I remember two things I told him. I said, "One is that the Iraqis are building a nuclear reactor. If we don't do something about it, the Israelis will. Second, we are overstressing Anwar Sadat. If we don't back off a little bit, somebody's going to kill him." New administrations have trouble coping. So I was unemployed for a time. Actually, not being a lawyer -- one of the wonderful things was that all my lawyer friends went back to their law firms -- I was fortunate to get a job at the Center for Strategic and International Studies, which my friend Edward Luttwak organized. We go back a long way. He's well known in the strategic community. Extremely intelligent individual, and highly irascible. A fun human being. So I went to work at CSIS on both Europe and the Middle East, because those are the areas I'd worked on at the government. I was there for twelve years.

Q: Could you explain sort of the origins of CSIS and what role it played. I mean, a place like the American Enterprise Institute, which is sort of the conservative holding tank, and the Brookings Institution, which is sort of more kind of from the left. There are other ones around here, but CSIS… what was its origin and when you went there initially where did it fit in the Washington game?

HUNTER: One has to be a little careful about trying to over-characterize the political orientation of different places. I would say Brookings is more dead-center. CSIS was created by David Abshire, a former Army officer who had held other government jobs, and Admiral Arleigh Burke. It started out as a one-room think tank. Originally, it was tied to Georgetown University. It went independent of Georgetown while I was there, about 1984 or ‘85 because the good Fathers at Georgetown thought CSIS was too conservative, so they went their separate ways. I guess when I went there, CSIS was still quite conservative. I was kind of the token liberal, along with Zbig Brzezinski, who was a high-flyer, obviously. They had some high-flyers, Kissinger, Brzezinski, and some others, like Jim Schlesinger, who was another very impressive person. David Abshire is a hard person to say “No” to. He is still going strong at, I guess, about 80 now. He now heads the Center for the Study of the Presidency and the Congress, and he’s also one of the world’s great fundraiser. One of a very rare breed of people who actually enjoy raising money. CSIS was fairly small when I went there. By the time I left, it was a lot larger and had repositioned itself from being quite conservative to being, I would say, almost dead-center. Today, I’d say it’s about there now. It’s got its first Democratic president in John Hamre, formerly Deputy Secretary of Defense. In between Abshire and Hamre was Bob Zoellick, who just resigned as Deputy Secretary of State [and is now President of the World Bank]. One of those curious things, he got let go by CSIS because he got in trouble with Abshire, but that enabled him to become a government employee. He lucked out. So that’s about where CSIS was positioned. It had a formula. David Abshire’s magic formula was to bring together smart people, who did research, did writing, a lot of writing, with people in the business community who wanted to play in Washington. He brought them together especially with people from Capitol Hill. Abshire had been, at some point in his career, Assistant Secretary of State for Congressional Affairs. He brought this experience with him in the development of CSIS. So that was the formula. Get people to give money so they could play in Washington and sustain serious research, a lot of outreach, and engagement with people in Congress. That was the magic formula. Abshire started from nothing. Unlike Brookings, which has a huge endowment.

Q: Question I ask of people who serve in these think tanks. All these papers are being written, and my experience is that so few of my colleagues who are dealing with problems get much of a chance to read things outside of the telegrams that come in and all. What’s your impression of this?

HUNTER: I think it’s kind of a complicated subject, and I don’t have a conclusive view, because different people will look at this differently. But I have been in a number of think tanks. I have served in the administration three times at a very senior level. I’ve also worked on Capitol Hill for a senior member of the Senate, Ted Kennedy. I think that for people who are in government, there's very rarely an impact of a think tank directly on their own thinking. Very rarely. But when they get involved in outside studies, it’s often to explain to people what they’re doing, rather than to learn things from it. There are always exceptions. The article that jumps out at you, or the particular meeting in which you come away with an idea. On Capitol Hill, perhaps this happens a bit more so because they don’t have the levers of power, and they’re always poaching from outside and are constantly looking for ideas to take on the administration or to make their own mark. They’re not going to be able to do so much about things, but they can at least talk about things. So when you’re on Capitol Hill, a staff person, particularly, but also members, you probably learn more and gain more from think tanks than does somebody in the administration. Where this system does play a very important role, you already said, is as holding tanks. People stay in Washington who know something about what it is to run government, rather than being totally dispersed to the four winds, helping to train the next generation in the pragmatic arts of making policy. It also helps people figure out what may need to be done in the future, if and when they get back into government. Henry Kissinger's famous line, he said, "I lived off the intellectual capital I brought to my government job." It also is a way of recruiting people, bringing them into the establishment, in foreign affairs, particularly, in national security, with its military side, perhaps a little less so. There is an Establishment. It is largely open, anybody can join it. But it is the pool of people, two to three thousand people, from whom all but maybe the top cabinet jobs in foreign policy and national security get recruited. Generally the top cabinet jobs, as well. You kind of have to be in that Establishment, with rare exceptions. Now there's a broad gauge. There's all the way from the left to the far right, but there is a kind of a fraternity and sorority. Beyond that, the think tanks are part of a process of enabling us to, I won't say reach consensus, but let's say reach broad understandings on issues. At least what the issues are, in order to help us govern. We are maybe unique, but when the new government comes in, the new administration, we fire everybody at the top. Six thousand jobs, gone. The new President might keep a few people on, but that's the number of Presidentially-nominated and Senate-confirmable jobs, with all the people being replaced in foreign affairs and national security just as much as anywhere else. The Reagan National Security Adviser started fresh. Most National Security Councils start fresh. Even when Reagan gave way to Bush, a lot of new people came in, they cleaned house.

Q: It was not that friendly a split.

HUNTER: Sure, well, of course. People in the top jobs at State, Defense, certainly on the civilian side, are all replaced. The military takes longer to turn over. Probably less at the CIA, except at the top. So you've got a bunch of novices coming in. So how do you govern? You do it in part because people have been in government jobs before and come back. The new leadership may reach out to someone who's had a job. Or people who've been involved in think tanks and world affairs councils and councils on foreign relations, and they've written articles, and they've rubbed shoulders in the process of building a tolerable consensus with regard to issues. Getting rid of the real quirks, the kooks who are not up to serious responsibilities. One thing that happened in this current administration is that, following 9/11, the kooks were in charge and were able to hijack the president and drive him into Iraq. In fact, at the start of the Clinton and Bush-43 administrations, it didn't seem really to matter whether there was a first-rate team. It looked to many people that foreign policy didn't matter much. We'd won the Cold War, we didn't have any enemies who could get at us in the homeland, we had the security of the two broad oceans back again. We had all this power, and so it didn't really matter, and neither Clinton nor Bush 43 paid much attention to who they had running things. Bush made some ideological choices for domestic political reasons and let these guys play. Then, on 9/11, they had the levers of power. But, generally, it doesn't work that way. Generally, you're trying to build consensus on a broad range of policies. That doesn't mean we get it right. You can get it woefully wrong. For example, the Vietnam War, on which I was on the pro-Vietnam side longer than I wish I'd been, a lot of that happened because we'd built a consensus, here, and in the country, too, that prosecuting the war in Vietnam was the right thing to do. The arguments and people who were against it got marginalized, drowned out.

Now, for the United States, which is a huge country and where the government does have all this turnover, bringing in fresh blood can be a big help. Nobody can encompass everything, and we're involved as a superpower in dealing with everything. If you get this process right, then we are implacable. We do everything, we get it done right, and that has been true most of the last 60, 70 years. But if you get it wrong, as one president said, "It's a doozy," as we got Vietnam wrong, ultimately. As we got Iraq wrong. As we could get Iran wrong, if we are foolish enough to go to war. Since 9/11, there's been this huge effort to define American foreign policy in terms of the terrorist paradigm, which is of course ludicrous, comparing it to the Cold War, ludicrous. A lot of the same people in the establishment who battened on the Cold War, and I was one, have decided that this is a new definition on which they can batten. Just like nature abhors a vacuum, as they say, so does the foreign policy community -- and I mean that in the broadest sense of the American approach -- abhor a lack of definition, certainty, and framework. The Cold War framework is gone, so what do you replace it with? A lot of people dove into the terrorist paradigm, because it seems to explain things and give us a focus, which, of course, is ludicrous. It was used as a weapon by the Bush administration to shoehorn a lot of stuff under the terrorism label, including cutting taxes and everything else. But there were a lot of people on the other side of the political aisle who also do it, who accept the definition that "Here's the problem." I made up a joke about 30 years ago, one of Hunter's Rules, to explain this: that the person who really runs Washington is a little old man who sits in a windowless room at the top of the Old Post Office Building, with just a single telephone. Every once in a while, he'll pick up the phone and he'll say to the world, "The issue is" and fills in the blank…. "abortion, school prayer, bussing, gay marriage, Iraq, or Viet Nam," whatever. That's all he says. Then we all run around and focus on that issue, and people choose up sides. But the fact that that is the topic dominates the debate here and crowds out other things, the Gresham's Law that the single issue crowds out others. It's often not who's for or against a particular position, but it's "What is the issue we are dealing with, today?"

Q: And another thing, of course, is that Washington being, it's almost a self-enclosed unit within the Beltway.

HUNTER: We are a company town. In Dearborn, they make cars. Here, we make policy, or maybe mischief.

Q: The man who declares this an issue is only declaring this for people who work inside the Beltway, practically. It spreads out to some extent, but basically the great American public goes its own way.

HUNTER: In foreign policy and national security, I'm a great exponent of education, world affairs councils. Getting people involved. Keeping the establishment open, bringing in new blood. I guess I'm really a populist. Not in the sense that the great mass should define everything, but that you bring in smart and reasonable people and get them engaged, let them have a shot at influencing things. The American people are pretty sensible, over time. Sometimes it takes us a while to get there, but over time we're pretty sensible. I've seen this happen, time after time. We're seeing it now. We're beginning to right the ship of state after some terrible buffeting.

Q: Let me just…

HUNTER: As I say, we are beginning to right the ship of state, but after some terrible damage has been done to ourselves over Iraq. Maybe it's been the worst strategic blunder in our history, certainly in the last period. One of the reasons that this career carries with it such responsibility is that, in general, the average American will cede to the commander-in-chief, to the Washington apparatus, an awful lot of latitude for making foreign policy. Now, it can also be unforgiving. In fact, Hunter's rule with regard to making war is that, if you're going to be able to sustain combat, it has to be both in the nation's interest and comport with the values of the American people. It also has to have the word "victory" written on it, in the sense of a way to bring it to an end. Because, otherwise, at some point the American people will turn around. This is one of the informal checks and balances. It's one reason I'm in favor of conscription, even though I didn't serve in the military. Getting as many people involved to see what the hell is going on. Now, as I say, if you have a World War II, we go out and we do a lot of good things. If you get it wrong, however, then you can really get it wrong in a big way.

So in my judgment, the application of education to people who work here, finding people -- and nurturing them -- who have a genuine strategic perspective, making sure the checks and balances work, and, in the final analysis, it is about the stewardship of the people at the top. Incredible responsibility. Particularly after 9/11, there was this incredible latitude the top leaders had. The checks and balances had disappeared, and we had the great misfortune as a society that the people who were in charge were ideologically motivated to do certain things. Some political people saw an opportunity to use 9/11 to push for a whole series of things. Both groups of people betrayed their trust to the United States. One thing I argued during the John Kerry campaign for president in 2004 was that, if he won the presidency, he should put a very good Republican in as secretary of defense or secretary of state, the way Roosevelt had Knox and Stimson come in as Secretary of the Navy and Secretary of War, both strong Republicans. So I would say that, not only did these people betray the trust of the American people in terms of the issues, but they did it as well in terms of process. It was a trammeling of the democratic process and the checks and balances. We, the American people, during wartime invest a lot of confidence in our commander-in-chief, which is the way it ought to be. But if the commander-in-chief is led astray, as this one was, or if he doesn't hire sensible, intelligent people who genuinely care for the country rather than promoting their own ideology, then we get in very, very deep trouble.

Q: Also too a good commander in chief has got to be curious, be willing to ask questions.

HUNTER: And have a system. This is why I argue so strongly and sometimes successfully -- but sometimes it's a failure -- that for presidents, after getting elected, maybe the most important thing they do in foreign affairs is not only creating the system, the National Security Council, which can be varied up to a point, but the choosing of his people. The choosing of his people in foreign policy and national security will very often determine the fate of his administration. He needs at least somebody around him who's got a very firm strategic sense. A sense of grand strategy, a sense of where the American nation should go, a sense of the outside world and how it is really put together. When you get either amateurs or people who don't have that sense, or who are ideologues, the president and everybody else gets in trouble. That's most presidents. Most presidents get in trouble, in part because they don't have people around them who have the qualities that are absolutely indispensable. You see, we don't elect presidents for foreign affairs reasons. I don't recall a single presidential campaign where that has been true, though there was a little bit in 2004, a little bit in 1968. As a result, the qualities we require in electing a president do not include a significant knowledge of foreign affairs and national security. Unlike economics and domestic issues, the candidates, in the rough and tumble of a campaign, probably haven't been required to rub shoulders with people in foreign policy in a way in which decisions and real things are about. They accept for high office the people that the establishment gives them. Here's this team. They'll throw out a few ideas to get elected, and then when they become president, they discover that's not what governing is about. The difference is so critical between foreign policy and, say, education and health – in the latter, politics and interest groups are important; in foreign policy, real knowledge is most important, and the best politics is no politics.

Q: I was in Korea when Carter came in, and Carter had taken the second division out. We were there right on the front line, and it scared the hell out of us.

HUNTER: Fortunately, he reversed himself. He learned, and he reversed himself. A lot of presidents don't reverse themselves.

Q: What did you find yourself engaged in at CSIS?

HUNTER: I'd done a lot of writing, a lot of media. I've done thousands of radio and television broadcasts. I'd been on every major television public policy interview program in America. I haven't been on "Meet the Press" or "Face the Nation" for a long time, but I have been in the past. "Nightline" and "The McNeil-Lehrer Report," which was much better when McNeil was there. National Public Radio. I've been doing the BBC for 45 years. They still owe me for several hundred broadcasts! That's where I got my training. The London School of Economics is literally across the street from Bush House, which is the BBC World Service. I may have mentioned this, paid my way through graduate school by broadcasting for the BBC. A couple of times, a producer friend, Daniel Snowman, invited me to do a radio commentary in the interval in the concert hour on the Third Programme on Saturday. The drill was you had to take a news event, then sit there in the studio and write up 20 minutes worth and then broadcast it live! I remember I once compared the moon landing with a guy named Donald Crowhurst, who faked a round-the-world solo sailing and killed himself at the end; different types of heroism.

I did a lot of other things while I was at CSIS. As time went on, there was a lot of trouble in Lebanon. I was advisor to the Speaker of the House, Tip O'Neill, as the Congress was trying to grapple with the problems, both before and after the bombing of the Marine barracks. When there was all that trouble in Nicaragua, they set up a National Bipartisan Commission on Central America under Henry Kissinger. I was one of the Lead Consultants to that, for Bob Strauss, who was one of the commissioners, and that goes back to my Democratic Party involvement.

I was involved in the Mondale presidential campaign from the 21st of January 1981, actually it began before that, all the way through Election Day 1984. I was one of his key foreign policy people. One of the three or four people on foreign policy. The lead was David Aaron, who now works for RAND, another one was Madeleine Albright. She was involved on the Mondale team. I traveled a lot, flew a lot with Mondale.

Q: When you started working for CSIS on the foreign affairs…

HUNTER: I helped create the Center for National Policy. I was one of a small group of people who got together under the leadership of Ted Van Dyk, a domestic affairs person, mostly, and with some foreign affairs experience with the European Economic Community, and then he was head of issues for Humphrey in '68, when I wrote speeches. Ted was head of issues for McGovern in the '72 campaign. I wrote McGovern's only foreign policy speech – as well as about 40% of the Democratic Platform, all on the domestic side, the "non-Vietnam," "non-social issues" parts. So after the 1980 election, we tried to do a Paul Butler, who as national party chairman organized the Democrats after '56, and created a thing called the Center for Democratic Policy, with Cy Vance as chair. He changed the name to Center for National Policy, so it could at least look bipartisan, and I was the foreign policy guy there for a couple of years. Then there was a man named Allen Weinstein at CSIS, he came up with the brilliant idea of copying the German foundations in foreign policy, promoting democracy, where every political party has a foundation financed by the government. Allen came up with the idea that became the National Endowment for Democracy. I was kind of his number two person on formulating the concept. He, as much as anybody, sold President Reagan on the idea, which then led to Reagan's famous House of Lords speech. Success has a thousand fathers, and lots of other people have been involved with it, but Allen Weinstein is the man who, more than anyone else, deserves the credit for launching the idea for the National Endowment for Democracy, and he was then marginalized. Life's like that, unfortunately. Credit where credit is due, in this case to Allen. So I was involved in that.

Q: How did you look at the Reagan administration? Let's take the first four years. What was your impression of how it grew or dealt with foreign affairs?

HUNTER: My personal view is they started out with one of the weakest teams ever in foreign affairs. The national security advisor was Dick Allen. Smart guy, ideological, couldn't really run things. I guess Judge Clark was the first Secretary of State, then Al Haig, who himself had been Supreme Allied Commander in Europe, he'd been White

House Chief of Staff under Nixon, but just didn't have it as Secretary of State. His worst blunder, of course, was with regard to the Israeli invasion of Lebanon. I also think he probably never recovered from his "I'm in charge here" comment after the Reagan assassination attempt, which showed lack of understanding of the Presidential Succession Act, that he was not in charge. He wouldn't even have been if the president, God forbid, had died. So it was a pretty weak team.

But one thing I will say about Reagan is that, over time, even though a lot of things he did I did not agree with, by the time he finished he had a pretty good team. He had people like Frank Carlucci and Colin Powell. Some pretty outstanding people who were on his team. Because he learned of necessity. The National Security Advisor used to be a job in the basement of the West Wing until Nixon. Nixon brought Kissinger up onto the same floor as himself, near the Oval Office, and closed down the press office which used to be there. I remember in the Johnson years, that area just inside the door of the West Wing was a lot of old faded linoleum, a bunch of old broken down sofas, and these press guys just kind of lolled around there, guys and some women. Like it was out of Damon Runyon. Muzak on the elevator, because Johnson like Muzak. Then when Nixon came in, he refurbished the White House and paved over the swimming pool, put the press down there, got them a little out of the way, brought Kissinger upstairs. The first thing Reagan does is he took the National Security Advisor and stuck him back in the basement. I predicted that was going to last a month. It lasted about 32 days, so I was off by two days, because Reagan quickly realized he needed his foreign policy person upstairs with him. Later, he realized the people he had started with had failed and got rid of them. Full marks to Reagan. I figured out Reagan pretty early-on. There is the old line that great men and women usually have only one or two ideas in their lives. Henry Kissinger's was the balance of power. That was his one big idea. When he applied it, he was great, when he didn't apply it, he wasn't so great. I would probably qualify the word "great," I should say he basically knew what he was doing. It's like the old story of the stock broker who, when asked for advice, would open his desk drawer and look in and then close it and give advice, and everybody wondered what he had written in the desk drawer. He was amazingly successful. When he died, they broke open the desk to see what he had written there, which led him to give all this great advice and made him so fantastic. What it said was "Buy low, sell high." [laughter] Reagan, I discovered fairly early on, had two ideas that got him through in foreign policy. First, always have a foreign enemy. He started with Gaddafi, he ended with Gaddafi. He always had a foreign enemy. Second, whenever you get in trouble, change the subject. My favorite anecdote of that, it's a tragic anecdote, but the night the Marines died in Lebanon, Mondale called me: "What do I do?" I said: "You express condolences and then keep your mouth shut. Anything you say other than this, criticism, whatever it is, they'll just hammer you for it, they'll destroy you." So he did that. He said, "Anything else?" I said, "Yeah, why don't you call the Speaker, Tip O'Neill, touch base yourself?" Three days later, I was in the Speaker's office, talking about Lebanon because I was his advisor, and we had the television set on. There was the picture of American students arriving back from Granada and kissing the ground. O'Neill said, "You know, the other night Fritz [Mondale] called me." This was after that bombing. "And he asked, 'Tip, what do you think Reagan's going to do now?' I said, 'Oh, I don't know, invade Granada, something like that.'" What Reagan had done is that he had changed the subject. Castro figured it out, he tried to get his people out of there. Reagan did this brilliantly, and it got so I could predict it when he'd get in trouble. Like when he was about to swap a Soviet spy for my friend Nick Daniloff, of *US News*, who was grabbed by the KGB in Moscow, when he was just finishing his tour there. They grabbed Nick because we had arrested some Soviet spies in New York. That happened, it looked like, because the FBI [Federal Bureau of Investigation] was trying to get its budget supported, and it seemed like a good thing to do, and also there had been some Navy guy arrested for spying for the Russians. The FBI thus broke the rules about who's allowed to spy and who isn't, so the Russians grabbed Daniloff, choosing him, I assume, because he was about to leave Moscow, anyway. Reagan had always said he wouldn't swap in cases like this, but it was clear he was going to have to swap. I was at CNN [Cable News Network] all wired up, waiting for high noon for the swap to be announced, and I was going to do my bit in hammering Reagan for going back on his word. But then the producer says: "Turn on the TV. Reagan has just announced a summit in Reykjavik with Gorbachev." I burst out laughing, and I said, "My poor friend Nick Daniloff, I hope he has a book contract, already, because now he's yesterday." Sure enough. Reagan was brilliant at that, at changing the subject.

Clinton followed this Reagan method in regard to Iraq. Dropped a few bombs here and there, kept them contained. Talked a lot, managed to keep his powder more-or-less dry, so the American people weren't faced with the dilemma of having to go to war over something that they didn't want to go to war over. The current president [George W. Bush] got conned, and they took the Clinton policy on Iraq and drove it over the cliff, and we now have this disaster on our hands. Reagan was too smart for people like that. He did a few things here and there, but not too much. A few bombs in Libya and all that. Where I do fault Reagan is in prolonging the Cold War. I think his military buildup was excessive, including Star Wars [Strategic Defense Initiative, SDI], which was one of those issues which anybody with the most elementary strategic training would know was a potentially dangerous, nonsense idea. Now, of course, that's common wisdom, but the number of people who signed onto SDI at that time in this country was just staggering. Absolutely ludicrous. The idea at the end that the Soviet Union collapsed because of American military pressure I think is equally ludicrous. It collapsed from its internal weight, and the fact that Thomas Jefferson was right. The pen is mightier than the sword. Ideas ate the Soviet system from the inside. I always argue that, during this period, the most important instrument was the Helsinki Final Act, which opened the place up. Gorbachev tried to reform the system with openness, *glasnost*, and then with restructuring, *perestroika*, to try to save communism. But the Soviet people, being able to communicate, finally, said "I have other things to talk about, goodbye!" The computer married ideas with modern communications and that destroyed the Soviet Union. The idea that it was somehow the fact of American military buildup, that's just nonsense. I think, in fact, all of that actually delayed the collapse by a few years, but, so what? it came to an end. I don't often second guess that. I say "Look, who won the Cold War? The Right won it, the Left won it, let's move on. Everybody can claim victory."

One thing I know I got a chance to do a little bit of good with was after the invasion of Poland, the crackdown in Poland over Solidarity, at the end of '81. I had this bright idea, why don't we get every American to light a candle in the window at Christmas for the Poles? I called up somebody at the NSC I knew, and I got pooh-poohed, so I got my dander up. I figured, who could get this done? I called Brzezinski. He said, "It just so happens the Polish ambassador to the US has defected, because he couldn't stand what has happened, and I'm seeing him this afternoon, and I will give him the idea." So Brzezinski gave the idea to the ambassador. Reagan had the ambassador in the next day, and he said, "Mr. President why don't you get all the Americans to light a candle?" So Reagan put it in his Christmas address! I've got a copy of it on the wall here. Americans lit a candle. I admire that, you see, because it was Reagan who had a sense, the big gesture. Right now, I think, domestically, because of Reagan and what he got going, we face a potential disaster in terms of destruction of the middle class, the concentration of wealth in the hands of a smaller group of people, here, which I think can be devastating for our country. It gets worse and worse under the current team. But compared to the current president, Reagan doesn't look so bad in foreign policy.

Q: How would you describe your impression of the political apparatus? I'm thinking of Congress during this time when you were with CSIS.

HUNTER: You'll have to say a bit more about what you mean.

Q: I'm just wondering, you were working with the Speaker, and was there a difference in how the Congress dealt with foreign affairs then than now?

HUNTER: We were still in the Cold War. Fortunately, there was a broad consensus in this country about most foreign policy. When I was NATO ambassador, one of the great things about that job is that there were no interparty fault lines. There is a broad consensus in both parties on NATO, as a Cold War instrument and then as a post-Cold War instrument. Of course, in the Cold War, there were still some partisan disagreements on foreign policy. At the same time, we didn't have the kind of thing we had after 9/11, with the exploitation of that tragedy for the greater concentration of political power in the hands of the president. I guess I'll have to say another thing about Reagan is that, whether he tried or not, he certainly did not concentrate an undue amount of power in the executive. Congress continued to have a serious role. When you had the barracks bombing in Lebanon or when you had other crises, there was a belief that it was important to bring Congress along with you, not leave them on the outside. Democrats controlled the Congress, too, so the president had to respond to it.

Q: How did you deal with the situation in Central America? All of a sudden our eyes were concentrated on El Salvador and Nicaragua.

HUNTER: I think Reagan exaggerated. The idea that it was only a few days' march for the Sandinistas to Harlingen, Texas, you know that famous speech. I didn't like the idea of the *Contras.* I didn't like our being engaged in the kind of things we were involved in. I always thought it was exaggerated. One of the striking things, when I worked on the commission in '83, '84, the bipartisan Kissinger Commission on Central America, was that there was almost nobody in the country who had thought about Central America in strategic terms. We had human rights experts, we had individual-nation specialists, but people who actually looked at it in terms of what does this mean to us strategically, and how you might position oneself, and what you might do? We had almost nobody. Scotty Reston of the New York Times used to say that "people in America will do anything for Latin America, except read about it." I had to try to put some witnesses together for the Commission. It was extremely difficult to do that, to get the strategic perspective. Of course, the debate was heavily ideological within the United States. You had people like Jeane Kirkpatrick, who were on the warpath. Incidentally, there was an appropriation at one point for a congressional bipartisan study of this issue, and I was to be appointed by Tip O'Neill, and there were a couple of others. Kirkpatrick couldn't handle that. She tried to veto me, but the whole thing got killed, because of the intensity of the ideological passions on the part of some of the administration people. They'd rather kill the congressional study than have me or three or four others. Even though I'm not a "lefty." I've made my life trying to do the best for the country in security terms, whether it was Right or Left. I've been supportive of Republicans and supportive of Democrats. Essentially, I'm a Democrat for domestic reasons. I never went the way of the neocons, who I thought went off the deep end. A lot of otherwise good Democrats, who leaned way to the Right on security issues, I think went off the deep end, like Kirkpatrick.

So, the Congress had a much more active role back in Reagan's time, and I think the president was, even though he wanted to win, he was more respectful of that. There's no respect right now. You've got Republicans in Congress, particularly in the House, who are playing "take no prisoners" more than I've ever seen in my lifetime by either party. The Democrats play some hardball, too. I've seen hardball played, but nothing like this. I feel bad for either party, and certainly for the country, when it gets like this.

Q: On foreign affairs, where does Tip O'Neill fit? One thinks of him as being very much a domestic-oriented person.

HUNTER: Yeah, but he was Speaker of the House, and when you had serious issues, he had -- and also Jim Wright, at the time, who was Majority Leader -- he had to get involved, because he had a lot of people who deeply cared about these things. He might defer to some other Members, like Dante Fascell, who was an outstanding Chairman of the House International Relations Committee -- they keep changing its name -- for example. I'm trying to remember who succeeded Fulbright on the other side, oh, Sparkman, I think it was. O'Neill had to take foreign policy seriously. That's why I think he had me as an advisor, directly to him. Later on, jumping ahead to 1990, I went out to the Persian Gulf in September of 1990, on the first congressional visit after the invasion of Kuwait, I went out as the Majority Leader's representative. That was Dick Gephardt. I was Dick Gephardt's foreign policy advisor in the 1988 campaign. I'd been doing it informally, and then he asked me on a Friday to do it formally, and then the next Tuesday was Super Tuesday, and that was the end of his candidacy! So I didn't last very long, formally, but then I advised him afterwards for a long time. Another one of those people where the country would have been better off if he'd gone farther than he did.

Q: You were there with the invasion of Kuwait, you were still with CSIS, and in an advisory role to Gephardt. How did you feel about our response to that?

HUNTER: I guess more positive about it in retrospect than I did then. My worry was that we were going to get ourselves into something that we couldn't extricate ourselves from. One of the images that I used was about the dog that chases a car, and some time it may catch it, and then what's it going to do with it? I was worried about the aftereffects, not just of getting the guy, Saddam Hussein, out but of taking on Iraq altogether and having to run it. I have to say that Bush's stopping when he did was just right. I didn't like the license given to Saddam Hussein afterwards to slaughter a bunch of Marsh Arabs, because the Administration thought they were going to be agents of Iran. One of the more shameful acts of American history. Three in my lifetime. The failure to protect the people in Vietnam, this was more Congress than the administration, to provide Vietnam with a chance to defend itself after '73, when Congress halted the aid. The first being the turning over a lot of Soviet prisoners of war to Stalin in 1945-46, most of whom he then killed, and the third was allowing Saddam Hussein to use his military equipment to kill all these people. Very shameful episodes in history. Another one that was just stupid was restoring French control of Indochina. Do you know that, in 1945, when the French got us to do that, we permitted the use of demobilized Japanese troops to go in and fight against the nationalists? It's an amazing story. But for a country our size with our history, we haven't had a lot of shameful episodes, and we've created a lot of good in other places.

Q: We move up to the election of Clinton. I assume you got involved in that.

HUNTER: It's moving through the whole decade. I did an awful lot of writing. I wrote op-eds, articles, other things. On average, I had a publication once every 10 calendar days for 12 years. A couple hundred op-eds for the LA Times; a weekly article for Defense News and Army/Navy/Air Force Times for two years. During the Persian Gulf War, four of us from different countries were each asked to write a single sentence every day for the front page of the International Herald Tribune. 28 days of the war.

Q: Do you ever go through and look and see where you stood and where you should have stood in retrospect? How do you feel about it?

HUNTER: I made at least two big mistakes. One was being for Vietnam too long, and second not being for the invasion of Iraq in 1990-91. For what seemed to me to be the right reasons, but it proved to be the wrong judgment. Frankly, I think Bush-the-father did it right. You can't talk about what you did right unless you learn from what you did wrong. To be self-exculpatory on Vietnam, I was in the White House when it started, as you know, the Johnson part of it. It's one of the reasons you shouldn't have people too young or inexperienced making decisions -- not that I did on Vietnam, of course. The tug of loyalties was greater than the rational analysis. I'd have to go back to the details, but I think an awful lot of centrist Democratic Party foreign policy themes I invented during that period of the 1980s. A whole series of things, all different parts of the world. A piece I wrote for Foreign Policy magazine in 1992, which I think got it more-or-less right, they didn't publish, right before going to press, because they objected to the fact that I'd published similar ideas elsewhere.

Q: As you were an observer of the American scene, did you see a cloud forming on the right, from the neocons?

HUNTER: Not that early, no. This was just the end of the Cold War, and I give George H. W. Bush extremely high marks for the way in which he wrapped up the Cold War. The relationship with Russia and the unification of Germany, in particular.

Q: That was really a high point of American diplomacy.

HUNTER: Some very critical decisions were made then. A couple things were done wrong in terms of the future of Yugoslavia and the [Secretary of State James] Baker thing about Ukraine staying with Russia, but given the fast pace of events, these were small potatoes compared to getting the broad outlines very very right. This was Bush personally to a great extent. Incidentally, he was one of the, I hate to say this as a Democrat!, but one of the two best-trained presidents when they came into office we've had since Eisenhower. They were Nixon and Bush, because they'd both been vice presidents, and they figured out what they were doing. The rest of them have essentially been ingénues when they've come in. None more so than the current guy [George W. Bush]. This didn't matter under Clinton so much, because there wasn't that much to be done, and he is one of the smartest people you'll ever meet. Extremely smart, in a political way, as well as an intellectual way. Jimmy Carter was an extremely smart guy, but less in the political sense, and he had a lot of bad luck, too. Sometimes you get defined by the luck that you have. What was your question again?

Q: I was asking whether you were seeing a cloud…

HUNTER: Oh, a cloud on the horizon. No, not at that time. You see, we were still operating collectively in the afterglow of the Cold War. The lessons that had grown up in the Cold War. Let's consider a very simple one, which is the value of alliances, which carried us through into new territory. It helped with NATO, for example, and I was fortunate to play a lead role in that. But we operated on the idea that this was a good thing, to have an alliance like that, and let's find new work for it to do, good work for it to do, etc. Some people sometimes accused us of trying to find work for an old thing. Well, fine, it worked. It worked again in the last few years, led by some people who fought their own [Bush] administration to get it done. Including Nick Burns, who was one of my successors in NATO, and who did a lot of good work while the lightning was forking.

So the idea of having strong alliances and working with others was a bipartisan view, still. There were differences, but the commitment carried over. The problems only began with the neocons at the end of the last decade, who wanted to try to experiment. The US had all this power, and they thought we don't need anybody else. You had a bunch of ideologues, like [Paul] Wolfowitz and [Douglas] Feith, and [Richard] Perle. And Condi

Rice, not having enough common sense to see where it was going. They got together and were the stable of people in foreign policy in the Bush presidential campaign, and he brought them into government. Then, as I say, the accident happened that, after 9/11, they had the levers of power, and they dragged the country in a devastating direction, for their own purposes rather than for national purposes. People try to convince themselves that they're acting in the broader interest of the people and the nation, even when they're not. Very few people would say, "I'm just doing this for self-interest or for some perverted reason that's not primarily American."

Just a couple things, to back up a little bit to the years between Carter and Clinton. Whenever something was out there, I got involved in it if I possibly could. I did an awful lot of traveling, a lot of different places and various continents: Brazil, Argentina, Japan, China, Soviet Union -- I organized a trip to Moscow with Ted Sorensen in 1970, when he was running for Senate in New York -- a number of African countries, India, lots of Europe and Middle East travel. When the Iran-*Contra* thing broke, there was a [William] Scranton Commission to look into it. [Edmund] Muskie was on that, I was one of Muskie's advisors, as was Madeleine Albright. That was fun, working with Muskie, who I also wrote some speeches for. One draft he said was too long and would I cut it by a third. I did that, he read it, and he said, "This is great, but I can't figure out what you took out." I said, "You aren't supposed to!" I wrote a book during that time on the organization of the National Security Council, and I was fortunate to have Brent Scowcroft write an introduction to it. Brent I think is maybe the best National Security Advisor we've had, in process terms, under both Ford and Bush I. My book, Presidential Control of Foreign Policy: Management or Mishap, does lay out the process of what I call the "iron laws" for presidents to follow, in terms of managing the system. Every president has at some point, except this one and he may yet get there, been dragged back to this methodology. Everyone since Kennedy, even if they don't start with it. They change the names of parts of the organization and everything to "protect the innocent" and make it look like they're new, but they're just some basic management tools. What one has to understand is that very few presidents come in who ever managed anything. You come close if you're a governor, but a senator, never, and most, therefore, don't get the rules right.

Q: This is probably a good place to stop. We'll pick up with the Clinton campaign and afterwards.

[End session]

Q: Ok, today is the seventeenth of October, 2006. Bob, did you get involved with the Clinton campaign? This would have been the '92 election campaign between Clinton and Bush.

HUNTER: Poppa Bush. First, I didn't know Governor Clinton, and the only experience any of us had with him, was watching that amazing keynote speech he gave at the 1988 Democratic National Convention in Atlanta, which went on and on and on and on. But in '89, just prior to the AIPAC convention, Sandy Berger, who was the person in foreign affairs who was closest to Governor and then President Clinton throughout the entire period, said that Governor Clinton was going to be addressing AIPAC and could I come around and brief him? So this was the Shoreham Hotel, I think, Sunday afternoon, Clinton was going to speak Monday. There was another person there who was a senior official of several prominent Jewish groups, who later became Chairman of the Democratic Party in Massachusetts, Steve Grossman. So I gave the governor some pointers about things he had to say and things he shouldn't say. There's a certain litany of getting it right. I gave him enough to know what the nine points are you have to make, but don't leave any one of them out. It's a political litany. He did it, and he succeeded better than the Secretary of State did in front of AIPAC. At that point, as I ended my conversation with Clinton, and that day I spent about two or three hours with him, I realized this guy was something spectacular. We talked about the '88 campaign, about other things. He had figured out what had gone wrong in the Dukakis '88 presidential campaign, which had been a disaster, we had the same take on that. He had figured out exactly where Dukakis had gone wrong. Things that I had also seen, although he had probably seen more up closely, in terms of the domestic as opposed to the foreign side. It struck me that this was an extraordinarily-able political person. Not only a nice manner and all, but he was very smart. I was very taken with Clinton.

So I said to myself, this is a guy who has a great chance of being president, and being an effective president. So I guess, being a little dilatory, I didn't come around to doing anything until about mid-'91, and I talked to Sandy about getting involved. Then I talked to Walter Mondale, who was also thinking about supporting Clinton, and he got in touch with Clinton. Clinton called me and asked me if I'd be in the campaign. I wanted to have that direct engagement. If you don't get the direct engagement, you're not really involved. I guess I was, after Sandy, the second person with a foreign policy track record publicly to endorse Governor Clinton for president. So I was part of the team under Sandy's leadership. He recruited Tony Lake to be the number-one person on the substance side. Tony had been head of the Policy Planning Staff at State under Carter, and for a while Sandy had been his deputy there.

So in the campaign I helped to write -- Clinton gave, I think, five foreign policy speeches -- I worked on four of them. I didn't work on the human rights one. Including doing the central theme work, much of the drafting for the first speech, the one that helped Clinton make his mark at Georgetown University in December of '91. I had a major impact on some of the key themes of that one, setting the key themes of the campaign. Plus as I say, I worked on his other speeches wherever I happened to be.

Q: To go back a bit, when he was going to talk to AIPAC, one has the feeling that politicians come practically on their hands and knees to the American Israel Political Action Committee, whatever you want we'll do, you know. And I mean it's almost a subservient role. What did you advise him to say?

HUNTER: I won't comment on that particular statement you just made [chuckling]. It was that when you talk about the Israeli situation, you have to be for "secure, recognized, and defensible borders." Gotta get those three words in there. You have to mention that Jerusalem has to be unified, undivided, and will be the eternal capital of Israel. You have to understand, however, that that sentence doesn't rule out that Jerusalem can also be the capital of the Palestinian state. That the United States will never compromise on Israel's security. Phrases like that. None of which beg the questions of what you might need to do in a peace process. A certain degree of it is psychology. Let's say your objective is to get peace between Israel and the Arabs, and today most particularly about the Palestinians. If you're going to get Israel to be willing to make compromises, you have to start by showing you understand where Israelis are coming from, their hopes and their fears, for peacemaking. That understanding, and demonstrating that to the Israelis, has to be very much on the table. As you probably know, President Carter, I suspect, will go to his grave believing that he was betrayed by Menachem Begin after Camp David in regard to halting the construction of settlements, at least that's what I've heard him say in terms of the pledges he think he had. Obviously, the settlements are an issue that has to be dealt with in order to move forward. I believe that what we need to do in this country is to endorse the Clinton Principles that were formulated most clearly by him on the 10th or 11th of January 2001, and then were embodied in discussions and agreement by non-governmental people, Israeli and Palestinian, in Taba, Egypt, and then were contained in a thing called the Geneva Accords. These include land swaps, which would incorporate about 50% of all Israeli settlers in Israel, while the other settlements would be part of the Palestinian state. You have to remember, going back to 1980, what I just said to you, which is now consistent with President Bush's policies, you couldn't even say that there should be a Palestinian state. We've come a long way. We are at the point, now, where it's possible to bring this conflict to an end.

Q: Coming back to the campaign, setting forth in Clinton's Georgetown speech, which is his old alma mater…

HUNTER: Tony Lake was the chief drafter, but I had a major role in writing it.

Q: The campaign is renowned for running on the slogan "It's the economy, stupid" as opposed to foreign affairs. But foreign affairs always intrudes. What were the points that Tony Lake and you…

HUNTER: I'll give Tony credit for it.

Q: But you were there, obviously it was pretty much a meeting of the minds?

HUNTER: Let's take one phrase I invented, which Clinton used throughout his presidency, about what we would say in regard to "multilateralism," instead of saying "let's be multilateral rather than unilateral," a long phrase. In fact I wrote a Haiku about this once. It's "We should act with others when we can, and alone only when we must." That's a better way to put it the idea. The basic thing is that running for president, in foreign affairs...... I've done it nine times now, worked on it, never run for president, of course [laughter]. I think I'm smart enough not to do that, among other things. I'd get my vote, maybe my wife's.... is to pass what I call the Commander-in-Chief Test. I think I invented that phrase. The average American says to himself and herself, "I don't know anything about foreign affairs. I don't expect to know anything about foreign affairs. I really don't care whether this guy knows who the prime minister of India is -- which Reagan got into a problem over with the media -- or the number of warheads that fit on a rocket or something like that. I want to look at this person and ask: 'Can he, or now she, keep the country safe, full stop?'" That judgment by the average American is made to a significant extent in response to the inevitable crises that take place in a campaign. How does the guy handle a crisis? But you also need for the pundits and the commentators to say that you show a basic understanding of international relations, and you need to lay out some themes to show you've got a grasp of it. That was the objective of these speeches, to give people a sense -- that is, the talking heads and the scribblers -- that this person's got his head screwed on straight in foreign policy.

But that's not really the foreign policy test for the public. The real one is what I've just stated. How does this person behave in a crisis? Can I trust this person to keep our country safe? The words are part of it. I used to joke, back in the Cold War, but this is not really a joke, that what you should do, if you're running for president, is to be for a strong defense, be for peace and arms control, be for Israel, and then keep your mouth shut. There were the three I's: Israel, Italy, and Ireland. There are a lot of people who do vote on the basis of constituency interests. No question, you have to say some of the right things. We used to do that in the Humphrey campaign, write these little messages, among other things I did, as I also did in the Johnson White House. The messages had to go to the Baltic Americans, the Polish Americans, you've got to do all that kind of appeal, and the Armenian Americans. Of course, you get caught between them and the Turks. That's part of the rich fabric of American society. But the basic thing is, you're for a strong defense and you're for peace. During the Cold War, it was also arms control. Now, Bill Clinton passed the Commander-in-Chief test. I think, in part, it might have been the moment in the campaign, which was then was dominated by the Gennifer Flowers affair, to be very blunt about it, in which he and his wife appeared on that commentary, Sixty Minutes. That was right after the Super Bowl, I think it was, and they dealt with it, boom, and moved on. Clinton had weathered the crisis, he could be commander-in-chief.

Q: You might explain what the Gennifer Flowers was.

HUNTER: It was the accusation that the governor had had an affair with a particular woman over a period of time, a woman-not-his-wife. There was a lot of stuff that came out, and people thought it was going to ruin his campaign. He appeared on *Sixty Minutes* with his wife, Hillary Clinton, and they said "We've had problems in our marriage, but we've sorted this out." I think a lot of people related to it. They also related to the way in which he handled the crisis. There were other times. When Reagan said, "I paid for this microphone," or when George Bush the father blew up against Dan Rather on television. These are things that people sense, "Hey this guy's got guts."

At the same time with Clinton, this was the first post-Cold War election. In those three elections, '92, '96, and 2000, the threshold of the Commander-in-Chief test was much less because the Cold War was over, we'd won it. We had no natural enemies trying to attack the United States, until 2001. Look out the window behind me, and you see the Pentagon. You can see the place on the left where the plane slammed in on 9/11.

Everybody remembers that. My generation remembers when Kennedy was shot. My parents' generation, Pearl Harbor. Everybody now will say where he or she was on September 11, 2001. But between the two "9/11s" -- excuse the phrase, the Europeans write their dates opposite from us, so 9/11 for them is November the ninth, 1989, when the Berlin wall opened -- between that 9/11 and our 9/11 is what I call the "holiday from history." George Bush the first wrapped up the Cold War, he did very effective work, Clinton built upon that, and I had the good fortune to be involved with NATO and its transformation. Then we were shocked out of that "holiday" on "our 9/11." So, during those three presidential campaigns of '92, '96 and 2000, the threshold for the Commander-in-Chief test was way down. It helps to explain where we are now, with George W. Bush coming into office with a third-rate team of people. A bunch of ideologues chosen for political purposes, they were the guys of a particular constituency, and then, on 9/11, they had the levers of power, and the rest is history, unfortunately. So, for Clinton, he didn't have to pass such a high test, but still he did.

Those were, I think, very workmanlike speeches. His first couple of television interviews, if you'd picked them apart, you would have said this guy's an ingénue, but later on he built confidence, that sort of thing. So the role was to lay out a basic foreign policy speech, a defense speech, and also to show he was concerned about human rights and the like, so there was a human rights speech. This created a body of material out there that could be drawn upon when necessary in the campaign and so on. Remember, unless you're in a situation like we are today with Iraq, if you're a presidential candidate, you run almost entirely on domestic policy and economics. Nobody asks you about foreign affairs. They just don't ask you about it. "What about the Nonproliferation Treaty? What about what's happening in Lower Slobovia?" Nobody asks about it. We essentially elect our presidents on economics and on domestic issues and things that are relevant to our lives. Against this background, can this guy or woman keep us safe?

Q: You mentioned this before, but he came out of Arkansas and had been part of this intellectual group, but did you have a feeling he was rather quickly absorbing international issues, so if they came up he could deal with them?

HUNTER: First, you have to understand that Clinton is a brilliant person. His capacity to absorb material and translate it and be presidential is really quite remarkable. I found that, as NATO ambassador, when he'd show up in Brussels or Paris or Madrid, the summits, or when he came to Bosnia, something would be thrown out in front of him -- and I've had enough experience that I hope now not to be totally mesmerized by the President's walking into the room -- but I'd watch his mind work, and he'd make some gutsy decisions, and he would do things in a way that shows that "This is a person who's a statesman." You've got to remember, he came out of Arkansas, but he went to Georgetown, the School of Foreign Service, he went to Oxford as a Rhodes Scholar, how much he absorbed of that I don't know. He'd been in the National Governors' Conference, he was head of it at one point, the Democratic Leadership Council, which he was head of. He traveled extensively, as opposed to our current president. who'd been out of the country, except to go to Mexico, three times in his entire life. We've not had a president so ill-exposed to the outside world since Calvin Coolidge.

Q: And considering who his father is…

HUNTER: His father, George H. W. Bush, was one of the best prepared presidents we've had in foreign affairs, the best prepared was Richard Nixon, both having been Vice President. Mondale would have been if he'd been elected. Mondale really does know his foreign affairs, really does know it. The first Bush had been Vice President, head of the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), ambassador to China, UN ambassador, and his son had no curiosity. It shows.

So, Clinton was really a domestic president, in terms of the things that mattered to him, things that got his juices flowing, but when he went to pick up foreign policy, he did it very effectively. Leaping ahead, I remember we were in trouble at NATO because of the war in Bosnia, leading up to the NATO summit in '94, and Secretary General Manfred Wörner said to Christopher in a meeting a couple of weeks earlier, "NATO has made these pledges about air strikes. Either it means it or it doesn't. If it doesn't mean it, let's can it, if we do, let's say so, let's reinforce it." Christopher reported that back, and it was still unclear when Clinton came to Brussels what was going to happen, but Clinton got deeply involved, he saw what this was. Tony Lake was sitting there at the summit, madly writing this material for Clinton to use, because Tony was committed to getting something done. He was on the side of acting in Bosnia. In addition to Clinton, the person in Washington who was committed, who took the lead, was Tony Lake. A lot of other people have taken credit, and I won't name them, but Tony did it. He was the guy in Washington who did it. I'd like to think I played a role at NATO on that, but that's another thing. Clinton went before the NATO Council at the summit and just electrified them, the other heads of state and government, by what he said about what we had to do in Bosnia. Because he picked up an issue and recognized it had to be done, he decided more or less on the spot, and he did what had to be done. People say he was a "quick study." He was.

Q: Back to the campaign. Were there any problems, crises in your field, in foreign affairs?

HUNTER: Not really. There was not a lot of focus on it. This was kind of a workmanlike thing that had to be done, and Clinton did a workmanlike job. There were the debates. I first met him during the campaign when he was getting briefings, after the nomination. Sandy Berger asked me to go down to Arkansas with Lee Hamilton and I think it was Jim Woolsey to brief the governor at the Mansion -- Hillary was there, too -- on European issues and other things. And we did that.

One little crisis that I recall, without consulting notes, was over his relationship to the military. He had to do quite a bit of work. One thing he did in the campaign was that he got some military people to support him. [Admiral] Bill Crowe, retired Chairman of the Joint Chiefs, Navy guy, went down to Arkansas and endorsed him. Crowe was a man of great stature, who I was actually working with at the Center for Strategic and International Studies. I had great admiration for him, and that endorsement was of signal importance to the governor, to Clinton. Crowe was the kind of guy I have looked up to my whole career.

Q: Were you in with Crowe as he was mulling this over or not?

HUNTER: No, even though we worked in the same building, I had not talked to him about that.

Q: During the campaign, a couple figures that were around on the foreign affairs side, how about Albright and Christopher? Did they play much of a role at that time in the thought processes of international affairs or not?

HUNTER: Not a lot. Christopher, I think, headed up the search for the vice president. You have to remember, Christopher hadn't really been involved very much in foreign affairs since the Carter administration. He had been in a few study groups with the Council on Foreign Relations, he had been chairman of the Rockefeller Foundation, but he hadn't been particularly visible. He was involved in some things, punching his ticket in his effort to become Secretary of State, and he made a few speeches and did a few op-eds. In 1988, Stu Eizenstat -- who had been the chief domestic policy person for Carter in the White House, and also had been in charge of the issues side of the election campaign in '76, where I went down to Atlanta and did the debate book and organized it on the foreign affairs side -- Stu had this idea that, since there definitely was going to be a new president elected in 1988, as a result it was possible to get the Republicans and Democrats together to talk about the future on a bipartisan basis. The next time this situation occurred was 2000, and the next time is 2008. The incumbent couldn't run to succeed himself, so, at that point, the idea of getting people together from both parties and coming up with common viewpoints is possible. These so-called "transition projects" are also testing grounds for people who want to get jobs. I ran one at RAND in 2000, co-chaired it. We got fifty people, 25 former Republican office holders and senior people, and 25 Democrats. My co-chairs were Frank Carlucci, a former Secretary of Defense to a Republican President, but also he had held some jobs with Democrats, and was very prominent on our Board at RAND. The Republican co-chair was Zalmay Khalilzad, who, as we speak, is ambassador to Iraq. Half the people in our transition group got jobs in the new administration and half the people didn't. That's the way the game is played.

So in '88, Stu Eizenstat got this brainstorm, and he sold it to Carter, and Carter got Gerald Ford. In fact, there's a photograph up there on the wall of the three of us. A lot of the great and the good were in this transition project from the two parties, and Christopher was the Democratic Party luminary in foreign affairs. Larry Eagleburger was the lead Republican Party luminary in foreign affairs. Brent Scowcroft was involved, and there were a bunch of other people, Lamar Alexander, Carla Hills, Ed Muskie, Don Rumsfeld, a number of other people. Stu asked me if I would do the scribbling on the foreign affairs side on a bipartisan basis, which I did. I wrote that part of the final report at the end of the seminars. Eagleburger wrote one, too, because, by the time we got to the end of the project, it was obvious that the Republicans were going to win, that Bush was going to get elected, and Dukakis was sinking. So the draft that Eagleburger put in was the one that was forwarded to James Baker, who was Bush's first Secretary of State, and Eagleburger, of course, became deputy secretary and then secretary right at the end, '92, for a few weeks.

So, this was a significant engagement with Christopher, I was his guy to do the writing for him on that project. And Clinton, I think -- this is conjecture now -- figured that "Foreign policy is not my strong suit, in terms of what I'm going to want to do, it's not something that is pressing the country the way the Cold War pressed the country. It's obvious." So he went with establishment figures, and having Christopher involved in the campaign was a very good imprimatur for electoral purposes. Then when Clinton got elected, Christopher, having done a very workmanlike job on helping him to figure out who should be Vice President, and being a senior person in the field and in the establishment, Clinton picked Christopher as Secretary of State. You'll have to ask Clinton exactly how he did it, but that was a natural. But I wouldn't say that, in the idea factory, Christopher was particularly engaged.

Albright was not engaged, either. In fact, she had supported Bob Kerrey and came onto the Clinton team very late. After the nomination, Sandy got her up front for a number of events. It was useful to have a woman. She had a certain caché, because she'd been head of foreign policy for Dukakis in the '88 campaign and, at that time, was on the MacNeil-Lehrer Report, regularly, I can't remember who the Republican counterpart was, debating the issues. So she had a certain prominence. And she was very articulate, so Sandy used her at the TV debates as a spin doctor. But she was not really on the idea side of the campaign. Then there was the debate prep, which is intellectually important for coherence as well as to help get the candidate up to speed. Sandy, of course, was in charge of it, and Tony was there to be the chief idea guy. I think there were about 10 or 12 of us who were involved in that, some of whom came out of earlier presidential campaigns. There were certain people who had been in the '68 Humphrey campaign, who get drawn upon every four years. It's like on the political side, where there are certain people who get drawn upon with a lot of experience, going way back to the Johnson, some with the Kennedy campaign. The journeymen -- and women -- you called upon them because they had experience. A lot of whom don't want to go into government, but want to help elect your guy. It was kind of a club of folks who were there with experience, and I'm lucky enough to be at least partly involved in that from time to time. With Humphrey, I had done both domestic and foreign affairs, with Johnson mostly domestic, and with McGovern and Carter and later Gore, foreign affairs and defense.

So we worked on that and did the usual things. I wrote most of the strategy paper for the candidate about how to handle the debate. It said to the governor, "Here is what you're trying to achieve, here's the basic line to take on your vision for the future." Sort of to put your own themes together and the basic themes to go after the sitting president on. I wrote that basic strategy paper, and Sandy added a couple of paragraphs to it. So that was fun, and then going down to Arkansas to brief Clinton on Europe. But I was not one of the day-to-day people, in the sense of being on the phone with the governor. I had very little interaction with him.

Q: There was a simmering thing going on in Yugoslavia, wasn't there? I remember thinking about it, the Europeans were still talking about it. Was it their thing at that point or not?

HUNTER: I think what happened over Yugoslavia caught everybody by surprise. It seemed to be a relatively minor matter compared with the fundamental transformation of the entire international system, the fundamental transformation of the East-West relationship. You have to remember, the Soviet Union collapsed a few days before Christmas in 1991. Here the US was in '92, trying to sort these things out, and the war had started in Bosnia. I wrote a piece in the Outlook Section of The Washington Post in, I think, September '92, saying that this is going to be a test of whether we can do anything in Europe, and, by God, we've got to use military force to stop the Serbs from doing what they are doing.

There was the effort by the [Cyrus] Vance-[Lord] Owen Commission to get involved. It's very elaborate, you can look at it. Bosnia did not figure in the presidential campaign. The issue had emerged, but there was not a debate over it. This was a minor theme.

Q: When the election happens in November of '92, your guy won, so what happened to you?

HUNTER: There was a transition team as always, and Sandy ran this in foreign affairs. As I've already said, Sandy [Berger] was *the* person closest to Governor and then President Clinton, throughout the entire period, in foreign affairs. Nobody was closer, even when he was the Deputy National Security Advisor. My instinct told me he felt he wasn't yet "ready for prime time," so Tony [Lake] was put up as the Advisor, but Sandy had a lot of influence, at least as far as I could see.

If you've ever seen how one of things works, the president has to pick his cabinet by Inauguration Day. What happens is that he announces them, and then they do fast-forward with security clearances, background checks, and the forms you have to fill out, which is why sometimes they get in trouble because it's done very hastily. Someone hadn't paid Social Security on their nanny or something. One thing that happens, I've observed over the years, is that, as a president rushes to put a cabinet together, the opposition party, as far as they have any influence in the Congress, picks on at least one person, one appointee, to make an object lesson of, and try to "touch up" the president, and that's what happened in this case. That's what happened to [Senator] John Tower, a man I liked and respected. He was a fanny-pincher and drank a lot, but he was a quality human being. He didn't become Secretary of Defense. I actually got to know him quite well, he was an LSE person, as was I, and that's how I got to know him. Also on a trip a group of us took to the Soviet Union in '87. I had a lot of admiration for him, as a Democrat. Kept the politics out of it. Most people in Washington public life are pretty decent people, you know, that you work with.

So then they get those top appointments through, and then this group of people start putting their own teams together. Whether it was Les Aspin at Defense, or Warren

Christopher at State, or Albright at the UN, or Tony Lake as National Security Advisor, and Jim Woolsey was at CIA – though his people are almost all career professionals. There's an interaction between what the cabinet-level people might want and what the transition team, which is culling names and resumes, and what the White House wants, politically. In fact, the interaction on this is a wonder to behold, sometimes, filling all the jobs. We are a wonderful country. I always say that we like to give everybody else a chance, by handicapping ourselves. We've got about 6,000 "PAS" jobs, President and Senate, Presidential appointees subject to Senate confirmation, other than military officers and Foreign Service Officers, all of whom are also subject to Senate confirmation. We fire all 6,000 of them! For a new president, even when going from Reagan to Bush, at least with everybody who can be fired, most are. Then we start fresh. Well, the process of starting fresh, of deciding who can do the job, and what are the politics, and how do you get them cleared, I used to say the world quieted down for six months, because the United States was so important, and nobody in other countries wanted to do anything for six months until this behemoth got things straight. It's a wonder to behold. So then they started doing this, and it was obvious to me, as the process went, on that I wasn't going to get one of the senior Washington jobs. Then they started turning to other kinds of jobs. Some things here will be in my memoirs. I had a lot of support from a lot of people that I've worked with, which I was very deeply gratified for, including people on the other side of the aisle. Jim Schlesinger [former Secretary of Defense] went to bat for me, for example, a Republican. [Edward] Kennedy, whom I had worked for. Mondale was supportive. Lots of people. How much capability had anything to do with it, let other people judge, because that is a factor, but not the only factor, whether I have any capabilities or not, in determining the outcome.

Well, it got to be February '93. The pace of filling these jobs is extremely slow. I think George Bush the father, still after nine months, only had about two-thirds of the jobs filled. It takes a long time to get down to the mid- and lower-levels; and hold-over people, civil servants, serve in "acting" capacities. On the world scene, it's just remarkable, you can go six, nine months, and some assistant secretary jobs are not filled. At this moment, as we sit here, the Deputy Secretary of State job has been empty for about three months. Well, there's somebody acting and maybe you can do without the formal appointee, but there's obviously something going on there in the politics and the struggles.

In February, I got a call, I think from Tony Lake, offering me two alternatives. Either Ambassador to the European Union or Assistant Secretary of State for Intelligence and Research, which is the spook job in the State Department. It can be a very important and useful job because "INR," which were the initials in the lexicon at State, properly done, can be one of the big clearinghouses for all of the intelligence of the nation.

Q: It has a very good reputation as being probably right more often than some of the other groups.

HUNTER: I found, during my four years in the Carter administration, where every single day I read intelligence reports from throughout the government, in two of the most consequential areas, Europe and the Middle East, I would have matched INR with CIA and then a long drop to whoever else in the Intelligence Community was next. INR was certainly more literate, but part of their job was to draw upon what other people were doing. It's a first-class outfit, they've had a lot of top-quality officials. The other job was European Union. I thought about it, talked to my wife, and decided to do the European Union job, Ambassador to the European Union. One, I knew a lot about it, and second it was a "line" job, whereas INR is more like what I had been doing, research, sort of a staff job. It's not a line job at State, you don't actually have things that you sign off on. So I said "I'll do the EU." I was getting prepared for that, filed my papers, it's a *lengthy* process. In fact, the White House questionnaire is something like 20 pages long of questions. An edited one had been typed on, and the appointees who got a Xeroxed copy would see where it had questions added: "Have you ever failed to pay Social Security on a domestic employee?" That question had just been stuck in at the end of the form. So you can look at these forms, and you can see which scandal happened in which administration, since they are always adding questions to the White House form. When you become an ambassador, you get a formal letter of instruction from the President, it's four pages. It might be a year late, but you get this letter, which is your formal legal basis for acting, but which nobody hardly reads. By the time I got mine from Clinton, the presidential greeting contained this sentence: "You will follow no instructions unless they come from me or, in my name, from the Secretary of State." That was put in because of [Lt. Colonel] Ollie North's going off to Lebanon and getting John Kelly, the poor US ambassador there, to do all kinds of strange things for him in regard to Iran-*Contra.* So they put that sentence in the President's letter of instruction to protect the ambassador against somebody showing up and doing that. More than once, when someone in authority was playing games, I would say the classic thing, "I'd be pleased to do that, just send me a formal instruction."

Q: This is the White House calling.

HUNTER: I remember when I did that when I was 24 years old, and I'd pick up the phone and I'd say, "This is Bob Hunter at the White House," and everybody at the other end would jump, and I'd say to myself: "No, I'm just a person! Ease up!" That's a terrible thing, where people jump just because it's somebody at the White House calling.

I remember [Admiral] Tom Moorer, who was really a great man, Admiral and CNO [Chief of Naval Operations] and Chairman [of the Joint Chiefs], later was at CSIS while I was there, really a great man who got torpedoed twice leaving the Philippines in 1942. From Alabama, wonderful man. He said that, when he was chairman, he'd sometimes hear from Henry. Kissinger, who would call him and say, "The President wants the following things done." So then Tom says, "I'm happy to do that. You just send me a piece of paper with the President's signature on it, and I'll do what you want." Tom said that he'd never hear back. I did that more than once. That's an ambassador's protection, because you're the legal agent of the President of the United States, and if you do something that you don't have authority for, you're on the line. You say, "I'm happy to do that, send me a formal instruction. Send me the legal authority." Sometimes it comes, sometimes it doesn't come. If it doesn't come, you don't do it. My staff often wondered, when I was at NATO, why I didn't suggest more alternatives, and why I didn't just "wing it." I said "Look, we're running very tough issues here, and I want to make sure that, when we do something, we're not going to get blowback from Washington." We were very successful at that. I'd watched other administrations. Some ambassadors were naïve about that and would get in trouble. Not that I can't be naïve!

So then, in late February '93, a funny thing happened. Reginald Bartholomew, whom I'd known for a long time, we'd worked together at the White House, had become Ambassador to NATO. He hadn't been there very long. It was a backwater. It wasn't going anywhere in the post-Cold War, it was a dead-end. Bosnia was heating up, and Reggie was offered the opportunity if he'd want to go off and be the US negotiator for Bosnia. Reggie was a guy always with a sense of the "main chance," and I don't blame him, what the hell, he's a talented, ambitious person. So he gave up the NATO job to become negotiator for Bosnia. Well, I hadn't even known the job was coming open. My wife and I gave a dinner party. One of the guests was Brian Atwood, a friend, who had been involved in the campaign and was very much in the transition, and who was being made Undersecretary for Management at the Department. He said, "You know, the NATO job has just come open, because Bartholomew is leaving. Would you be interested in that?" I said, "Yeah, I'd be interested in that." He put it in the mill, and I was at a conference in East Berlin, I got another call, which was: "Which do you prefer, EU or NATO?" I did a little sounding, and I remember talking to George Vest, who'd been Assistant Secretary for Europe, one of the great people of this business. One of the truly great people. One of the things I like about George is that I have seen him deal with the President of the United States and with the person pushing the mail cart around the hall in the State Department, and he treats them exactly the same. The same degree of politeness, respect, and courtesy.

Q: Nice Virginia gentleman.

HUNTER: He is a First Family of Virginia, FFV, from Williamsburg. The poor side, as he says, but a man of real distinction. I phoned him, and he says, "Robert, if you're at the EU, even though the United States is the number one economic power, you're on the outside knocking on the door. If you're at NATO, you sit at the table by right, as the representative of the country that is number one. No choice." So when the call came, I said, "Thanks very much, I'll do NATO." In fact, they were anxious to get somebody out there. I was the second ambassador to get qualified through the process. I got asked on the eighth of March and I got sworn in on the eighth of July. The only other person who got out faster was Pamela Harriman to Paris who, incidentally, did a magnificent job.

Q: I want to just go back a bit to transition team, just because every campaign is loaded with your 24 year-old hotshots, who come in and are full of beans and know not as much as they should, let's say, but they think they do. They got cross-wired with the military early on in the Clinton administration, I think, but did you run across this? This is supposedly where some staffers at the White House said to General McCaffrey, when he was in uniform, "We don't deal with people in uniform, are you one of those?" or *something. Anyway, it got played up. You're an old pro by this time, did you run across this breed of cat?*

HUNTER: Sure. Every transition team does. The transition is the mother lode. This is people with Potomac fever, people want jobs. This is the competitive time. It's like a revolutionary situation, power is lying in the streets, with people running around trying to pick it up. It is a zoo. It's the time of sharp elbows. It's the time of everybody writing resumes, and trying to get somebody to talk to somebody else on your behalf. This is the time when you have the "heat in the kitchen," as Harry Truman said. So it's always a zoo. I would say the Clinton transition was no more orderly or disorderly than anybody else's transition. The one under Carter had also been like that, which I saw directly. Self-important young people running around thinking they're going to run the world. Then order and discipline finally…

Q: I'm having a horrible blank, but the General who became secretary of state under Reagan…

HUNTER: Alexander Haig.

Q: Haig was supposed to have called the transition team on the first day when he took over, and they all came in with the sharp elbows out, ready for assignments, and he said, "I want to thank you all very much and goodbye and good luck." A few people he told "You stay here."

HUNTER: Let me be very direct about this. Setting up a transition team before the election shows confidence. "I'm going to win." You'd better set one up as a result. Second, you begin to find at different levels who might be interested. To prepare, you have to have people to get a bunch of resumes together and to start thinking a little bit about who should be on the team. It's also a way of giving people jobs to do who come to the campaign "off the street." But once the president gets elected, he needs to start imposing real discipline on the selection process, for his agenda rather than just to take care of the people who are thrown up to him. Sometimes they run parallel teams. But any president-elect who allows the transition team to run the whole process is going to be in deep trouble. The problem is, this is more true in foreign affairs and defense, the getting in trouble, than on the domestic side. There is no natural reason for a candidate during the campaign to have to run into foreign affairs people. He or she goes around the country, dealing with farm groups, dealing with health groups, dealing with education groups. These are the bread and butter, so to speak, of getting elected. Over the years, if he's been a governor or senator, this is mostly what he's done.

Ok, with foreign affairs, this is where most presidents get it wrong. They will not have rubbed shoulders with the foreign affairs crowd on a natural day-to-day basis. They will not know who's good and who's not good, one. Two, they are faced with an establishment which will present him with a list of the people, which they've jockeyed with one another to put together, and said it's "Buggins turn," it's your turn, etcetera, etcetera. They'll give the president-elect a slate to rubber stamp if he's dumb enough to do it, or the slate put together by his cabinet member, who put together his crowd of people. Third, foreign affairs and defense are different from other areas. With domestic issues, there are an awful lot of interest groups involved. I've got the farmers, I've got labor, I've got this guy in education, I've got this guy in health. In putting people into a job, I want to put someone from the AFL-CIO here, and somebody from big business there, blah, blah blah, and it almost doesn't matter which labor guy I put in, as long as the head of the AFL-CIO approves. It's a way to help the education, etcetera, policies get passed, blah blah blah. But in foreign affairs, the number one requirement is knowing something, being smart, having experience, being able to handle the issues. The same with defense. But if the President allows the system just to throw up the names, he's going to get what he deserves. We've only had a handful of people who became President who figured it out in advance. Because they used their previous high offices wisely, Richard Nixon better than anybody else.

Q: I've had many people whom I've interviewed talk about Nixon coming around when he was out of office, sitting there with a yellow pad, taking notes, and really asking real questions.

HUNTER: He'd been Vice President for eight years, so he saw how the system worked, he could see who the phonies were, who were the real competitors for senior positions later on. George H. W. Bush, too, eight years. Walter Mondale for four years. Mondale would have put together a first-class team, because he figured out who was good and who wasn't. I can think of at least one person who got high office under Clinton, who will remain nameless, who Mondale had figured out early on was a turkey. Christopher and Clinton didn't realize this guy was a turkey, so he got a high office. He didn't last that long.

Q: Let me just stop here.

Q: This is tape 6, side 1 with Robert Hunter. Did you get any feeling at all about then Governor Clinton and the Foreign Service? Some people come in with the feeling that these are a bunch of snooty bastards, or an aversion to them or anything like that?

HUNTER: That doesn't ring a bell. Clinton is not a guy with hard edges and prejudices like that. I never detected any of that. I guess Nixon thought they were all enemies, but I never saw this once with Clinton.

Q: How did you feel as you were looking at this? You'd been around the block many times on this, about Christopher as being secretary of state, because he's a lawyer, and dealing with the problems of the time, he doesn't resonate in the secretary of state ranks with many others. How did you feel early on?

HUNTER: Let me put it this way. He is a very smart guy, I had a track record with him, had a lot of admiration for him. He is a fair and judicious person, not a person who was prejudiced. He didn't come with an agenda of things, particularly an agenda of negative things, which some people do, like the current crowd [George W. Bush team]. He'd had a lot of experience in a lot of things: Deputy Secretary, what he did on the Iranian hostage negotiations. So here was a highly qualified individual. A lot of that is who you pick. I don't fault somebody who becomes President without a lot of experience, as long as they choose wisely. Obviously, everybody is highly ambitious, and a lot of people have sharp elbows. That's life. But the idea of "Let's just have people who will work together smoothly as a team," that's ludicrous. You want people who have different views and who can bring inspiration, and who question conventional wisdom, and who will have fights from time to time, because this is serious business. You're head of the United States of America; you don't want people just to march off in close-order, together. That's our biggest problem, chronically, that we tend to march off close together. This current crowd *wanted* to march off the Iraqi cliff. The Vietnam cliff, earlier. I'd still love to learn procedurally about how that happened. Someone was saying the other day that one of the problems we have in Iraq is that we have a personnel system that has to rotate people out because, if you're a colonel or a lieutenant colonel, you want to get the next promotion, you've got to get a bunch of tickets punched, and now that you're staying three, four years in Iraq, it doesn't help your career. So they rotate them out, they've got to start fresh with new leadership. Here at RAND, we've been doing a lot of work on the problem of continuity, why we haven't been getting it right in Iraq.

Q: I was Consul-General for 18 months in Saigon and watching...

HUNTER: When?

Q: '69-'70.

HUNTER: Poor you.

Q: ...and watching the military, I sat on some boards and all, six months in the field and six months in a staff job. After a few months I found myself as the person with historical continuity, historic memory, compared to all the newcomers.

HUNTER: I have an anecdote on this that I was telling just the other day. It reminds me of a guy from RAND, giving a speech during an election period, which I remember very well, a seminar that I took part in, up at Harvard. He was talking about the problem of our need to keep the colonels in their jobs in the field, in the war. He argued that everyone, instead of worrying about their next promotion, should instead be kept in place in order to get the job done. The person who made this statement, this RAND guy, was Herman Kahn, and it was December 1967.

So it's a question of who the president picks, and they need to be talented people. Nowadays, he has to pick at least one person who has a very strong strategic sense, the capacity to a lot of issues put together, but not an ideological strategic sense. Kissinger, with some ideology, had it. Brzezinski, with some ideology, had it. Scowcroft recognized it when he saw it and was a good organizer. Today, the people at the top of this administration who have a strategic sense get it perverted. That's how we got into Iraq. The President doesn't have to have this sense, himself. Nixon had it. Kissinger was essentially the guy who dressed it up. The strategist for Nixon, essentially, was Nixon. Unfortunately for him, “a funny thing happened on the way to history.” Nixon disappeared, and Kissinger got to take the credit for Nixon’s grand strategy.

So that’s the thing. You pick a good team of solid people. Not only is it to do the process, but who can recognize ideas when others have them, who will be smart and flexible, will have enough immersion in serious strategic calculations to be able to figure out what’s going on on a grand strategic level and be able to move one way or another, rather than being rigid or being shaped by a few people. Much of American history has been reactive in terms of grand strategy. Very rarely has it been proactive, where we had to take the initiative. We’re in kind of the latter area, now. Well, we have to be good at it. We shifted from the early Cold War period of actually having to construct things to being reactive and just managing the system. Then we had the “holiday from history.” Now we’ve been in a period -- certainly, in NATO, we were from the end of the Cold War onward, but since 9/11 in other areas, the Iraq war -- where we need strategic thinking across the board. We need creativity, people with their heads screwed on right, but we don’t have them. We’re in big trouble. We largely dismantled the American strategic community, the analytical people, late in the Cold War because, at that point, we just needed to check the blocks, there was no real thought required. Nowadays, too many people in the business look at the jobs, call on their conventional wisdom, and…

Q: Looking at it in the beginning, then we’ll stop before you actually appeared at NATO for this session, but was there a strategic thinker in the early Clinton period, a Brzezinski or a Kissinger?

HUNTER: No, there never was. The closest person was Tony Lake, who is quite talented, but there never was one. Still, we did put together a grand strategy for Europe; indeed, this is only time that I’ve ever seen an American foreign policy that started with a grand strategy and then put the pieces together, rather than the grand strategy emerging after the fact from the pieces. I was in the thick of that and, if I can be immodest, I think I played perhaps the leading role on the European security piece.

Q: One last question on this. Foreign affairs-wise, where did Sandy Berger develop his knowledge, and how did you see him as a player at the beginning of the Clinton administration?

HUNTER: Sandy had been on the Policy Planning Staff, and then been a trade lawyer, afterwards. He’d been engaged with Clinton early on, beginning with the 1972 McGovern campaign. He’d been the guy who ran all the Clinton presidential campaign in foreign policy, obviously had been steeped in all of that, and was Deputy National Security Advisor, and learned on the job, and he was a very smart boss. He’s not a strategic thinker, and he didn’t pretend to be. His job was to help the meshing of the gears and to help the President, to advise the President of pitfalls, to keep him out of trouble. A very important task. Brent Scowcroft is not a brilliant strategist in my judgment, but he was a brilliant person to manage the process. Sandy was very good at managing, also, but he’s not an idea guy. That’s all right, just as long as somebody is doing it, because remember, Clinton never really needed anybody like that, as presidents did during the Cold War or after 9/11. With the "holiday of history," a few things here, a few things there. We got Europe right, which was as important as anything. Now, post-9/11, we need people with a strategic sense – a sensible strategic sense!! -- and we don't have them.

The process of appointing people and getting them confirmed is quite long, and there are a number of things you have to do, as you're being designated and getting your clearances, which include paying courtesy calls on senior members of the Senate and, of course, getting "up to speed" on administration policy. There are two other things. First, an absolute requirement: you never, never, never, go to visit the country to which you've been appointed by the president. The President sends your name to the Senate: "I hereby nominate" Never, never, never go to visit where you're going. It's the last place. The man who was appointed ambassador to Barbados or someplace like that, his wife went down to check out the residence, and the Senate said "Stop" and refused to confirm him. When you go through your Senate hearing, you always say "*If confirmed by the United States Senate,* here's what I'll do." You gotta get confirmed. The other thing is you must not take any government decisions before you are confirmed. You don't sign any pieces of paper, you don't even pretend to be taking decisions. It's like Persephone and the pomegranate seeds. It's very important, the priority is the Senate.

One thing that was happening was that Christopher was having to go to one of the semi-annual NATO hearings, the June foreign ministers' meeting in Athens, and I came into the State Department to work on his speech, which in NATO parlance is called the "intervention," and the draft that had been put together by the career people was mush. I had the ambition, first, to recognize that the world had changed, and that fact had to be reflected in what Christopher said – some people were even asking: "Who needs NATO?" Second, I had the ambition that, if I'm going to do this job, I'm going to do a decent job. Third, I'd been involved in NATO issues for 30-odd years. Since 1962, 31 years already at that point, including having had the key NSC responsibility for NATO under Carter. So I sat down at – literally -- the kitchen table, and I wrote a new draft, then ran it through the Assistant Secretary who had a sense that Christopher had to have a good speech. That became the draft, and I did all the things you have to do to get that accepted as the draft. One thing I did was to phone the NATO Secretary General, Manfred Wörner, after I was appointed, whom I'd known for years, and I said, "Manfred, what do you want?" He said, "I want a NATO summit!" So I set about doing that and pushed that through. So we were going to put that in Christopher's speech to the ministerial, to have a NATO summit. That Christopher intervention, even though the bureaucrats did manage to water a number of parts down, became the basic framework for what the administration then did at NATO, with the exception that there was no NATO enlargement at that point. This was before I was confirmed by the Senate and sworn in and became a government employee. I don't think Christopher to this day knows that I wrote his speech, but I'm glad I used my own initiative. There was another reason for my doing it. To be candid, Christopher had gone off to Europe early on to talk about Bosnia, and he made the classic mistake, related to the fact that allies would always bitch about what we do. No matter how much they disliked the last president, as soon as there's a new one, they decide they love the last guy, because they know they're vulnerable. That was more true in the Cold War than was in 1993, because a possible threat was just theoretical after the Cold War, the idea that you don't know for sure what's going to happen with Russia. The Allies wanted to get the President to say what he's going to do, to be clear about it. If he comes in and he waffles, he's seen as a clown, no matter who he is. So, the first time out of the box you'd better get it right. Christopher was over in Europe talking about Bosnia, and he did the unpardonable thing, which had been done by Mondale also in 1977 -- not Mondale's fault, the career people wrote his talking points. Whenever you're on a "fact-finding tour" in Europe, you don't ask them what you should do; you say what the United States plans to do, you lead. Well, Christopher goes off to Europe and he asks: "What do you think about Bosnia?" The message the Europeans got from that was that he had no idea of what the US wanted to do about it. Now, if he had said "Let's do X, Y, and Z," they would have bitched about that, too, but at least there would have been an American position, and they probably would have fallen into line. Christopher comes back to Washington, and already he's damaged goods. That's it. Like with Mondale, not really his fault. So one of the things I wanted to do with the NATO speech in Athens was to get Christopher back in the game, and it did. Because it showed, when he came to Athens at the NATO meeting and made his intervention, that the US had a sense of what was happening in European security, what the real problems were, and that it had some concrete ideas of what do to that added up and made sense to the Europeans. This helped make it possible for us later on to get the Europeans to support a set of policies that remade European security..

Q: Ok, well we'll pick this up the next time. I think we'll want to cover what particular line you took prior to actually coming on the job, helping Christopher take a line with NATO. And then coming on to NATO which would be in '93.

HUNTER: I was sworn in on July the 8th and arrived in Brussels on the 11th, Sunday morning.

Q: We'll pick it up at that point, but we will go back to the way you were helping setting your own agenda through Christopher writing this.

HUNTER: My primary objective was, if we were going to be able collectively to do our job, to recoup after the bad misstep a few months earlier.

Q: Which was the fact finding.

HUNTER: Yes, it's like when the Secretary of State goes anywhere abroad. Fact finding? Uh uh. The Secretary doesn't go out and "fact find," because he or she has diplomats to do that. You go out and say: "Here is what we think should be done." You lead. Boom. [End session]

Q: Ok, today is the 16th of January 2007. What did you see as our agenda with NATO in '93?

HUNTER: Well, let's give credit where credit is due. The great strength of our relationship with NATO, throughout its entire history is that support for it has almost always been bipartisan in this country. It's not a matter of squabbling between Democrats and Republicans as to what they wanted to do instead, or saying, "I'm going to do the opposite of what the team that just left has done." When a new administration does that, it gets us in trouble on a regular basis, not just with some changes in personnel, but the cleaning house that goes on in every American government, where we fire everybody who knows anything, whichever party you are. Second, saying, in effect: "We're going to go off in a new direction and forget about what the last crew did." It's a problem we had with regards both to the Allies and to much of the rest of the world when this team came in in 2001. The George H.W. Bush administration had actually done some very important historical work, not only helping with a "soft landing," the collapse of the Soviet Union, where the President really earned his marbles as a foreign policy president, but also engineering the unification of Germany, not *reunification* -- it had never been unified as such a country along the lines it is now -- and as a member of NATO. Not creating neutrality for Germany, whatever that would mean in a post-Cold War era for the eastern part of Germany or for all of it. Also to set in train some steps so that Europe would be less divided, such as the North Atlantic Cooperation Council, created near the end of 1991, which provided membership for every country that was either a regular member of NATO or in Central Europe, nine of them; then when its membership was completed a few months after the Soviet Union collapsed, it included, I think, just about all the countries that had emerged out of the wreckage of the Soviet empire, both the internal and the external empires. That's the fifteen republics that came out of the Soviet Union, plus all the countries that had regained their technical, practical independence. So the Bush administration had started in this direction. When we were coming into office, we had a number of problems, one of which, of course, was Bosnia, which I may have already mentioned, and on which I had done a good deal of writing, to say that this is something that has to be stopped, the war in Bosnia. The worst fighting in Europe since World War II.

Q: Before we were there did you see Bosnia as being not just because of nasty fighting, but did you see a larger spread that could involve other countries?

HUNTER: One thing that I think became clear early on, which was one of the reasons it was difficult to deal with the Bosnian question -- as you may have noticed, I've got a kind of a way of summarizing situations in two lines to try to catch peoples' attention. The line I had at the time was that, "You could shoot as many Austrian Archdukes as you want in Sarajevo, and you're not going to have World War III." There was not going to be a contagion. It was contained. Everybody agreed, everybody, whether it was the Americans, the Europeans, the Russians, etcetera, that this was not going to spread into a wider war. But it still was an issue beyond the human suffering, which was prodigious. 200,000 people died in Bosnia before this war got stopped. How were we going to be able to structure security in Europe, in general? How were you going to build security, and get what you were doing taken seriously, if you didn't stop it? This was the big thing that finally led to decisions to use NATO air power to stop the war. Not just the enormity of Srebrenica, the worst slaughter of its kind in Europe since World War II, but also the understanding that NATO wouldn't have a future if it couldn't stop fighting in its own backyard.

The more immediate issues were: What do you do with this animal, NATO? What do you do about the issue of American engagement in Europe? What do you do about creating a new security structure for Europe and then broaden it to the Eurasian region? That was clear. I may have mentioned that, when I got nominated by the President, one of the first things I did was to call Manfred Wörner, Secretary General of NATO, a friend since I worked for Kennedy and he was in the Bundestag, we were good friends. I said: "Manfred, what do you want?" And he said: "Get me a summit." One of the things I worked on, even prior to being confirmed by the Senate, was to organize a summit meeting. I think I played a lead role in organizing that, which then took place in January 1994. Why was it important? It was a commitment of U. S. power and permanence. A term I invented sometime before, and was bound and determined to see implemented as a critical aspect, was that "America is a European power." That we are deeply and permanently engaged in the future of Europe and European security, and a European player. That idea has been validated, and even if one said, after the Cold War, "Gee there're not too many security problems," economically we had already crossed the Rubicon a long time before. We don't have membership in the European Union, but, by gosh, we're the extra member when it comes to the management of the global economy. Together with the Europeans, we created economic ties which cannot be ruptured, the US cannot retreat to isolationism regarding Europe, without the whole structure of our economy and their economies collapsing. Do some Americans still have any illusions about isolation? Sorry, issue dead. Too late. They should have done something about it before, decades before, if that's what they wanted.

So I had this vision which had evolved over many, many years and with a lot of people, based on what had been done in the previous administration. When we got to it, there were a couple of major changes, where we had to reverse Bush administration policy and move forward, again on a bipartisan basis. Obviously, as I was the nominee for NATO, I made the rounds and saw the people in the Senate who were important, such as Senator [Claiborne] Pell, Chairman of the Foreign Relations Committee, but also the minority members that they then were, the Republicans. There were no fault lines. That's the thing. No fault lines between the parties on NATO

Q: What about Jesse Helms?

HUNTER: I asked to see him, his folks said thank you for doing so, and they said that he didn't have enough time, so I didn't see him, and, in fact, for my confirmation hearing he submitted a long list of written questions to be answered afterwards, which is standard practice, and I wrote the answers and cleared them with the State Department, and no problem. It was striking that, when I left NATO, a friend of mine in Congress, named David Skaggs, a very distinguished then-congressman from Colorado, organized a round-robin letter urging President Clinton to keep me in the government, and the first signer of that was Jesse Helms. It didn't have an effect, but that's OK. So when you are the nominee, it is very important to call on the Senators. It proved to be a godsend. [Senator]

Dick Lugar, for example, was one of the most important people supporting what I was trying to do at NATO.

Q: A senator from Indiana.

HUNTER: And later Chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee until a few days ago, actually, and the man who coined the phrase "NATO, out of area or out of business" or at least his deputy, Ken Myers, invented it. That phrase was extremely useful to me as we were trying to sell our policies, because the Allies could see that the Congress was behind our policies -- it wasn't just the Ambassador talking -- and a leading Senator from the opposite political party, to boot. I already mentioned that I worked on the idea of the summit. But then Christopher was going to speak at the Athens ministerial-level meeting of the North Atlantic Council in June, to which I could not go because I hadn't been confirmed. In fact, I was only the second ambassador to get confirmed, kind of a hurry up on it. The first one was Pamela Harriman in Paris. A person who surprised just about everybody by doing a terrific job.

Q: She was absolutely first-rate.

HUNTER: She understood politics. She had to do what had to be done, she had to do what she knew, and when she didn’t have the expertise, she called on people who did. I didn't really have a view of her potential when she took the job, but I worked with her closely, and I have the utmost respect for her. She was exactly what we needed in France at that time. Confirmation takes a long time, as you know about this, a *long* time. I was asked to do the job on March the 8th, I was sworn in on July the 8th, so it was only four months, a record!

When I got involved in preparations for the Athens ministerial meeting, I was given a copy of the draft for Christopher to use. It was "business as usual." A bureaucratic draft, more of the same, just carry on. It could have been given five years earlier, as though nothing had happened in the world. So I sat down, as I mentioned, around the kitchen table, and I typed up a new draft and sent it in, and eventually had to go to the new assistant secretary and argue vehemently that the State draft was useless…

Q: Who was that?

HUNTER: Steve Oxman. Disappeared without a trace. A man who really didn’t know very much about Europe, but he was Christopher’s law partner, disappeared without a trace. Probably a decent human being, but he didn’t know his job. I finally convinced him that he was not doing Christopher a service by relying on the State draft, so I worked on it assiduously. By the end, some munchkins in the Department had dumbed down some of the ideas, no offense meant to the original Munchkins!

Q: Munchkins being little people from The Wizard of Oz. *The term is also used pejoratively in the Foreign Service, what people do to the Foreign Service.*

HUNTER: It’s like the term the military uses, the "iron majors." People at that level who are looking for a promotion and making sure nothing happens during their service that could possibly be risky. If you want to get the military to do anything you have to convince the iron majors. I had a conversation once with the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, John Shalikashvili, he was one of the outstanding military people in our modern history. He’d been Supreme Allied Commander in Europe. I went to ask him why hadn’t certain things been done, even though he had approved them. He shook his head and said, “Iron majors.” Even he couldn’t overrule them in certain things.

Anyway, I had this idea, which is in the speech, to do a comprehensive approach. The one area, let’s be honest about it, that I didn’t stick in that speech was NATO enlargement, taking new members. In fact, that’s something the US government came to only about the middle of September that year [1993]. Instead, the speech draft focused on just about everything else that proved to be of significance, including ideas from the previous administration that had value, notably, the North Atlantic Cooperation Council. The draft had the essence of the idea that became Partnership with Peace a few months later. A whole series of other things. NATO's relationship with the European Union, what you do with Russia, it was all in the initial draft. The idea was not just to come up with ideas, but that they would make a coherent whole and also show American leadership to the Allies. Again, it’s leaping ahead, in all my years in government and all my thinking about US foreign policy over the years, other than this one occasion, on European security, I don’t think I’ve ever seen an occasion when US grand strategy has been something we started with rather than something we used to describe what had already been done. That’s what you usually do. You look at the package of things and say, "Gee, I guess we’ve got a new grand strategy, here." Let me also say that, as I was working to create the new grand strategy, there were an awful lot of good people involved, including Republicans like Dick Lugar and his deputy, Ken Meyers, and David Abshire, who was very supportive. Also, from outside the government, there was George Vest, who has been one of the great men of modern American foreign policy, a Foreign Service Officer, who held every job that his skills destined him to have had except ambassador to NATO. Ambassador to the European Communities, Assistant Secretary for Europe, number two at NATO. One of the good things about NATO in the Cold War, and I hope through the early years and even now, if they’ll listen, was that a lot of the high-flyers in the Foreign Service wanted to be involved in NATO. They wanted to be involved in something important, and where it would also be good for their onward careers. There were a number of ambassadors who worked at this recruitment in other areas. For example, Chester Bowles, who was ambassador to India, created a strong team, and many of these people went on to senior positions in foreign policy later on. Kennan in Yugoslavia; in fact, you were one of his quality people! For years, many of the best FSOs were members of what was sort of a German Mafia, they were sometimes called the Bonn Group. These were high-flyers. Many of these people went to Vietnam, and you still see some of them today in some areas, although it’s harder to get the best to go to Iraq, because of the fundamental structural failure of policies, there, which couldn’t be rescued even by the best Foreign Service Officers. I digress.

Q: There's a book called Life in the Emerald City, the people who were sent there because of...

HUNTER: There were inexperienced Republican operatives we sent over, for example to create a stock market in Baghdad, a person who had never been to a stock market before. But I digress. Back when I started out at NATO, there were a lot of good people. I formed a fast friendship with a Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense, named Joe Kruzel, who was one of the outstanding idea people, and who unfortunately died on Mount Igman, a real loss to the country. He and I and John Shali and I think Jenonne Walker at the NSC were the people who created Partnership for Peace. One of the great things is that everybody now claims credit for it. Which in a way is good. One thing I did, as I may have mentioned to you before, when I got in this job, I followed the Reagan principle: "There is no limit to what you can get done if you don't care who takes the credit." One of the striking things, of course, is that everybody took the credit. When it came time for deciding whether I would get another administration job after NATO, as opposed to some of the credit-takers, well, I was willing to pay the price of not getting credit in order to get the job done, and that's part of service to the country.

Q: Ben Franklin puts forward as his advice to people who want to get things done.

HUNTER: Of course, Ben Franklin was a great self-promoter. He was one of them, and he combined so many American qualities, one of which is being an entrepreneur and a self-promoter, a scalawag, which in the right amount is another wonderful quality, and a great statesman. He was able to combine national and personal ambitions. Unfortunately, we have few people nowadays who can see beyond their personal ambitions.

Q: When you were talking to Christopher when you were working on his speech…

HUNTER: I don't think I saw him except to have my picture taken, like all new ambassadors.

Q: I first encountered this speech which you rewrote, did he present that basically?

HUNTER: The basic themes, his people severed some language from it, but it really had the essence of what I put in, and I think it went a long way to accomplish the ideas I had. One was to help set an agenda, the second was to help restore Christopher's reputation in Europe, following that ill-fated trip earlier in the year, which was similar to some things that had been done at the beginning of the Carter administration. *Déjà vu* all over again. The Allies, they're very peculiar, even somewhat true today, certainly then. No matter how much they have a problem with a sitting president, as soon as he leaves and somebody else comes in, they remember only the virtues of the predecessor. They look at the newcomer with extremely tough standards because they depended, then, and to a more limited extent now, on the United States for leadership and their security. One of the biggest concerns about the current fiasco in Iraq is the damage being done to the United States and our capacity to do other things. That's a major reason why most Europeans didn't want us to go into Iraq. It was "Gee guys, what's the United States doing to itself? And we need a confident and capable America to be able to do things for us.” So that was a major goal, trying to regain the strength of the position of the secretary of state. He never understood this and never said thank you. I’m a grown up. In fact, I tried twice to get him to swear me in as ambassador. The response I got back from his office was, "If he swears you in for NATO, he’ll have to swear everybody in." As I’ve already mentioned, this was not a job that people were competing for. Indeed, my predecessor, Reggie Bartholomew, had given it up to become the negotiator for Bosnia. So I was lucky to get this job which nobody else seemed to want. I may have mentioned to you, I eventually got a call from Tony Lake, who told me I wouldn’t get a Washington job. I said, “Look, send me abroad, like used to happen with Latin American generals, to get 'em out of town.” In fact, Clinton ended up sending a lot of good people abroad. Leaving myself aside, that included Stu Eizenstat, David Aaron, Dick Holbrooke, Dick Gardner, and a number of others. Good, solid Democrats with a lot of experience, but the folks who were deciding who got the jobs didn’t want us around. I was there at NATO four and a half years.

Q: The kind of perspective, the people you mention, including yourself, all were really experienced, could be considered to have expertise. One of the people I’ve interviewed said “expertise is the enemy of policy” and you don’t want too much around.

HUNTER: I may have told you, having served four years less two hours and twenty minutes in the Carter White House, I am convinced that, you need, at the top level, someone who knows about what’s going on in the world, who knows how to put the pieces together -- what I call having a genuine *strategic* sense, a rare but vital commodity for the president to have near him. This person, even if he or she doesn't have all the capacity to think things through, he or she at least who knows what questions to ask and where to look for the answers. The answers will almost always be there, somewhere in the US government. Just about everything you need to know, except what Dictator X is going to have for breakfast tomorrow morning, somebody in the government knows it. Somebody. Whether CIA, DIA, State Department, somebody, someplace knows it well and truly. The chore is to find that person and then to listen to him or her. We are extremely bad at that, particularly when most people who make it to the top in our foreign policy establishment, with some wonderful exceptions, are afraid of having somebody down below tell them what they think, out of their own wisdom. Our presidents tend to be very badly served by the government, because of senior people who won’t reach out to the experts. I remember being stunned, early in the current administration, when I heard that Colin Powell had invited some Army captain or somebody at the deputy assistant secretary level to come to a top-level meeting. He said: “This is the person who understands what is going on.” That doesn’t happen very often. Brzezinski used to bring those of us to see the president who knew what was going on, and Carter was a person who valued that. Like the story of John Kennedy’s calling a bureaucrat down in the bowels of the State Department soon after he became President. The senior people shuddered.

Q: I used to get that, because my name being Kennedy, and I was in INR, and I’d call up and say" Just tell them Mr. Kennedy called.” And I’d get this long pause at the other end, *which was about whether the president was calling down. They weren't sure which Kennedy I was. I'd hasten to tell them that it was the INR Kennedy, not the president.*

HUNTER: There is a lot of talent in the US government, and they're so bad at the senior level in making use of it.

Q: When you went out to there, what was the feeling that you were getting from people in the European Bureau at State or anybody else that you were talking to about NATO? Because NATO was on the brink of "Do we need NATO anymore?"

HUNTER: It was my thought that it was possible to make a good running. The forcing point was getting the one thing that I had to do, which was to get the summit, because summits are a forcing action. The president will be engaged, and you can't let the president be a bozo.

Q: We'll pick this up the next time, and we'll talk about your arriving at NATO and then we'll talk about setting up the summit and what was on your agenda for getting the president to commit himself there.

[End session]

Q: Today is the 15th of February 2007, and as you've just told me, this is the 109th anniversary of the blowing up of the Battleship Maine. What year are we talking about the summit when you're going to Brussels?

HUNTER: First, something on the Battleship *Maine*. Admiral Hyman Rickover wrote a book for the Naval Institute, in which he questioned whether the explosion was due to external causes – like a torpedo; he thought it was a powder magazine that had blown up, because it was right next to a bituminous coal bunker, and they had a bad history of spontaneous combustion. Some other people have questioned the standard view, as well. It was interesting that the court of inquiry at the time the battleship was blown up first came to the same conclusion as Rickover later did, but then, as the publicity mounted, came around to believe that it was external. Walter Millis in 1934 wrote a book about this period, in which he raised the issue of the sinking of the *Maine*. The reason I say this now, in the Year of our Lord 2007, is that, if you read Millis' account of how we got into the Spanish-American War, it's so close to how we got into Iraq in terms of the sociology, the psychology, the players, the misrepresentation of facts, deliberate misrepresentation, the invidious role played by Theodore Roosevelt, as Assistant Secretary of the Navy, and the role of the media, Mr. Hearst and Mr. Pulitzer. In the case of the invasion of Iraq, there were certain newspapers and television networks, that shall remain nameless, that are playing the same role, now, it is stunning as a repeat of history, absolutely stunning. They did it on Iraq, and they are starting to do it on Iran. And another similar aspect: the *Maine* was in Havana harbor to intimidate the Spanish, just like so many US naval vessels are in the Persian Gulf, now, to intimidate the Iranians. And like in 1898, there is risk of a conflict by accident.

Q: Well we're creating our history here now. What year did you arrive in Brussels?

HUNTER: On Sunday morning, I think it was the 11th of July in 1993. As I mentioned earlier, it was a fairly quick appointment-confirmation process, it was only four months from the day I was asked 'til the day I arrived at post. The only ambassador who arrived more rapidly was Pamela Harriman, who did a marvelous job in Paris. That Sunday afternoon, almost right off the plane, I held a staff meeting at the US mission, because there was a NATO meeting -- the North Atlantic Council in Permanent Session, which is the ambassadors -- the following day to talk about the summit the following January. Obviously, I had what are called "instructions," which I more-or-less wrote, the best instructions are always the ones you write yourself!, for this meeting. My first impression on getting to NATO, and it's a general comment, is that too many people in our great republic don't appreciate the quality of the people who work for the government. The Foreign Service, the Civil Service, the military. I had a great team. Part of that was because of my predecessors, whom I learned from, particularly from a man named Larry Legere, who had long since left, but who for years had been head of the defense component at the USNATO mission. He always recruited outstanding people, military and civilian, from the Defense Department, and then made sure that these outstanding people got good onward jobs when they left NATO. So you'd get outstanding people to make this a useful part of their career track. It became quite obvious to me from the very beginning that this was a first-rate team. Of course, that began with my secretary, Mary Ann Silva. Reggie Bartholomew, my predecessor, had told me that, "Whatever else you do, keep Mary Ann." So I did that on his say-so, and she did a stellar job. My DCM was a career FSO, Bob Pearson, who was one of the best, as was his successor, Doug McElhaney. We had a lot of outstanding people. Three good heads of the DOD part of the mission, as my Defense Advisor: Tom Kuenning, an Air Force Brigadier General, who went on to be head of the On-Site Inspection Agency; Cathy Kelleher, one of our leading NATO academics; and Bob Hall, a USIA person who had worked in Bill Perry's office. There was Bob Beecroft, an "old German hand," who knew NATO backwards and forwards. Norm Ray, a US Vice Admiral, who was Deputy Chairman of the Military Committee, who walked me through the complexities of dealing with the WEU; I later got him selected as one of NATO's Assistant Secretaries General. And lots of others, too numerous to name, including a first-rate group of MilReps -- US Military Representatives, in the office across the hall. I was proud of the whole team, and all share in the credit for an amazing set of achievements. A really dedicated, hard-working group of people, who really cared about what they were doing and getting it right. That was one of my slogans at NATO, "Get it right." Of course, you know that an ambassador only gets to choose two people, his or her deputy chief of mission and his or her personal secretary. All the rest are chosen by the bureaucracy, in this case the State and Defense Departments, though you can make suggestions. One special thing I should mention. I think alone of all US ambassadors, the one at NATO isn't just connected to the State Department, but also has the right to go directly to the Secretary of Defense. In fact, the two departments concluded a treaty to that effect several decades ago; and I kept a copy of it, DOD Directive such-and-so, on my desk, just in case anyone at State -- and it did happen -- complained about my dealing directly with Les Aspin, Bill Perry, or Bill Cohen (the last two honored me with the DOD Medal for Distinguished Public Service, the top civilian honor). Anyway, I got to Brussels on a Sunday morning, met with the team that afternoon, and we started the ball rolling with the Allies the following day. I'd have to go back and recollect what the specific issues were, in regard to the NATO summit that was on the docket, but the basic thing was two or three propositions. First, it became immediately obvious that the Allies were pleased to have a fully-qualified US ambassador. We had had a quality chargé, Sandy Vershbow, who went on to be my successor at NATO, but however good that person was, as far as the Allies were concerned, he or she – and until much later, all NATO ambassadors from all allied nations were "he," from NATO's founding until about 2003 or 2004 -- he or she is not an ambassador created by the President.

Q: However good they may be, it's still not an ambassador representing the president.

HUNTER: Immediately, the idea that an ambassador was there was very important to the Allies. The second function that became very clear very early on, and came also out of my experience over many, many years working on NATO -- including being in charge of NATO issues in the Carter White House for two years -- whatever the Allies may say about American policies, they respect American leadership, they look for American leadership. America is the 800-pound gorilla, it's the pivot point, it's the essence of NATO. Without the United States, there is no NATO. It's a necessary, but not sufficient, condition. So immediately on the arrival of an ambassador -- which happened to be me, it could have been somebody else -- the spirits of the Allies went up, and they desired to be responsive to American leadership. That, of course, was a primary goal of mine, to make sure that Bill Clinton's leadership would come across effectively at NATO and that we would do the right things that were necessary. It was also true, then, and to a great extent true, now, that if the United States doesn't take the initiative, nobody does. Of all the initiatives that led up to the recreation of NATO in the 1990s, the only major one that came from elsewhere was the NATO-Russia relationship, which came from the Germans and the French, though the German defense minister, Volker Ruhe, did press for enlargement as much as anyone in the Alliance. The Americans actually wrote the document, the NATO-Russia Founding Act, of which the 10th anniversary will be celebrated on the 17th of May this year, but all the rest of the ideas came from the United States. Strikingly, almost all of the ideas came from within the government, which is very rare, sometimes, and of these, a high proportion came out of my mission, from me and my staff, more than from anywhere else in the government. We were the principal architects, and certainly the integrators, putting together the ideas into a unified and purposeful grand strategy. That was my job, as I saw it. I should point out, as I think I have before, that early on I decided to follow the famous Ronald Reagan dictum, "There is no limit to the good things you can get done as long as you don't mind who takes the credit." For everything we did at NATO, there were at least a thousand fathers and mothers, no matter who did it, and whenever anyone takes the credit, I never say "No." Leaping ahead, that was true also with Allies, as well. It was critical for the process that everybody come around to a view that they had -- to use that wonderful modern expression – "ownership" of the product. By the time we finished getting done the reconstruction of NATO, about 1995 -- virtually everything was in place by then, except for maybe NATO-Russia, which took a little bit longer -- any one of the 16 NATO ambassadors could go out and brief on what NATO was doing, and they would all say the same thing, because they all were part of it, they all had ownership of it. It's a lot of work to get that done.

The real process for almost all the ideas then took place within the US government, and to a great extent at my mission, between the time I arrived at NATO and the informal defense ministers meeting that took place in Travemünde, Germany, on October 19-21.

Q: I wonder if you could explain before we move any further what you mean by the reconstruction of NATO?

HUNTER: The proximate cause for NATO had gone away. There was no Soviet Union. Here was an alliance of…. to quote Yuri Arbatov, the long-serving head of the U. S. A. and Canada Institute in Moscow, one of the really difficult people, but in the Cold War he had been the Soviets' "authorized" linkage to the Western, and in particular the US, academic and think-tank world. He said, rather ironically, afterwards, "We have made the ultimate assault on you, we have taken away your enemy." So here was NATO's original rationale gone away. In fact, as I've often remarked, one of the marvelous things was that NATO didn't just pack up and go home after the end of the Cold War. I often illustrate that with a story about what happened on the 19th of June in 1815, it was a Monday, the day after the Battle of Waterloo, and Field-Marshal Blűcher met the Duke of Wellington at place called *La Belle Alliance,* just south of the battlefield, and Marshal Blűcher said, "Why don't we call the battle after this place where we are, you know, 'The Beautiful Alliance.'" The Duke said, "No, no, I think we'll name it after my headquarters," which was north of the battlefield, in Waterloo. Well, they had a glass of champagne; they went their separate ways, and that was the end of the Grand Alliance. Well, I used to say that, on the notional day after the Cold War ended, at NATO everybody came to work as usual. The fly wheel. The incredible pattern of people working together in an integrated military structure, in a single language -- American -- with common training, efforts to build common standards, even though lots of equipment was built by lots of different firms in different places. You almost had to turn off the NATO light switch. But there was nobody to turn off the switch. Institutions, you can turn them on, it's very hard to turn them off. The League of Nations didn't formally go out of business, I discovered, until the first of January 1946. It carried on all through the Second World War in Geneva. Bureaucrats carried on with it because that's what you do. So, here we had a circumstance of doubt whether this NATO thing was going to just peter out, or whether there were new tasks to be done. This was my sense, not "How do we preserve this thing?" or "How do we put out a preservation order on this house, and what kind of renovation are we going to do because it's a nice house?" But "Are there things to be done that this house can be used for?"

I like to argue that, by the time we collectively finished this first transformation of NATO -- and now it's gone through this fundamental, second transformation in the last four years -- about the only thing that was the same was the building. The innards of the way it works have just been so fundamentally redone. This was, in my judgment, one of the very few occasions I can think of in US history, and I've had some appreciation of

American history, in which we started with what we wanted to achieve and then built the individual items to make that come true, rather than calling something a grand strategy after the bits and pieces have been done pragmatically. It was less "grand," obviously, than going back to, say, the meeting in Argentia, Newfoundland in 1941, the Atlantic Charter. Much less grand. But the vision was, "What do we need to do to meet the conditions of having a viable European security?" It was recognizing that the basics of American interests -- let's talk about American interests -- where the Allies would find it compatible, and that hadn't changed -- which was, number one, to prevent the domination of the Continent by a hostile hegemonic power. That would be against our interests. Like Germany was in the two world wars, then the Soviet Union. How do you prevent the emergence of conditions in which this might become a problem, again? How do you advance the interests of democracy and market economies to have this work? How do you give people a common sense of security? Be careful, it's not necessarily easy to reach a common sense of security. People sometimes forget. The Alliance has worked so long that no one wakes up every morning saying "It's a miracle that the Alliance works!" Instead, many say that, if somebody gets out of step, like Germany and France on Iraq, "How could they detract from what we're trying to do?" Come on, give me a break. The Alliance has worked because the interests of allies were additive, not because they were subtractive from some mythical pure state. But I guess that the very fact that one could talk about the behavior of some allies as being subtractive from the ideal shows that this NATO animal does have a life of its own.

So on the matter of going through item-by-item: I've already indicated that I drafted a speech for Christopher for the Athens foreign ministers' meeting of the North Atlantic Council in June 1993. My draft has all the elements of what we ended up doing, except for NATO enlargement. I was a little slow on that, but I caught up with it. It didn't take too long. But it was not yet clear that that was either necessary or desirable as a fundamental proposition. You don't want to do anything that's going to deprive the Alliance of the capacity to be effective. As a result, one of the great challenges, as we moved into enlargement, was how to make sure that, when you bring in a new country, you don't weaken the Alliance. I remember when the Latvian foreign minister came to see me at NATO, a year or so down the road, and he said: "I want very much to join NATO, but I wouldn't want to join NATO if I'd make it weaker." I replied, "Have you ever heard of Groucho Marx?" -- "I wouldn't want to join a club that would have me for a member." Well, he hadn't heard of Groucho Marx, and I didn't pursue it.

So, we started out looking at what needed to be done. One was to have a summit with the commitment of the United States to the future of European security. I had already had a phrase I invented and had been using in articles: *the United States is a European power*. A permanent part of the mix in Europe. An unimpeachable proposition. In fact, we'd gotten to the point where we couldn't withdraw from Europe without doing fundamental damage to ourselves. Economically, as much as anything. On the economic side, during the Cold War, the strategic glue helped us over economic problems. Since the end of the Cold War, economic glue has helped us over strategic problems, because we have a three trillion dollar annual relationship, we can't damage that.

So, on the list of things, as we worked them up between then and the Travemünde meeting, we put together a whole series of potential initiatives. The one that I'm most proud of my own role in was the initiative that became the Partnership for Peace. It had an horrendous number of fathers and mothers. I think there were three or four, in fact, and I do believe that I was one of them. Another was Joe Kruzel, who died on Mount Igman, tragically, in Bosnia, in that accident, and John Shalikashvili, who was at that time Supreme Allied Commander Europe (SACEUR) and then went off to become Chairman of the Joint Chiefs. There were some other people who were involved, notably Jenonne Walker at the NSC. In fact, the key moment in this evolution was a meeting in Brussels on the 11th of September 1993. The International Institute for Strategic Studies (IISS) was having its annual convention in Brussels. Les Aspin, the Secretary of Defense, wanted to come, so Joe Kruzel, who was the Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense responsible for NATO, and I talked. We talked about having a seminar in my residence. In the morning part of the seminar, we had a lot of think-tank people from the US and Europe, plus some US government people, and in the afternoon we just had the government people. Manfred Wörner, the NATO Secretary General, spoke at lunch. We had representatives from various parts of the government. Military, Office of Secretary of Defense, State Department. It was at that meeting, around my dining room table at the NATO Ambassador's residence, when the various strands came together to produce the Partnership for Peace. It was called "Peacekeeping Partnership" at that point. At some point, we can talk about the details and why PFP – as it was called -- was such a miracle.

So, number one was to keep the Americans involved, and that meant keeping forces there, and using NATO effectively as a strategic instrument. It meant preserving the best of the past, which included keeping Allied Command Europe going and continuing to provide a "home" for Germany.

One of the great miracles of maybe all of modern history was the solution of the German problem, which began about 1866, when it became a single nation, and suddenly it was too big to be contained by any other single European power, thus requiring the balance of power system, working through a very effective coalition of other countries. When that broke down in the early part of the 20th century, it helped produce the cataclysmic First World War, and then it broke down again with the Nazi-Soviet Pact, etcetera. But the transformation of Germany after the Second World War was a breathtaking miracle, so much so that, when Germany was unified after the Cold War, it could fairly be said that the historic problem has been solved! But you still want to have an insurance policy.

Q: When you said the German problem is solved, maybe it's just me, but I've read too much history where you get the wrong people in the leadership and they start pounding the drums, they can put nations on a different course.

HUNTER: All right, let me be clear about what I mean by "solved." If we were just looking at the remarkable transformation within German society, well, as you say, it is possible that that could prove to be ephemeral. If it hadn't been for the Great Depression, we wouldn't have had Hitler, probably. Some people think it was the great inflation period in Germany. But the great inflation period was 1923. The thing that most produced the depression in Germany was the Smoot-Hawley Tariff imposed by the United States, whereby we exported our depression. Because there can be things like a Great Depression and the effects in societies, that's why institutions are important -- the combination of the European Union and NATO, to embed Germany firmly, and let us hope forever, within these broader institutions. The phrase I used is that it is the objective of this generation of Germans to make it impossible for their children and grandchildren to do what their parents and grandparents did. Thus, when it came to enlargement of the two institutions, Germany was very much in the forefront. Volker Ruhe, the German Defense Minister, was one of the leading proponents of NATO enlargement. It wasn't just that he had a bright idea out of the sky kind of thing, it was fundamental to Germany's future so that, as I used to argue, when Germany becomes the dominant power in Central Europe -- not there, yet, but I think it will come out this way -- it will be not "Here comes Germany, again," but "Here comes the European Union and here comes NATO." Hence, when it came to NATO enlargement and to EU enlargement, the German priority, a great vision of Chancellor Helmut Kohl, was to surround itself with these institutions. That's why Poland, the Czech Republic, and Hungary were first. If you had had to choose two, it would have been Poland and the Czech Republic, because those were the two countries on Germany's Eastern side. That's why Germany gave up the Deutschmark, the great pillar of democratic, economic respectability for Germany. The engine. The thing that had been held on to more than anything else as a substitute for nationalism.

So, in terms of "preserving the best of the past," it was to preserve Allied Command Europe, to preserve a "home" for Germany, as well. There was a whole series of other ideas, and I'd have to go back and consult my notes to determine the order in which we developed them. We pulled them all together at Travemünde. Now, within the U. S. government we had worked out the ideas with a lot of very talented people. Jenonne Walker at the NSC, for example, a lot of Defense Department people, notably Joe Kruzel, though a less robust team at the State Department. Some able working-level people, there, but the senior leadership at the State Department was far less engaged, it really wasn't as talented as some of the other departments or the NSC staff at that time. Later on, there were some highly qualified people at State at that level, quality people like John Kornblum, who eventually became Assistant Secretary for Europe.

We had come together, in the administration, in preparations for the Travemünde meeting, on a series of initiatives, and the State Department made a presentation on behalf of Secretary Christopher, through cable traffic to the allied capitals. But the publicity went to Les Aspin, who was at the meeting in Travemünde, the first-ever informal defense ministers meeting, now generally held once a year, where he laid out the full agenda, notably Partnership for Peace. Enlargement was on the agenda, although it still was not a central point. Aspin indicated that it was still being talked about, but the US was not thinking about doing that right now. Combined Joint Task Forces (CJTFs), which John Shalikashvili and his people had invented, which was a way of deploying NATO forces more flexibly than in the past. The US presentation built on a lot of things that the previous administration had done, like the unification of Germany, the creation of a North Atlantic Cooperation Council, and the like. A lot of real continuity. One other element which was important, at Travemünde, was to develop a relationship with the

European Union in its security personality, at that time called Western European Union (WEU), which we've discussed. Subsequently, it has been called the European Security and Defense Policy, with WEU becoming atrophied as a result. This had been discussed at the end of the previous administration, as the West Europeans -- within the context of what was still the European Communities, then became the European Union -- started to move on their ambition to have a collective foreign policy, to have a defense policy, which ultimately is what you need to do if you're going to be truly effective. This is even though you have to recognize that a common defense policy is the last thing you'll do in creating a true European Union, the last cession of sovereignty, ceding national control over your young men and women as they risk their lives in combat. At the end of the Bush administration, various officials fought this tooth and nail. Ambassador Jim Dobbins and Reggie Bartholomew became famous for lecturing the Europeans that they dasn't do any of this. What the Europeans were trying to do had a long pedigree, incidentally. They had been at this for a long time, and I had this vision that the reasons for the US to oppose a strong European component in defense had gone away with the end of the Cold War.

During the Cold War, John Kennedy talked about the twin pillars, two pillars of the Alliance. The US wanted a strong European military defense component, just so long as it did exactly what we told it to do. That was because we had responsibility for central management of the strategic relationship with the Soviet Union, and we didn't want any meddling that could cause real problems. It was the right policy. Then the Cold War disappeared. In fact, the argument then flipped. I recognized early on that having a strong European defense component in the Alliance could be highly useful, even with these quasi-independent elements -- and one person from the previous administration did invent the concept, Sandy Vershbow, I think it was -- to have a European defense personality that was "separable but not separate from NATO." That is, parts of NATO could be used by the WEU, sort of "borrowing the army." Most people don't understand that NATO has no standing forces, except for headquarters and some specialized aircraft and a pipeline. Nations have standing forces. When NATO wants to do something, it goes around and asks: "Who's going to come to my tea party?" So if the European Union [WEU/ESDP] is going to do something, militarily, it doesn't have a separate set of forces, though it does have its own headquarters and some support elements. In fact, it's the same forces! I like to say it's like, "Whose turn is it to drive the army, today? Can I borrow the army tonight, Daddy?" It's the same thing. The argument I made was that, if the Europeans are going to try to have coherence and develop a defense policy, and if this leads them to spend more money on defense and work on defense issues than they would otherwise do, and if that's useful to NATO, why not do it? To this day, there are still some Americans who don't get that point.

There was a special meeting of NATO defense ministers at Colorado Springs in October 2003, I guess it was, at a time when four of the European countries were thinking of having a WEU planning cell of 50 people in a suburb of Brussels, Tervuren, near where the US ambassador to NATO lives. Some senior American at the Colorado meeting called it the “greatest threat to NATO.” Say again? I shook my head and wondered what the US was thinking. My further response was that, "If NATO is threatened by 50 men and a dog, in a clapped-out old Belgian Army barracks, it's in real trouble."

Q: Particularly then.

HUNTER: The Ambassador [to NATO], Nick Burns had a wonderful line. In the middle of this park in Tervuren, near where the planning staff was to be, is the African Museum, which was created by King Leopold II, and where the Stanley and Livingstone mementoes are. Outside is this huge stone elephant. Our ambassador to NATO, Nick Burns, said, “One white elephant in Tervuren is quite enough.” A wonderful line, even if it really got it wrong. We still have this kind of US response, so the Europeans will say, “Well, if the Americans aren’t going to accept it unless they invent it, then we will wait to hear what they propose.”

So I had a vision that the United States should, in our interests and those of NATO, support a strong EU role in foreign and defense policy. This is one of the elements, in fact, it was one of the propositions we made, to have this kind of relationship between NATO and WEU, something I negotiated later on down the pike. One of the wonderful things at Travemünde was that, when Aspin showed up at this meeting -- and it could have been Christopher, if it had been a foreign ministers’ meeting -- the Allies came into the meeting down in the dumps, and they went out with a spring in their step! It was instantly palpable as you watched peoples’ attitudes change. It was “NATO is back and standing tall, and America’s here leading, thank God.” Within 10 minutes of Aspin’s making his presentation with the new US ideas, you could just see people light up. The room was electrified. The Marines had landed. It was so much so that we had one little idea, just a kind of extra throwaway idea, which was “Why don’t we talk about nonproliferation?” The Allies jumped on it and said “Another great idea!” And they asked to put it on the summit agenda. We hadn’t expected it to be part of the summit agenda. It was only an idea we were beginning to develop.

To back up a little bit, this proposal about the relationship with the European Union came out of a lunch I had, soon after I arrived at NATO, at the home of the French ambassador, Jacques Blot. Definitely a French patriot and a very intelligent man, etcetera, and I went to the lunch with two ambitions. One was to try to clean up this relationship between NATO and WEU, so they could be mutually reinforcing; and the other was to reverse something that I had followed ever since it happened in 1966, which was the departure of France from Allied Command Europe and the expulsion of the Command and allied troops from France, whereupon the United States in pique removed the political headquarters from Paris and put it in Brussels -- which France had not asked for. Indeed, France never left the political side of NATO. Incidentally, it also never left NATO’s integrated air defense system, recognizing that that was the military capability that you would need on the spot, the instant a war with the Soviet Union began, and France wouldn’t have time to join up, again. They never left it! People misunderstood what de Gaulle was doing, because this was *lese majesté,* so to speak*,* what France had done, and that’s another story for another time as to why it happened. I was bound and determined, since the world had changed, to reverse that. So Blot and I cut a deal over lunch that afternoon, in effect, which I then reported back to the government and had no problem with Washington. I kept Washington totally informed. One of my key principles as ambassador was that I never committed the US to anything where I didn't have a cable to support it, because you'd get yourself in deep trouble if you did that. Particularly when you're running a mission as important as NATO. If you don't have instructions, then if you do something the State Department doesn't like, they'll bitch. If you do something the Defense Department doesn't like, they'll bitch. That's why, I think I already mentioned, I never did anything without ensuring that every element of my mission, State Department, civilians, and the Defense Department, military and civilians, plus USIA and FEMA, were all in on the discussion before I took the decisions. As a result, we never lost a bureaucratic battle in Washington, and we never had a leak. I had learned this lesson going all the way back to the Johnson White House.

Q: It's all very nice to say everybody was on board, but on most things Defense, Treasury, White House, have if nothing else ambitious people who want to exert their own influence. How can one get this situation you describe?

HUNTER: What I'm getting at is first – and this is leaping ahead -- we didn't weigh in on every issue. Second, even when we decided we wanted to come up with a particular position to be adopted by the US, sometimes we would "lead a witness" in Washington, with a clarity of analysis that would lead them to come to the same conclusion as we had done, so more often than not they would make the proposal we wanted back to us, as an instruction, without our having actually suggested the proposal! Some of my State Department people in the Mission got upset, sometimes, that I didn't put enough recommendations in my cables. What they didn't understand, some of them, was that we were putting the recommendations in by creating them through logic, so that other people would come to the same conclusion we had, rather than their saying "Oh it's those guys in Brussels, what do they know?" The point I'm making is the value of bringing everybody at the Mission into the game. Incidentally, when I'd come back from trips to Washington or one of the military commands, I would tell my senior people everything. I wouldn't hold back anything, any of the secrets, any of what was going on in Washington: "Who struck John?" or "What's really going on here." All the parts of the picture. My senior staff appreciated being brought into the picture. So, if we had a full discussion, before I would make a decision about what we were going to suggest to Washington – and I was the president's representative, that was my job – then even when people lost the argument at the Mission, they knew they'd had their say and they knew that, the next time around, they might win the argument, whatever it was. Thus there was no reason to go off and be a sore loser. They might have lost a particular point, but they're not going to be sore about it, and if their part of the Washington bureaucracy phoned up and said, "How could you accept this decision by the Ambassador?" they would say, "Maybe I didn't exactly like it, but I had my say, my full say." Perhaps an even more important point is that we never had a leak. I'd learned, working in the White House, twice, that the way to keep people from leaking is to involve them in decisions. Then they have some responsibility for them and there's a moral problem: "I had my say, but I'm still going to go and leak." That's worse than saying, "I'm going to leak because I didn't have my say." Human nature.

So with the French ambassador, I had the idea to get them back into Allied Command Europe, because there was no longer any reason for them to stay out of it, based upon an alternative view of the management of East-West relations. The reason that Allied Command Europe was asked to leave France and why the French left the military side of the Alliance, I believed from 1966 on when it happened, was that, for France, French foreign policy is about Germany. That is less so now, but then, certainly the three top French foreign policy concerns were Germany, Germany, Germany, for obvious reasons. By that time, in 1966, they recognized that the Germans needed, politically, to find a way of overcoming the division of their country. In effect, the French invented *détente* in order to deal with their German problem, given that the Germans hoped the situation of being divided could be changed. De Gaulle had to get his country out of Allied Command Europe in order to gain the flexibility to play to this felt German need. It worked. The US picked up on *détente* and this started the ball rolling that led, with the Helsinki Final Act and the deepening of *détente* and other developments – though with a big backwards detour early in the Reagan administration – to the end of the Cold War, three decades later.

Now, here we were at a time after the Cold War. Germany was now united. For France, there was still the thought in the back of the mind about what that could mean in the future. You're right, to have the "German problem" "solved," you have to keep it "solved." You have to have an insurance policy, you never let up, because you've checked your circumstances and decided that the same countries are still there. Geopolitics matters, geography still matters in this globalizing world, give me a break. That means that having a strong Allied Command Europe, of which France was part, would be part of the effort to ensure the German future. The French could also see the value in a strong WEU, and France would lead the WEU, fine, which was a major part of its ambitions to lead the European Union. I saw that this was not incompatible with what we wanted at NATO, that this could be a package deal. It also occurred to me that, if there were going to be a strong WEU with French leadership, France would have to come back into NATO, because NATO -- especially the US -- is the source of so many of the military goodies. Also, France in the integrated military command system also was necessary to ensure that a unified Germany remained engaged in a broader strategic framework, involving the Americans. So with Blot and I understanding that all this had a strategic purpose, we cut a deal, and in effect we more-or-less delivered on the deal, both of us, and it was approved by our governments, one part of which was the agreement that is called the Berlin-Brussels Agreement of 1996, which included the possibility of a transfer of NATO assets to the WEU and all of that, plus blah blah blah. All this we can talk about later. Plus, France re-entered the Military Committee at NATO Headquarters, sent military staff to NATO at SHAPE [Supreme Headquarters, Allied Powers Europe], started sending its defense minister to ministerial meetings -- which I renamed the NATO Ministerial in Ministers of Defense Session, to get the theology right for the French -- and came within an eyelash of their rejoining Allied Command Europe, except for one issue, which had a lot to do with mismanagement more than anything else, which was the U. S. requirement to continue holding the NATO command in Naples, Allied Forces Southern Europe.

Q: CINCSOUTH.

HUNTER: CINCSOUTH, yeah, we can get into that later. In fact, as I said later on, it didn't really matter that reintegration didn't go all the way. The French came 95% back into Allied Command Europe, and they have never stood apart from the Alliance, militarily, from that day to this, in anything that NATO has chosen to do. In fact, even though they would resolutely say "We're not in Allied Command Europe," in Afghanistan, not only was France involved in the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF), but at one point it was commanding what was in essence a NATO operation under Allied Command Europe! As long as you don't tell the French that that's what they're doing, poke them in the eye with a sharp stick, they'll do it. Sometimes, if you keep quiet about what's happening, things happen there.

Well, this was the deal that Jacques Blot and I cut. (That probably had something to do with the French later giving me the Legion of Honor). Because I recognized that the strategic environment had changed to make these things possible and necessary, so that was part of the package.

The ghost at the NATO banquet, of course, was Bosnia from beginning to end, and that was the poison and the thing that had everybody depressed. Because here was a war going on -- 200,000 people died before it came to an end -- on NATO's doorstep. The European Union had tried and not gotten very far, though the Vance-Owen Plan had promise. The Clinton administration came in and junked it and started off in its own direction, which was a mistake, so people were in the doldrums about that. There was a tracking of the two processes, dealing with Bosnia and the transformation of NATO to a modern perspective. The basic goals were to keep America in, to make sure West Europe stays stable, to stabilize Central Europe and to take it off the geopolitical chess board, where it had been the proximate cause of the two world wars and maybe in part of the Cold War, and to reach out to Russia. To balance all those objectives, so they came into a coherent whole, fitting them within George H. W. Bush's vision of a "Europe whole and free and at peace." This is a fundamental strategic concept. The most radical strategic concept for Europe ever. I am proud that I played the lead role in putting all of this together, conceptually, and also to a considerable degree in policy.

Q: We'll pick this up the next time by talking about putting NATO together to reconstruct NATO, and one of the things you said right at the beginning, and I've heard again and again, is that, could you discuss next time, why is it that everybody waits for the United States to come up with initiatives? There are a lot of people a lot brighter than other people, and certainly it's distributed fairly among the various diplomatic groups. Would you talk about that? Also, would you talk about what I would call the Soviet Mafia within the United States, which had been built up since even before the Cold War, who felt so close in a way to the Soviet thing that they thought we didn't want to upset the Soviets as far as this Partnership for Peace, and then we'll talk about the whole Serbian-Croatian thing too.

HUNTER: And certain people in the State Department who were the Russian Mafia, if you want to call it that. Not the anti-Russian Mafia, which has also existed, but the people who saw Russia as the key to national security, with Strobe Talbott in the lead.

Q: Well, this is a baby. I had been talking to a man who was consul general and chargé in Zagreb about this time, Ron Neitzke, and Ron was talking about the Belgrade Mafia who couldn't see…

HUNTER: That was George Kennan's doing. When he was ambassador to Yugoslavia, he hired a lot of extraordinarily talented people, and if you look at the number of people that went on to senior things: Larry Eagleburger, David Anderson, you were there, too! You're part of that Mafia. Chester Bowles in India and Kennan in Yugoslavia. Recruited talented people.

Q: It's a problem, and it's one that you can look at in an even greater cadre that came out of service in the Soviet Union.

HUNTER: There's just one simple thing I recognized early on: that we had to balance the interests of the folks who wanted NATO and keep it pure, the people who wanted it to play an effective role, the people who wanted to stabilize Central Europe, and the people who wanted to reach out to Russia. You had to bring these all together and balance them off against one another and come up with a package, because you couldn't sacrifice the relationship with Russia on the altar of stability in Central Europe, but, even more importantly, you couldn't sacrifice the future of Central Europe on the altar of Russia. You had to do both. We understood that at USNATO, and I believe we played a key role, indeed the most important role, in getting this done right.

Q: And also if you could talk a bit about, you talked about cutting deals with the French, but what were the French and the German sensitivities as you're dealing with this. This wasn't a cut and dry thing, we'll talk about that. We have a lot to talk about.

[End session]

Q: Today is the 19th of March 2007. Bob do you want to talk first about why the Europeans seemed to let us take the initiative and then felt quite inclined to criticize after we took the initiative on things?

HUNTER: I think that's fairly endemic in human nature, now, isn't it? Somebody else comes up with the idea and then you bitch about it. What is it they say about the army? You can tell when the army is in good shape when everybody is complaining. One of the wonderful things about our European Allies, this is historically true, and it has continued to be true, is that they may complain about the sitting US president, but then when the new president comes in, they suddenly discover that the old guy had a lot of virtues they like. Then they decide they don't like the new one very much. A few people have puzzled over this. I think it's fairly simple. During the Cold War and to a different degree and different way, now, the United States is the lynchpin of common security across the

Atlantic. Confrontation, containment of the Soviet Union, major steps to wrap up the Cold War -- all of which required investments of US power and commitment. Central European states, if you gave them a choice between joining NATO and just having a raw US commitment, that is, a choice between joining NATO without America and just having America without NATO, they would choose America without NATO in a heartbeat. Today, we're helping to ensure, to the extent any external country has a role, the pacific future Russia. Among non-Russians, this depends on the United States more than anybody else. Here in Europe are people who tried the balance of power for 300 years. Sometimes it worked, though it imposed costs. But it failed cataclysmically twice -- the first in 1914, after 99 years of being pretty successful; and the second in 1939, when the Soviets made their deal with the Nazis. So after the Cold War, sensible people in Europe were unwilling to go back to the roles played by individual states, or even by the European Union, itself, because they recognize that, in the big things, the United States still remains the "arsenal of democracy" and has the strategic depth, has the capacity to pull things together, has a single decision-making process, rather than multiple decision making-processes, and, frankly, in dealing with the Russian future, in particular -- the Soviet future, before -- the United States is indispensable. It's a simple question of power and the mobilization of power.

So a major reason for the Allies' looking to the United States to take the lead is that only ideas that are blessed in the United States have a chance at being effective in NATO, and many other things, because it involves the investment of power and commitment. It's one reason they're so upset about Iraq. Not so much because this is immoral, because there are enough cynical Europeans, it's because the United States may be doing itself a cardinal injury and therefore may not be able to help protect other people and do the right things. It's the self-inflicted wound they were most worried about. This is going to be hard to recover from. People in Europe rely on the US. So, you look to the United States to come up with leadership, because it's only if the United States blesses an idea that NATO works. Now, there are times when the United States opposes what Europeans do. We have a long history of trying to kill off European weapons systems. The British with the Sky Bolt and TSR II. The TSR II was a better weapons system than the one we came up with, the F-111, but we played it off. That's kind of a sidebar issue.

With regard to Bosnia in my time, there had been a proposal, a set of ideas put together by Cyrus Vance, acting as a private individual, and David Owen, I guess Lord Owen, by then, the former Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs in Britain, and the Clinton administration killed it off. We suffer, lots of people do, from a very acute case of NIH, "not invented here." If it's not invented here, we tend to give it a pass. Now, some of those people are clever. The French invented what we now call the G-8. They held the first meeting at Rambouillet in 1975, I think it was, it had legs. At various times, the Europeans would take initiatives in regard to their own security, what we call now the European Security and Defense Policy (ESDP), and we bitch and moan about it. Somehow, it interferes with our capacity to call the shots. Well, in times of difficulties, Europeans have taken a deep breath and said, "Well, if this is going to lead the United States to be less committed, maybe we shouldn't do that."

The United States, for example, in the administration just prior to the Clinton administration, was staunchly opposed to strengthening the Western European Union. I took the lead in reversing that policy because I recognized, along with some others, I recognized something they didn't: which is that American strictures on the role of European defense outside of NATO was appropriate during the Cold War, when we had to do central management of the relationship with the Soviet Union. That's one reason we reacted so intensely to French *lese majesté* in 1966 when they withdrew from Allied Command Europe. These same people never have come to understand something that I understood at the time, if I may say so, which is that de Gaulle was not doing what he did because he didn't think the United States would defend Europe with nuclear weapons, but because they knew we would! If you have a lot of diplomatic room to play with, you can do things. And the French were dealing with their central German problem which was deep uneasiness among the West German people over the division of Germany. The French and the Germans then together invented a thing called *détente.* The United States came along afterwards and picked up on it. Well, so the French invented *détente* with the Germans, and eventually it proved to be the undoing of the Soviet Union. Nevertheless, we've never forgiven the French for withdrawing from NATO's integrated command structure in 1966. Like some Americans who opposed the invasion of Iraq who still complain that France also opposed it!

Q: Do you think anybody really thinks that any more?

HUNTER: Well, we still react negatively, intensely, anytime the French don't do what we want. This US behavior toward separate European defense efforts was appropriate during the Cold War, when there needed to be central management. But after the end of the Cold War, it was quite the reverse. We had no need for central management of a Cold War, and if the Europeans, by doing things for Western European Union --- or now what is called the European Security and Defense Policy -- spend money on it because it is part of creating a European Union, we should be overjoyed. They might not do the added defense spending because they are worried about challenges in Lower Slobovia, but if they are doing it for purposes of being able to foster European unity, they are still contributing to NATO's military capacity. But we still have not gotten over the European desire to have some military and defense capacity of their own that is not just NATO. The previous administration fought it tooth and nail, and, as I said, I reversed it, but even today there are serious people in the US government who complain, not because of what WEU/ESDP is, but because it's somehow taking the leadership role away from us, rather than understanding that leadership is what you earn. These people think it should be a birthright.

We have underestimated, for example, the role the British, and particularly Foreign Secretary Ernest Bevin, played in launching the Marshall Plan and in putting the ideas for a defense alliance together before the creation of NATO. Western Union, a British invention in 1948, was created to demonstrate to the United States that the Europeans wanted to do something for their security, and to which we could respond. Well, we took all the credit for this, including the Marshall Plan, and that was the way Bevin organized it. He was smart about it. So I think that is a major reason the Europeans wait for US leadership. It's basically the facts of power.

Of the various issues of NATO that we dealt with during my tenure, the one idea which really came out of the Europeans was the functional aspect of relations with Russia, and that was launched by the Germans and the French. There were people in the State Department and various diplomats in the US government who were pushing the Russian agenda, but they weren't the ones that came up with this particular idea. Once they did, once the Germans and French took the lead, the NATO-Russia Founding Act was essentially written in the US State Department. Of course, the basic proposal to be made to the Russians was negotiated at the North Atlantic Council. The Secretary-General, Javier Solana, was very clever. He said on a Friday afternoon: "Well I'm going to take all these ideas, and I will work them over on this weekend. I will give you my draft on Monday, OK?" which he then did. The draft was finished in the State Department over the weekend and sent over to me. I printed it out and gave it to Solana, and he then changed the heading on it and put in on his own stationery, and the ambassadors on the North Atlantic Council went with it. We might have got it accepted, anyway, even if it had been clearly marked as our draft, but we were at a time of trying to get people to come along with things and not just our having the ideas. My British colleague came up to me afterwards and he said, "You know, if you are going to do that, have a draft which gets passed off as Javier's, be sure first you change the American spellings to the English spellings we use here at NATO!" Like "defense" spelt with a "c" and "neighbor" spelled "-our." We hadn't changed the American spellings. It was kind of obvious where the thing was written, right?

Q: Your fingerprints are all over this.

HUNTER: No, it was State Department fingerprints, that's where all the credit is due, and there were some very talented people working on that down in the State Department, at the junior to mid-levels, where the expertise was. So there you are, you come into a situation like this. My one contribution was during the negotiations among the allies, when the French were objecting to some things we wanted. I suggested to Washington that we offer to hold the NATO-Russia signing ceremony at the Elysée Palace, and that worked like a charm. Suddenly, all the French concerns about our draft disappeared!

Now all this was particularly important, as part of Bush 41's "Europe whole and free" because, at the beginning of my tenure as ambassador, the United States had been drifting for a while in terms of not doing much followup to what Bush had done in regard to the Soviets, the former Soviets, Russia. As I mentioned, there was a *chargé d'affaires* at the USNATO mission, there hadn't been an ambassador for a number of months. The *chargé* later became my successor, an able Foreign Service Officer.

Q: Who was that?

HUNTER: Alexander, Sandy, Vershbow. An able fellow, but he was still only a *chargé* and was a career person, and most USNATO ambassadors had been political people.

Recently, they've been mostly career, and I'll say something that may offend you as a Foreign Service Officer. I think in part because of some things that had been done during my tenure, where some State people wanted to get more control over the Mission, they've put a Foreign Service Officer in there rather than a political appointee. I think they had enough of my creating things, and they wanted to keep control. That's all right, because an FSO person has a "future" -- right? -- that needs to be protected, and he or she is a participant within the system and therefore will be careful not to rock the boat, as I did. But some able FSO people do get selected, and particularly Nick Burns, Vershbow's successor, who is now Undersecretary for Political Affairs, and the current Ambassador to NATO, Victoria Nuland, who is also doing a good job, and she's career.

Number two, as I mentioned before, the previous Ambassador, Reginald Bartholomew, was offered the job of being negotiator for Bosnia, and thought that that was a greener pasture than NATO, and he resigned to take that job. Well, that said something about the United States; it obviously didn't care that much about NATO. It would take an able person and then shift him and leave the job open because the US agenda was changing. So when I arrived at NATO, Bosnia was festering, it was 1993 -- how many tens of thousands of people had died at that point! -- it was not going anywhere, the Clinton administration had undercut the one effort the US has launched, it abandoned it, the Vance-Owen plan, which hadn't been invented by the new administration. The secretary of state had gone over to Europe, I guess it was in March or April, to ask the Allies' advice about Bosnia. Uh uh. Americans who are looked to by the Europeans for leadership and commitment don't go and ask advice, they go and offer concrete ideas, that's what US diplomats are supposed to do. When the Secretary of State shows up, he's supposed to have ideas and say "Here's what President Clinton's ideas are going to be." I tried to warn him and, in fact, I've probably mentioned it, that before I became ambassador I tried to seize control of the secretary of state's "intervention" -- the NATO name for a speech -- for the Athens Meeting at the North Atlantic Council in June of that year. I had been nominated but had not been confirmed. I tore up the draft that the bureaucrats had done, a draft that was just straight-lining of existing policy as though nothing had happened for years. I wrote him a new draft -- and much of what I said survived -- in part because I wanted to see the secretary of state and hence the US succeed. I had seen this happen at the beginning of the Carter administration; it was *déjà vu* all over again. So he did go to Athens and he showed US leadership on real issues in relevant terms. The previous administration, I have mentioned, had done a tremendous job on the unification of Germany, a tremendous job on the Russians, and President Bush had really got it right. Yet Clinton, coming in as president, brought in basically a group of people selected by the establishment where a lot of the folks, I'll leave myself out, who knew something about foreign affairs were sent to foreign embassies because they had lost the competition for jobs in Washington. I finally said to Tony Lake: "Well, why don't you do with me like they do with generals in Latin America, send me abroad." That's how we get so many Latin American generals as ambassadors in Washington. OK, so they did that, and they sent Dick Holbrooke and David Aaron and Dick Gardner and Stu Eizenstat, people like that, to Europe. Anyway, that helped to create a strong US team in Europe.

This leads up to the Travemünde NATO defense minister's informal meeting that fall, when we came up with an agenda of about a half dozen major initiatives to be prepared for the January 1994 summit, which I had organized to get it done. Other allies made some proposals later on, and, when we were smart, we would adopt them because, when we got down to negotiations at the NATO Council, the Allies liked the US leadership but they also wanted to have a role in shaping. Then, when we were smart, we would, once we had asserted leadership and come up with the basic ideas, in the fine-tuning we would pick up as many of the other allies' ideas as possible, to make them feel part of the action, to gain what is called in the jargon phrase, "ownership." Remember, the strength of NATO comes from two things above all others: one, the American commitment and two, the consensus principle for all NATO decisions, which means that, once everybody commits to something, nobody has ever fallen off the ladder and that's the case. Sometimes some of them don't take part in, say, a NATO military action, but nobody stands up and asks for a decision to be revoked, it doesn't happen.

Q: Well you know part of the idea of America leading on this the need seems to be reinforced by the crisis of Yugoslavia and the former Yugoslavia, where at least according to what one generally heard was Europeans' saying:, "Well this is our baby, we can take care of it." The situation in Bosnia got worse and worse until the United States, very reluctantly, got dragged in. How did you feel about that?

HUNTER: I think it is true that, even though this was before my time so I didn't see the documents, a number of Europeans thought they could handle it all on their own, they recognized the challenge. They didn't get very far. The one creation was this thing called the UN Protection Force, UNPROFOR, which I think the consensus is you would never do that again. It was a glorified police outfit, but without its people being able to use deadly force, they were even less than policemen. But with these Bosnian people at risk, they were given a job to do and then told that they couldn't do it! The mandate was so limited and became part of the problem rather than part of the solution, on top of which we wouldn't join it. We weren't about to put American forces at risk, which, had we done so, it might have become something, so this was a kind of mini-League of Nations situation, with a tiny little effort and the inability to apply power.

Ironically, the one country in UNPROFOR which sent tanks and used them was Denmark, it used them once and the Serbs, who were the bad guys in this particular stance, never came near them again. Very interestingly, the commander of the lead tank was a Danish woman officer.

On top of all, the Yugoslav matter was played out with different European Allies choosing sides in the breakup of Yugoslavia, more-or-less where they had been in 1914 or 1941. The German Foreign Minister, Hans Dietrich-Genscher, a very strong Croatian supporter, had a lot to do with the breakup of Yugoslavia -- whether it should or shouldn't have broken up, who knows? -- but he played a major role in that. Various countries were pro-Serbian, because they had been pro-Serbian in 1914 and they…

Q: The Russians particularly.

HUNTER: Well, the Russians sure, but I'm talking about within the Alliance, as well, the German relationship with the Croatians going back to the Second World War, for example. The British had another view that interfered with our efforts to get NATO air strikes, which were meant to stop the war. The country that fought that most consistently was Britain, and we never really figured out why. It's not easy to go to them and ask "Why are you doing this," particularly because they wouldn't give you a straight answer. They weren't very good about the air strike business -- "punching above their weight" is the phrase that our British colleague on the Council, John Weston, whom I respect, used to use. We would tussle over this, and when we get into a discussion on Bosnia I'll tell how I organized negotiations at NATO so we finally were able to prevail, but before which we were trying to build bricks without straw.

With the British, there were several things. One, there is an old saying, probably at least half whimsical, that, when you join the British army, you are told three things: "never volunteer, don't march on Moscow, and don't get involved in the Balkans." OK. Number two, the British did have some kind of relationship with the Serbs. Manfred Wörner, the NATO Secretary General was once asked by Warren Christopher at a meeting I had set up: "Why are the British doing this?" Manfred said: "It's because I believe the British want to limit Germany's influence in the Balkans." I don't know if it is true or not, but it had a history. OK?

Q: Well you know they…

HUNTER: The British also had Fitzroy Maclean, who had served with Tito during the War, and he warned them to stay out. Then, of course, the British military didn't want any part of it. This was at a time when there were all kinds of scandals in Britain, in which the Royal family was being discredited; and some people said that the only institution in Britain that seemed not to be tarnished was the military, and they were against it. I mean we kept reaching for an explanation. All I do know is what the British did, they fought NATO's acting over Bosnia, tooth and nail.

If they couldn't prevail at NATO, because I followed my instructions on the front lines, so to speak, they would try it back in Washington, they were wonderful at that, fantastic. So that brought us to this situation where NATO was in the doghouse. The United States wasn't participating in UNPROFOR; the United States had killed off the one peace process [Vance-Owen] that was ongoing, which was a plan to partition various parts of the country. In fact, some people think that's what should have been done, but that's history. So everyone was waiting for American leadership, and what we did, since we weren't prepared to act unilaterally, was something that happened indirectly. By doing all these other things within NATO, about its future, we eventually got to the point where, to make the things we were doing at NATO relevant to ending the European twentieth-century security problem and opening the capacity of NATO to act in the twenty-first century, it became necessary to stop the Bosnian war and clean up Europe's backyard. Otherwise, everything else being done at NATO would be nugatory. That's what really eventually got everybody to agree to NATO military action over Bosnia. We had gotten this new animal, this new NATO; and people realized that it was going to get destroyed, along with the European Union, unless the Bosnia war was stopped. That's what NATO really did, eventually. Remember, the United States had no troops on the ground with UNPROFOR. We weren't prepared to run risks by ourselves or even along with anybody else.

Q: Well I recall somebody who was with the mission that went to Belgrade and said some of the Serb military would jeer them and say; they used the term I think was "eighteen." I think eighteen was the number of Americans who had been killed in the Blackhawk Down at the time in Somalia.

HUNTER: Obviously that was in people's minds.

Q: Yeah, I mean the feeling was…

HUNTER: Where the hell was Bosnia?

Q: We couldn't take casualties, therefore any threats we might make were pure bluff. I mean this was the attitude within the Serb military apparently.

HUNTER: Well, eventually, we did it all with air power and had no casualties, no combat fatalities.

Q: Well why don't we continue with the Balkan thing and then I will come back to the airplane thing.

HUNTER: Sure.

Q: How stood things when you got to Brussels and what was your feeling about what NATO could do?

HUNTER: It's interesting. The other day, I was putting papers away, and I came upon a memo I wrote to Tony Lake, the National Security Adviser, on the first of May 1993, just a single-spaced memo. I had already been nominated, and I had run into him at dinner at Brzezinski's. He asked me to send him some ideas. The other day, I read the memo again, and it's all in there. I had taken a very strong stand the previous year. What had really got me going was an article in the Washington Post, saying, in effect, that obviously a lot of other things had happened in history, this is the way of the world, blah, blah, blah. But in my view, this was the worst slaughter since World War II in Europe, and no matter whatever else we wanted to do with the future of Europe, the Bosnia war had to be brought to a halt. It wasn't only a humanitarian question but also the politics and also the strategy and also the credibility, credibility of power. But there was nothing being done. I arrived at NATO on the eleventh of July, a Sunday; we had already agreed to hold a NATO summit. So the day after I got to Brussels, there was a NATO meeting about how to organize this summit. It was essentially feeling one's way at that point, because the instructions I had were pretty tepid, though I had a hand in writing them. It was only later, in October, that we came up with the shot in the arm, including Partnership for Peace.

Now on Bosnia. The lead was taken by Tony Lake in the White House, he was the white knight in Washington and should get more credit than anyone else for stopping the war. An awful lot of people take credit for stopping it, but there are only a handful of people who actually did it. Obviously, the president was number one, and then Tony Lake and a couple of other people in the White House. I like to think I was one of this group. A lot of the people who took credit for stopping the Bosnia war were later in charge over Kosovo and they just blew it. That certainly was an avoidable war. Milosevic test-marketed his approach and repeated what he had gotten away with before, up to a point. The Dayton [Accords] actually let him off the hook, and the same people who were not particularly competent over Bosnia were later running things over Kosovo, and Milosevic almost got away with it a second time, because all the people who had done the work to stop the Bosnia war had left the government by then. That's another matter, no names.

Now what happened was that, on about the 28th, 29th or 30th of July '93, I get a secure telephone call from Washington to tell me that the United States had decided to take a constructive step: to lift the arms embargo against the Bosnian government, because the embargo was working in an unbalanced way against the Bosnia Moslems, who were suffering most of the casualties, by far. The Croats and the Serbs had open borders to the outside world and they were getting heavily supplied with arms, whereas we at NATO were running an arms embargo against Bosnia -- in effect against the Muslims -- and the Western European Union was running a blockade along the coast. So the US proposal was to lift the arms embargo against Bosnia, and then use NATO air strikes to protect the UN-designated "safe areas" affecting mostly large numbers of Bosnians, especially Muslims. This gets into the arcana of the UN negotiations and "safe areas," and all that, which we will talk about later. The shorthand for it became "lift and strike." You can get terribly bored about the way power was worked out in the interstices of the debates, about issues which had become symbolic, but were done in terms of the niceties in the words of the documents.

The announcement was that the United States was ready to take these steps, unilaterally, if the Allies would not come along with us. I remember the team that came from Washington for the NATO debate on the US proposal, headed by the assistant secretary, Steve Oxman, who himself didn't have a lot of experience in Europe. By this point at the US Mission, we had done soundings and determined that the key country that might come along with us was France, but that the country that would not at all come along with us was Britain. The others, of course, were watching what the major powers would do. The Germans played less of a role, because they can't engage, even today, to the same degree as others in military affairs.

Q: It's a constitutional thing, and then political.

HUNTER: And a historical thing, historical and political. I am one of those people who say, being old enough, that Germans who tend to be pacifists, let them work it out, don't push them too hard, because they had a couple of really bad events in their history. Right? I remember the US team coming from Washington. They got in around midnight. During the previous day, we had a meeting at the mission to sort out what we thought would be the likely reaction of various allies. Of course, whenever Washington shows up they come in with a swagger, no matter where it is, it is one of the wonderful things about being a diplomat, as I was briefly, and having watched this so many other times, is that you have a team on the ground, the ambassador and his or her team, and the folks show up from Washington with their little policy papers and their own little debate in Washington. It's not a magic power and it may or may not be connected to reality on the ground. Smart people in Washington know how to do it when they travel abroad; the dumb people in Washington sort of lay around and preen themselves. So these people came in, and they were absolutely certain that they knew what the hell was going on. The first thing they said was, "The British are for our proposal, the French are against it." My deputy, Bob Pearson, and I just looked at one another, because we knew, from things said at NATO, that the positions were exactly the reverse. What had happened is that the British government had recognized they could play the game in Washington, sell a bill of goods, because the people there that the British were talking to didn't know what was going on, and the British convinced them that their perspective was consistent with our objective. You can't fault the British for trying. You know, one of the things in diplomacy is that you have to get over saying there are good guys and bad guys. Your job is to figure out how to get what your government wants you to get, right? So you have to do analysis about what is really going on with the other parties. You've got to admire the way the British deal with diplomacy. Among the NATO crowd, they probably have the best-disciplined representatives, and they will play good cop, bad cop. They will let down their hair and tell you something, but they aren't letting down their hair. Their military might say one thing and their diplomats might say another, but they have worked it out in advance. The French are a little different because they are the last NATO ally -- I'm sorry I shouldn't say this because Portugal had a revolution in '74 and the Turks had two or three *coups d'etat,* but otherwise the French are the last ally that almost had a Putsch. Since then, and maybe even before in France, the political side of the house treats the military people like children -- that, they are meant "to be seen and not heard" and they are slapped down if they try to take any kind of an position that is not totally consistent with the line from the Quai [d'Orsay]. Whereas we have civilian control of the military, but we work very carefully and closely with the military, and I think it works. Most of the other allies are at are six and sevens, but the British are extremely well-disciplined.

We saw immediately the Washington team was wrong. So then this assistant secretary gets on the phone back to Washington, I think to Christopher, and in the space of about an hour our resolute position was turned to mush, turned to mush. General Barry McCaffrey, who was the military adviser to the traveling party, looked at us and shook his head and said, "Once again, the United States negotiates with itself." So by the time we went to the North Atlantic Council meeting in the morning, we didn't really have very much, and we had backed off the idea that, if the Alliance wouldn't act with us in Bosnia -- "lift and strike" -- we would do it by ourselves. That would have been a potent diplomatic weapon in dealing with the Allies, but we gave it away before we started. The negotiation the next day was my first example of this, watching the team from

Washington, we got our heads handed to us. We had an inexperienced team doing negotiations, though we had Reg Bartholomew, who had been our NATO ambassador and who came over with the team. But he got rebuked three times by the Secretary General for being loud and noisy and rude in his behavior. The assistant secretary didn't seem to know where he was.

Q: Who was the assistant secretary?

HUNTER: Steve Oxman. The Allies were just poking at us, "You Americans don't have any troops on the ground, you're trying to put us at risk when you're not in UNPROFOR (United Nations Protection Force), we have people who are dying." I came to the conclusion, after a while, that the reason the British kept their troops in UNPROFOR was not to help with UNPROFOR, but rather to prevent NATO air strikes. They were deliberately kept there, and the British worked at preventing air strikes very hard, by hook or by crook. Well, that's a national position, and you can't say they are morally right or wrong, what you have to do is try to get them to agree to what we wanted. But we were building bricks without straw, because we had no moral leg to stand on, no military commitment in Bosnia, no role in UNPROFOR, particularly when we had earlier said we would if need be act alone. I would have to check on the cable that said we were prepared to do a unilateral strike, which we clearly backed away from, backed down, and so what came out of the NATO meeting was essentially mush that particular day, in terms of real NATO commitments, blah, blah, blah. It issued commandments about what the local parties in Bosnia were supposed to do, but they didn't add up to anything.

The idea was that NATO would come back to the issue in a few weeks. Because of the short amount of time between the two meetings, I was asked to stay in Brussels and get ready. I was supposed to go back to Washington and help my wife "pack out," as you folks in the Foreign Service would say, and also to have a public swearing in. I had just had a quickie swearing-in, in order to get to work, and NATO was not a particularly important place, we weren't taken seriously, and who cares about who's NATO ambassador, right? What the hell is this Alliance all about? So I stayed behind in Brussels, at Oxman's request, and left my poor wife having to pack out, and without the public swearing-in by the undersecretary, which didn't matter to me, but I did want the European Allies to see that NATO was taken at least reasonably seriously. Then we had a second set of North Atlantic Council negotiations, at the end of August, which went a little bit better, we got a little more teeth in the agreement that was reached, but really it didn't have anything that was going to take us very far. The Washington team decided to sit this one out. After the first time, maybe they didn't want to risk another embarrassment. At some point, perhaps we can talk about what the various NATO agreements were regarding Bosnia. They get kind of elaborate and complicated.

Q: Well we might as well at least begin to talk about this. In the first place who was…was the American military a major player saying don't get involved? Or was it Clinton, himself, who didn't want to…who was more interested in domestic things? Who was on what side in Washington?

HUNTER: Well, I think the people in Washington who wanted to do something in Bosnia were fairly few. Tony Lake and a couple of people who worked for him, like Sandy Vershbow, stood behind the policy of getting NATO actively involved. John Shalikashvili, who was the Supreme Allied Commander Europe, had to keep his powder dry, but he was helpful every step of the way when it came to the idea of maybe using military force. Of course, he was then moved from there to become Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff . General George Joulwan came in, and he was always, always reluctant to use air power, which made my job more difficult because the allied ambassadors would see the American ambassador pushing one way and they would see the Supreme Allied Commander Europe, this American general, pushing the other way. It was often a difficulty. However, Joulwan's caution about the use of military force flipped immediately, in terms of value, after the Dayton Accords, when we put troops on the ground for the Implementation Force [IFOR] in Bosnia, because his effort to protect the troops, then, was one of the reasons IFOR succeeded, with some of the draconian things that were done for safety reasons, including no drinking. No US service people went out on patrol except in groups of four and wearing full battle kit. But nobody got killed, nobody in ten years, since then. Our troops didn't like it, they would go into the mess hall, and there would be the French having their bottle of wine, the Germans and the British with their bottles and pints of beer, and the Americans would only have their Coca Cola. But it kept them safe.

Q: I recall I was an observer in '94 and '95 I think of the elections there and the Americans were all buttoned up in their flak jackets and helmets and all…

HUNTER: The British soldiers were out there in their skivvies, building schools…

Q: Yeah, yeah.

HUNTER: Yeah, but still for the president the problem was *Blackhawk Down*, what happened in Somalia, which was the poison pill given to us by the previous administration. I don't know if I have talked about what was done to us before they got out of town. Sandy Burger called me and asked "What do we do about these deployments in Somalia." I replied, "We have no choice. Bush is still president." But it was a poison pill. They left their dirty laundry for us, with a no-win situation. So here is a president left to face this situation in Bosnia. Bosnia is back of the moon, as far as the American people are concerned, it's in Europe and the Europeans hadn't cleaned it up, so how could the president ask Americans to go over there and die for a thing like that? We can't even pronounce the name or find it on a map. But I will say that, over a period of time after this one failed effort, the negotiations at the beginning of August '93, Clinton did work progressively in the right direction. In fact, at some point if you really want to talk about the details of the various air strikes, there were essentially three separate activities that evolved over time, and I don't even remember which came at what point. It was an evolution, a gradual evolution, more-and-more theoretically evolved.

There were three set of NATO decisions. One was suppression of the flight of any aircraft over Bosnia, that's one. That included things like humanitarian flights, so they had to permit those on a case-by-case basis. One of the parties painted a red cross on the plane or the helicopter, and they had to get permission to fly it. One of the problems with that procedure was that sometimes the Serbs would paint a red cross on an aircraft and they would fly, and then you'd see troops get out. Remember, we had an incredible amount of intelligence on this thing, technical intelligence. In that particular NATO effort, Operation Deny Flight, which went on from March 1993 -- in implementing a previous UN decision of October 1992 -- until the Implementation Force (IFOR) kicked in the 20th of December in 1995, Operation Deny Flight flew 100,420 sorties, which was tremendous training on top of everything else. There were some little games that got played here and there by the Serbs. The sorties and all the other uses of NATO airpower in Bosnia were, from the US perspective, designed mostly to protect the safe areas, meaning in particular the Bosnian Moslems. Of course, all the NATO decisions that were taken were to be applied on a neutral basis as regard to the offending party. However, everybody knew that the Bosniacs, the Bosnian Serbs, were taking most of the aggressive military actions in Bosnia. The official Bosnian government in Sarajevo had very little it could do. The Croats were also doing all kinds of nasty things, too, from time to time, so they were also getting pounded by the Serbs. They were both aggressor and aggressee, although the Serbs of course were doing most of the attacking. So when NATO would say, "Thou shalt not kill people," it was formally directed against everybody, on a neutral basis. In fact, the British, with some other allies, were always neutral, and they used to accuse us of always wanting to do things just to stop the Serbs. We said that we did have a neutral approach, but, of course, we were not being particularly truthful and everybody knew it. We were trying to get the people who were attacking to stop, and that meant mostly the Serbs. One of the ironies about the problems we Americans have in some parts of the Muslim world is that we rescued Bosnia; we rescued the Muslims there. We helped them and got the fighting stopped, but we didn't get any credit because, I think, a lot of folks in the Muslim world don't really regard Bosnians as Muslims, given that most of them are secular and are only Muslims because of their ancestors' being impressed into the Ottoman Empire.

One of the ironies is that, if you walk around Sarajevo and you talk to people, and unless somebody is wearing a badge saying "I'm this or that," you wouldn't know what religion they are. Indeed, Sarajevo was probably the most integrated city -- Orthodox, other Christians, Muslims, Jews -- anywhere in Yugoslavia.

Q: No, these are people who essentially converted in order to get out of taxes.

HUTNER: Well, a lot of them in the Ottoman Empire were taken back to Constantinople as it was then, was, put in the army, many as Janissaries. In fact, there was something like a million Bosnians living in Constantinople/Istanbul. A large number went back to Bosnia. We never got credit for helping these Muslims, bad advertising maybe.
So, where was I?

Q: Well you were talking about three parts and you…

HUNTER: The second part of the NATO effort related to UNPROFOR troops on the ground; the idea is that we would be willing to support them with NATO air power if they got in trouble. In fact in the fullness of time, it got so that we delegated authority for this particular potential use of airpower. Everybody on the NATO Council rigidly held on to authority, especially later on when NATO adopted measures for protection of the UN-designated "safe areas." The one use of airpower that was delegated easily was Operation Deny Flight, preventing any aircraft from flying over Bosnia.
But what would happen if UNPROFOR forces got into trouble and were under attack? How would NATO air power come to their rescue? It was in fact called in on a handful of occasions, and it should have been called in over Srebrenica, but wasn't. But the authority for this use of NATO airpower was not only delegated to the military and bypassed what we called the "two-key" arrangement with the United Nations, where it had the right of veto; authority was delegated all the way down to the forward air controllers, down to a lowly sergeant. Let's say you were a Danish soldier down there. You are under attack and you needed NATO air power to come and help you. The guy on the ground could call the airplane, directly, that was circling around overhead, and the airplane would come and attack: authority was delegated all the way down the chain. But as I say, it happened only a handful of times, but it did serve most of the time as a deterrent against attacks on UNPROFOR troops.

The third NATO effort was related to the so-called "safe areas" around various cities. First, the UN Security Council said that nobody could have heavy weapons in these areas, but it was tough enough to enforce that prohibition. Second, there was a prohibition against firing heavy weapons into the safe areas. You couldn't use mortars, you couldn't use artillery etc., and that, of course, was even tougher to enforce. Over the next two years, I think, there were something like eight NATO airstrike decisions, and I negotiated all for the United States except the first one. We succeeded in getting each one a little bit tougher, but the definitions were difficult, and there was a two-tier arrangement, whereby both NATO and the UN had to decide upon the actual use of force. Even on the occasions when we at the North Atlantic Council would delegate authority to the Supreme Allied Commander Europe, who then would delegate the key to the Commander-in-Chief of Allied Forces Southern Europe, Naples, who at the time was a US admiral, and he might even delegate authority, though he tended to hold on it to himself when it was delegated to him -- still, the United Nations had to "turn its key."

Both keys had to be "turned," right? and the UN key -- that is, the formal release authority -- was kept by the UN Secretary General. He didn't even delegate it to his Special Representative, who was in Zagreb. At one point, the UN Secretary General appointed a Japanese diplomat to be his Special Representative, precisely, the Secretary General said, so that his guy in Zagreb wouldn't be affected by the emotions of the locals. So he wouldn't be responsive to any of the European countries, you know, he was some guy out in left field. He didn't have a national stake in any of the issues that were involved. In fact, when we finally got around to getting the job done in August '95, the UN Secretary general finally delegated his key to his Special Representative in Zagreb, who then turned his key on permanently and thus allowed us to undertake air strikes. Prior to that, Milosevic simply out-foxed everyone he needed to out-fox. The British did well at preventing NATO action, and even when we beat them back at NATO, the British totally outfoxed the United States at the UN, that is, the UN mission at the United Nations, the British totally outfoxed them. The US mission to the UN was useless on this issue.

Q: Were the British continuing this policy of trying to keep this…

HUNTER: Absolutely, they would pull back to another trench if they had to. I remember at one point being with Bill Perry, at a NATO Defense Ministers' conference in Seville. All of a sudden, the British came around and they agreed with our position on the use of NATO airpower. Bill Perry, incidentally was very good on this issue.

Q: He was secretary of defense.

HUNTER: Another white knight was Joe Kruzel, but he was killed A couple of Perry's other people were also very effective. At the Seville meeting, the US had worked around to trying to get a decision that NATO wouldn't do pin-pricks. If NATO was going to use military power, to protect a safe area by attacking artillery and mortars, it wouldn't just be pin-pricks, it would be serious strikes. The British supported this proposal. I went around to Bill and I said, "This stinks of fish." Sure enough, we later found that, even though the British blessed the policy to Bill and supported the NATO decision, but then made it nugatory when it came to practice. It did stink of fish.

Q: I mean was this…

HUNTER: For example, they would agree to do something at NATO, and then they would go and tell the UN Secretary General, Boutros Ghali, that "We don't want this to happen," and Boutros Ghali wasn't a fool. Whether you liked him or not, he had his own perspective of this job of his. He looked at the five permanent members of the Security Council and one of them -- Russia -- didn't want anything to happen to the Serbs, OK, fine. The Chinese were playing games, "This is not our job and we are not going to stick our neck out." So that leaves you three. The United States had no forces on the ground with UNPROFOR, but was calling for NATO military action. The two countries with forces on the ground were saying "No," especially the British, and even if we brought the French around, the British would still say "No" at the UN.

Now, the British had approved all this under Chapter Seven of the UN Charter, but when Boutros Ghali was going around talking to the permanent members of the Security Council, the British ambassador was saying that they didn't want air attacks to happen. The French were kind of lukewarm, at best, and the American team at the UN was totally getting flummoxed all the time. Boutros Ghali said to himself, "Well, hell, I'm not going to do this." Then if the British didn't find that they could stop the use of airpower that way -- as we discovered on more than one occasion -- they actually gave orders to their military commander on the ground, who was running the NATO military command, not to request the use of airpower at that time. I won't tell you how we knew this, but we knew it! The use of NATO airpower was off. So that's how the British would do it.

Q: Well what was happening at NATO headquarters? I mean were you all, were the lines drawn on these where they say, OK, if you, I mean not you but your…

HUNTER: Oh no, what happened was this. NATO took up the issue, or had to take up the issue. Essentially, when the United States pressed for the use of airpower, but without a leg to stand on, morally, because we had no troops on the ground with UNPROFOR, that was always the card that others could play, particularly the British. Don't get me wrong: there were a lot of courageous people in UNPROFOR, and there were casualties, a lot of people killed. The French alone, I think lost 73 people killed. The French are tremendous allies. Once they agree and get to the fight, they get in with both feet and slug it out with the best of them. Caveats disappear almost all the time. Generally, they were fantastic once they got in, and with the use of air power, the French Air Force never posed a problem.

When something happened in Bosnia, especially some especially outrageous act by the Serbs, then people at NATO had to focus on the issue, and we Americans would seize on the opportunity to get the issue back on the front burner, again, and to try again to get more resolute NATO action. However, in between these particular incidents, people at NATO had reports all the time, but there was a lot of blah, blah, blah. Thus most of the time was spent on the reformation of NATO. It was only when those two threads came together that we were able to stop the Bosnia War.

Now, the next big event after Travemünde, if I recall correctly, was the NATO summit in January 1994. Christopher came over to see what was going on, in preparation for the summit, and I took him around to see Manfred Wörner. Wörner was a white knight who always pushed for robust NATO action on Bosnia. On this occasion, he said to Christopher that, either we should be serious about the use of NATO air strikes, or we should abandon the commitment, since we were looking like hypocrites. So when Clinton came to the summit and got that message again from Wörner, he reworked what he was going to say to the Council. Tony Lake sat there madly writing new text, new talking points for the president. Remember I told you Tony Lake was stalwart in Washington. The president in effect said, you know, NATO needs either to be serious about the air strike commitment or abandon it. Given that this was the summit that was remaking NATO, and that America was back and doing all these other things, the allied leaders fell in line with Clinton. It was a very effective performance. I don't know whether Clinton's actual statement is available somewhere, since it was an off-the-record, classified meeting. Wörner and Lake and I and a few other people got the reinforcement we needed out of the Council at the level of heads of state and government.

I'll also tell you what happened after that first NATO meeting at the beginning of August 1993, which had been such a disaster. We had sent people over who did not prepare adequately, either weren't good enough or took a slapdash approach, and they certainly didn't handle the Council right, I just couldn't believe it. I woke up angry the next morning. I said to myself that this was just a terrible thing for the United States, a terrible thing for the Alliance and for the people of Bosnia, and it made me very angry. Having watched how Washington had fallen apart on the US negotiating position even before the negotiating even started, I said to myself, "Now, how are we going to do something about this?" It occurred to me that there was just one person out there who could do something about it, and that was Manfred Wörner. Manfred was a very sick man, and he had come back to NATO for the Council meeting from his rest cure up in the Bavarian mountains. Of course, he died about a year later, he had cancer and folks knew it, but he was a man of great physical courage, moral courage, and a great flamboyant character. He came across as a giant when he was most needed.

Q: Let's wait a second.

HUNTER: So he was up in the Bavarian mountains, and I phoned and asked him if I could come see him. He agreed instantly, he was also deeply frustrated. I quickly arranged to get permission to go to Germany. You always have to get permission to travel, when you're ambassador, you have to get permission both from the State Department to leave your post and from the receiving country, otherwise you don't do it. So I flew down to Munich and got picked up by the German Army and driven up in the mountains to this lakeside rest area where Manfred was recovering from his cancer treatments. He was in his jogging suit. His wife, Elfie, was there. Manfred and I hatched a plot to try and get something done. Essentially, elements of the plot were that we would get Wörner together with Christopher and Shalikashvili at Aviano, the airbase in Italy, because Christopher was coming through at the end of a Middle East trip. Wörner would say "I am proposing this meeting." So I reported back that Wörner wanted to meet Christopher. The meeting took place the following, I think, Saturday, so a few of us flew down from Belgium. That was when the incident occurred when Christopher asked Wörner why the British were resisting the use of NATO airpower. So we went down to Aviano, and Shali laid on his plane, SACEUR's plane, and the Chairman of the Military Committee learned about this quite by happenstance and demanded to go. That was Field Marshal Vincent, who was Chairman of the NATO Military Committee. Of course, his first job, as he obviously saw it, was to support British policy. The British do that, even when they are in international billets.

One of the great problems for the American general who is SACEUR, Supreme Allied Commander Europe, is that he is also a US serving officer in command of US forces in Europe. Every Pentagon has always gotten PO'd at SACEUR for taking European views from time to time. It's a lot of effort for SACEUR to balance his two sets of duties. But that means our guys at least have that kind of experience. But the British don't have two perspectives, except very rarely. They have fine officers who have been exceptions regarding this point, but that was not true of this particular guy, Vincent heard about the trip and he just had to come along, presumably to make sure the British position got a full hearing. We at the US mission had worked up some talking points. I had written up some stuff, a position, and I sat on the plane with Shali, and Shali went along with it, and he added some things to it, it was pretty robust in terms of what NATO would do. The next NATO meeting was coming up, and Field Marshal Vincent was doing his damnedest to try to draw NATO's position back. He was nervous as a puppy as we flew down. I mean he was just about to wet his pants because he could see that we could actually do something that we were talking about. We got in this meeting in Aviano, and Christopher took a robust position. He understood what had to be done, and full marks to Christopher, and full marks to Shali, and full marks, obviously, to Wörner, who was making the running. I was there taking notes and codifying what was agreed. Based on that meeting, I thought we had something real. I wrote up a cable based upon what was decided, which was the ideas I had been pushing and that had been blessed by Wörner in our meeting the previous week. I would like to find that cable, a seven-point program for getting the job done. I sent it back as a cable, and that's the last anybody ever heard about it. It disappeared in the Washington maw. So when the next NATO meeting came on Bosnia, the agreement was again fairly tepid, the safe area thing advanced a little bit further, but in effect we came out of that NATO meeting with not much help and the issue went away for a while. The moment had been lost. NATO chose to ignore Bosnia, and the Serbs stuck their heads down and didn't do a lot.

Q: Were the Serbs coming back then?

HUNTER: How do you mean?

Q: Well I mean were they increasing their shelling?

HUNTER: Well, no, they backed off a bit for a time on major shelling. There was a lot of local shooting here and there, and some people getting shot at in Sniper Alley, but there wasn't a major shelling, and there wasn't anything truly egregious until I think it was February the seventh the next year, '94 right smack in the middle of the conference in Munich that's held every year. It was then called the Wehrkunde Conference; it's now the Munich Conference on Security Policy. This was the event every year during the Cold War, where the US Secretary of Defense would come over and meet with his counterparts in this great conclave, along with representatives of NGOs, and all the great and the good from the outside world. In effect, SECDEF gave the Europeans their marching orders each year. It was much less like that after the end of the Cold War, but the conference was still a big deal. Right during the middle of that conference, a shell landed in the middle of the market in Sarajevo and killed a lot of people, and that provided a galvanizing event. I saw the opportunity to grab hold of this beast, again, after the summit, and try to push it forward, and you can pick up there if you want: What we tried to do and why it failed.

Q: OK, shall we stop at the…

HUNTER: Yeah.

Q: We will pick this up…what happened after the market place shelling and what NATO did. I do want to come back to dealing with the Russian/Soviets and how we were dealing with them and NATO and the sensitivities and the battles that raged on that.

HUNTER: Battles within the US government.

Q: Oh yeah.

HUNTER: Where you had some people who wanted to run NATO into the ground if they couldn't kill it. We had some people who wanted to preserve NATO just as it was; we had some who wanted to make it able to stabilize Central Europe. We had some who didn't want to do anything that was going to alienate the Russians. I was the guy who eventually had to pull that rabbit out of the hat by playing one side off against another. Actually, the pro-Russia people, led by Strobe Talbott, were particularly hard-over in trying to limit what NATO would do.

Q: It is very obvious from reading newspapers.

HUNTER: Sort of.

Q: OK. Today is May 2, 2007, let's talk about post- marketplace Sarajevo and how did this galvanize NATO, I mean this one mortar or artillery round killed what about 80 people and all the killing had been going on for a long time in Sarajevo. This really seemed to be sort of enough is enough. From your perspective how was this…what were the results of this?

HUNTER: Well, unfortunately, it wasn't "enough is enough." Within the US government, there was the support of the President who, of course, had limitations on what was possible because of Bosnia's being a long way from nowhere. The one person in Washington who I think was consistent on pressing for the use of military power to try to do something about this was Tony Lake, the National Security Advisor and, of course, those of us at USNATO, our mission. I recall flying back from the Munich meeting, this is February 1994. I think I may have mentioned, earlier, that one of the perks of the USNATO ambassador, at least it was until up to recently, was, when necessary, to be able to use military aviation out of Ramstein to go to places where it was either hard to get to by commercial flights, or with special needs. Like when I went on missions to the Caucasus and Central Asia. So flying back from the Munich meeting to Brussels, I had four or five of the other NATO ambassadors on the USAF plane, I will have to check my notes to see which ones. The group did include the British Ambassador, Sir John Weston, who is a very smart individual, one of the smartest at NATO during the time that I was there, but was under instructions -- at least, let's say I inferred that he was under instructions, judging by his behavior, "Ye shall know them by their fruits," right? -- to oppose the use of NATO airpower. So, we came up with some ideas, collectively, on the way back to Brussels on the plane, which then got the full approval of the US government in terms of trying to get NATO to step up to the mark -- I guess you would call it drawing a line in the sand, if you wanted to use that kind of idiom, though we never did. I'd have to check the notes, because there was a sequence of these NATO decisions, there were about eight-nine of them, but this one was to be quite precise about the definition of the so-called safe areas. These were areas from which heavy weapons had to be excluded and could not be in the area -- a 25-kilometer radius from the various towns/cities, which included Sarajevo -- and if any heavy weapon was identified or used, which would be defined as artillery, mortars and the like, anything with a range where it could be used from outside into the safe area, that would call for the use of NATO airpower. This was, of course, under the two-key system, which meant that an air strike had to get the approval not only of the North Atlantic Council, which, on this and on subsequent occasions, was delegated to the NATO commander: "You don't have to come back to us, here are the criteria. We expect you to follow through on this." But the UN also had to turn its key, it's a symbolic key, legal key, which meant the UN Secretary General would have to "turn the UN key" or he could delegate authority to his representative on the ground, who was the Special Representative of the Secretary General (SRSG). That was Mr. Akashi for a considerable period of time, who was Japanese and who was put there precisely, as Boutros Boutros Ghali said, so that he wouldn't have somebody there with any emotional or political attachments. Akashi would do what he was told to do from New York, and, unfortunately, it was very difficult to get the UN Secretary General to agree to air strikes.

I may have mentioned to you, I think it was the subsequent April, when there was a NATO Council meeting a second time after the restrictions regarding safe areas were violated in a major way, but where NATO had done nothing more than what we called pin-pricks, all that NATO had been allowed to do by the UN Secretary General. At that time, Manfred, with whom I was very close, told me of a conversation he had just had with Boutros Ghali, who had said to Wörner: "Some of your allies speak with forked tongues." It was wonderful, an Egyptian reaching for an American Western idiom, that we attribute to Native Americans. He meant the British and maybe the French, as well, were saying one thing at the NATO Council and doing another thing in New York. In fact, it became obvious to us that the British were misbehaving in terms of being straightforward. They might agree to something at the NATO Council, but then they would go to the UN and try to block the decision, there, by keeping the UN from turning its key. We even determined at one point, through keeping our ear to the ground, that their commander defied NATO orders to use air power. So the British were very effective in blocking us, and our UN mission in New York was constantly and thoroughly hornswoggled, to use another great Western expression, by the British and sometimes by the French. The French were kind of hiding behind the Brits on this in New York. The US Mission to the UN was asleep at the switch, and it was no help at all to try to get this done. A lot of folks talked about who was doing what, but when it came to actually getting things done on Bosnia, the USUN mission failed. So it was really Tony Lake back in Washington, with a few others, doing practical things, and those of us at the US Mission, plus Manfred Wörner, doing what we could. As you know, Manfred died that spring, which was a terrible thing for NATO. I'd have to check on the actual date of his death, but a couple weeks beforehand, he came from the hospital in Aachen to a NATO meeting on air strikes, and he was sitting there with his oxygen tank, and the morning he died he was working on these issues right up to the moment he died. I've seen a few of those people who…Hubert Humphrey was another....who literally were working on the things they believed in until the moment they died, hours before they died. I had the honor to work for Humphrey and with Wörner and to see this kind of incredible courage and devotion to ideals right to the last moment.

So a decision was adopted at that February '94 NATO Council meeting. Incidentally, the NATO commander was very much concerned about protecting his forces, General George Joulwan, and I have a very high regard for him. He is what they call in the jargon, a "soldier's soldier;" he cared about the people under his command, and you can see it. Another senior officer I worked with who was like that was Admiral Mike Boorda, who was AFSOUTH and later CNO -- who committed suicide over what seemed to us civilians to be a peccadillo. You can't fake caring for the men and women under your command. A couple of fine officers. Of course, the Supreme Allied Commander Europe, or SACEUR, is always an American, as a visible commitment of American engagement at NATO. We used to say, beginning when Eisenhower was the first SACEUR, that he is worth two American divisions, because the relationship with the United States and Europe is always a matter of mutual trust and the firm commitment of the US to European security.

Q: You were talking about a US officer always in command.

HUNTER: Well, the Supreme Allied Commander Europe is a four-star US general and commands all US forces in Europe. He is also the commander of allied forces, and so has two hats, as a minimum, and generally there is no a tension there, but sometimes there is a tension between what the US government wants and what the Allies want. George was very sensitive to that, and though in fact I didn't happen to like it at the time, I can understand the value in it, and I'll describe it. He would be given a directive by the Council to do things, and then he would say to them, in effect, "Are you sure, are you really sure this is what you want to do?" In effect, he would always come back even when he didn't need to, he'd come back and say, "Are you really sure?" He didn't say it in so many words, but they got the message. This was not what the US government wanted him to do, but his saying it led the Allies to believe that maybe the US government wasn't so keen on using NATO force, as well. Also, the Allies looked to this military leader to keep their folks safe – an important, positive thing. But his sowing doubts about what the US really wanted was a real pain in the butt for those of us who were trying to get the war stopped, because it added to the limitations on the use of NATO air power.

It worked the other way, however, after we deployed the Implementation Force, following the Dayton Accords, when there was an incredible requirement not to take casualties. So the same general, George Joulwan, imposed some really draconian requirements on the forces, the American forces, who were deployed with IFOR in Bosnia: no drinking, they had to travel in flak jackets and body armor everywhere, and they had to go in groups of four in reinforced armored personnel carriers. The Brits would be out there in their skivvies building a school, and the Americans would go by fully-loaded down with armor. But we didn't have any casualties -- nor did the British or anyone else, for that matter -- and that was critically important for the President to be able to keep US forces deployed. We haven't taken any casualties since then. So what worked for the post-peace environment was a pain in the butt prior to that, because it put severe limitations on the use of NATO power and the willingness of Allies to do so. They could read the signals and could see there was a kind of a tussle between me and George, because I was the representative of the President and of the US government, and he did his military duty as he saw it. But, eventually, we got the bombing done, anyway, and stopped the war.

Q: But coming back to the post marketplace mortaring did anything particular happen? I mean were wheels put into motion or anything happen or how.?

HUNTER: NATO created what are called "Op Plans," operational plans, which set out a whole panoply of things that you would do. One of the good things about the military, particularly when they have time to work it through, is that they look at all the angles, they figure out everything that has to be done, and when you are doing it in an allied environment, you want everyone to know what is expected of them and what's going to happen and what the rules of engagement are, because the Allies have to have confidence in the Op Plan. For example, when it came time to have the actual Op Plan, which led to the air attacks by NATO which brought the war to an end, it was a big, huge document. The Allies insisted on seeing it, the ambassadors. I supported that happening, but none of them read it, there was too much to read, but they had their technical specialists look at it and sent it back to their capitals. Of course, they already got it through their military people. Yet the fact that they had a chance to look at the Op Plan helped deal with the political problems they had. So it wasn't that something was being done secretively or behind the barn. A lot of the process was about building confidence. You see, this proved to be the first-ever use of NATO air power except for a bomb here and there. You had to build the confidence to do it so it would work. It happened over time.

Q: How long sort of a period between the…I keep coming back to the marketplace as only a benchmark…

HUNTER: Yes, I saw it and people like Tony Lake saw it. This was the moment when we could try to shame the naysayers, and by that time, obviously, it was mostly the Brits. The French would come around in the end, but the Brits were kind of leading the other people who had some trouble with NATO air strikes. The Canadians were often the last to make a decision, in part because they had a lot of troops on the ground, and about the only thing they did at NATO was, first, at UNPROFOR, and then later the Implementation Force. A lot of Canadian troops. There was also a six-hour time difference for them, between Brussels and Ottawa, but the Canadians never held out when the other allies were ready to act. I found in the negotiations that, as I would line up a number of the Allies who were deeply concerned about the American commitment to Europe and to their security, and if the United States were prepared to take action in Bosnia, that was sufficient. Then if I could get the French split off from the Brits and get the French being willing to do something, and then tee up the Canadians to come along, at that point the Brits got isolated and would have to fall off on opposing an actual NATO decision. Then they would have to find some other way to mess it up, by going to the UN, for example, hence Boutros Ghali's comment about "some of your allies speak with forked tongues."

I may have mentioned before, Boutros Ghali wasn't being stupid, he was saying, in effect, "I have five permanent members of my Security Council, I've got two who don't want this at all, the Russians and the Chinese are out there watching the play and taking advantage. You've got the United States, who's in favor of this, at least so it seems, and then you've got one who is ambivalent, the French, and then you have one dead set against it. Why should I get out in front of my guys here?" In fact, it was only when both Britain and France finally came on board in the summer of 1995, after Srebrenica, that Boutros Ghali was prepared to release his key to his local guy, with orders to do what he had to do.

Q: Did…

HUNTER: You can understand what I'm saying was very frustrating. Here was the market bombing. Here was NATO taking this firm decision about safe areas, here were the violations that continued. The NATO commander was ambivalent about it and telegraphed his ambivalence about putting people at risk. Then you had the British who were actively opposed to it. It meant that NATO didn't use its air power and looked stupid.

Q: Did you get any…were you able to have meaningful, frank discussions with your British colleague? Why were they taking this position? Usually they are not in that…

HUNTER: I never got a straight answer and, in fact, we never did figure this out, and someday we'll get told. On a couple of occasions, I found that on other issues that the British ambassador.... who had been a friend for twenty years, right? A very able person, he had been one of Margaret Thatcher's bright young men and that tended to warp, if I may look at this from an American perspective, the perspective of a number of them, to believe they had more power and authority than they did and to be a bit hard-edged, as she was and as she did in her own country. One time on another issue, I think it had to do with Western European Union, I discovered that he had exceeded his instructions, because I knew quite well a senior official in the Foreign and Commonwealth Office. I was in London, and I had a talk with the official, and it turned out that Sir John hadn't been following his instructions -- and he was then brought up short. The whole thing was very unusual, because the Brits are very good at keeping on the agreed message. One of the things that I may have already mentioned is that, if you are dealing diplomatically with the Brits, somebody will come from some part of their government, military or political, and they will tell you, "Gosh, my guys over there are not being very helpful, but I'm going to be helpful to you." Rubbish, the Brits are always on message, sometimes they play "good cop" and "bad cop," but they are always on message, as one of their strengths to play this game. They would sometimes say things here in Washington to try to undercut what we were doing at NATO, leading some of the less-sophisticated people in Washington to believe that, because of the "Special Relationship," they were on our side. I mentioned that, when we had the first negotiation at NATO on Bosnia, in August of '93, where the team that flew in from Washington believed the Brits were for what we wanted to do and the French were against it. They had it exactly backwards, because the Brits had convinced the naive people in Washington: "We are with you, but why don't we tweak this just a little bit," thereby eviscerating our position, and the Washington people fell for the wine and dine set. My job, you see, was not to be sucked in by the wine and dine set. I was being paid to figure out exactly what people were doing and to try to figure out why they were doing it, with all sentimentality put aside. This is when I was struck with the realization -- being basically an Anglophile, having lived there -- that it was the British who were sabotaging us on Bosnia.

Q: Were you ever concerned about the will of the Clinton administration? Because I've talked to other people who talk about the reluctance and sometimes they even use the term " the cowardice of the Clinton administration" on getting involved in things, having been hit early on with Somalia, which really wasn't their fault. But also this was not a sort of pro-active administration. Did you ever sort of look over your shoulder and wonder what's happening back in Washington?

HUNTER: Obviously, part of my analysis as an ambassador was to try to figure out all foreign countries, including your own, when it comes to it. It is like my old line that the country most foreign to the State Department, begging your pardon, is the United States Congress. But I was saying that the one person at the senior level who was always steadfast on this was Tony Lake.

Q: At the National Security Council.

HUNTER: National Security Council. He was steadfast, and he had a couple of people working for him who were also working to get NATO airpower employed to stop the war. But other people were essentially phlegmatic, some of them. I will say that Bill Perry, I think, was one of the best Secretaries of Defense we ever had, as far as I could tell from knowing some of them and studying most of the rest. Wherever his heart was on these things, he was always very supportive of what we were trying to do regarding the use of NATO air power. You would want to ask him, but I suspect it came in part out of an understanding that, if the United States didn't keep its word or was made to look like a chucklehead in face of someone else's use of power, that would have a broader impact on us. So he was always there. John Shalikashvili, from the time he was SACEUR and then, when he became, soon after I arrived, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs, never had a whiff of variance in his support. The State Department was involved enough for Christopher to understand what was going on, but there were some people at State playing games and, you know, really weren't all that steadfast. In fact, later on, there was an effort by the chief negotiator to keep things solely on a negotiating track and not to have the use of NATO air power. I can speculate on the motive, but I just know what happened, that we did not have the support of the negotiator for the use of NATO air power on a consistent basis.

Q: That was Richard Holbrooke?

HUNTER: That was Holbrooke, yes, so that was a bad message, there. Now, to go back to your point. To repeat, it was on July 28th, give or take, '93, when I got a secure phone call at the residence to tell me that we were going to "lift and strike," but to try to do it with allies. But by the time we got to the end of the NATO meeting that took place, it was obvious that we weren't going to get the Allies' support. The United States then backed away from the idea of acting unilaterally. Now, I can understand that Bosnia was in the European backyard, but the European Allies weren't prepared to get engaged in the use of air power, and that that would have made this a unilateral US action in the European backyard. But there was never any reluctance that I saw in Washington, with a few exceptions, to use air power if it could be done in an allied context, if there would be allied agreement to do it, never reluctance on that part.

I will say one thing, because it will go in my memoirs, but they aren't going to come out for years, anyway. We had had the meeting at Travemünde in October of '93, which brought together all the ideas we'd had, the Partnership for Peace, which was invented around my dining room table in Brussels, and all this other stuff which was the package of things the United States put forward at NATO. Christopher, who sent messages with the US ideas through cables to his colleagues in Europe, didn't get any public attention, but Les Aspin spoke directly to his colleagues at this special meeting of defense ministers at Travemünde, Germany, which got the Alliance turned around in the space of two hours. The United States was back and leading, this is what it's all about.

Well, we were flying in the helicopter from the airport in Berlin, Tempelhof, the grand old airport that has what used to be the world's largest air terminal, shaped like an imperial eagle, if you've ever seen it. It's now going to be torn down. It's in what was the American Sector of Berlin. We flew by helicopter with Les Aspin out to Travemünde, and I got hold of his briefing book. It included a vacating of the American commitment to use air power in Bosnia. I said to him through the squawk box headphones, "You do this and you might as well not do any of the other proposals." I said, "This will vitiate American leadership, and that will be the end of it, forget about the rest of it." He didn't say anything, except at the end he said, "Yeah," and he dropped this point about ending the air power commitment.

Q: Where was this coming from?

HUNTER: I have no idea. Well, obviously, it came from some people back in Washington. I've never gone back and researched to find out how high up it went. It was obvious to me that it couldn't have been something that involved presidential engagement, or Aspin wouldn't have been able to drop it. It may have come out of his Pentagon bureaucracy, maybe it's worth researching. But it was clear, as I said to him through this squawk thing in the helicopter, "You make that statement and forget about the rest of it, that would be the end of American leadership here." He was not stupid and he figured it out, he probably hadn't read the briefing book up to that point, anyway. They don't go through them if they are told that there is nothing controversial in them. Perry never did that. Perry grabbed the briefing book as soon as he got on the plane, and if, by the time he got off the plane in Brussels or wherever the ministerial meeting was being held, the briefing book looked the same, it was a miracle. Les was a man of great intelligence, and to his credit he dropped that point from his statement, fortunately. Otherwise, I didn't detect any opposition in Washington. Yes, there were failures by the

US mission at the UN, yes, there was the opposition, covert at first and later overt, by the US Bosnia negotiator, Dick Holbrooke, to the actual use of NATO air power, reluctance to see it used. As I've already mentioned, once we got the bombing started, 24 hours later he demanded that it stop so he could go and negotiate with Milosevic, which then failed. Any child could have told you it was going to fail, but, you know, somebody had to get the credit for stopping the war, and it wasn't going to be NATO stopping it.

Q: I'm trying to get a little time-line here.

HUNTER: Sure.

Q: Marketplace Srebrenica bombing.

HUNTER: Well, this took a long time, NATO military action, and this is the tragedy, and tens of thousands of people died, or thousands, anyway. The first NATO decisions were taken in August of '93, and then the marketplace bombing in February of '94, followed by the first big NATO decision. The next big decision was about three months later, I guess it was April. I can't remember what the incident was. Then there were various incidents and various ratcheting up of the decisions, until Srebrenica, which took place in July of '95. There was a whole series of incidents in between, and we had the NATO Council meetings. At every one, with one exception I will talk about, we were able to negotiate harder lines in terms of exclusion of weapons, triggering devices, whittling away the limits on what the UN was prepared to do. Getting more commitments by the Allies.

Now, remember, there were three sets of decisions, three sets of NATO activities, and I would have to go back and look at the record to see at which point which ones were agreed to. Operation Deny Flight, which was that no non-NATO aircraft could fly over Bosnia, and we shot down a few Serb planes. If I remember correctly, by the time that Operation Deny Flight came to an end after Dayton, there had been 100,420 sorties or something like that. That is a huge amount of flying over this period.

The second one was the Safe Areas, UN-mandated, and the third was ground-support air strikes, which were such that, I can't remember the exact name, if it ever got to the point where an individual UNPROFOR unit, say a platoon, was under fire, it could call for a NATO plane flying overhead to come and strike the people firing against them, without having to go through anybody for permission. Authority was delegated all the way down there, a procedure which remains one of the open issues, open sores, for the Dutch and others at Srebrenica, about why they didn't call in the NATO air power.

Q: They had the authority to…

HUNTER: They had the authority to, as NATO planes were patrolling all the time, to say on the radio, "Hey, Charlie, I want you to attack that position over there." That would have been related to the Dutch soldiers, themselves, being under attack, regrettably not related to the Serb attacks on the Bosnia Moslems. The Dutch could have done that.

There were various occasions on which NATO would finally get a chance to use a little bit of air power. At one point, for example, after the Serbs had broken the embargo on flying airplanes over Bosnia, I got an agreement through the Council, just to add to what we were doing, that there could be a retaliatory strike on this particular Serbian airbase. The decision was taken on a Friday, and the actual attack was done on a Monday. But when it came, the NATO attack was not against the aircraft; it was only against the runways. The Supreme Allied Commander hadn't told us, including the Secretary General, as Claes told me, what the attacks were going to be against, so they were just against the runways, and an hour later Serb aircraft took off on the grass to prove that the NATO attack had been useless. You can see what I am getting at is that this kind of feckless use of air power, pin pricks, was worse than no use, because it telegraphed to Milosevic that we weren't prepared to do serious things, and he could read what was going on. He had at least one allied country letting him know, he was able to read the tea leaves; he could also read them in New York, etc., as to what was going on.

There was, for example in 1998 or '99, after I'd left office, an incident involving Kosovo, in which the entire NATO air armada was sent off in the direction of Serbia during the ethnic cleansing in Kosovo. It got to the Serbia frontier and turned back. This was a demonstration, right? I pounded the wall: it was a demonstration of weakness, not strength.

Q: Sure, if you don't use it, it shows you're bluffing.

HUNTER: Absolutely, it was…Milosevic read it as a bluff. I like to think that wouldn't have happened when I was at NATO.

Q: Part of the problem about air strikes was that there were so many allied troops in there, that they were considered to be hostages. I mean, how was that problem addressed?

HUNTER: Some soldiers were actually taken hostage; I think it was May of '95. This time....before I forget it, one thing about the French: when they took a decision, they followed through, no BS. Their military was always happy to take part. In fact, they were as good allies as we had. I remember, at one point, the Council went down to Aviano, to the air base, and we were talking to a French Air Force colonel and an American Air Force brigadier general, both sitting in front of a screen, vectoring NATO aircraft, and I asked them, "Do you have any problem with working these things together?" They said, "Why would you even ask a question like that?" The French, once they make a political decision, no problems, whereas with the Brits, that was only step one. You were saying what…

Q: My question is how did we deal with the potential and actual hostage situation?

HUNTER: Oh, the hostage situation, OK. As I mentioned, there were ten NATO Allies with troops in UNPROFOR. There was a large number of troops, over all, and many of whom were from non-NATO countries and some of them -- this is one of the sad commentaries about UN peacekeeping -- did it for the money, not soldiers as mercenaries but countries, poor countries getting money to do our work. When people dump on the United Nations here in this country, they forget that there are an awful lot of people from an awful lot of countries who send their soldiers off to risk getting killed, doing things that benefit us, and that criticism of the UN just gets you. Well, anyway, there were ten NATO countries with troops on the ground with UNPROFOR and, I think as I've said before, I became convinced that the British kept their troops on the ground precisely so they could make the argument against the use of NATO air power.

What happened at some point in '95, there was an issue about what would happen if life really got tough for these people. The United States was refusing to put forces on the ground, because of the Somalia precedent. Frankly, those of us at NATO had nothing but…contempt is the wrong word, let's say I have to think of a word for UNPROFOR. Not the people serving there, they were as courageous as they come. But they should never have been put in with this kind of mandate. They were put into a hostile situation where they had to a great extent less than police power. At least a policeman is able to draw his weapon and shoot somebody, if he has to. You know, if there were two people, say a Serb and a Moslem, trying to kill one another, the UNPROFOR people just had to sit there and watch it, under the rules of engagement. They were sitting targets, but a lot of people undertook that duty because it was the United Nations and they believed in it. I wouldn't have agreed to my nation being involved under those circumstances, because what leader can really put his people under rules of engagement where they are just targets and nothing else? That was before the United States was willing to do anything unilaterally, as a given. Other Allies weren't prepared to act, this was a brand new kind of thing, it was different from the Cold War, and they hadn't yet understood what was going to have to happen. It was a transitory process. People would ask: "Why didn't NATO act in Bosnia sooner than it did? I'd say, "It's a miracle that NATO eventually acted at all!" This was a psychological transformation from the Cold War era to the new era. Unfortunately, tragically, in that process of transformation, a lot of Bosnians died, but at least we came out the other end, in a way that might not have happened, historically, but that's no comfort to people who died. It's like I've often said that, if anybody in the 20th century did not die in vain in a war, it was the people in Hiroshima, because that raised to human consciousness the enormity of a nuclear war. We might have had another nuclear war if it hadn't been for the use of the bomb at Hiroshima, although that may seem a terrible thing to say. I once said that to John Hersey, that everybody should be required to read his book once a year, Hiroshima. It's a fantastic, shocking book. I also believe that, during the Cold War and maybe even now, when people talk of the use of nuclear weapons, you should every once in a while blow up a nuclear weapon in the South Pacific, with all the world leaders watching it, just so people are conscious of what the hell these things are. People talk about nuclear war in theoretical, antiseptic terms.

OK, so we Americans didn't have troops on the ground, but we were pushing for use of air power. That always meant that our hands weren't clean, so to speak. What happened in early in '95 was that there started to be a movement on the part of some of the NATO countries with troops in UNPROFOR. They were saying "We're going to have to get out of here, the risks to our people have gone up." The United States had earlier said, "We are prepared to send in our troops to help UNPROFOR leave under benign circumstances. We will send in planes and whatever else is required and all the big stuff that we've got, to help people pack up and get out under benign circumstances, but we won't do it under hostile circumstances.” There was one thing that we managed to engineer in early ’95, I was pushing for it at NATO, and Tony Lake was in Washington, and this was a critical moment. In fact, to show you how rapid the turn around was, on one particular morning, the Canadian ambassador came to see me, John Anderson, former Chief of Defense in Canada, one of those quiet, thoughtful, no-nonsense kind of military people, who is going to do the right thing, a sober person. He told me that his government had decided that they were going to have to leave UNPROFOR, OK? Two hours later -- I couldn’t tell him at that point, I would only have my instructions two hours later, when I actually got the cable -- I went to the Council and said "The United States has decided that, if UNPROFOR has to leave under hostile circumstances, we will send in forces to get them out as safely as possible." This was a US force commitment, running risks, shared risks, a fundamental principle at NATO. The Canadian ambassador came to see me two hours later and said, “We are going to stay.” The attitude at NATO turned around just like that, because there was the commitment of the United States to be willing to share risks, which actually reduced the likelihood that it might have to happen, a withdrawal of UNPROFOR from Bosnia. It was the fact that we made the commitment, if need be, to do this. It showed engagement of the United States. People at NATO were looking for that, the subtleties of it.

Well, in May, I think it was, some UNPROFOR troops were taken hostage by the Bosnian Serbs.

Q: Was it in ’94?

HUNTER: ’95.

Q: ’95.

HUNTER: Taken hostage. Later on, after Srebrenica, and tell me if we’ve covered this territory, I think we did. At that point, the reason that NATO was ready to act, finally, all the objections got swept aside, was several events. The most important, in my judgment, was that we had completed the work of the reform of NATO, Partnership for Peace, enlargement on track, looking towards a relationship with Russia -- it had joined Partnership of Peace by that point -- a new relationship with Western European Union, Combined Joint Task Forces, looking toward a special relationship with Ukraine, all of the things that made NATO relevant for the future, to wrap up the 20th century and then move forward. Oh, I should mention another program, that George Joulwan put together. It “partnered” Central European militaries with the National Guard in different US states, like Illinois partnered with Poland – that one was kind of obvious. Ohio and Hungary, Michigan and Latvia, etcetera. For training and the like. This was a terrific tool; the National Guard in the different states took it very seriously.

All this demonstrated American commitment. This whole package got done and then, as I indicated, some people, including my current colleague here at RAND, Steve Larrabee, said at one of the annual NATO-related conferences, “You guys are fat, dumb and happy, you think you’ve got all this done, but you’ve got this war going on. If you can’t stop this war right in your backyard, you’re worthless, you and the European Union.” Or words to that effect! This kind of comment had a major effect, people understood that all this work would be for nothing if we can’t stop the war, and that includes America’s commitment to Europe's security future, and the rest of it, to stabilize Central Europe, take it off the chess board, lots of incredible developments, which included ending the European civil war that had started in 1914, to work toward George H.W. Bush’s goal of a Europe whole and free. I mean this is big stuff, OK? I mean you get that stuff ready, NATO and the European Union, but a war is going on near to NATO and EU territory. People tolerate lots of killings in lots of places, but don’t tell us about it, because then, by God, we can’t ignore it, because it becomes a moral problem. I don’t mean just "moral" on its own, but also in terms of there being a kind of moral basis for political credibility.

Srebrenica was the triggering event, the worst atrocity of its kind in Europe since World War II; and reminiscent of it. I may have mentioned how, afterwards, the Dutch ambassador to NATO came to me and said, “I’m getting some reports about things that happened, and I urge you to take a look.” So I reported this back. The CIA folks and the National Reconnaissance Office got out photographs of the area, before and afterwards, and discovered all these newly-plowed fields. Madeleine Albright showed the photos at the UN, which showed where there were mass graves. That galvanized people. For NATO, the EU, this was the galvanizing event.

Tell me, have I talked about Srebrenica?

Q: I’m not sure but I don’t mind going over this again.

HUNTER: Well, the instruction I got from Washington was to secure the use of NATO air power. Incidentally, there was another thing with our Bosnia negotiator. I may as well correct the record about how, when we agreed to have American forces be part of the Implementation Force. He made a meal of it and went to the president at a White House social event, including the secretary of state, and Holbrooke said, “You understand, Mr. President, that this is going to mean that you are no longer going to control American forces." The president said, “I thought I was in control of the American forces.” The secretary of state said, “Let’s talk about it later.” Well, this individual, Dick Holbrooke, must not have read the NATO documents, even though they had passed over his desk at least five times for approval. The US president never gives up control of US forces; he can pull them out any time he wants, so that was flat misrepresentation. I will put it down to ignorance rather than any other reason. The president was right, you know, he doesn't give up control of US forces, and, of course, the same is true with any other leader. One of the things for credibility, as all the leaders know, is that "I can pull my guys out. Troops are under allied command for an operation, but I can pull out at any moment, that’s important."

So, I get my instructions after Srebrenica to get the bombing done. Finally, we got it cleared *carte blanche*. Incidentally, Boutros Ghali at the UN got the signal from France, certainly, and also from Britain, that they were prepared to go forward with this. So he delegated his key. I watched this happen, I reported it and said, “Here is what he is doing and why is he doing it.” I figured it out because, finally, he had the big three Western permanent members of his Security Council at one, and so he could say, “It’s not my problem, I can wash my hands of it, let the other folks do it.” So he delegated his key to his Special Representative in Zagreb, with the idea of turning it on. Thus at that point, we had that key turned on. On the NATO side, I also got the instruction, “Make sure that when NATO bombing starts, it won't stop if UNPROFOR hostages are taken." We were certain that there would be some immediate provocation by the Serbs. It was another market bombing actually that triggered it, eventually, in Sarajevo. I have to check on it, but I’m pretty sure that’s what it was.

But, my instructions continued, "make it a provision that, even if there were a hostage-taking, the use of NATO air power would continue." An impossible instruction to implement, given that we had no troops at risk. It was one of those Washington magic-wand things. There was one of those all-night meetings of the NATO Council -- and the all-night NATO meetings are the best rather than the worst. Some commentators said, “Oh, God, the Alliance is in disarray.” Oh, no, a long meeting shows allies honestly grappling with tough issues, and they come out at the end with a firm understanding and decision, because they’ve had a chance to grapple. So it was 2:00 in the morning, and I was trying all kinds of different things to get our provision on "no halt to bombing even if there is a hostage-taking." I made a proposal which was, "Why don’t we set it up so that the fighting will continue -- that is, the use of NATO air power, with our key turned on -- even if there are hostages, unless we decide as a Council to turn it off?" Of course, the instant I said that, I realized the trap that I had walked into. All the other ambassadors understood that my proposal would give us a unit veto to prevent the stopping of the bombing, although we didn’t have troops on the ground with UNPROFOR. Well, everybody recognized that instantly, and I said to myself, “Oh God, I’ve just"…whereupon a flurry of ambassadors' hands went up, and they started denouncing me and the United States. Everybody spoke, including the Acting Secretary General, with unkind words for what the United States was doing. I wanted to crawl under the table, I really just wanted to. The worst 45 minutes or an hour I had had at NATO. I was taking every insult, just being pummeled. "What cynicism, how can you do that? Your troops aren’t at risk. You’re willing to let our people die," and all of this stuff went on and on. The Acting Secretary General chimed in, saying, "This seems to me a very inappropriate thing for the United States to have suggested." I got through the end of all of that, and everything quieted down, and then they agreed to my proposal!! I said to myself, “I guess I wasn’t so stupid after all, that was a masterstroke!” They had to get it out of their systems that the United States was asking them to be put at risk, without our troops being at risk, and they wanted finally to express their dudgeon at the United States, and I had given them a chance to do it.

So, once they had gotten it out of their systems, and had also made some points for people back in their capitals, they agreed to the decision sheet, as its called, and hence the bombing started. After all the bickering, the bombing was done extremely effectively by the NATO military; Joulwan put his heart into it.

Q: Well, had you by this time, having gone through the pin-prick stage, had everybody realized that, if we are going to do this, we really got to do it?

HUNTER: Oh, yeah, sure, that was clear. In fact, at one point we had a meeting in Seville of the NATO defense ministers, I will have to look up the date on it. This came in the fall of ’94, and Bill Perry, of course, was there. He and I cooked up a deal, because Perry was always very useful, and, as I said, he was one of the best secretaries of defense we’ve ever had. He and I worked out a deal to get introduced that, if NATO were to use its air power, it would not be a pin-prick; it had to be a serious use of air power. We put it out there, and I was surprised that the British agreed to it, it went through. I went to Perry and I said, “I smell fish.” He said, “Well, see if you can find out what it is that is stinking.” Sure enough, we discovered, in the not too-distant future, that the British were turning things off at the UN, and also were cooking a deal with their own NATO commander on the ground, who had to start things going. So they had given in at Seville, not because they had a change of heart, but they were just going to change the venue and the manner in which they were going to fight us. To my credit, I will say, I smelled fish as soon as they put it out there.

Q: How was that dealt with?

HUNTER: You do what you can to push and shove and pull and that sort of thing. I told you that we tried to find out what was going on with the Brits. Their ambassador used to call it "punching above our weight," and I’m pretty sure he was following instructions. I really haven’t figured it out. I told you what Manfred Wörner said to Christopher, that it was because of the Brits wanting to limit German influence in the Balkans and with the Serbs. OK?

Q: I may have mentioned before but I’ve been told that every British soldier has…

HUNTER: Three rules…

Q: Three rules and I think I..

HUNTER: Don’t volunteer, don’t march on Moscow, and don’t go into the Balkans, right?

Q: Yeah.

HUNTER: Those are the three rules. Well, in fact, the way the British acted at one point, there, was real misbehavior. I think it was over the Safe Area at Gorazde, and we were going to hold a meeting in the morning at the NATO Council to jack up the NATO role and the requirements imposed on the Serbs. I got a call at 2:00 in the morning from the British ambassador, who said, “I’ve just gotten word that a deal has been worked out by our commander on the ground with their commander. The Serbs said Gorazde is going to be relieved, and everything is going to come right, so we don’t need to hold a NATO meeting in the morning, right?" A big miscalculation on his part. I put the phone down, and I picked up the STU line (secure telephone unit) and I called SHAPE, Supreme Headquarters Allied Powers Europe, got a hold of people, and I said, "Here’s what I've been told, let me know what the facts are." They called back ten minutes later and said there was nothing to it. There hadn’t been a deal reached. So I got on the phone, and I called Washington, with the six-hour difference, and I reached somebody senior, told them what was going on, and said we’ve got to get this turned around. At 4:00 in the morning, our time, the President of the United States called the British prime minister. So when we came in in the morning, the British Ambassador had different instructions. I said to myself that he was so proud that he was about to confound us, you see, that he telegraphed his punch, whereas, if he had come in in the middle of the meeting and announced this supposed "deal," we probably would have had a failed meeting. But, instead, I had the time to get something done.

Q: OK, well looking at time it’s probably a good place to stop. So we will pick it up at this point where you have confounded the British…

HUNTER: On this one limited engagement. But it didn’t lead to anything because…

Q: We are still talking about the leading up to the all out commitment of NATO to bombing. We are talking about the British machinations is the only word I can think of, of trying to stop it. But we will move on then from that point on.

HUNTER: Sure.

Q: Good.

HUNTER: Thank you.

Q: This is Tape 9, Side 1, with Robert Hunter. We are sort of filling in. Bob, we have been talking at some length about the British reluctance to go along with our effort to stop the fighting in the Balkans. One of the questions that occurred to me afterwards was did you have much contact with our embassy in the United Kingdom, and did you get much reading from them about what was…why the British were taking this covert stand, you might say?

HUNTER: I don’t think we had a lot of contact directly with our people in London, but some. I don’t have a memory of getting a satisfactory sense from them of what was going on. I don’t know how much of that might be clientitis, which tends to happen to embassies, in general, but essentially I think we weren’t getting a sense from anybody who really gave us a serious view on that. I do recall once being in London at the US ambassador’s residence and...

Q: Who was the ambassador then?

HUNTER: Bill Crowe, a man of great distinction.

Q: Yeah.

HUNTER: Who I think was an excellent choice for that job. Now that I reflect on it, I don't think our embassy in London had any more of a take on the motives for British behavior over Bosnia than we did, beyond just simple explanations of what the British positions were, and the like. You have to remember that Anglophilia, which I have been infected with myself for forty-five years, having lived in London for seven years, is a chronic American disease, and one sometimes has to get beyond that to see what is actually going on. The British are very crafty and they are very adept. I may have mentioned to you, before, that one of the things we get paid to do at NATO, as much as any diplomat, is to read your audience, because you are negotiating all the time and you've got to understand whom you are negotiating with. You can't just engage in bombast, you have to learn all you can and use all the techniques that you can to elicit information. One thing about the British is that they are all always on the same page. They will seem to "let their hair down," but they aren't in fact doing so. The British military will tell you something like "Our political people don't know what they are talking about," or vice versa, but at the end of the day, they're really all saying the same thing, they are just playing "good cop, bad cop." They are exceedingly well-disciplined. The Germans aren't terribly well disciplined, and with the French it is absolute command by the political over the military. The French diplomats make it very clear at NATO, by sometimes insulting their military people in public, making sure everybody knows that they are in charge. If you think about it, of all the major allies of ours -- except maybe Spain or Portugal, though what happened there was quite different -- they were the last ones who almost had a Putsch, over the Algerian question. So the French political side keeps their military under control. With most allies, you can learn different things by talking to diplomats, the military, etc., but with the British it's always…

Q: On the other side, I know, when I was consul general in Naples, and Admiral Crowe was CINCSOUTH (Commander in Chief, Southern Forces)…

HUNTER: Exactly.

Q: There he was, saying that his cooperation with the French military was outstanding. Although, technically, they weren't in the integrated command structure, they participated in most things, and, I understand from other people, who said that the intelligence cooperation is really first-rate.

HUNTER: The cooperation from the British side is number one in terms of day-to-day, but number two is the French. I may have mentioned before that the British will agree to something and then get you on the details. But if the French agree to something, they do it. It's kind of like our methodology, as somebody once said about negotiating with the Japanese. One of the difficulties we have is that we will come to an agreement, and then we will work out the details. The Japanese work out the details in advance and, when they agree, boom, it happens instantly, because everything is already worked out. They are just two entirely different negotiating styles.

Q: Let me ask a question about the Japanese. Was it ever considered that in some way or another that we wanted to nail the Japanese into NATO? It's almost an oxymoron, but at the same time they are a power, and NATO is a military power.

HUNTER: The simple word is "No," except during Bosnia and, I gather, later in the Kosovo operations. We were looking for support everywhere in terms of who would send troops, this was for the Implementation Force, but the Japanese still had problems with doing that. A striking thing was that, every time we had a ministerial meeting, the Japanese ambassador to Brussels would come around to see me and would ask all the toughest, most penetrating questions. They were extremely well-prepared.

There used to be a NATO-Japan dialogue, and, every couple of years, some NATO folks went to Tokyo or some people from Tokyo came to NATO. The only other country with which that happened, in what you might call a somewhat bizarre situation, was Argentina, which always wanted to have a dialogue with NATO, and some of us found it a little bit amusing.

Q: While we are sort of on this tour of the horizon, you might say... You know, every time one gets up and talks about great powers and potential and all, Brazil always comes up. Yet, I have to say that, in all my oral histories, unless I'm talking about something south of the Caribbean, Brazil never raises its head. Brazil seems to be not a very aggressive or influential power.

HUNTER: I remember twenty years ago, people used to joke that "The optimists are learning Russian, the pessimists are learning Chinese, and the realists are learning Brazilian Portuguese." It's one of those phenomena, if I were a Brazilian, I would feel fat, dumb, and happy, not having to worry so much about international security issues. The Monroe Doctrine works still. It is the American backyard, and, if I were most Latin Americans, I'd think it was wonderful not to have the kind of ambition that the great powers have, which classically is not about security, except from time to time, but is about other aspects of national society. So far, they have largely been proof against that. The whole world would be happier if we could all become proof against that. An untapped area of inquiry is why nations do things out of pride, status, self-respect. The struggle for Africa in the 19th century was mostly about that. The Belgians got in because everybody else was there. The Germans wanted to get in because everybody else was there. I haven't looked at the research, but I suspect none of the European powers ever made a net profit on the colonies.

Q: I think from what I gather that that is quite true.

HUNTER: We certainly haven't with our "colonies."

Q: No. Going back to where I started, I was asking if the Brits at their NATO mission, and the ambassador, there, gave you any answers. Looking at the broader picture, as the ambassador to NATO, I would think that you would be either tasking our embassies in Europe for information or our embassies in Europe would be tasking you. I mean, was there much dialogue or were you kind of doing your thing and they were doing their thing?

HUNTER: One thing at NATO is that you're on the cable traffic routing for all of the European countries, so you are reading a large part of the cable traffic, not the really nuts and bolts stuff about every domestic issue, but anything to do with security, so you are really always getting an overall picture. I recall visiting one embassy within our purview in Central Europe, and the ambassador's cable take was about a quarter of an inch thick a day, while mine was about six inches thick. But, sure, when something was being done by another NATO ambassador around the Council table that you didn't understand, you either got on the phone or you sent a cable, or, as you sent out your reporting cable, you would copy everybody who was relevant, and then you would, say, include the phrase: "Embassy Bonn may want to comment" on this and tell us what the Germans are up to. Then they would do their research, and they would send a cable back. That would be emails, now. In those days, not so long ago, we didn't really have email. In fact, I like the use of cables, because you have to think a little bit before you write a message, you have a better track record, and everybody gets the cable, and so everybody is getting the picture you're getting.

Q: Well there is a discipline to cables. An email is in a way a sort of indulgence, which is dangerous because, when you do that, you may say, "Well I think this and that" rather than "We've looked at this long and hard, and we feel this is the way things are."

HUNTER: That's why I maintained an absolute discipline. There was obviously communication by phone back and forth, but we were not looking at five positions being communicated to Washington, because the basic thing is to get people there and elsewhere to know what is really going on and what the decision framework is, rather than just people blowing smoke here and there. I may have mentioned to you, before, that an awful lot of the Washington interagency process on NATO was actually done at my mission, because I involved everybody, never cut anybody out of anything, and I never had a leak. I'd come back from Washington and I would say, "Here is everything that went on," so my team would know and could do their jobs, and they respected that, being professionals. We never lost an inter-agency battle in Washington, because somebody there would pick up the phone and call somebody in one of the elements of the mission, the Foreign Service or the civilians in the defense element or the military in the defense element and ask "What is going on, why didn't you object to this thing in the cable?" The people in the mission would say, "Look, we were involved in the decision, and this is the best deal, go with it."

But, yes, your basic question is that the idea was to make sure, as things were happening, that all the relevant US embassies with a security perspective in Europe were informed of what we were doing. That's why we did a lot of heavy reporting and did honest reporting, not cooking it one way or the other. You want to make sure that everybody knows what is going on, and then you polled the other embassies for their perspective. Or somebody in another US embassy would read our cable and reply, "I think I can give you an explanation as to why the country I am in is doing thus and so." Or Washington would intervene and go out with a *demarche,* or simply a request to the other embassies to go out and talk to foreign ministers and that sort of thing, to find out what was going on.

Q: How about your experience with the American apparatus? How well disciplined were we? I'm not just fishing, but I'm talking about the overall thing.

HUNTER: Well, one of the wonderful things about the United States is the way in which we arrive at decisions. We are a heavily consensus-based society, not in the sense that we all start with the same understanding, but that we tend to work until the consensus becomes rock-solid. It's one reason that enemies don't roll us once we have a consensus. World War II, we had a consensus, and it held up throughout the war. But there is this famous line of Kissinger's, which I'm sick of hearing, which is "I know who to call in London and Paris but whom do I call in Europe?" But the real problem is "Whom do Europeans call in Washington?" There are so many different centers of power, here, and some of the Europeans are good at playing one side off against another, here in Washington. The British are wonderful at that, playing one side off against the other, with the different positions on issues in different parts of the US government. For European diplomats coming here, and their capitals, trying to figure out how we do things, they find that we are easily the most arcane or the most hidden or the most complex of just about any country. We managed, historically, to have a society that worked, where we could reach decisions, when it was 3,000 miles from here to the farthest state in the Union in California, and when we had one telegraph line. We made it work. So we've got this complicated process, this ethos, that tends to bring things together. That means that, if you can dominate the topic, you can often dominate the result. So a European coming to the States can't understand us. Today, for example, you go to NATO Headquarters, and you walk in there and the issue is Afghanistan. You come here and the issue is Iraq, right now. Neither sees the others', what's the word? *preoccupation,* because of the obsession with whatever the issue is we are focused on.

So, I would say the question is "What phone number do you call in Washington?" One thing that I tried to do at NATO, and I think more or less successfully, was "one-stop shopping," so that by engaging everybody in the US Mission, from the different sectors, critical sectors, of the American government that worked on NATO issues -- State, Defense, USIA, FEMA, uniformed, civilian -- it became easier for others at NATO to know they could come to us and ask anyone of my people, "What is going on?" and they would hear a message that we could deliver on. If they went to Washington and got the bottom line, they would hear more or less the same message that they got from us, except from some folks who were out of line, and they would thus learn over time to rely on the central messages coming out of our mission, rather than just the speculation in different parts of Washington. It was a real strength for US policy.

Let me just take this a step further. One thing I really liked when I was at NATO, from early on. I found in talking to military people, there, beginning with the Americans but also others, I'd sit and listen to these military people talk to one another -- let's say SACEUR or the US Milrep (military representative) or some of the other military officers from different countries. The amount of information they shared with one another was incredible; and yet I know that, in the Foreign Service culture and in the political culture, information is power, and people clutch it to themselves and don't share it: "I'm going to get ahead with the boss because I know something that you don't know" -- this kind of competition, which I find detrimental to the government, but it's human nature. I didn't practice it. But when it came to understanding the reason that the military people share information, I came to understand that it is because, if you don't, somebody dies. The stakes are red hot, precision and communication are required, whereas some people play games a lot with information. I didn't play games with my staff. As I said, I shared everything, because they couldn't do their jobs if I've got something in the back of my mind that they don't know about. There might have been a few items that I held back which were not relevant, which were so sensitive, but nothing relevant to the jobs that they were doing.

Q: Well one of the things that I've noticed since I've been doing these interviews and sort of watching what is happening in Iraq, is the hotter the issue the more the experts tend to be pushed aside and the Washington operators who know how to manipulate the Washington system, the staff assistants, the people who are out to make a name for themselves, get involved in it, and the people who, say, have served on the ground and know what the real issues are and what the problems are are dismissed practically.

HUNTER: I appreciate that. That is one of my central insights after forty years in this business.... and I have been fortunate to have had, now, more than thirteen years at the highest levels of the government, in one form or another, with no more than one person between me and the President, on the executive side, and then working for Senator Ted Kennedy for three and a half years at a time when people thought he was going to be president. I've had a chance to see these things. I was talking with a diplomat yesterday at the American Academy of Diplomacy about how Robert Murphy said his greatest moment was when he was in Algeria, and we broke diplomatic relations, and he had five people on his staff. I remember Don Burgess, who was US ambassador in Egypt when relations were broken at the start of the Six-Day War forty years ago, and, when I visited him in Cairo, he was sitting in the US embassy with a Spanish flag on top of it, with only eight people, and he was having a wonderful time. The same thing happened with an ambassador we had in Prague. In a way, we were lucky at NATO that we were a pariah because of Bosnia – I used to tell people that we were Typhoid Mary.

So a small group of us went through the entire reform process of NATO, up through the end of '95. A small group of people, mostly on my team. Back at home, there was Tony Lake, as I said, the hero on Bosnia, and he had a couple of people working for him there who shared his perspective. There were a few people in the State Department at the DAS level (deputy assistant secretary), not the assistant secretary, he was a zero, he didn't even understand Europe. There was a first-class team at Defense, particularly after Bill Perry came in, Joe Kruzel whom we lost on Mt. Igman, Gen. John Shalikashvili, SACEUR, who became the Chairman of The Joint Chiefs of Staff, and some desk officers at State and Defense. I suspect if I lined then up, it might be, outside of people on my team -- some outstanding people, really outstanding people -- of the Americans who remade NATO, there might have been a dozen or so people, plus some junior desk officers.

Then we got Bosnia right, fighting the people who were the credit-takers on Bosnia, but who were often not there when we could have used their help. The war in Bosnia didn't stop at Dayton; it stopped earlier with the bombing campaign by NATO. The Dayton conference was a clean-up act, to get Bosnia off the US plate. Milosevic got enough out of it that he decided to have another go and did Kosovo. I mentioned that, by that time, the team that had in fact stopped the Bosnia War were all gone, and the credit-takers were in charge, and so we fought a war we didn't have to fight over Kosovo because of failures of American diplomacy and American use of power.

Then, after the end of the Bosnia War, all of a sudden we at NATO became the flavor of the month, and everybody piled in. NATO had suddenly become the big game, so everybody came piling in. But the good news was that we had already done the work, while nobody was looking, so that the newcomers couldn't pull it apart. Even though there were some credit-takers and people with well-known names, which I'm not going to name. In fact, there was one person who came back to Washington from a foreign posting and thought he was going to redo everything at NATO, but it had already been done. For example, the argument has often been made that NATO enlargement really wasn't decided until 1996, and then only because of the Herculean efforts of a couple of people. That was nonsense. NATO enlargement was decided on the 11th of January 1994. I've got sitting here on the wall a part of the summit communiqué, which my team and I helped draft. It says "We expect," this is from the communiqué of that summit, "We expect and would welcome NATO expansion that would reach to democratic states to our East as part of an evolutionary process, taking into account political and security developments in the whole of Europe." That was the commitment to enlarge, and everybody knew it. Now, that sentence has other elements in it. One is that is applies to democratic states. Another is that it is evolutionary, it wasn't going to happen all at once. And "taking into account political and security developments in the whole of Europe." That means you have to pay at least some attention to Russian security -- though we always made clear that this was without ever giving Moscow either a look-in or a veto on NATO actions. So this was the commitment to enlarge, and all the stuff about how the commitment wasn't made until two years later is nonsense. Everybody knew that the United States, President Bill Clinton, had made the commitment. In fact, he then went off to Warsaw after the Brussels summit and made an even stronger statement, that enlargement "is not a question of whether, it's when and how." Well, bingo. But the credit-takers hadn't been around, and so they had to pretend that it hadn't happened, in order to show that they had done it.

Now, when I get to what you are saying about crowding out sensible advice and real knowledge, this is one thing that I feel very strongly about. Remember, you and I lived through Viet Nam. I shared with some folks who were meeting here, yesterday, a quotation from Bernard Fall. Bernard Fall told us, the French journalist, what we were getting into in Viet Nam, but people didn't listen to him. He later stepped on a landmine and died. I will say that one of the unfortunate things in our country is that the experts who were right and were ignored never get rehabilitated. We rehabilitate the McNamara's and the Wolfowitz's and others. Wolfowitz would still be at the World Bank, if he hadn't made himself vulnerable, but when he was, a lot of people wanted to get even with him for what he had done in leading the country into the mess in Iraq. But we don't rehabilitate the people who were right. You are out of step. It is part of the American consensus-building process, especially people who don't want to admit we got it wrong when our young men and women were sent off to war, and many of them had to die. So we were turning against Viet Nam and all, but we didn't take the people who warned us, but we didn't listen to, and rehabilitate them. The Washington establishment won't do that, just won't do that.

So what happened in Viet Nam is that all the real experts got crowded out, and the same thing is happening with Iraq, the debate in Iraq before the US invasion was not among the real experts, it was among wannabees. That's also true of Iran.

Q: I have to say that I watch this and I watch one PhD. talking to another Ph.D., and you know they don't know diddlysquat about the realities there. Well, anyway.

HUNTER: I got asked by one of the top three people in the foreign policy apparatus this year if I would join a group of advisors on Iraq from the Democratic Party. I said, "I would be delighted to, but I'll have to tell you, none of us in Washington can contribute anything on the tactical situation in Iraq. We can talk about the politics and the grand strategy and all that stuff." I said, "The only people who can make those decisions are the people who actually interact, and you people in the government who are interacting on a daily basis." That's a fact.

My other pet thing, Hunter's Law Number 27, which I invented, in fact, when I was in the White House the second time. I probably told you this before: "Anything you want to know about the world, except what Dictator X is going to want for breakfast tomorrow morning, somebody in the US government knows it, the culture, the whole bit, the whole smear." The job of the top policy makers is to find that person or persons and then listen to them. The former is sometimes easier than the latter. For top people, it is extremely difficult for them to hear things that produce cognitive dissonance, extremely difficult, especially when you get into meetings, even when the president is not there. Colin Powell, a couple of times, I understand, actually brought desk officers to the Principals' meeting in the White House Situation Room. When I was at the White House, serving the president, that was my job, and there would be a meeting, the president would have a foreign leader come, and we were doing the final strategy papers. I would write them in my area and send them to Brzezinski, and he would make changes, if he had any, and send them to the president; increasingly, he didn't because we have the kind of resonance, you learn. But I would get the State briefing papers and look at them, and then I would then call the desk officers, not the higher level people, I would call the desk officers and ask, "What about this, what about that?" They would tell me what was really going on. Then I would change all the stuff and get it right, rather than the product of the interagency process or the State process, which would water things down. I remember one wonderful occasion on which I got a paper that came out of State for a presidential meeting with the British prime minister, and there was a particular issue that wasn't addressed, and I'd been reading the cable traffic. So I called the guy who had written the paper, the desk officer, and I said, "How come this issue so and so isn't in there?" He said, "Well, that's all in NODIS traffic, I couldn't include it." I don't know if I explained this, before -- you understand it, of course -- but that means "No Distribution," which means that only the main people get to see the cable. I said to him, "You know, the last time I looked, the President of the United States had a security clearance."

But he was in no position, because of the NODIS traffic, to put it in. So this is endemic in this government. I would say that most of the mistakes we make in the world are because of failing to use the talent and to understand who is best. It isn't even judgment calls, two guys differing on an issue; it's first finding somebody who knows what's going on. We made this mistake in Iraq, we did that in Viet Nam, we did it all over the place. We are doing it on Iran, today.

Q: OK, back to what about did you find, I may have asked this before but it's worth going back to again just so I make sure that I don't miss it. Did you overlap or were there problems with the European Union? Was there a European Union when you were there? Was it in…

HUNTER: There's been a "European Union," with one name or another, since 1956, or 1950, if you include the Coal and Steel Community.

Q: Well, I mean it was called by various names.

HUNTER: When I got there, I think it was still called the European Communities, plural. It then became the European Union in '93.

Q: But was there in a way you had almost a tremendous overlap. How did this work?

HUNTER: Well, first we always have an ambassador who does the European Union and who has a different relationship with the host. At NATO, the US ambassador and other ambassadors sit on the NATO Council by right, there is no *agrément*, each government appoints somebody, and you just bring your letter of credence from the President -- "I hereby appoint..." -- you are there by right. If you are the US ambassador to the European Union, you have to get *agrément* from every single EU member country, it takes a while.

Q: He's also not a…

HUNTER: And he is an outsider.

Q: He's outside.

HUNTER: OK, he’s an outsider. Now, there were three US ambassadors in Brussels while I was at NATO. Jim Dobbins, who works with me here at RAND, was on his way out, going off to another job. He was replaced by one of my oldest friends, Stu Eizenstat. We'd been in the Humphrey campaign, together. He came to the EU for three years, and he then went off and became Undersecretary of State for Economics and eventually Deputy Secretary of the Treasury. When Stu left the EU job, there was a third individual who came in as ambassador, Vernon Weaver, who had been head of SBA, the Small Business Administration. Now, obviously, there were some areas of overlap, but the most important area had to do with the military side of the EU's activity, which technically at that time was the Western European Union. It's later been incorporated within European Union, itself -- to bore you, they call it the European Security and Defense Policy (ESDP). NATO calls it the European Security and Defense *Identity* (ESDI), with an "I," the NATO argument being that it is "separable but not separate" from what NATO does, because a lot of the assets WEU would be using were NATO assets, the same troops, blah, blah, blah, all of this. Now, the question is, "Who is in charge of relations with the WEU for the United States?" It had traditionally been the NATO ambassador. I made very clear at the beginning that that was going to continue, and Washington backed me up. There was the USEU [US Mission to the European Union] staff making a run at it, but we won that bureaucratic struggle. In fact, today, it’s still true, even though now someone from the current USNATO mission sits in the USEU mission, and somebody in the US Mission to the EU sits in the NATO mission, and they try to do this quietly. A sensible arrangement. The USNATO mission's being in charge of relations with the WEU made sense because, in fact, in the European system, there were still fights over turf. Indeed, in my entire time at NATO, there was only one European ambassador to NATO who had ever served at the European Union. There were separate career structures. Now, of course, as the military piece has come in as Pillar Two, the security piece, within the European Union, they are now getting a unified civil service, and so people can cross from one issue to another and go back again. So, we at USNATO had control of that issue, and I was therefore the United States representative to the Western European Union, and there were meetings back and forth. In fact, the joke was that, when we had meetings every six months, NATO ambassadors would go to them and the WEU ambassadors would come to us, on a rotating basis. Out at the WEU, there were about ten of the European ambassadors who were "double-hatted," the same individual would sit at the NATO table and sit at the WEU table. When we went down to WEU -- it was in a former bank building, just off the Grand Sablon -- all of these folks from countries that belonged to the WEU would have this little plastic name card, denoting that their countries were Members or Associate Members or Observers. We and the Canadians didn’t have any name cards at all, so they made them up in paper, they would handwrite this little paper thing. I used to joke that one of my accomplishments, after four and a half years, was that, when we went to these meetings, we’d now have a little plastic sign. I said, “You can’t call us members or associates or observers, why don’t you call us and the Canadians 'Friends of the WEU?'” Because there are institutional problems there, which today still exist, stupidly in my judgment, stupidly. Right now, there is paralysis between NATO and the European Union, which is costing everybody, particularly in Afghanistan. So we would have these meetings with the WEU.

Q: Well now we haven't talked about when the bombing…you say the Brits were opposed to doing something. Anyway, the bombing took place, the Dayton Accords came…

HUNTER: Let me just review. I don't remember if we said it, before. In my judgment, the reason we finally did the bombing, the triggering event was Srebrenica, the worst human crime in Europe since World War II. It came against the background of all this work we had done at NATO to reform it, that we had gone through. So, suddenly, we had an institution with a future to it that needed to be protected, like the European Union, but for it this mattered in a lesser way. The argument was that NATO is a zero if it can't stop a war in its own back yard. Thus, when Srebrenica came, we had a reason to act, and suddenly everybody was prepared to come along. When the UN Secretary General found that the French and particularly the British were no longer opposing at the UN what the British, particularly, had agreed to at NATO, he then got out of the way and we ordered the bombing and in 18 days the Bosnia War came to an end.

Q: Was Srebrenica as apparent? As you know, the Dutch were overwhelmed and all, but the enormity of what happened afterward, was this a slow process of understanding what the Bosnian Serbs did to the…?

HUNTER: It took several days. Obviously, those of us who wanted to use military force had been unable to be effective at getting it done What happened, a few days afterward, the Dutch ambassador to NATO came to me and told me the stories about what the Dutch soldiers had been seeing, which I instantly reported. The CIA, the National Reconnaissance Office, or some place or other, got out photographs of the region and discovered there was a lot of plowed ground that hadn't been plowed a few days earlier. These were graves, mass graves, and these were the photographs that Madeleine Albright, our UN ambassador, showed at the UN. Then, of course, everything let loose, inspectors went out there and found the mass graves, that's how it happened.

Q: How did the insertion of NATO forces into Bosnia go from your perspective?

HUNTER: Swimmingly, to use a phrase. You've got to remember that the war was stopped by the NATO bombing, plus some local military action by the British and the French, plus the fact that on the ground, the arming of the Croats and the Bosnians did actually enable them to seize enough territory to get to the magic 51/49 percent split on their own. We had provided a lot of, as I said, "material help," so Milosevic already knew that he wasn't going to get all that he wanted. Then the bombing took place, which showed unanimity at NATO. That was the big thing: he couldn't pick us apart. It was critical, he couldn't pick us apart, he couldn't use the Greeks, he couldn't use the British, he couldn't use anybody, and everybody was prepared to do the bombing. I told you that, 24 hours after we started the bombing, the US negotiator, Dick Holbrooke, demanded that we stop the bombing, so that he could go and negotiate something. Well, I opposed that, the Secretary General opposed it, he was really angry, but it had to be done because Holbrooke was the negotiator, so we did it. The negotiations failed, as all of his Bosnia diplomacy had failed in the absence of the connection to the military instrument. I then renegotiated the bombing to restart. Afterwards, we realized that the bombing halt had

had kind of a backhanded salutary impact -- though it was a "close run thing," like Wellington said about Waterloo -- because, having stopped and then restarted the bombing, it showed Milosevic that NATO was prepared to go for it. But it sure took me some fancy footwork in the NATO Council to get the bombing restarted! I began by getting the Secretary General to declare that we didn't need a new bombing decision, but just had to end the pause; even so, it was 3 in the morning before we got it all done. So then the bombing was over and the war was over. Then came Dayton, which tidied things up, did a lot of things, but also to a great extent let Milosevic off the hook, gave him more than he had any right to expect. The military side of NATO had prepared the plan for the Implementation Force that would be going into Bosnia, which was one of the reasons that Dayton worked, because the negotiators could point out what was actually going to happen: "This is who is going to do what."

One reason the [1999] Rambouillet talks on Kosovo failed is that we, among others, had not done the preparatory work so that the Supreme Allied Commander, who was then Wes Clark, was not able to go into the Rambouillet talks and say, "This is what is going to happen if there is an agreement. Here's how NATO can broker things on the ground." But that was only one reason that diplomacy over Kosovo was a failure; the US simply funked it. The people in the US government who had done the work before, to stop the fighting in Bosnia, had been let go. I hated to see a war [over Kosovo] happen almost by accident, at least in major part because of internal Washington politics that kept us from doing the things that might have stopped Milosevic without war.

OK, so then after the Dayton Accords were concluded, NATO went into Bosnia, it had an incredibly elaborate plan to do it, the kind of plan we should have had for Iraq. That is was one reason our people tear their hair over Iraq. General Joulwan, who was Supreme Allied Commander, had in my judgment made things more complicated when we were trying to get NATO to use air power to stop what the Serbs were doing against the Safe areas, by his desire not to have anybody at NATO get hurt. But then, with the deployment of the Implementation Force, that same attitude proved to be a fantastic asset, because that fulfilled the European and allied requirement not to have casualties in a place nobody heard of. On top of which, NATO put in a stunning amount of force "right from the git-go," which, as a devotee of the Weinberger-Powell Doctrine, I strongly supported. If you put in a lot of forces, you are likely to take fewer casualties. It's not that the more forces you put in, the more people get killed, it tends to be the opposite, the fewer who get killed. So what happened was that SACEUR, General Joulwan, took the US First Armored Division, probably the most potent military unit on the face of the earth, and drove it down through Hungary and through the Brčko Corridor, which was this amazingly conflicted area, to take up positions. To see an Abrams tank, an M1A1, on top of a tank transporter moving along, the earth shakes, boom, boom, boom, this is Hannibal and the elephants. If we are prepared to use it, all of a sudden people say, "Oh, oh, don't touch." If we had done that in Iraq after the initial phase of fighting in 2003, it might have come out a lot differently.

Obviously, there were local problems and difficulties and all of the smear that takes place, but there was that backbone of a heavy force. We had been practicing, the Allies all working together, forty-plus years of NATO working together, etc., in the integrated command system, bringing in the others. There was the Bill Perry effort, on which George Joulwan did the nuts and bolts, to get the Russians involved in IFOR, where the politicians in Moscow had hated what we were doing with the bombing but, by God, Marshal Pavel Grachev, the Russian Defense Minister -- I've got his picture sitting right there -- got Russian troops involved. The Russian military wanted a piece of IFOR, they wanted a chance to show off, and they sent their very best people. One of the wonderful things about it was, "How do you fit them in the command relationships?" They weren't going to take commands from NATO. So the clever thing that worked, which Joulwan personally worked out, with large charts and arrows showing the arrangements, was that the Russians would report to an American general: they could do that, because Americans were the big game. There is nothing second-rate about reporting to an American general, and that is not NATO. He just happened to be the same person who was also the NATO commander! So the Russians were there working for the Americans, not NATO. It was a conceit, everybody knew about it, sure, but it worked. In fact, there was more than one occasion on which Russian soldiers came to rescue Americans who were in trouble, and Americans came to rescue Russians who were in trouble. This was the first time the American and Russian military were together since the meeting on the Elbe in April '45.

There was one occasion in which the Americans came up to a Serb position and the US officer in command said: "I want to go into that particular barn, I think its got some weapons in there." And the Serbs came out armed to the teeth. So the guy whistles and, all of a sudden, this huge force appears over the horizon, half Americans and half Russians, helicopters and tanks and everything, and the US officer said, "Now, pretty please, can I look at your barn?" So that was it, and they found it full of weapons.

Q: I remember as an election observer, we had people coming to lecture us about what to do, and all I could remember was a Russian lieutenant colonel getting up and telling us about certain police activities and what could be done and all. It was an impressive time.

HUNTER: The combination of the NATO military action and IFOR were what really brought peace to Bosnia.

Q: What did this do for you all at NATO headquarters? Were you walking all a little taller because this really was the first time that NATO had been used for anything?

HUTNER: When I arrived at NATO on the 11th of July in '93, morale was at rock bottom. There hadn't been an American ambassador for a little while, and everybody was at six and sevens, but then we got the work going toward the January 1994 summit, and there was the defense ministers' meeting at Travemünde, which I mentioned, where the US came in with all these proposals, and America was back and standing tall. What happened at the summit in '94, we got all this stuff done, and then, finally, in August '95, we got the ability to drop bombs in Bosnia. The day after the bombing started, everybody walked around the NATO Council room, around the building, everybody was ten feet tall, grinning from ear to ear. NATO had finally stepped up to the mark, the first time it had ever used military force in a serious way. It wasn't that we were a bunch of bloodthirsty people and, "By God, we finally got to use the instrument," but rather, "By God, we finally took on something and showed this Alliance could do something to help people and stop a war," which it did. Then, obviously, morale was way up, and, in the day-to-day things, it made decisions much easier as we worked things through. Communication from the military to the political was excellent, we had quality people in charge, we had gotten rid of the bystanders and the naysayers. The term as Chairman of the Military Committee had just ended for the British field marshal who had been working hand-in-glove with the British government, making sure nothing happened, and he was gone. We had a man replace him named General Klaus Naumann, he'd been the former head of the German military, as fine a military officer as I have ever worked with in a political-military environment. He was now Chairman of the Military Committee, and Joulwan was there huffing and puffing in all the right ways. As I said to Joulwan the other day, "When you came to the Council, you inspired trust that you would keep people as safe as possible. Here are committed troops under foreign command, to go into a potential war situation, and these people trusted you to do the best that can be done to prevent casualties while getting the job done." A lot of the military led on making IFOR work, because some of the civilians in NATO weren't ready and, in fact, took a long time to "ramp up," to use a military phrase. The political side had, I thought, an outstanding high representative, Carl Bildt, former Swedish prime minister and currently foreign minister, and actually on the Board here at RAND for a time, which I arranged.

The civilian side of getting things done took a long time to get going, but we bought the time. Even though political success in Bosnia still has a long way to go, nobody's dying, nobody's dying. The same in Kosovo, nobody is dying, and, in the fullness of time, these places will come right, but it is not easy because of very deep, antediluvian attitudes.

Q: Now young kids are growing up in their different worlds there from their parents.

HUNTER: Well, some of their textbooks still need changing. I remember three years ago, being at Naples, the NATO command there, and there was a NATO general, a large general, who had just come back from traveling around Bosnia, and he said he had gone into a little school there, with Croatian kids in the Croatian part of Bosnia, and the kids were singing a song for him in Croatian. He said he then asked the teacher to translate that for him, and the words were, "The Serbs are the enemy, Croatia has been persecuted for a thousand years. We must grow up and learn to kill Serbs," or something like that. He said to the teacher, "Now you stop that right now or you are out of here," because NATO still had the command. He said that is what they are teaching the kids.

Q: Oh yeah. Were there problems in…we'll stick to Bosnia at the time. Were there problems with NATO and other forces, Ukrainian, you had Moroccan, you know. Were there problems from your perspective? Did you get involved in unity problems or anything of that nature?

HUNTER: No, we organized at NATO for what we called TCNs, Troop Contributing Nations. They had an opportunity to send their diplomatic people into NATO and to take part in some of the bodies that talked about this, so it wasn't just, "You have to do what you are told." Essentially, we delegated this to the Military Committee and to SACEUR and kept out of their way. Then, of course, individual nations would report back, but we gave them a framework, we gave them an Op [Operational] Plan. There was some resistance in the NATO military, at first, to showing the Council the entire draft Op Plan. There was a summary of the operations plan, right? Well, we Americans didn't care, I mean we saw the people writing the Op Plan, and we saw the whole thing, that is the US government. So I convinced the military people, I said, "Look, nobody on the Council or in the allied governments is going to read the Op Plan, but they want to see it." OK, so reluctantly the military dumped the 1,200 pages on everybody's desk. Two days later it was approved.

The Allies, the political people, the ambassadors, wanted the right to have a chance to see it. Of course, they sent the draft Op Plan back to their capitals and they'd been working on the military side, but the political side wanted the right to see the full Op Plan, so they could say to their capitals "We saw it." Who's going to read the 1,200 pages? It was an important political part of creating confidence, and I convinced our military people that they had to do this. So that is what it is. The fundamental thing about NATO is building the trust and confidence among the nations and between the civilians and the military, that's what makes it work.

Q: I'm looking at the time, it's probably a good place to stop, but I'm not sure if our times are right, as far as when you were there. Were you there for Kosovo?

HUNTER: No.

Q: All right, so we won't talk about Kosovo, but we really haven't talked about the integration of some of the nations coming into NATO, the new thing. We will talk about it in here. We've sort of finished with Bosnia.

HUNTER: Well I was there 'till New Year's Day 1998. The decision to admit the first three countries had been made. The prospect of the Baltic States having a chance to get in was there, the idea that others would come in and the processes, which were highly elaborate, to get countries ready to come in were all there, but the actual admission didn't take place until the 17th of March 1999. In fact, I remember the Czech Embassy here had a dinner the night before the signing, out in the Truman Library in Independence, Mo., to which the US team who had done the work was not invited, incidentally, that's all right. The games people play in Washington! But we had the dinner at the Czech residence, and the Czech foreign minister was there, people were making all these little encomiums and all this stuff. I said my bit about what they had done and how they had earned their way into NATO, and then I said, "But I have to tell you, minister, there's good news and there's bad news." I said, "Tomorrow morning you join NATO." I said, "But in about two weeks, you have to go to war." That is Kosovo, "Welcome to NATO." They were put to the test right away, which was true, and they passed the test.

There was another important moment a few weeks earlier, when President Clinton signed the US instrument of ratification of the admission to NATO of Poland, Hungary, and the

Czech Republic, in a ceremony in the Rose Garden, the wind blowing the documents every which way. Since NATO membership is about the US strategic commitment, and this is what the new Allies really wanted, this was the decisive moment. I was sitting at the back of the audience in the cheap seats, next to a guy named Jan Nowak, who had been a hero at the time of the Warsaw Uprising in '43, as a courier to London -- and Churchill, God help him, wouldn't see him. Jan was sitting there in tears. I said, "Jan, for Poland, today is the day that World War II has finally come to an end." Just short of 60 years after Britain and France went to war precisely in defense of Poland. He then paid me the ultimate compliment of saying I had played a major role in making it happen.

Q: OK so we'll pick up that whole process of bringing the countries in and the preparations they had to go through...

HUNTER: Absolutely.

Q: and all that. So we will talk about that.

HUNTER: Just to give you one line: that between the day we decided to bring countries in, January 11, 1994, and the first admission on March 17 in 1999, was five years and two months. In between were all the efforts that went on to make sure that new countries would increase security rather than decrease it, would strengthen NATO and not weaken it.

Q: Yeah. Good.

Q: OK today is the 20th of June 2007. Bob, we are talking about bringing the NATO people in. Can you tell me about your approach to the various countries and how we viewed it at the time? I'm told that they received a three-and-a-half foot set of requirements or a checklist or something they had to do. I mean it was quite a feat, wasn't it, to bring…?

HUNTER: That's more European Union than NATO. With the EU, new members have 20,000 pages, literally, that they have to accept, they call it the *acquis*. Well, NATO enlargement is one of those things where you look back and say, "This was obvious," or "It's been done, so it must have been a piece of cake," but it wasn't. We started out in the United States, at least, taking over from the Bush administration into the Clinton administration, without enlargement being on the agenda, at least for the near future. It's sometimes called enlargement, sometimes called expansion. We use the terms interchangeably. Expansion tended to look as though we might be a little more threatening toward Russia than otherwise. But I've used the word interchangeably. That was not on the agenda. In fact, if I recall correctly in the speech at the Athens meeting of the North Atlantic Council Ministerial Session in June of 1993, Warren Christopher had a line in it, "At an appropriate time, we may choose to enlarge NATO membership. But that is not now on the agenda." I essentially wrote the speech, though that particular line, I don't know where that came from. I was not yet in the government.

Q: Were you thinking that this was inevitable or what was your thinking when you wrote the speech?

HUNTER: Well, to be honest, I wasn't one of the earliest supporters of enlargement in terms of formal membership. I was concerned about retaining NATO's strength for the future, particularly the Article 5 commitment that engaged the United States, along with the effectiveness of the integrated military command structure, and that it would be a serious security instrument. And I was one of the three or four authors of the Partnership for Peace. One of the debates that took place was within the administration, about whether NATO should become a "Y'all come" party to bring everybody in, to make it another Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, a kind of chowder and marching society…

Q: It was a delusion and…

HUNTER: A potential delusion, or was NATO going to be really a hard-core effort, serious about security and serious about American engagement? My initial concern was to solidify the gains and to take Central Europe off the map of strategic competition, countries that are being fought over. This was a proximate cause of the First and Second World Wars, but in terms of actually bringing these counties into formal NATO membership, that was not on the agenda right at the beginning.

It moved from there into a formal commitment to do so at the summit in January 1994, in part because other elements were moving along, and in part because it became obvious very quickly that this would need to be done, if your objective was how to "create a Europe whole and free" -- the first George Bush's history-making statement, the idea that there could be a single security for everybody in Europe, in which everybody gained and nobody loses. This was the first time, as I always used to joke, since Charlemagne, that you have had a chance to try to get a unified Europe, at least in a positive sense. There were, after all, Napoleon and Hitler.

A major element of that had to be what you did with the Central Europeans, and that's where the invention of Partnership for Peace came in. But enlargement, formally, didn't come on to the agenda until a clear understanding was reached in the Alliance of the perspective of the countries and peoples that were affected. For them, with their history of militaries rolling across them from the East and rolling across them from the West, having been occupied and having had to live under the Nazis or under Communism -- or both -- the need to gain a sense that they were not going to be again subjected to invasion was Item Number One; and that, until they had some kind of confidence about that, psychological confidence about protection against the vagaries of history, the rest wasn't going to be possible, in terms of political and economic development. So that awareness moved us from the idea of "Let's do serious, constructive things with the Central Europeans" to "You know, we are going to have to bite the bullet and take countries in." That decision, as I indicated before, was taken at the NATO summit on January 11, 1994, even though there were some people who argued that it wasn't taken until later and, after all -- to be ironic about it -- not everybody was there at the NATO summit to take the credit for the decision. But the key statement, the commitment to enlarge NATO, was negotiated for that summit and negotiated with every word's being balanced and with everybody around the table, at the ambassadors' level, the ministers' level and the head of state and government level -- with everybody knowing what it meant.

As we progress to the critical year of 1993, leading up to the Summit of ’94, I mentioned earlier that, when I first got asked to do the job, I called Manfred Wörner, who was the Secretary General and was an old friend, and I said, “Manfred what would you like?” He said, “Get me a summit.” So that became my ambition, and I had a lot to do with getting that on the docket, even before I joined the government. That focused the mind. Summit meetings, I learned when I was at the White House, are a great way to get work done. I lived at a residence hall in London in the 1960s, called London House, and the patron was Her Majesty the Queen, and she was going to come for a visit. They were building an extra addition, and it was going to be inaugurated by her, and, by God, they worked 24-hours a day, and if you know anything about the Brits in those days, getting anything done in less than ten years was impossible. I called it the “Visit from the Queen Theory of Economic Progress.”

Well, we had a summit scheduled, and during the period leading up to the Travemünde meeting of defense ministers, October 20-21, we were pulling together a whole series of elements. In my entire experience of government, I can’t think of another occasion, which I’ve either had a chance to witness or analyze or been involved in, when the US started with a grand strategy, what we are trying to achieve, overall, and then worked on the bits and pieces, rather than doing things pragmatically or by happenstance or in reaction to events and then giving it the coloration of a grand strategy. Whether President George H.W. Bush knew the import of his statement, to “create a Europe full and free and at peace,” I do not know, but it was the inauguration of a genuine grand strategy and created the framework. I’m pleased, as I’ve said elsewhere, that in the Clinton administration we picked that up that initiative and made some changes to it, but in effect built on it. This helped to create the great success at NATO. Over the years in US politics, NATO has always been bipartisan, and that’s had a tremendous value, even today, at a time when you can’t say very much is bipartisan. It’s a tremendous virtue. The elements of that bipartisanship were, first, to keep the United States engaged in Europe, whether for reasons of tidying up after conflict or for longer-term reasons. I had coined a phrase two or three years earlier in an article, "America is a European Power." The implication was of permanence, not coming to Europe in 1917 and then leaving in 1919 and then coming again in ’43. When you think about it, after the Second War, in the late ‘40s, we didn’t leave completely but would stay forever.

Second, the idea was to preserve this thing called NATO, beyond doing so just because of inertia, but because it would do useful things. Not only was NATO the mechanism through which the United States expresses its strategic commitment to Europe. That worked, in part because NATO was military, and thus it was somewhat simple and straightforward. We got to run NATO to a great extent, sort of the 800-pound gorilla, and we kept NATO within the framework of what we would like it to do. It was also an opportunity for American leadership, in which we pride ourselves, whether it’s a good thing or bad thing. I think it is a good thing. Nothing has happened at NATO without American leadership, just like a lot of other things going way back and carried over.

The third thing was the inertia factor. You can't kill institutions. NATO kept on going in part because of this magnificent thing called the integrated military command structure, in which everybody, with the partial exception of France, we will talk about the details of that later, maybe, said, "If we are going to do defense in Europe, we are going to think about NATO first." Even Iceland, with no forces and therefore not in the integrated command structure, still thought in that way. Such an alliance had never happened before. Yes, there were always problems of interoperability and who can do this or that, but no set of militaries had ever before been able to work as closely together – there were problems with the alliances in World War I, World War II, etc. But we had this thing that worked. So preserving it was kind of important.

Number four was now that everything had come loose again -- history had been "unfrozen," to use a phrase I can't remember who said it first, but I plagiarized it. That raised the question of the future of Germany, where there was François Mauriac's famous line, a Frenchman, who said, "I love Germany, I love it so much I want two of them." If there was anything that we and the Soviets agreed on during the Cold War, it was the division of Germany. In fact, when I was in the government under Carter, in charge of European affairs at the NSC, we used always to talk about pressing for the unity of Germany, but we were always being hypocritical and we always knew it.

Q: This reminds me. I was in Korea, when anybody who has dealt with Korea, as I did at a certain point, we were sort of glad that Korea was divided, because the Koreans are a very powerful force, and I mean a very disciplined force, and one used to say: "It's not really that bad a trait to have Germany split and to have Korea split."

HUNTER: One of the longer-range concerns is whether you get a unified Korea with nuclear weapons. Anyway, in fact the division of Germany was something we and the Soviets agreed on, and the process of transforming that mutual agreement was one of the remarkable parts of the Cold War that was not understood very well. Like there was De Gaulle's leaving the military structure of NATO. That was essentially his effort to try to deal with West German concerns about unity, something I started writing about in these terms the day de Gaulle made his declaration in 1966. This fact of the German interest in unity was underscored when the first Bush's administration, under the President's leadership, did what I considered to be a brilliant bit of statecraft, both in the soft-landing collapse of the Soviet Union and in the unification of Germany, not *reunification* but *unification* of Germany. There was the Soviet Union and then Russia, as its successor, facing the choice whether they wanted this unified country of Germany rattling around loose -- or at least the eastern part of it -- or to have it fully encapsulated within NATO. The Russians chose the latter, I think wisely. There was a transition period of several years in which certain things couldn't be done by NATO in the eastern part of Germany, blah, blah, blah, and other questions about what NATO could do in Central Europe, of which we still see vestiges, now, in the question of missile defenses to be installed in the Czech Republic and Poland. Whether it would be better to have a unified Germany under the control of the Americans rather than its rattling around loose was also why, when the enlargement of both NATO and the European Union came along, Chancellor Kohl wisely sought to “surround" Germany with these institutions, so that when Germany becomes a major if not dominant player again in Central Europe, etc., it won’t be “Here comes Germany, again,” but rather "Here come NATO and the EU." It was also the reason Kohl gave up the Deutschmark for the Euro. The German economy still drives the Euro. Here we are in 2007, and a few weeks ago I had a discussion, at his request, with the Polish ambassador to the US. He said, “We're worried about the Germans.” I said to myself, “Bravo.” Here we go again, right? That’s why the transformation of NATO was done that way. That was one of the elements: NATO had provided a home for Germany and would continue to do so in the new circumstances.

Then one of the other elements was, what do you do with these new countries that have come loose from the Warsaw Pact, regaining their freedom with the “unfreezing of history?” One of the concerns was how do you take them off the geopolitical chess board? That led to the invention of Partnership of Peace, and the State Partnership Program with the National Guard, which we will talk about if we haven’t already, and then eventually you’ve got to give them a sense of confidence about the future, through NATO enlargement. Then, to take a couple of other elements, there was Ukraine, a special case; and Russia, which at first we really hadn’t quite figured out how formally to deal with, but there was an understanding, which began with George H.W. Bush, which we in the Clinton administration carried over, and I used to cite this all the time. This is a bit-truncated history, but I think it’s real. Germany after World War I was kicked when it was down -- the French took the lead, the British came afterward, and we got skunked at Versailles -- and this helped produce Hitler, at least he used it as an argument. Well, George H.W. Bush had the vision, as I inferred it, that you don’t treat Russia the way you treated Germany after 1918, you treat Russia the way we treated Germany after 1945, at least the Western part, and we carried on that policy consciously in the Clinton administration.

Then there were a couple of other things. We worked to get NATO to pay attention to countries to the South, in the Med. That became the Mediterranean Dialogue, which was mostly for the Allies closest to them; it never went very far, because France, in particular, didn't want NATO -- meaning the US -- interfering in its bilateral business. As part of it, I arranged for Israel to have a relationship with NATO, working through their ambassador to Belgium. I also travelled a lot to PFP countries; one time I recall in particular was going to Central Asia and being in Tashkent: I joked to people later that if anybody had missed the Brezhnev times, come to Uzbekistan, where they are alive and well. I had a three-hour meeting with Islam Karimov, the dictator who was a holdover from the Soviet Union, who started off with a 50-minute harangue. I said to myself that I was there as the US representative, so I answered with a 40-minute “sober-but-pointed response”!

One important issue was how do you deal with the European Union, as it is now called, which, with its own aspirations of developing its integration, wanted to have a foreign policy, wanted to have a defense policy? This goes all the way back to the early ‘50s, with the European Defense Community, EDC, which failed in the French parliament, not because France was really against rearming Germany, which was a major element of the whole thing -- we were pressing to get Western Germany rearmed, we needed the troops. Because 42 days after EDC failed in the French parliament, Western European Union was created, following a British suggestion, with even fewer controls on German forces than there would have been under the EDC. It was really that France was not willing to give up too much sovereignty, too soon. Raymond Aron, who was one of my heroes, wrote about that at the time. So you had this thing -- we can go into it at some point if you want to, it's an arcane issue, though it's still important -- the development of a foreign policy and a defense policy by the European Union, as we now call it.

The previous administration had still had the perception that we had in the Cold War, which was "Let us have" -- to use John F. Kennedy's phrase -- "a strong European pillar of defense." There was a codicil, which we never said out loud, but everybody knew it: "…provided it does exactly what we tell it to do." That was for a good reason, which was that we had to take the lead in managing the central strategic relationship with the Soviet Union, you didn't want someone else meddling with it. With the end of the Soviet Union, the end of the Cold War, that reason goes away. But the Bush administration didn't change its view, and as late as just before they left office, they were continuing to throw dirt balls at anything the EU did in this area, quite harshly, too. I was bound and determined, when I came in, to reverse that.

Q: Did you feel that there was a group or a person who was opposed to what you might say was "the course of history," the reintegration of Europe, or the fact that Europe was going to develop more self-determination in world events?

HUNTER: If you're talking about, not the unification of Germany or the overall picture, let's say just the role of the European Communities and the European Union, I suspect there were, and even continue, today, to be some people who do a "harrumph harrumph" at the Europeans' challenging our supremacy, our dominance and influence. I think people fundamentally misconceive that, strategically Europe, is in sync with us. I think I mentioned before that I have had a $20 bet now for thirteen years -- nobody has ever picked it up, they've just increased it because of inflation: "Name for me a scenario according to which the European countries, through what is now called the European Security and Defense Policy, would want to do something in the world militarily that we would object to." Nobody has ever been able to define any such circumstance. The EU nations don't have any strategic ambitions that are against our strategic ambitions. It's a positive thing. Also, there are some people who say that the Europeans are getting too big for their britches, economically; they are going to be too strong or we can't compete with them. But the smart money in the private sector has always understood exactly the opposite. It is a positive-sum game. I think, to go back to the burden of your question, the real opposition to a European foreign policy was that people had trouble adapting to novelty. People are like the machinery, the bureaucratic inertia, and the US response was quite harsh.

Q: I keep coming back to here you've got this huge apparatus, as I sit here and look out your window at the Pentagon. I can see helicopters flying out to Langley, CIA; I can see the State Department. I'm sitting here in RAND and…

HUNTER: Where I have "oversight of the Pentagon."

Q: Huh?

HUNTER: Where I have oversight of the Pentagon -- it's right there, less than half a mile away. A joke.

Q: Yeah, you have "oversight of the Pentagon," and you know, considering the billions of dollars that have been spent on intelligence and it was all focused on the Soviet Union, but nobody got it. When it broke up, there were a few individual people who can point to some sentences in what they wrote or something, but basically it was bureaucratic inertia and not only bureaucratic but also think-tank inertia. Everybody was in the same boat.

HUNTER: Well, I certainly don't cite this as one of the great lessons of good things that happen! I made some real mistakes in my life on foreign affairs. I supported the Viet Nam War longer than I should have. I had started working in the White House at the time of the Tonkin Gulf. And I missed the end of the Cold War in its profundity. Ironically, I predicted its end in a book I wrote in 1969, second edition in '72, and more-or-less got right how it would happen, then abandoned my own analysis after I was in the government some years later: a lesson there, I guess! I've always joked that I don't know anybody who knew anything who predicted the end of the Cold War. I've met a couple, as you were saying. I know some people who didn't know anything but who got it right, because they weren't wrapped up in it. It was so compelling, this structural framework -- and this is not a conspiracy theory. This is when you are dealing with something of the enormity of this struggle between us and the Soviet Union, dealing politically between capitalism and communism, if you want to oversimplify it like that. The fact that you had these two nuclear armed states, each and together with the capacity to end human life on the planet. In fact, one of the great achievements of human society is that we escaped the Cold War without a nuclear conflagration. Today, you can't even tell people this, it doesn't mean anything to them, it doesn't resonate. I think one of the healthy things, psychologically, is that we now worry about half dozen people getting killed, somewhere. Back then, we talked about deaths in the hundreds of millions of people. It had a morally calcifying and corrupting effect on the whole system, everywhere, that people were engaged in. As a result, the very idea of thinking about the end of the Cold War became unacceptable. It just wasn't done. It was supposed to go on forever, and the idea of the enormity of moving this supertanker, or redoing a whole set of assumptions, was just…well, people just didn't think about it.

My favorite -- as you know I have an anecdote for everything. I remember a meeting in 1989, out at one of the rival think tanks, it wasn't at RAND or CSIS, where I worked then. It was about twenty of us, the Grand Pooh-Bahs on European security. We were talking about what was going on in Central Europe, Eastern Europe. We were there the whole morning, and one thing nobody even suggested, as a possibility, was the opening of the Berlin Wall, and we were right…. for four whole hours! It just didn't occur to us. This has been very chastening. It's one thing to say, wait a second, we must not fault the analysts. This can have consequences, falling into this kind of trap. In fact, today, there is an effort by some people to have terrorism or maybe "political Islamism" replace the Cold War as the "central paradigm."

Q: A very strong element within, I'd say, the administration but also think tanks.

HUNTER: Oh yeah, sure. One thing in our society, America, that can be a great strength, but sometimes it is a temporary weakness, is that we work by consensus on things like this. People work to get the consensus, and when we get that consensus, we are going to take on the Nazis, we are going to take on the Japanese, we are going to contain the Soviet Union. By God, it's strong. You don't break it apart. But then, if we make a mistake like on Viet Nam -- I think it was a strategic mistake, but how big a mistake historians still can't say -- it takes a long time to correct it, because the idea that our leaders might have done something wrong or we've been wrong, and I don't mean wrong in a moral sense, let's say "miscalculated our own interests" -- the correcting is extremely difficult to do to, the breaking apart of that consensus.

Q: But were you, was there almost a B team that was looking at some of the consequences that you…were you aware that you didn't want to fall in the group thing and figure out what does this mean, and let's look at all the alternatives and not feel that…one of the major concerns was would this so enrage the Russians that they might re-instigate a Cold War-ish type atmosphere or something like that? Were we looking at this?

HUNTER: Yes, as a short answer. I think a number of things were happening. One, a lot of steps were being taken all at once, as soon as the Cold War began to fracture. The old group-endorsed framework had been shattered in a world that had suddenly changed, number one. Number two; a lot of thinking was going on in Europe, the intellectual and political leadership came out of Europe, in a sense that events would take place out there. Folks would come over here, and you would hear about something that just happened, yesterday, in a febrile period that we hadn't had since the beginning of the Cold War. So everything was in play, and it gave you a chance to work with possibilities.

Third, as I indicated, as we started to paw our way through all that was happening, we started with the basic thinking of the previous administration, with George Bush and his crowd, and we recognized that here was a chance to shape events in a really grand strategic way, for the first time in 45 years, and we picked it up in the Clinton administration. There was a relatively small number of people involved in this, and so there were a lot of debates that went on. Are we going to infuriate the Russians, does this mean taking on too many responsibilities, is it going to dilute NATO, is it going to get us off track of having a strong NATO, shall we just have a y'all come party, does this enable us to get out of Europe? All of these things were in play. I guess the good news was that not that many people were paying attention at the beginning of the Clinton administration. We had the ability to work on these issues with a relatively small group of people, because the basic work for German unification had taken place, the Soviet Union had collapsed and, interestingly, there was one other thing that affected this greatly. It was the Bosnia War, which kept going, it was festering. As a result, people in Washington had no interest in horning in on what we were doing. It was only later, after we had rebuilt NATO for the future, that everybody said, “Gosh, look at what is happening, how do we get in on the act?” But during this period of about two years, we had, until the Bosnia war got stopped -- or, rather, we stopped it -- it was possible to get so much done because nobody wanted to poach. NATO was a career-ending place, this is where you get into the tar baby of Bosnia, and there were a couple of people who did and they didn’t do such a great job, though they did take credit for what NATO did, but that’s another matter. So there were these debates clearly going on, and there were different elements within the US government that had different perspectives on it.

One of the other major elements in this mix that enabled things to go forward was a reassertion of US leadership, and by a relatively small group of people within the administration who decided to do this and supported it. What we discovered was that our European friends were aching for that leadership, with the recognition that here was all this stuff that had come loose, there was an indeterminate future, there was a risk of reliving the period between the First and Second World Wars, and that the United States was critical to getting the future right. But the US had been flailing around for a while, with only having a *chargé d'affaires* at NATO for a while, and then the change of administration. A new administration always takes forever to take up the reins; we’ve talked about this before, we are the only government in the world that, except where they have a fundamental revolution and they shoot all the old guys, changes so many people. We’ve got 6,000 people who are nominated by the president and confirmed by the Senate, and we change just about all of them. So for the first X months of the new administration, you’re just dumb to foreign policy, sometimes with terrible consequences in the world. So what happened was we started when we said, “All right, we’re going to have a NATO summit and we appointed an ambassador to NATO in a relative hurry” -- it happened to be me, it could have been somebody else who incidentally knew something about NATO -- but it showed the president was interested. Then, at the Travemünde meeting in October, we came out with a whole raft of ideas, and suddenly "America was back," by God. I may have mentioned earlier that we came up with a whole bunch of ideas for the summit, and then there was one other idea we threw out on non-proliferation, which we just wanted to talk about a bit, and the Europeans grabbed it. We said, “Oh, well, I guess that can be another summit initiative."

But all of these things were in play and, I guess if I had to order them in terms of importance, first was the demonstration of keeping America engaged; second was preserving what you got in NATO that’s still useful, through good old bureaucratic inertia; third, what do you do about the German future, blah, blah, blah? -- all that’s to preserve the best of the past. Then how do you stabilize Central Europe? Those were the big ones. How do you get all that, plus the thing in the background, that you don’t want to push Russia away? So as we moved forward, all of these elements were there. The one that probably took the longest to come to fruition was how to figure out a relationship with Russia that was going to make sense. Now, there were some people who believed that what was happening in Russia was only a transitory phase, and that they were going to be back and be a threat. I recall when I first arrived, I went down to SHAPE to meet with the team there under John Shalikashvili, the Supreme Allied Commander, who then went back to Washington to become Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, and who was one of the major positive forces in all of this. I have tremendous respect for him. He had been given a briefing by his staff to give to this new American ambassador; one of his briefers got up and gave it. I don't think Gen. Shali had ever seen it. It was about how by the year 2000 we could expect the Russians to have 98 divisions poised against the West. Instead of just sitting there, I said, in effect, in nice words, that this was absolutely absurd. I said this was ludicrous. John Shali turned bright red, and, afterwards, I wrote him a nice note, and I think that helped create a relationship. I think he realized that the briefing was ludicrous. To go from this Russian society which was, as somebody said, "Costa Rica with nuclear weapons," to the idea of having 98 fully armored divisions in 7 years -- come on, give me a break. But there were some people who thought that way. There were some other people in the government who thought the most important thing was not riling the Russians at all and treating them as though Russia was just like any other country.

What we recognized in my team is that we had to deal with all of this stuff at once, and it had to add up to a strategic whole. That's why I say that this is only time I know of in which a small group of people figured out what was in the American grand strategic interest, building on what Bush had done, and then trying to put the individual elements to it so that it could work.

Q: When we were looking at this, were we looking at Sweden and Finland as being part of the thing, or were we sort of allowing a sort of Nordic neutral bloc to be there and not even make any sort of "include them out?"

HUNTER: Well, they weren't members of NATO.

Q: Yes, that's what I mean but…

HUNTER: When we formulated Partnership for Peace, they were offered membership, because we recognized their potential contribution -- I created this phrase that I constantly used, we wanted allies "to be producers and not just consumers of security." When we invited Sweden and Finland to join PFP, along with the other former so-called "neutral and non-aligned" countries, and I say "former" because the term is still used, but how can you be "neutral and not aligned" if there is nobody to be neutral and non-aligned in reference to? I said to the Swedes and the Finns, "If you are going to be in Partnership for Peace, you are going to be on the teaching staff," because these were countries that took security very seriously. Sweden was one of the most serious security countries in Europe and still is. In fact, I may have told you, back in the '80s, I gave a lecture once out in Washington State, and Scoop Jackson's widow was there, and there was a guy who was a senior official in the Swedish government named Sverker Åström, and I said, "You know, Sweden is the 17th member of NATO and a serious asset." He got furious, he got me denounced in the Swedish parliament. But I got my revenge in 1994, when he was sent by the Swedish government to NATO to find out what role they would be playing in Partnership for Peace. I said, “Welcome to NATO, Sverker.” In fact, when NATO went from the North Atlantic Cooperation Council to the Euro-Atlantic Partnership Council, the essential reason for the change was to enable countries that had been neutral and non-aligned to join this particular institution, along with Partnership for Peace. They weren’t applying for NATO membership, but, in fact, today, anytime Sweden and Finland want to be NATO Allies, they would be welcomed as full allies the next day, because they are serious about security.

I’m a bit rambunctious, and I figure if I’m going to be involved with something, I might as well make it interesting. So I went to NATO determined that we were going to make a go of it, but no point being shy about it. I had some ambitions for the Alliance. One was on the summit, and I used that as a transformative vehicle, having seen before now how you do that in administration. When I was at the Carter NSC, dealing with Europe and then the Middle East, every time a foreign leader would come to Washington, that’s the time you get everything out of the in box, the hold box, and get it done. You’re an old Yugoslav hand, and I remember when Tito came, and Larry Eagleburger was the ambassador there, and he kept sending in his "Eaglegrams: "Can we do this, can we do that?" I kept saying, "yes, yes, yes," so we just did all kinds of things because Tito wanted to have a productive relationship, so we got the bureaucrats out of the way of getting things done.

OK, but another ambition I had was to reverse the US attitudes on the European Union, its foreign policy and military ideas, on which I had worked, literally since 1963. I recognized that the strategic argument against having a strong European pillar had reversed. There was no longer a need to keep them down, because there was no longer a central strategic relationship with the Soviet Union that the US had to be in charge of managing. The Cold War was over. In fact, the situation was quite the opposite. If, indeed, the Europeans would take defense more seriously than just for the reason of being in NATO, with the limited challenges it faced, because they wanted to build an effective defense instrument within the EU, and if therefore they would spend more money on defense and take it more seriously, that’s great, why get in the way of that? That insight enabled me to take the lead in reversing the US policy on this issue, so that we were able to work effectively with WEU [Western European Union] as the EU's "defense identity" was then. For some US opponents of this change, there was the illusion that there were somehow two sets of European forces which would be inherently in competition with one another, in getting resources, for example, as between NATO and the WEU. But in fact, WEU didn't field a separate set of military forces, there was only one set. European countries don’t buy two military forces, one for NATO and one for WEU. The question was "Who got to use the army?" and the NATO phrase, which was invented right at the end of the Bush Administration, was to see WEU as involving forces that were "separable but not separate from NATO." That is, WEU could "borrow the army," but we argued that it should be understood that these forces were not in fact separate from NATO, but rather "separable" from it. Furthermore, it is important to understand that NATO, as such, has no permanent forces. What gets used is what you, the NATO commander, ask for on the day from national military components, which are already trained and ready. But, in regard to WEU and the European Union, you can take forces that might otherwise be used by NATO and have them used by WEU. They are separable from NATO, but they are not separate from it. It is a subtle but still very important distinction. Then there was a big debate over which institution would have first call on forces if both wanted to use them at the same time; we can talk about that later if you want, since it is a continuing debate. Does NATO get primacy or the EU primacy? It was a false debate, since it is hard to conceive that this would ever happen, but it was part of the game of competing for allegiances, etc., between two institutions.

The other ambition I had was to get France back into Allied Command Europe, again to be part of the integrated military command structure. Something, as I said, I watched and commented on since 1966. I went back and I got out what De Gaulle said in his press conference in February 1966 about how France would stay out of the allied command until such time as NATO reformed itself. That is exactly what we were doing, reforming the Alliance. It also occurred to me that we had some leverage on the French: since, if there was going to be a serious Western Europe Union -- a "European Security and Defense Identity" it was called, generically, France saw this as its opportunity for leadership in the defense and military area. The Brits weren't really playing very much in WEU, preferring to stay offshore from the Continent, and the Germans were still the Germans, right, with special restrictions against having nuclear weapons, and special restrictions imposed by the Bundestag on other things it could do in the military area. Now, if France wanted to take the lead with the ESDI -- (they made the last letter a "P" for Program, since they didn't recognize that it was just a hiving-off from NATO), as part of its overall ambition to lead within Europe, they would be far more effective if they were back in Allied Command Europe, because that would open the goodie bag to them, give them access to all kinds of modern equipment and military capacity they wouldn't otherwise have in order to play this leadership role. In fact, during the Persian Gulf War of 1991, the French got involved, but the military suddenly realized that they were out of the game because they hadn't been involved in Allied Command Europe and had missed out on more than a generation of transformation. As a result, the French put themselves during the '91 war under US command, which was tough for them.

Q: Also, I'm told that they didn't have the same guidance equipment, they couldn't fly missions, and they couldn't communicate. I mean the whole…

HUNTER: The whole nine yards. They had a lot of modern equipment, but it couldn't integrate, and so the military desperately wanted back into NATO's integrated command structure and still do. We don't have any problems with the French military on this point; they want to be our favorite ally. The politicians, that's another problem. So I saw this. OK. Here was the deal, that there would be value for us to be able to have the French military contribution, and to be able to do a lot of things that would be possible with their involvement, on and on. So I cut a deal with the French ambassador. I did this on my own to begin with, and then got Washington's blessing. They had no problem with it. In effect, we would recognize the importance of Western European Union, and they would move back towards reintegrating into NATO's command structure. Also, because the original reason for France's getting out of the NATO command structure was to manage the German problem in terms of *détente,* that reason had gone away. Second, if they were going to have a residual question regarding a unified Germany, they would want it deeply engaged in NATO, and that meant cozying up to us They couldn't rely any longer upon Russia to keep Germany divided, along with us; they had to look to us to deal with their German problem. Third, they wanted all the goodies. Thus this was a marriage made in heaven: we cut this deal. In fact, we almost got everything done. Later on, the issue came up about who was going to get the command of Allied Forces Southern Europe in Naples -- the US or France -- and the deal came apart over that, but we still got 95 percent of the way there. So, frankly, the difference between where we actually got to in the French relationship within the integrated military structure and what the original idea was isn't a dime's worth of difference.

Q: While you were dealing with this how would you rank the various Eastern European countries that were planning to come in?

HUNTER: Hoping to come in.

Q: Hoping to come in. I mean during the time you were there, were there ones that just seemed they just weren't that good or did you see them…was there a rank order of how... not politically, but I'm thinking militarily?

HUNTER: I'm glad you posed the question that way, because that was a meaningless question in terms of geopolitics. In terms of geopolitics, it was in terms of how do you create a framework in which you take Central Europe off the map for competition, without creating more problems, either by driving the Russians away or by weakening NATO -- hence, one reason for Partnership for Peace. Some people wanted Partnership for Peace as a way station for countries that will never get into NATO, but we're helping them anyway, giving them some kind of confidence. Others saw PFP as a way of getting them up to speed so that, when you take them into NATO, they would do well. With my team, I was able to work those two angles into a common package, so we could beg that question, but still we could get countries into Partnership for Peace and make it a useful instrument.

The position of our US military was, "No, no we can't take these countries in as allies, it would weaken NATO." The basic rationale for enlargement was for geopolitical reasons, security in Europe, peace, confidence in the future, and to whom should we be prepared to give the Article 5 guarantee? -- that is, we will fight for you if you are attacked. Which meant, in reality, the US strategic guarantee, that's what Article 5 is about. To whom was the United States willing to give a strategic guarantee? One of the elements of the answer for us, in addition to the grand strategy idea, was "How do we take in new members without destroying NATO?" The argument in answer was that countries needed to reform their militaries, and they also needed to make their economies work; they needed to have democratic societies. All the arguments we made early on were based on the fact that NATO membership is forever. Nobody has ever been thrown out; there was no mechanism for throwing anybody out. So you don't want to take in country X, which is democratic, but tomorrow morning it becomes a dictatorship. Hence, this is why Slovakia didn't make it the first time around.

Q: Well Greece went into the…it has a dictatorship. I was there.

HUNTER: What happened with Greece in 1967 was that NATO suspended it from Allied Command Europe; of course, that didn't matter very much then; and it also stopped supplying the Greeks with documents. They were sent to Coventry, they weren't sent out of the Alliance, though. Oh, yeah, they paid a penalty, but they didn't get thrown out. Of course, NATO at the beginning took in a Fascist Portugal, etc.

When we started on actual membership as part of the process of taking Central European countries off the geopolitical chessboard and helping them gain confidence about the future, we knew that membership was ours to confer. We're in the catbird seat, they are the *demandeurs*, we can make them leap through any hoop we want. When you talk about different countries to be asked to join, it was not, "Who is ready to be a decent ally?" it was, "What territory do we first want to pick off the map of contention, whom do we want to solidify?" Everybody agreed on Poland, for obvious historic and geographic reasons, it's perfect "tank country" is what I'm saying. The other one that was obvious was the Czech Republic, on the Eastern frontier of Germany, with the desire to surround Germany with NATO, to bring in the areas where, if there were ever a new conflict, would be in play, blah, blah, blah, all the rest. So everybody always agreed on those two. Then the question was "Who else do you add?" Hungary became the next one and Slovakia would have been, too, the so-called Visegrad countries, but it messed up under Vladimir Meciar. Remember, however, that we denied that there was any geopolitics involved, membership was open to everybody, it's based on values, it's based upon X, Y, and Z factors. But in the order of membership, obviously what really mattered was geography: surround Germany; stabilize Central Europe; Russia won't be able to play with it anymore, etc., etc.

The first time NATO decided to bring in new countries was at the Madrid summit in July '97. It was three countries, Poland, Hungary, the Czech Republic. That got more-or-less set in concrete at a NATO foreign ministers' meeting in Sintra, one of the grand old cities of Portugal, in May that year. The French were pushing to include Romania, we thought just so they could be different from us. Maybe because Romanian is a Romance language! The irony was that, even though France championed Romania's NATO membership, it did almost nothing to help it become ready to join; that job fell to us in the US. The British wanted to include just one more country besides the three, and that was Slovenia. Their goal was to make that the end of enlargement – I thought as part of the unspoken British goal to keep NATO small, so it will work; and to make the EU large, so it won't! But at Sintra, after all the other ministers had spoken, it was going alphabetically around the table, which put the US last, Madeleine Albright said that we preferred a "small number" in the first round of enlargement, and that number was three. So that was it. The US reasoning was that it could be difficult to get the Senate to ratify a NATO "Article 5" commitment to new countries, so let's start with some that are sure to pass. The French made another run at including Romania at Madrid, more to make a point than anything else, but it got nowhere, once Chancellor Kohl backed up the US – where the Germans had up ‘til then not taken a position on whether it should be just three or some more. That followed a contact by President Clinton to Kohl, which I suggested to the President that he make, so we wouldn’t have a squabble at the summit and mess up the sense of unity over NATO enlargement.

The only other difficulty at the Madrid summit came when some of the Northern European Allies wanted to create a “prospect” for the three Baltic states to join at some point. Strobe Talbott, who was then Deputy Secretary of State, fought any reference, because of concern about the Russian reaction. He had earlier tried to reverse a NATO decision to hold a meeting of the Euro-Atlantic Partnership Council at Madrid, because the Russians, by their absence, could be embarrassed. He even told me when I saw him at the State Department in June that I should have ignored my instructions to agree to such a meeting! I replied that Madeleine had made the proposal to a meeting of the NAC earlier in the year, and suggested that he should take it up with her. To my surprise, he did so, earning a withering glare from her and a terse “Since I proposed the meeting, I guess we should go forward with it.” Then at the Madrid summit, in a meeting just of ministers and ambassadors to iron out problems in the communiqué, the Danish foreign minister made clear that, if there was no reference to the Baltics, there would be no communiqué, so that took care of that.

The Partnership for Peace was thus designed in part so that when countries came into NATO, they wouldn't be liabilities, militarily or in any other way. That’s one reason why it took five years and two months from the promise of enlargement to the admission of the first three members. At the same time, we did not want them to do so much militarily, to "buy their way in," if that’s what it was, that they wouldn’t be able to survive as societies, hence the two-percent of GDP idea as a limit for their military spending, the idea that we don’t want you to buy a bunch of high tech equipment that would take away from your economic development. It's why we didn’t push them to buy tanks and airplanes; we pushed them to transform their militaries, to get democratic leadership, to make as positive a contribution as possible to what was happening in their societies. I used to say to the American military folks who went out to work on Partnership for Peace in the Central European states, “You are ambassadors,” I said, “They will not just be watching how you make a platoon work. They will be watching the relationship between officers and enlisted people. They will be looking to see how democratic societies do these things. They will be looking to see how you hold your knife and fork.” That's what PFP was, and that was one of its great successes.

At one point, we had 50 percent of all the officers and enlisted personnel with the United States Air Forces in Europe involved in PFP activities in Central Europe -- it’s a thing called PERS Tempo, it’s the tempo of personnel activity, what did people do. More than 50 percent of the time, on average, everybody in the US Air Forces in Europe was involved operationally in Central Europe with Partnership for Peace. It was fantastic, it was one of the great successes of political-military engagement with people who were hungry to be involved in this. It was pushing an open door.

Another important point that is sometimes misunderstood. There were never any formal requirements for an aspirant to join NATO, because if an ally is going to give a strategic commitment to another country to defend it -- "I commit my defense to your defense" -- you make that commitment in your heart of hearts. You don’t say, "Somebody passed the test and so let's just take them in;" you just ask yourself: "In my country, am I willing to defend this guy if he gets in trouble?" However you decide that. But we still had a bunch of things we got the aspirants to do, necessarily. Thus there was a major NATO Enlargement Study in 1995, and it laid out expectations. But even if you checked all the blocks, it didn’t make it sure you would be admitted; and you could come in, if you were Poland, even if you didn’t behave.

Let me tell you one little anecdote about not focusing on high technology, high performance weaponry. The first peacekeeping exercise we were having under PFP was in Poznan, in Poland. It went very successfully; the Poles took it very seriously. Beforehand, there was a bilateral meeting with the US Secretary of Defense at NATO, and with John Shali, who was I think still SACEUR then. He might have already become Chairman of the Joint Chiefs by then. Anyway, we were sitting in a room with the Polish defense minister and the Polish chief of defense and, of course, the minister of defense was a military guy in civilian clothes. The Poles started laying out what they wanted this PFP exercise to be, so they said, “The first thing, we will have the F-16s come from the US Air Force, and then the tanks will come in this way, and then…” Shali finally said, “Stop!” He said, “This is a *peacekeeping* exercise, this isn’t preparing for the second Battle of Kursk!” That was the largest tank battle in history. The Poles didn’t get it, because, for the Poles, this was "How do we join up so we can take on the Russians?" We were saying, “No, no that is not what it’s about.” It took a long time to get them to understand that. So it wasn’t about having a lot of tanks and a lot of airplanes, even though some of them still hung on to all of that stuff. It was having these transformations, relatively low-cost, high-impact transformations.

Then, of course, there were a lot of other things involved in what, as you know, was the unfreezing of history. You had a lot of these countries who were operating on the basis of 19th century nationalism. We were trying to build on what was going on in the European Union, a 21st century concept of "beyond nationalism." Well, one reason it happened that way is that memories had been frozen, some since 1948, some back in 1933 in Eastern Germany with the Nazis, some in 1944-5, with the Communists coming with the Soviet troops. One of the things that sustained these peoples and one of the things that we worked on in the West was the promotion of nationalism. In Poland, you have the Catholic Church. Polish nationalism in the Catholic Church was fortunately great, this was very strong. After the end of Communism, people don’t go to church in Poland as much as they used to. I guess it is along the lines of their expression of what a relief it is to be free and independent. I was the guy who got the crown of St. Stephen returned to Hungary, which the US military had "liberated" in 1945, the central symbol of Hungarian nationalism. We worked very hard at that promotion of nationalism in Central Europe. Well all of a sudden…

Q: It wasn’t St. Stephen was it?

HUNTER: Crown of St. Stephen, yeah. So here it was, suddenly you have the apparatus of Communism and Soviet power collapse, these countries are independent, again, and we've helped to stir up all this nationalism. Well, they had stirred it up, themselves, as a way of holding on to something, and suddenly we are saying, "You've got to get beyond that if you are going to become members of the European Union and NATO; you've got to learn to get beyond it." But some of it had a darker side, as well, because you can't slice and dice it. Nationalism also means claims against your neighbors, and one of the things we said, very honestly, was, "Hey, we can't have you being revanchists." We told them that, if you want to join NATO, you've got to get over that particular part of history. They were so hungry for NATO membership and the American strategic commitment that they've done a pretty good job of it.

Hungary, for example. The Treaty of Trianon, one of the four Versailles treaties, in 1920 took Transylvania away from Hungary as punishment for being one of the Central Powers, and gave it to Romania. Well, what do you do about that? One of the issues was, of course, that a lot of Hungarians had been thrown out of Romania. One of our arguments was, "OK, but you can't revisit that, you Hungarians get over it or you are not going to get into NATO." The reconciliation between Hungary and Romania, which is still holding, is one of the great achievements of the last ten years. Taking all this garbage, which came out of the First World War and the Second World War and is still there, it had been frozen, and trying to get over it. One of the things about going into the Balkans, today, where, ten years after the Bosnia War, where nobody had been killed, it's still about trying to get people over their history.

Q: You have to go back only to 800 A.D. when they do the line first and then you start from there. Oh God.

HUNTER: One of the things is…it is wonderful to have a chance to work on trying to help people get over the bad elements of their historical memories, to gain a genuine sense of security, to have a chance to build lives in free and democratic societies, and we have a lot of very fine people in the US government who have worked on this, like Joe Kruzel, who died. I've got a sign sitting here in the office, which he gave me, which I may have shown you before. He was killed on Mt. Igman. He played a critical role in getting the summit going in the summer of '93, when he was charge of preparations at Defense, as the Deputy Assistant Secretary, and we took the line in the Clinton campaign from.....

Q: James Carville?

HUNTER: He said, "It's the economy, stupid." So Joe had this sign made up, "It's the summit, stupid." He put it in French, as well, saying "*C'est le sommet, imbècile*." Afterwards, he gave the sign to me for the work we'd done together. That is my memory of a great man.

Q: Probably this is a good place to stop at this point. But the next time we really haven't come to the end-game in NATO. How did things stand at the end? I mean we've talked a lot about…

HUNTER: I hope there is no end. The end of when, what are you talking about?

Q: Well I mean of your time there. How did things wrap up by the time…you left there when?

HUNTER: January 1, 1998.

Q: How sort of…

HUNTER: The work of completing NATO's role through the 20th century, all of the building blocks were in place at that point, with a lot of very able people working together on it.

Q: So maybe next time we can deal with that part of your time there, and I would also like to ask, was there much talk about definitions, what would be considered by NATO as an attack, because very recently there was an attack on Estonia, by electronic means of playing around computers and all of this, which was very definitely orchestrated out of Russia, and the cutting off of oil.

HUNTER: People don't understand. Estonia may be the most electronically-wired country in the world, because they started fresh. You go to park your car at the parking meter, and you take out your cell phone and you pay for your parking with your cell phone. People don't have checks. Everything is done with their cell phones.

Q: Sticking to the end of your time at NATO, how did we define, maybe not an attack, but aggression? Or did we? Does NATO pursue this and another one, the problem with the Russians having difficulties with Chechnya and other places? This wasn't within your purview but…

HUNTER: NATO didn't touch it.

Q: OK, well we will visit it.

HUNTER: Didn't touch it.

Q*: Well we will just take that off the thing, wouldn't touch that.*

HUNTER: Or even talk about it.

Q: When you left the job did you see a change in attitude back in Washington? Because there are an awful lot of people really who don't know what they are doing but they have very strong opinions. That's coming from me.

HUNTER: You don't hear me disagreeing!

Q: But we will…sort of the climate when you left there and then we will pick up where you went afterwards. OK?

Q: OK, today is the 26th of July 2007. Bob when you heard what we said…

HUNTER: The anniversary of Castro's arriving in Cuba on board the ship *The Granma* in 19, what 53?

Q: '53 yes, yes this is July 26th, this is Cuban National Day, isn't it? Bob, well as you were leaving, you were saying in '98 that everything was kind of put together. Did you feel that NATO had received its new definition of what it was going to be and all at that point?

HUNTER: I won't say that NATO had come to a terminus, at a point in my life where I had done a great job and everything was wonderful from then on!! But at least during my time there, a lot of things did come to fruition, some of which, of course, had been begun by the Bush administration.

Q: Not the first Bush administration?

HUNTER: The first Bush administration, 41, as it's called. The unification of Germany and the reaching out to Russia were two facts of great historic importance organized by President Bush, the creation of the North Atlantic Cooperation Council, the idea that the United States would still stay involved in NATO, these were all very important developments. But in the next five years, from the beginning of the Clinton administration, we picked up what Bush had done. Except in a few areas, we didn't try to reject everything our predecessors had done. The one area where we did act differently from what had been done was on Bosnia, where US inaction had helped feed the tragedy in part because, I think, people weren't paying a lot of attention to it. Usually, when new administrations come in, everybody tries to reinvent the wheel, and sometimes you get into trouble. When you do that, it takes you a while to understand that the previous administration often knew what it was doing! But as I've already indicated to you, this is the only time I've had a personal experience of in my career in foreign affairs in which creating the grand strategy -- the idea what we were trying to do and why we were trying to do it -- did in significant ways precede the devising of the elements that added up to a grand strategy. Very often, what we call "grand strategy" is a series of responses to requirements in the outside world. Then you lump all the things you are doing together and you say "That's our grand strategy." But if you pursue a grand strategy effectively, like we did in the Second World War and the post-Second World War and at the beginning of the Cold War, then it can be quite something. With NATO in the 1990s, this was the only time I can remember when we started with the idea of what are we trying to achieve, what are the elements required, and only then how do we put the building blocks together.

So, by the time I departed from NATO, I think that NATO had done major work on all the necessary building blocks. I probably mentioned it before, but one was the permanent commitment of the United States to European security. Another was the continuation of Allied Command Europe and the idea that countries would look, if not first and foremost, certainly very high on the list, to the integrated structures as they did their defense, with a common language, various common standards, the 1,200 NATO Standardization Agreements or STANAGS. The idea that the North Atlantic Council and its processes were important for dealing with critical issues in the trans-Atlantic area, where it was understood that, if the United States was going to be involved, it had to be through NATO. That was preserving the past, institutionally. Then there was the idea of preserving the best of the past, substantively, of which one of the most important was to provide a home for Germany. This was "surrounding Germany" with both NATO and the EU, which was a principal German desire when NATO and EU expansion started. Germany wanted to surround itself in order that, when it became more powerful, especially in Central Europe, it wouldn't be "Here come the Germans, again," but rather "Here is Germany as part of NATO and the EU." We are seeing some of that now and so it's working; also, Germany's giving up the Deutschmark was another of the most important steps.

So, all this was about how you keep history from repeating itself in grand strategic ways. Let me say that it was about how do you wrap up the Cold War, really wrap it up? One was, of course, keeping American power engaged and NATO continuing. Then, there became a central issue, which is, how do you take Central Europe off the chessboard? It wasn't easy; it was a dynamic effort. "The end of history" was a stupid statement when it was made, and it looks even more stupid now.

Q: That was what's his name?

HUNTER: It was Frank Fukuyama. A Russian who was present when Frank gave his first paper on "The End of History" was asked afterwards: “What do you think of the presentation?” He said, “Lousy presentation, but what a great title!” Well, our objective, to get back on the main line, here, was to take the Central European states off the chessboard, to "end history" if you must, but in the sense of their no longer being the object of other peoples actions, to make them subject to their own actions and, in effect, to remove something which had been a proximate cause of a lot of conflicts. The First and Second World Wars and the Cold War all had in significant part the proximate cause of uncertainly in Central Europe. Our idea was to freeze them in place as part of the West, so to speak, to make them permanently a part of the West, in order to give everybody a clear sense that they were no longer "fair game." It started with the North Atlantic Cooperation Council under Bush and continued with the Partnership for Peace. We came then to understand that NATO enlargement was important, not to do it to turn NATO into just another chowder and marching society, like the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), but to give these people confidence that they would no longer be invaded by anybody, so they would know their place was securely in the West, and so everybody else would know it, too. Then they would have the confidence to get on with the business of economic and political change. I mentioned that, when the three Baltic presidents were asked at one point if they had to choose whether to join NATO or the EU, they were unanimous that they would join NATO. "Give us our security and then the rest will follow." Comfort, understanding, everybody knows it, OK. The power of the United States to be engaged and to say, "I'm sorry, OK?, all these places are off limits."

It was critical, however, not just to say "Y'all come," but to ensure that new countries joining NATO would strengthen it or at least not weaken it, and so the aspirants understood their responsibilities, and also so everybody would know that, if the Allies were going to make the key security commitment, the Article 5 commitment -- "If you are attacked I will defend you" -- it was a very, very important moral and political commitment, even more important than the legal commitment. So everybody would know that all the Allies really meant this commitment, because otherwise the NATO treaty is meaningless, it becomes just a scrap of paper. People didn't want 1930s' scraps of paper. So that is why it took, as I mentioned before, five years and two months between the time that NATO proclaimed on January 11, 1994, that it was going to enlarge and the date when the first three countries entered. It was necessary to get all this other work done, including a demonstration by the aspirants that they would be, in the phrase I invented: "producers and not just consumers of security." It also included the reaching out to Ukraine, and it required, critically, the reaching out to Russia. There was a balance of objectives. How do you give a sense of security to Central Europe without giving a sense of insecurity to Russia or a sense of stigmatization or giving the Russians cause to believe that they had a right to revanchism later on? This happened with Germany in 1919 and afterwards. There were major debates in the US government. There were some who wanted to favor the Russians and some who wanted to favor Central Europe, and some of us who wanted to favor the whole ball of wax. Fortunately, "we" ended up winning!

The relationship with the European Union, we had to get that sorted out so that it was a positive rather than a negative factor. The redoing of the NATO command structures, reorienting the focus of NATO from the big war to small wars and toward efforts that would bring the military and the civilian aspects together, to reorient the direction of NATO clockwise a hundred and twenty degrees from the Fulda Gap in Germany to southeast Europe. That also involved the movement of a lot of American forces. Thus the US Air Force, in large part, moved from Germany across the Alps to Italy, to be nearer to where the problems were.

These were the essential building blocks that came together. Together, they said two things. One, we've wrapped up the 20th century in Europe. The notion of security involvement with NATO was that we will try to design something, even though we won the Cold War, in which everybody has a chance to gain in security terms, and nobody will lose anything in security terms, as long as they are prepared to play by certain simple rules, not rules that require anybody to be stigmatized. Now, that meant certain governments were beyond the pale, at least to begin with. The Slovak government didn’t make the first cut on NATO enlargement because of the lack of reforms. Belarus has still got an undemocratic government; Moldova is still, unfortunately, in an ambiguous situation because of what the Russians are doing. Milosevic down in the Balkans had to stop doing some things that he was doing in the Former Yugoslavia. Also, in order to validate all that was being done for NATO's future, NATO had to stop the war that was going…you couldn’t have a war going on in Europe and say you’ve succeeded. "Who the hell do you think you are?"

Well, these weren’t just "Let’s wrap up the 20th century so it cannot happen ever again." There were power, institutions, attitudes, engagement, giving everybody an incentive that they will gain more in terms of their security and their sense of self respect, etc., if they play the game rather than if they break the game. Well NATO is a…it just occurred to me to mention this..... a collective *defense* organization, not collective *security,* which includes everybody, with a unit veto and which gets you nowhere. But in some ways, the attitude we were developing was about a larger collective security idea: here’s a chance, not to gang up against members that don’t play the game, like the League of Nations and the Italians when they committed aggression over Abyssinia -- it’s not to say there isn’t some merit in that -- but it is something more, which is incentives for all the European countries to work at "a Europe whole and free and at peace." What we were trying to do wasn’t just about closing the door on the past, it was also how do we do things for the future to make sure it doesn’t happen, again, and also to reach out and expand the idea of what security is all about, beginning with the Balkans?

That was the black hole of European security, certainly since the Balkan Wars of 1910 and ’12, and then the match that lit the First World War. Nobody ever wanted to deal with it, and they were perfectly happy to have Tito keep Yugoslavia all by itself, followed by that incredible patchwork government they had, with the rotating twelve presidencies, and then Yugoslavia broke up. But if you are going to do a secure future in Europe, you had to start dealing with that. What NATO was doing for the future also meant taking on some of the newer issues; non-proliferation was on the agenda very early. Then creating processes not only to stop the war in Bosnia, but also to stop what Milosevic was doing in Kosovo, which was technically outside the NATO area. Then to have a methodology and growing attitudes, so that NATO would be able in the 21st century to begin to do things beyond Europe that would be in the common interest.

Now, when I left, nobody at NATO was talking about Kosovo, nobody wanted to talk about it. It wasn’t a squeaky wheel, and yet, ironically, on Christmas Eve, I guess it was in 1992, the first Bush administration had made an absolute commitment to the security of Kosovo. So that was something that was not dealt with at NATO. In my personal view -- and I was not then in office and didn't see the cable traffic -- I think what happened in Kosovo had a lot to do with serious American diplomatic blunders and a failure to mobilize power in the right way and to send signals to Milosevic that he could not get away with it. He took advantage, and then he came close to getting away with it. A lot of people suffered because, among other things, the US had dismantled the team that had done Bosnia, the ones who had been successful at dealing with a critical Balkan crisis, before. We put other people, a bunch of wannabees, in power, who, when the time came, weren't up to it.

Q: Well when you were putting…

HUNTER: Let me say one other thing. One good thing was that, at USNATO, we managed to build a bridge between State and Defense, we managed that the senior leadership in the United States government accepted the ethos that is NATO -- not that there are angels singing, like in the Terry Thomas film, *Carlton Brown of the FO*, whenever the UN was mentioned -- and that it was reaffirmed for the future. NATO has always been bipartisan, a great strength, and thus has always had the support of the Congress, the support of the president. We ratified and reinvigorated that for the future, and that factor just sits there quietly in the background. But it is a major strength in terms of American security and Western democracy, prosperity, and everything else.

Q: But OK on that subject did you ever sort of have dark thoughts, night thoughts, looking at the United States and saying, "You know the wrong leaders, the wrong atmosphere and the United States might say screw it," and basically opt out. I mean did you feel that were we so imbedded in NATO that it was pretty much out of the question, or could there be a change in the political environment? This was how you thought at the time looking over your shoulder?

HUNTER: I guess I looked at it instrumentally. Rather than looking at what might go wrong, but rather saying, "Here are the things that need to be done, now, so let's get on with the job." But, sure, there was a move on the part of some people at the end of the Cold War and in the early years, afterwards, that NATO could be dispensable, that history had come to an end. Keeping the institution strong didn't matter to them; you could turn it into another OSCE, a "chowder and marching society." But I was operating on the basis that there was an evident American self-interest and values here that were involved, that reinforced one another. It's a matter of winning through to get these things done. So while you are doing these things, you don't entertain black thoughts about things going wrong, because you are making them go right.

Now, one of the times I had a real problem of confidence was at the first negotiation of air strikes for Bosnia, when we had a second-rate team that came from Washington, didn't know what they were doing, didn't know much about it.

Q: Whom would you call the team?

HUNTER: Well, let's just say they were a second-rate team, they didn't really understand what was going on.

Q: But I'm trying to pin this down a little more. Where was the team located? I mean you're talking about…

HUTNER: The Assistant Secretary of State, who didn’t know much about Europe, along with a former NATO ambassador, who tried to browbeat the Allies and got rebuked three times by the NATO Secretary General. I’m not trying to personalize it, but what I’m saying is that I woke up the next morning angry, I probably told you this, but, anyway, the United States had come in a few days earlier and said "We will 'lift and strike.'” *Lift* the arms embargo against Bosnia, *strike* with aircraft if people were being killed, make things happen, and do it unilaterally, if need be. By the time we got through this NATO Council meeting, we had been crowded back by the Allies, and the United States had abandoned its idea of doing lift and strike on its own, right? That’s when I woke up the next morning, really angry, because I saw that there was a possibility of absolute collapse on Bosnia, and that would be a collapse for everything we were doing. That’s when I flew down to Bavaria and met with Secretary General Wörner, and we started cooking up plots to make things work, and they eventually they did, but only after he died, unfortunately.

Another time I despaired is when the Bosnia negotiator, Dick Holbrooke, demanded a pause in the bombing 24 hours after we got it started -- though I was able to get it restarted -- in August of 1995. There were two or three events like that, including one I mentioned to you, a black moment of about twenty minutes, riding in a helicopter with the Secretary of Defense, Les Aspin, from Berlin out to Travemünde in September of ’93, and reading his briefing book, in which he was going to retreat from the "lift and strike" commitment. I told him, “We’ve got all this smörgåsbord laid out for the future of NATO. If you say that about lift and strike, it is all over.” He was smart enough to understand that, and he left it out of his speech, but that would have been the end of American leadership and much of the future of NATO.

There were some dark moments when we struggled to get certain air strike decisions negotiated on Bosnia and had to fight the British on it, under the John Major government, which still I don’t understand why they worked so hard to sabotage -- if that is the right word -- what we were trying to do to help the Bosnians get peace. The way I eventually solved it was, by accident, first to get the French onboard and then the British guys, who at that point had to come on board. And there was the only time that we failed to get a NATO Council decision that pushed the envelope on what it was prepared to do. It was over some Serb attacks on the safe area at Bihac. The NATO meeting was on our Thanksgiving Day, in '94. Washington was absent. Holbrooke, by then both the assistant secretary and the Bosnia negotiator, had taken his fiancée to London for the weekend, so he was "out of pocket." Albright, at the UN, went to Haiti to have Thanksgiving dinner with the troops. But this was a critical day at NATO, for Bosnia. So, when I needed support from Washington, I worked on the phone directly with Christopher, who was "home alone." The French were posing a problem, obstructing movement. So, at my suggestion, Christopher got on to President Clinton, who phoned the French president, François Mitterrand, and Chris phoned me back and said that Mitterrand had agreed with us. I walked around the Council room to where Jacques Blot, the French ambassador, was sitting, reading poetry -- the Council was in recess as ambassadors were consulting with governments. I said, "Our two presidents have just talked. I don't want to tell you how to do your business, but I might suggest that you phone Paris to see if your position has changed?" Blot looked up from his poetry and said: "My government took a principled decision this morning, and nothing my president and your president could have said to one another could possibly have changed that." I was nonplussed! It thus proved not possible to get a robust decision out of the Council over Bihac. It was only some time later, when I was sent the memcon of the Clinton-Mitterrand conversation, that I saw the problem. Mitterrand had kept using phrases like "je comprend," and “Oui,” and the like, to indicate that he understood what Clinton was saying, but obviously the notetaker on the US end of the phone call mistook words of "comprehension" for words of agreement! Blot had been right.

Oh, incidentally, one thing I'm not sure I mentioned was that I worked very hard not just on the relationship of NATO with the EU and Western European Union, but also to get France back into Allied Command Europe. This was a plot, a bargain, cooked up by the French ambassador and me for national reasons. We got 95 percent of the way there. In fact, the difference now between France's being in the integrated command structure and being out is a matter for the theologians, it doesn’t matter on the ground, and that was a real achievement.

Q: Well that’s, of course, a major…well I think also the French…

HUNTER: You see, the French also learned in the Gulf War in '91 that they had to be with America. They had to put their forces under US command, because they had missed out on all those years of modernization. I also realized that, if they were going to be effective with Western Europe Union, now called the European Security and Defense Policy, within Europe, they had to have access to the NATO goodies and the NATO planning and all this other stuff, so they had to come back into NATO in order to be part of something that would enable them actually do a job in competition with NATO, and they understood that.

Q: One of the great arms of American military might or diplomatic might is our airlift capacity. Were we working during this time to get somebody else and to have enough C-130s or C-5s or whatever it is? Significant aircraft to move troops hither and yon and all that, or did we sort of feel, yeah this is pretty good for us to have it under our control, which means people have to pretty-well depend on us?

HUNTER: I never detected that idea, ever. The United States was quite generous with providing airlift when necessary. When I was in the White House under Carter, there were operations in southwest Africa and that sort of thing.

Q: Yeah.

HUNTER: The Congo, we were there. Under the deal that my team and I brokered between NATO and the Western European Union, there was the so-called potential transfer of assets. In major respect, that meant American transport aircraft with American pilots would go and work for Western European Union. Everybody was comfortable with it, our military was comfortable with it. There was also an effort to get the Europeans to buy more airlift of their own, to buy some C-130s, buy some C-17s, and a lot did. They've, of course, come along with their A-400M, "a day late and a dollar short," which a lot of our people thought would eventually die on the vine. I warned them that it wouldn't, because it's about European job shares, and the plane eventually will come into service. But also at this time we are talking about, "lift" was mostly sealift. NATO wasn't getting involved in distant places where you might need highly-expensive airlift, and even today in Iraq, 90 percent, 95 percent of the lift is sealift.

Q: OK, '98 you left. Where did you go?

HUNTER: I came here to the RAND Corporation.

Q: And you've been here since?

HUNTER: That's right, since the 22th of January 1998, the day I left the US government, I've been here almost ten years. I also do other things. I'm a Senior International Consultant for Lockheed-Martin. I chair a small NGO called the Council for a Community of Democracies. For 4 years, I've been President of the Atlantic Treaty Association (ATA), the umbrella group, based in Brussels, for NATO's 42 Atlantic Councils. (I helped repair US-Belgian relations after the Iraq war, when Belgium didn't like what we did, and the reward was free lodgings for ATA, a five room office, across the street from the Foreign Ministry.) When Bill Cohen was Defense Secretary, I was on the Defense Policy Board. Now I'm what's called a "Senior Concept Developer" for NATO's Allied Command Transformation in Norfolk. I serve on the Advisory Board to the Supreme Allied Commander Europe, in his "US hat." I'm on the Executive Committees of the Boards of the American Academy of Diplomacy and the US Atlantic Council. A Governor of the Ditchley Foundation, that's a place near Oxford for conferences, mostly Anglo-American. Lots of travel, speaking, writing. I remember once, I was doing a project on NATO-Russia relations, in Moscow, the night the Manezh burned down. That's the old Imperial stables: the first building restored after Napoleon left town, and it survived even the World War II bombing -- what they call the Great Patriotic War. But then brought low by faulty wiring! You see the photo I took, on the wall there; it looks like the Kremlin is burning!

The RAND headquarters, of course, has been in Santa Monica, almost from the very beginning in 1948. If anybody knows Santa Monica and the Santa Monica Amusement Pier, we are just across the street, almost on the beach. We are across the street from the Santa Monica City Hall, where the second OJ Simpson trial was held.

RAND evolved from a single effort called Project Air Force (PAF). That part of RAND is a Federally-Funded Research and Development Center, or FFRDC. Congress appropriates the money, it goes to the Pentagon, the Air Force then come to RAND's Project Air Force and it says, "I've got this pot of money with PAF's name on it, let's work out how you spend it." We then have done the same for the Army, through what we call the Arroyo Center. We have a third FFRDC which deals with everything else -- not the Navy, we don't have one for the Navy -- like the Office of the Secretary of Defense, the Intelligence Community. So there are these three pots of money, and then it has to be worked out how it gets spent.

When I came, here, the share of Pentagon money in the total RAND budget was probably less than it is now. Since 9/11, the amount of Pentagon money has gone up. At the end of the Cold War, the Pentagon money dropped from, I guess, 90-something percent of the total RAND budget. It dropped to about 50 percent, and there was a lot of effort to get into other areas. The RAND Corporation, which is about 1,500 people, 3-400 PhDs and, just guessing at numbers, about 1,050, 1,100 out in Santa Monica, 300 here at Pentagon City, about 200 now in Pittsburgh, I don't know the numbers in RAND Europe -- Cambridge and in Berlin -- which works on the European Union kinds of things, getting contracts there. And we used to have about 25-35 people in New York City, which redid the Fire Department and the educational system and all that. For the Air Force and the Army and also for the Office of the Secretary of Defense, we do here on a regular basis engineering, cost effectiveness studies, operations research, you name it, the whole smear. If the Air Force wants to know where in the world most efficiently to deploy its F-16s, RAND figures it out. If they decide they are worried about what kind of new transport aircraft to build for mid-air refueling, RAND figures that out. If the Army asks, "How do we stage people's careers, so that they will have productive careers and the Army will have the right skills?" we figure that out. All across the board, all kinds of things, you would be surprised.

The "lessons learned study" for the Air Force on the Iraq War was done here. The Air Force didn't have time to do it, themselves; we did major work on the aftermath of Viet Nam. My understanding is that, when you see the little cursor that goes around on the computer screen, that was invented by RAND, so various things have been invented here over the years. Of course, we did a lot of strategic work in the Cold War. About 50 percent of our money comes from the Pentagon, even now. But we do a lot of other things. RAND is the largest institution in America in health economics, or the money that is involved in the health system, and in judging standards for health care, $20-30 million a year, a lot of people. We are the largest think tank in America on educational reform. Sitting next door to me for a number of years was the former head of the Columbia Teachers' College, a lot of very talented people work on that. We are the largest institution on criminal justice and also civil justice in America, and we also have some significant people on energy and the environment, that's the other 50 percent besides the military.

We are non-partisan, we are tax exempt, we don't make a profit, non-political. We are, you might say, not just bipartisan, we don't have any politics at all in the work we produce.

Q: Let me ask the question. If some of these think tanks have a reputation, like Brookings or the American Enterprise Institute (AEI,) and all have a thought to be sort of a depository of ex-government people and exiles....

HUNTER: So are we.

Q: Is RAND seen as a place where people, like yourself, suddenly come in and out of government?

HUNTER: Absolutely, but it's not done on a partisan basis. In other words, we are not a place where Democrats would go or a place where Republicans would go. It used to be that CSIS was a place where Republicans went; now it sort of gets both. AEI has a lot of Neocons; Heritage, what you might call "Old cons;" and the Carnegie Endowment has more Democrats than Republicans. Here we get all kinds. On this floor, we have Lynn Davis, who was Undersecretary of State for Arms Control and International Security Affairs under Clinton; Bernie Rostker, who is right around the corner here, was head of the Selective Service System and Undersecretary of Defense; Jim Thomson is the RAND president, who worked with me in the Carter National Security Council, and has a lot of experience in working key military and strategic issues. Zal Khalilzad, who is our UN ambassador and used to be ambassador in Iraq and before that was in Afghanistan, was here for many years in Project Air Force. The current Undersecretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness is David Chu, who was also here for many years. So you can say that people come here to work on serious problems and then they may get called to go back into government, but it is not a place that is a parking lot for people of a particular persuasion or who are taken in here because, gosh, we might want to have somebody who later goes into the government. We have Jim Dobbins, who is head of one of the divisions here, a career Foreign Service Officer, I haven't a clue about his politics, he was Assistant Secretary for Europe, he was Ambassador to the EU, he was the US negotiator for Haiti and for Kosovo and for Afghanistan and some other things under the Clinton administration and under the early George W. Bush administration.

Q: When you came here…so what piece of the pie have you been working with?

HUNTER: I was originally asked to come in to help develop private sector work, some of which I did, but I gradually moved into the areas where my competences are. I have a lot of European security, a lot of Middle East, and other projects. A couple of us helped the Romanian Foreign Ministry modernize their IT [informational technology]. I did a three-year project for the State Department to help Georgia create a National Security Council -- getting ready for the eventual end of the [Eduard] Shevardnadze presidency -- and trained a group of younger Georgians to be leaders in governance, foreign policy. So that meant a good deal of time in Tbilisi. Also dealing with [Mikheil] Saakashvili, after the "Rose Revolution." Counter-insurgency, or COIN; asymmetrical warfare; aspects of terrorism; the integration of instruments of power and influence; Russia and NATO; a lot of things.

I also work on the organizational end of government. In 1999-2000, I co-chaired a project on presidential transition: "What should the next president do, whether it would turn out to be either Al Gore or George Bush?" We had 50 people who all had experience in government, half Republicans and half Democrats. I was co-chair with Zalmay Khalilzad and Frank Carlucci, the former Secretary of Defense and whose politics were more Republican than Democrat, because of who appointed him to cabinet level, even though he started as a Foreign Service Officer. We wrote a pretty good document, on a bipartisan basis, and then from that group it was always understood that half would probably get jobs in the new administration and half of the group wouldn't get jobs. As it tuned out, nearly half of the group, all Republicans, actually got the jobs, right? But it gave us a basis for people then going into government, the classic thing with the relationships and the understanding of having talked through the issues and building bridges and all of that. If it hadn't been for this government being hi-jacked by a small group of people after 9/11, it would have been much more serious.

Q: OK, your group wrote this transition document. What happened to it in effect?

HUNTER: There was a large distribution, including to a lot of people around both of the presidential candidates and people in the outside world, either with an interest in serving or just an interest in public policy. I worked on the Gore campaign, on my own time, and Zal Khalilzad was in the Bush campaign on his own time. The rule here is you don't do politics on RAND time, full stop. If you want to do politics, it's got to be squeaky clean. I used non-RAND assets for what I was doing, and you are allowed to do that, but you can't cite yourself as being at RAND. Some other places are less rigorous. With a transition group, it's as much as anything about who you bring in, so everyone gets a chance to know one another better and to think through issues, so that whoever then goes into government is going to be in a better position to say, "This approach is wrong, we've thought through this, about how do we make it work, blah, blah, blah." So it's not so much to help educate the public as it is helping to create the basis for governing.

I've already mentioned to you, and you know this for yourself, that, uniquely in the world, except for governments that have *coups d'etat* and shoot everybody, then start fresh, we handicap ourselves by firing the top 6,000 managers in the government, and you know it takes nine months or more sometimes to get the new people in place. But the world doesn't stop.

Q: Not only do we take time to get them in place, but then it takes months more to learn how to do the job.

HUNTER: To find your way to the washroom, sure. What they say is that, with a three-year tour, it takes a year to learn it, a year to do it, and a year to prepare for your next job. I often shock audiences by saying; "Look, not only is this the way we do it with these 6,000 people being changed, but in the White House, all the documents move out." They are moved out even though, technically, they don't belong to the outgoing president, anymore, after Nixon, but they all move out. It's like on Friday you take the ten top US corporations and fire all the top managers, you get a new team on Monday -- or maybe not on Monday, maybe ten Mondays later -- and you still have to produce as many widgets as you did on Friday. Well, one way you try to do that is by selecting people from an establishment, people who tend to know one another, you may not like one another, but you have talked through the issues, etc., been immersed in it, and have some kind of capacity to relate to what you are getting yourselves into.

It used to be in the old days -- I used to joke when I worked for Carter -- the world would quiet down for six months after a new president came in, because other countries were afraid to do something that might lead to a spasm of American stupidity. Now the world doesn't quiet down for six months. I find the way we do things ironic and humorous, but it is a deadly serious problem that we have.

Q: Of course this is a deadly serious problem for all of us. Well now…

HUNTER: But part of engaging the whole society, one reason this huge country is able to operate is because we do bring people in and out....

Q: Well, one of those things that is often forgotten is that there is this whole sub-stratum of people who know each other and both have been in and out of various administrations, who kind of keep the thing together.

HUNTER: 95 percent of the people in every administration who are hired already know one another, at least in my business of foreign policy. Now, there are wildly different viewpoints, very often. I know, as I mentioned, every single senior person in this government, this Republican government, in foreign affairs and national security, except the president himself, I've never met the president. I've met the vice president, the secretary of this, that, and another thing and fortunately or unfortunately they know me!

Q: I would just appreciate, not in great detail, your take on the role of RAND and the accumulated wisdom, intelligence, know-how and all and outside the government from an organization such as yours, and the lead up to and the administration of the Iraq crisis. Was it as a bad disconnect as said? What was your impression?

HUTNER: Well, I'd say another positive thing that happened at RAND. There wasn't a lot of money kicking around for doing research on terrorism prior to 9/11. We -- as a society, as a government, or the foundations -- very often don't invest a lot in things that might happen around the corner. The grant-giving foundations tend to give money to the usual suspects and for the issues they are familiar with. Very few of them have people with a real imagination. That is one of the ironies of the situation, right? I've seen this for years, and there are a few exceptions, but they are very few and far between. We at RAND happened to have at the time some folks here who were working on terrorism, with small grants, and they were working on other things, but on 9/11 we had probably more talent and real knowledge about terrorism than any other think tank. It wasn't because the foundations or the government were funding it, it is because we are pretty wide spread, with a lot of eclectic people, we have all kinds of talent and all kinds of people here who do all kinds of things, military, civilian, they've served in all kinds of places and done all kinds of things. Thus RAND was able to get to work on terrorism issues from 9/12 onward.

Walking up towards Iraq, I don't recall -- and I may not have seen it all -- that we were asked by the Pentagon to do anything serious on it, before the invasion. Remember, this war was ideologically driven.

Q: Yeah.

HUNTER: Even though Rumsfeld had been on the RAND Board, Condi Rice had been on the Board, etc., we weren't really asked to do much, and we kept essentially out of the debate, because it was highly politicized, and we could publish things from here that were purely analytical, but had to stay strictly out of anything that would smack of taking a political side in this. There were some other think tanks that got involved. I'm afraid the American media failed everybody, and Congress failed the American people. We didn't get into the fray; it wasn't our job to get in the fray, given our consuming need to keep out of highly-charged political areas.

Q: Was there…

HUNTER: Now if you're asked by the Pentagon by somebody to do something, however controversial, then…that is another thing I will say about RAND. Even though we do an awful lot of classified work, here -- I tend to stay away from it, I prefer not to get my memory cluttered up with recalling what was classified and what was not, so I don't have to worry about that; I do my classified work for some government advisory boards -- we try to publish everything we do, including work for the government. Some sensitive things may have to come out of our reports in the public domain, but the idea is that what we are doing is public property, so that some publication will come out of it. If a private-sector donor doesn't like that, then don't ask us to do a study with a proprietary interest, like benefitting one company as opposed to an industry as a whole.

Q: Well just to get a mood…you at RAND had all this sort of expertise on terrorism and all, was there a feeling of, I don't know, satisfaction, dissatisfaction, despair, exhalation on our going into Iraq?

HUNTER: What I am saying now has nothing to do with where RAND was or its official position or anything like that. I told you we were very careful not to get into a situation where issues would become partisan. I don't know what the attitudes on Iraq were across the whole institution, because everybody has an opinion. The people I work with and the national security and foreign policy people I would say, in their personal views, broke eight or nine to one against the war, for a variety of reasons, including people here having some sense of how bad things could go. Some people had a sense of the failure of planning for after the conflict. As we learned later, the civilian leadership in the Defense Department, in effect, took the State Department post-conflict plans and threw them in the ash can. There were some people here at RAND who had a lack of confidence in the people in the administration who were making judgments, and some who felt this was a major distraction from fighting terrorism. So the issue of taking a poll, here, of personal opinions, I think you would have found that it broke about eight or nine to one against the war. I personally was intensely against it for a variety of reasons. Among other things, I thought we would end up right where we are. We have enough experts here who felt like that.

Q: This is my reading and normally the people I interview, and I've been doing this for twenty years, they don't break fifty-fifty, but the people I interview probably turn to be…I don't even like the term Democratic, but sort of the Democratic outlook as opposed to a Republican outlook, left wing, right wing or something, probably sixty-forty or something more towards the left side of the spectrum but very close to the middle. But I can count on two fingers people who were really strong supporters about going into Iraq, and the rest were just aghast.

HUNTER: We had a handful here. In fact, we did have at least one little seminar beforehand and talked about it, but there were a handful here who were for it and, of course, Zal Khalilzad, who is no longer here, was one of the architects, one of the Neocons who wrote an open letter to President Clinton in January 1998, calling for the removal of Saddam Hussein. And there were some others here on that side of the argument. But I would say it broke about 9-1 against. Now I could probably tell you who some of the people are, here, in terms of their politics, but most of them I couldn't tell you anything. Probably there are more Democrats than Republicans, simply because that happens in most think tanks. Unless you are in a think tank that is heavily marked as a right-wing group, like AEI or Heritage, you tend to be more Democrats than not. As to left-right, RAND is probably slightly more left than right, but there are a lot of experts here, strategists, analysts, engineers, a lot of them park their personal politics at the door and look as these as analytical problems. If people were against the war, it's because they analyzed what was going on and came to their own conclusions, that it was the wrong thing to do.

Q: Well Bob I think this probably is a good place to stop and so I want to thank you very much.

HUNTER: Stu, Thank YOU very much. You are a great -- and patient! -- interviewer, and also a talented analyst and author, as well as a Foreign Service Officer with an outstanding record. Your book on the Consular Service, The American Consul: A History of the United States Consular Service 1776-1914 -- which I keep right here for reference -- has to be standard reading for anyone with an interest in becoming an FSO, in understanding the role that a lot of dedicated Americans have played on behalf of our country, or with any interest in US relations with the outside world over our history. Hey, I should be interviewing YOU!

End of interview