ORAL HISTORY PROJECT
on the
ALLIED OCCUPATION OF JAPAN

Interview

Subject: Richard B. Finn
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By: Marlene Mayo

Q: Mr. Finn, I would like to start out by asking you a little bit about your background: where you were born, your family, your early education, the greatest influences on you.

RBF: I was born in Niagara Falls, New York--incidentally, a nice place to be born at because people have always heard of it, especially Japanese; they've all been there--December 16, 1917, brought up in a small town, educated--I like to think of myself as a poor boy, but I won a scholarship to Harvard, got an A.B. and an L.L.B. at Harvard. I entered the United States Navy, was sent to Japanese Language School, not because I knew anything about the Orient. I don't think I could have found Japan on a map, but they had two criteria for the school at that time: either somebody who had had some experience in Japan and Asia, preferably some language background, or some-one who had an academic record that led them to believe he might readily learn Japanese. I'm not sure that the second applied in my case. The first certainly did not, but it was an interesting experience: one year of intensive
study at the University of Colorado from 1942 to 1943. I emerged from that as a Ensign in the Navy, and I was sent to Australia to work in what was then called "General MacArthur's Navy."

Q: Could I ask you a little bit about the Japanese language training? How intensive was it? What was your routine? Do you remember anything about the teachers, the textbooks, the materials that you were given to help you learn Japanese?

RBF: It was intensive. It had the reputation of being an extremely difficult, unpleasant one year where you, theoretically, did nothing but immerse yourself in this arcane language, with no outside interests or activities except maybe on a Saturday night, and were supposed to emerge after a year as a fully accomplished Japanese linguist. I'd say, surprisingly, it came as close to that goal as you could reasonably expect of an institution set off in the Rocky Mountains in one of the most beautiful places in the country, a marvelous campus, a wonderful experience for an Easterner who'd never been west of Detroit. And in addition, there were a lot of very good-looking Colorado girls, who thought we were some kind of strange breed of cat but were attracted nevertheless. A lot of the guys married Colorado girls. I imported my own version from Radcliffe College, for better or for worse.

Q: Did they help you learn anything about Japanese history or culture at the same time you were learning the language?

RBF: That was irrelevant, irrelevant. The general program was four hours of classes a day, and you had writing, and you had speaking, and you had reading. And the focus was primarily, of course, on the reading, on the
learning to read and the ideographs. The speaking was secondary, and the writing, the most difficult and probably the least important, was third. But every Saturday morning there was a test, an hour's test usually, on what you'd done the week before. The training system was Naganuma's Readers, and Naganuma had something like six readers of graduated difficulty, simple on up to most difficult. The very first lesson was, "Kore wa, Hon desu." And you had to learn the ideograph for "hon." And the last one would end up something like, sekai ni kore wa ga nai sure, and would go on. Fairly complicated Japanese. Even today there are people like Marshall Green that can recite verbatim lessons, whole blocks of lessons, like some people recite Shakespeare, from Naganuma's Readers.

Q: What specifically were you being trained for at the Language School? Was it for interpreting, for translating documents, or did you have any idea of the assignments you might be given?

RBF: The purpose was not very clear. We were to be multi-purpose in the language. The result was that some people were assigned to be interpreters at the end of the course, when we got out in the field. And others were translators, readers, scanners. The great bulk of the people, I think, were readers, translators, scanners. Very few people ended up in the field doing the front-line interrogating of prisoners and the verbal work in the language. But a number did, with tremendous success. Some very bright guys, and not all with Japanese language background when they started, were just natural linguists: the David Osborns, Sam Stratton, the Congressman, and others
were good at it.

Q: They were in your language class?

RBF: Osborn was six months ahead; Stratton was in my class.

Q: And what were your assignments after you finished this language training?

Where were you sent?

RBF: I was sent immediately to Australia to Commander Southwest Pacific Naval Forces, and I was assigned to a suburb of Brisbane, Australia, called Indrapilly where ATIS, the Allied Translator Interpreter Service—which I think is maybe even still functioning in GHQ / general headquarters/ somewhere—was set up. And it was out in this, I think an Australian Army barracks of some kind and an office building, a small place out about 10 miles. We took a sort of a Toonerville Trolley train in and out from Brisbane every day. It had a number of American nisei, it had a smattering of Australian linguists of one sort or another, White Russians who knew Japanese, a conglomerate of people of all kinds. It was a remarkable operation. Colonel Sidney Mashpere, U.S. Army, was the boss. Mashpere had been a businessman with some Oriental background. He wrote a book after the war on his experiences, a flamboyant fellow. He looked a little bit and acted even more like Groucho Marx, but he was a very clever, shrewd fellow, whose main ambition in life was to get a star and after that, to do good work in the war against Japan. He certainly did good work, but never did get his star.

Q: What sorts of things did you do with ATIS?

RBF: I was a translator. The technique in ATIS, they came, they would pick up bushels of Japanese documents up in New Guinea where the fighting was going
on at the time of interest to our particular theatre, fly them back down to Australia. There would be some preliminary scanning in the field of these things, looking for battle orders and material of operational interest. The bulk of them then would come on back to ATIS and be screened, scanned by the most competent, quick readers of Japanese, and those that were considered worthwhile would then be either translated in full or summarized. You ended up doing things like manuals for our artillery in the Japanese Army, which was a colossal bore and also rather difficult. But it was all kinds of odds and ends, including things like diaries. I remember we got a diary of a Japanese captured, I don't know, Wewak, Hollandia, somewhere, and the scanners thought it was very important. So Mashpere got four or five of us and stuck us right up in his office to show the importance he attached to it. Faubion Bowers, who is probably as brilliant a Japanese linguist as there is, both verbal and reading, was the boss of our little group, and we spent a week going through that bloody diary, trying to find out what of significance this fellow had done. My portion related to his youth and his entry into the army. I did not see any great significance to be attached to it. It was also hard as hell to read because it was in Sosho. But that shows you the kind of stuff we did.

Q: Were you trained to read Sosho?

RBF: Oh, yes. Oh, yes, we read The Shooting Match in Sosho. Of course, I would not like to claim even today that I'm much good at Sosho, but I was probably as good then as I am now.
Q: Were you still there when the war came to an end or had you been shifted elsewhere?

RBF: Oh, no, no. I spent almost a year in Brisbane from September 1943 to about June of 1944, and then I went up to Wendy Island. I was assigned to the PT boats of the Navy. I got out of ATIS and into the Navy, and I was an intelligence officer for PT boats with emphasis, of course, on any Japanese documents or prisoners they would catch in the course of the operations at that time on Wendy Island, north of Biak, Biak in turn north of New Guinea. Wendy is just a beautiful little tropical island. I'll never forget it. I'd like to go back some day and see the place. I was there only maybe a couple of weeks, and then we had the Morotai landing. Morotai is in the Halmaheras between New Guinea and the Philippines. I was there maybe three or four weeks on Morotai. We just landed and sort of hacked our way into the jungle and built a little shanty on this tropical island, again a very attractive place, not much danger, not much violence. I don't think I saw any Japanese in Morotai. You did in Biak; every night what they called "Washing Machine Charlie," a single Japanese plane, would come by to scare the daylights out of everybody and lead to the most marvelous anti-aircraft shooting match you ever saw, and every now and then they'd hit a fellow, and it was sort of exciting, my introduction to combat. And then after that I was in on the Leyte landings in the Philippines. Leyte took place October 20, 1944, a massive American military effort. I got there the day after, two days I think it was before the Japanese Fleet came up from the Singapore area to try to resist, oppose, and throw back the American
invasion of Leyte. And I was in on the so-called Battle of Leyte Gulf October 24, 1944, which I like to call the last great surface naval battle in history. It was quite exciting except we didn't know what was going on. We were out there all night with Japanese warships of one kind or another steaming by, fortunately off at a distance, star shells shooting overhead in all directions, and we being a PT boat, decided we were not going to be a decisive element in the combat. We had done our initial duty of spotting the Japanese, radioing the information back to the bigger ships, and we sort of stood by, watching the thing as it went on. And then the next day—a large number, of course, of Japanese ships had been sunk in our part of the battle. We were in the southern part of Leyte Gulf, not in the entrance to Leyte Gulf where Admiral Halsey had committed what I think was the tremendous error of rushing off north, thinking he was going to catch the big part of the Japanese Fleet when actually the big part of the Japanese Fleet had come in that very direction, could have entered Leyte Gulf, could have destroyed much of the American invasion fleet. But they got nervous, turned tail, and left just at the last minute. I think there was a Japanese cruiser sunk, there were a number of Japanese destroyers that were sunk in the southern part of Leyte Gulf.

We picked up a lot of these fellows swimming around in the water the morning after, landed them on a small island, and one of my jobs was to interrogate them. I was the only language fellow in that particular group, and we had a whole Japanese cruiser, large elements of the crew of a
Japanese cruiser, up to the rank of a commander, and we hadn't captured many Japanese commanders. It was rather exciting experience.

Q: What sorts of things did you learn from your interrogations?

RBF: Well, of course, number one, you wanted to learn what they were actually doing, what their unit was, how many people were in their unit, what their command structure was, and what their plans were, not only at that time but for the following week or two or three weeks, to sort of get a feel for what the present state of the Japanese Navy was and what their operational plans were in order to resist the American invasion of the Philippines. Then you'd go back from that sort of current, up-to-date aspect to more, what kind of losses they had suffered, what the situation was down in the Southeast Asia area where they'd come from, what was going on with headquarters up in Japan, a whole gamut of intelligence information.

Q: Were you at all interested in the morale of the soldiers, psychological warfare? Or yours was strictly military interrogation?

RBF: Largely military. I think it's a gross generalization. Morale with the Japanese never seemed to be a problem. The Japanese did their duty as their bosses told them to do their duty, and their morale didn't seem to be a great factor. The average Japanese, say, enlisted man was not a very easy person to elicit information about or any comments on morale or anything else. He was also very hard to understand when he spoke Japanese.

Q: Did you have an opportunity at that time to observe General MacArthur as a commander? In the Philippines in 1944 to 1945?
RBF: Yes. I should hasten to add, not first-hand. I did not see General MacArthur. I did not participate in the top headquarters work. In Australia the headquarters was down in what we called the AMP Building. That was an Australian insurance Company in downtown Brisbane. I would occasionally see MacArthur on the elevator or coming in and out of the building. I met with General Willoughby a couple of times. He was the G2, the top intelligence man for MacArthur's command. And it's true generally of General MacArthur, throughout the war and in the occupation, he did not associate with many people on his staff. He believed very much in the staff principle that you dealt with the top staff people, the heads of your staff sections, and you did not mix or have occasion to call upon people on down the line. There were very rare exceptions to this. There would be intelligence briefings of General MacArthur. I know Rex Reed, who was one of our Navy people in Australia—not a language man—for, I think, a period of several years was one of the briefers of MacArthur, and he'd see him practically every day to brief him on naval activities in the Pacific and would get some feeling for General MacArthur. Rex Reed, I think, had a very high admiration for MacArthur's intelligence, ability to ask questions, to see what the main points were, and that he was an easy man to work with in that context. But I did not have that kind of personal association.

One could not avoid feeling that MacArthur was an extremely effective commander, given the out-of-the-way operations that we engaged in. We were the tail end of a long supply and personnel line coming out of Washington, with Europe number one and Asia number two, Pacific number two. I think
MacArthur, as a planner, a strategist, and as a military leader, was remarkably effective.

One further comment. We were just getting up to the Philippines, and the Philippines, of course, was an excruciatingly difficult battle the whole way. The Japanese put up very tough resistance, and of course it became a bit of a joke, as well as a minor tragedy, that MacArthur wanted to capture the Philippines and overwhelm the Japanese resistance in very quick order. He'd won the agreement from Roosevelt that the Philippines would be the target rather than Taiwan, and I think MacArthur wanted to win it and win it quick and win it big. And it wasn't all that easy. There were a lot of losses, and there was very bad weather, and the Japanese fought very hard, the brutality on the Japanese side was very high. And I don't say this reflects upon MacArthur as a military leader, but it certainly was not a brilliant, quick, effective, clean operation.

Q: Where were you when you heard that the war with Japan was over?

RBF: I took part in the Battle of Leyte Gulf in October of 1944. I was in the Luzon operations based at Olongapo, which is a port north and west of Manila, and was in on much of the naval PT boat activity in the fighting for Manila itself. Manila, of course, was a land operation. The Navy didn't have much to do with it. We were out in Manila Bay making sure there were no Japanese being able to use the water in any way. But it was rather interesting. I remember a group of us commandeered a very nice house out at the end of Dewey Boulevard, owned by an American woman who was a widow. She'd been there all through the war, and she took us to her home and we had a very nice setup.
General MacArthur's Chief of Staff was in the next house, I recall. This was the kind of thing you could do in the war. Half a dozen young naval officers, nobody around to say Yes or No, and we had access to supplies and things. So we had a very nice place to live in for a couple of weeks.

My tour of duty ended in about April of 1945. I'd had 18 months, so I came on back to Washington. This, of course, was before the war ended. And I was assigned first to the Stewart Building in downtown Washington to work on translations. I remember I did a long translation of conditions in Mongolia. I wasn't quite sure of the relevance of that, but that's what I was told to do, so I did it. And then I was reassigned up to the Naval Communications Annex, up on Nebraska Circle. Rex Reed, incidentally, was assigned up there, too, and I was one of the translators. He was one of the intelligence analysts for the work, and this was part of the code breaking and translating operation which I had never done before and which was very exciting. You'd get a sheet of paper almost like a computer printout, and you'd have numbers down on the left column which were the word groups that the Japanese used. And then down the middle would be the translations out of the various code books that we had captured. But of course the numbers were sometimes garbled and the translation fragments were not complete. So you'd get these fragments of translations like saying Wewak nee and then you have a couple of blanks. And then say and it would go on. Your job was to take a thing that would be maybe about a third completed or a half completed and try to put it together with the aid of the code book and the numbers that
weren't always accurate, but trying to get numbers that might be close to the number given and fill it all out, and then to get a translation. Some guys were geniuses, and women at this. I was only there a couple of months and needless to say, I wasn't a genius, but it was interesting to do.

Q: And this is what you were doing when the war came to an end?

RBF: When the war ended, right. The war ended, of course, in mid-August 1945, and the Navy decided that Japanese linguists were going to be needed in Japan. So we were all put on boats or put on planes and rushed right on out to Japan. Rushed is a bit of an exaggeration. We got to Okinawa and the weather was bad, and there weren't any planes. So we sat in Okinawa for about a week, and one of the greatest errors of my military career, some of my colleagues decided—again with the anarchy that reigned at that period—that rather than going to Japan where their orders told them to go, well, they were going to go to Japan. But they decided to go by way of China, so they went to Shanghai, Peking, Nanking. I remember a couple of them were in the liberation of Peking, and of course that was a very nice experience to be in on. And they showed up in Japan about a month after the rest of us, having had a devil of a good time while we had sort of ground out the wait in Okinawa and had gone up to Ōmura, which is near Sasebo, then to Sasebo, then to Fukuoka, sort of milling around in the chaos of the post-war period, not doing an awful lot, but trying to enjoy ourselves and find out what Japan was like.

Q: And what were your first impressions of Japan, having studied the language and then being in the country finally? And having recently been an enemy?
RBF: One, the thing about being an enemy was never a factor in Japan. It was an amazing experience. You didn't feel anybody was hostile or anybody was going to shoot you or you couldn't stick your head out at night. One, living conditions were very poor, and that's a poor part of Japan, or at least it was then. You remember how hard people worked. You remember the honey bucket wagons every morning. You remember we lived in a Japanese military barracks. I remember back and forth to the chow hall you had to go by the latrines, and they were not, by American standards, very well kept up, and they were also odoriferous. That's one impression I have today.

Typhoons. It was typhoon season in the fall, and there were some real whoppers that for three or four days everything would be out. You just sort of huddled down and hunkered down and let the storm blow over, and not an awful lot of work was done. But then I'm not sure there was an awful lot of work to do, and I don't remember very clearly what our work was at that point.

Q: I was just going to ask you what your work was. Did you have a chance to talk very much with Japanese?

RBF: I don't remember any Japanese that I got to know as friends, and I was in Japan in that first period as a j.g. in the Navy from early September 1945 until mid-December 1945. I was in Kyushu for about a month, and then I was transferred up to Tokyo to work in what was called USSBS, the U.S. Strategic Bombing Survey. I met a lot of Japanese, the Japanese were very friendly and easy to deal with. We had a lot to do, of course, with Japanese military who were being demobilized or with Japanese economic and technical experts who were handling, oh, things like the electrical system. One of my projects in USSBS was to work with the
section of the survey that dealt with urban areas. And the purpose of the Bombing Survey, of course, was to determine how effective the bombing of Japan had been by the U.S. forces. Many of these fellows had come from Germany where they had done a bombing survey of the effects of bombing on Germany, and they were going to do the same thing in Japan. So I spent days going around—I was in the electrical section—to see what the effect of bombing had been on the electrical capacity of Greater Tokyo and Japan as a whole. So we went traveling around Tokyo to look at all the electrical installations, and I would meet a lot of people who were involved in electricity in one form or another. It was not, I thought, a very helpful operation, for several reasons. One, most of the stuff was destroyed. Two, most of the records had been bombed out. Three, the Japanese, the ones we talked to, didn't seem to be able to give you a very big picture. They could give you one little installation, but when there were hundreds of installations, you didn't relish the thought of trying to put together hundreds of little things trying to make the big picture. Four, the fellows who had come from Germany had were convinced that bombing had a major impact on the electrical capacity of the nation, as well as every other part of the country. They would write an outline of a report saying, "The strategic bombing of Tokyo, from the period this to this, resulted in x percent damage to Japan's ability to produce electricity." Germany they had a figure, you know, of 75 percent or something. They'd say, "Go out and prove that it was 75 percent or more in Japan." I think the report probably ended up with something like 75 percent, but I'm confident there were very few statistics that would bear it out. But maybe
these guys were experts and didn't need all that kind of statistical data.

I don't say this to reflect on the Bombing Survey, but more on the sort of chaos and difficulty of finding accurate information a month or two after the war ended -- in a place that was as heavily damaged as Tokyo. And again, these fellows from Germany, they were experts. They could probably tell a lot more readily than a j.g., who has trouble changing an electric light bulb, what the effect on bombing might have been.

Q: When you came from Hokkaido down to Kyushu and Tokyo, what were your impressions of the Japanese and Japan, by comparison?

RBF: I hope I didn't say Hokkaido because I came into Kyushu to Omura and Sasebo and Fukuoka. And then I took the train from Kyushu on up to Tokyo. The train ride was great fun. What were my impressions? Gosh, we went to geisha parties, all very innocent, I assure you. This was just -- you'd do this if you had an evening out, and they were only too happy to have you.

Q: Were they elaborate geisha parties?

RBF: They were nice geisha parties. They were not like Akasaka and Tokyo today, fortunately for anyone's pocketbook. But the Japanese were pleasant, receptive. Since we knew some Japanese, they were particularly easy for the language people to talk to. And we were useful to the Americans as well because we were a link between them.

Kyushu, as I say, struck me as a rather poor place, and I didn't meet the anyone that, well, a person either with kind of academic background or interests that I had that I could particularly get to know. The train trip up, which I suppose took me three days or so, I remember spending over a day
in Kyoto. It was a great experience. I'd read a lot about Kyoto and knew something about it. I was all by myself. I just made arrangements where to stay in small places or where to eat in Kyoto. I'm sure there was a military billet of some kind, but I looked at all the temples. I remember, you know, Kiyomizu-dera and Chion-in, and places like that, a great experience. You've read about all this, and you finally got to it, and it's the kind of thing that when you see Chartres or you see a great cathedral or a great spectacle of some kind, it makes an impact on you, and that was my feeling in Kyoto. Again, I don't remember anybody I met in Kyoto.

Tokyo was a little different, of course, a big operation, lots of people of all kinds doing all kinds of things. My most vivid impression today of Tokyo, I suppose, was meeting a number of Kabuki actors. My friend, Bowers, whom I mentioned earlier, had become an aide-de-camp to MacArthur because he was a linguist, and they wanted a linguist around MacArthur. Bowers lived in the American Embassy Annex down underneath the hill from the Embassy Residence where MacArthur was staying. And Bowers, who had studied Kabuki before the war, was very close to Don't ask me which number he was. He was the old great one of the post-war period. And I remember we had a dinner, and was there and an older Japanese critic, whose name temporarily escapes me, who had had a falling-out some years before with I don't know whether it was over a theatrical point or
some point of criticism or what. But Bowers had got these two fellows together, along with a number of other actors, and here I was...

END SIDE I, BEGIN SIDE II

... a raw recruit coming in at a dinner with Japanese actors talking about their problems of the theatre. I guess my total intake comprehensively that evening was probably around 10 percent, but it was a considerable experience. I got to know all of those fellows and know them very well. Even today Shôzô and Baiko, who I think are both still alive, I consider good friends of mine. I saw them off and on and when they come over here. That is the kind of recollection I have of Japan in that period.

Q: Down in your level of operations, were you at all aware of the presidential statement, for example, that had been issued to MacArthur and which was publicized in the latter part of September? Did you know something of the policies which he was supposed to be implementing in Japan?

RBF: I'm sure I did. I, of course, read the Nippon Times eagerly. I tried to sweat out the Japanese newspapers, which were very small, very fine print, only a couple of pages. It was like reading microfiche to try to read them, but I felt it was my duty to understand Japan. So I tried to read them, and I think I had a good feel for the general trend of policy and relations, but I had no personal involvement with this sort of thing. We worked in the Meiji Building, which is down the street from the Dai Ichi Building, and we were very technically oriented in the Bombing Survey. Some people at the top of the Bombing Survey were conducting studies of
what went on in Japan in the last days of the war, why Japan decided to surrender, what the politics of Japan might be at that time. But that was not my ballpark and I didn't know much about it. So you asked me was I aware. I'm sure I read about it, but I don't think it made much of an impact on me at the time.

Q: So apart from your technical responsibilities, you really were, in a sense, enjoying being in Japan?

RBF: Right, right.

Q: And how did your assignment come to an end?

RBF: Well, this was the period when people were being sent home on points, and if you had enough points--I think we had points in the Navy--you'd go home. And one had the problem of deciding whether he would like to stay on in Japan for a while and enjoy it--it was a rather exciting, exotic kind of existence to be out there. I think if I had been single, I would have been very tempted to stay on a few months or even longer. I had a legal background. I think I could have parleyed that into something with the occupation. I might even have parleyed it into a legal career in Japan a la Tom Blakemore. But after all, I had a wife back home. I had decided by then that maybe, instead of becoming a lawyer, I would try to get into the Government Service, than the best way to do that was back in Washington rather out in Tokyo. I remember going into the Diplomatic Section at that point and talking to John Servis. I didn't know him nor he me, but I went in just to meet people and ask about a career in the State Department. He was very pleasant to me. We had a brief talk about how you got into the Foreign Service and what I
should do, and that was sort of my plan. So I was eager to come home at the earliest opportunity and get out of the Navy and try to get into something more permanent in the Government Service.

Q: When you left Japan then you had no idea that you might be back there again as a career officer?

RBF: No. Not certainly specifically, but I liked Japan and I felt, after all, I'd invested from 1942 to 1945 at this point in Japan with the language. So I had a tool of the trade.

Q: What happened next then in your career?

RBF: I went back. I stayed in the Navy for a couple of more months. I got out of the Navy in early 1946 and I had, while I was in the process of getting out of the Navy, landed myself a job with the Far Eastern Commission. The Far Eastern Commission was created by the four foreign ministers in December 1945 at a meeting in Moscow. It converted the old Far Eastern Advisory Commission that was then existing into the new Far Eastern Commission, with more of a policy as well as an advisory role. The Commission got organized in about February of 1946. I got myself a job, largely through Sam Stratton, who was then the Executive Secretary, I believe, of the Commission. I became the secretary for two of the committees, the Constitutional Committee and the Strengthening of Democratic Tendencies Committee of this 11-nation body. I got out of the Navy in, I think, March and went on to the Commission where I worked for a year as the staff man for these two committees, dealing in theory at least with all of the broad policy for the occupation of Japan.
So here I am again right back in the middle of Japan.

Q: What can you tell us about the work of the Committee in that period, its involvement with the new constitution, for example, and with the strengthening of democratic tendencies? Do you have observations about the Americans who held responsible positions, George Blakeslee or Frank McCoy?

RBF: It was a very interesting period. I probably overlay much of what I recall with what I have learned since the time I was working there. But our job was to try to lay down policies for the new constitution of Japan. Mind you, this was March of 1946. It was also to lay down policies for the legal reform of Japan and for what might be called the democratization of Japan, under the rubric of strengthening democratic tendencies, which is language taken out of the Potsdam Declaration. The American representatives on the Commission were—and I was on the Secretariat as opposed to the American delegation of the Commission. The American representatives were Major General Frank McCoy, Retired, an old friend of General MacArthur, I think, who was picked partly because he would be sympathetic and congenial with General MacArthur; a number of people who came in from the Department for various purposes. Hugh Borton was one, Professor Reischauer, who was, I think, still working with the Government at that point, Dean Rusk in the Pentagon, Edwin Martin in the Pentagon, Bob Barnett, economic work in the Department, and a number of others. So the American representation at the top was full-time for the Commission, but the others were ad hoc coming out of the Japan or the economic side of the Department for specific meetings, whether economics, reparations, constitutional, cultural, or something
like that, very able people. General McCoy was a fine gentleman of the old school, a very intelligent man, a very, I think, broadminded man. He was an old man. He was 70 and unlike MacArthur, I think he reflected his septuagenarian status rather clearly, both physically and maybe even mentally, but he was devoted and sincere and I think effective. We had nice people on the Secretariat. Nelson Johnson, who had been Ambassador to China, was the top man on the Secretariat. Hugh Farley, who died a number of years ago, a Quaker, was I think also on the Secretariat, along with Stratton and myself and a number of others. We were in the Japanese Embassy building on Massachusetts Avenue, a very nice physical setup. It was a very pleasant arrangement in many ways. The Commission met weekly, the committees met weekly or even more frequently as well, and trying to turn out policies for the guidance of the occupation.

Now you asked about the substance of the work. February and March 1946 were the very period where in Tokyo the Government Section had produced a draft constitution. We as part of the new Far Eastern Commission were also setting out a number of broad principles for the constitution. In addition, of course, the United States had back a year before worked out the basic initial post-surrender policy for Japan, which had much in the way of general guidance for the occupation in all its aspects. SWNCC 228 had been approved later on in 1945. It had been relayed to General MacArthur and everyone feels confident had been used by the Government Section as guidance when General Whitney locked them all up for a week and said, "Produce a constitution." So that the Commission was very much
Johnny-come-lately in this operation, and I don't think we had been in business very long when the draft constitution appeared, allegedly a combined SCAP plus Japanese Government draft, which General MacArthur very archly informed the Commission when they inquired, was a combined product, and it was a Japanese product. It was not an imposed product, and he did not feel that we should in any way try to tell the Japanese that they should tear up this combined product and start on something new that the Far Eastern Commission might give them.

Q: Can you recall how you felt about that explanation at the time, that it was a combined product, or were you quite suspicious or dubious?

RBF: I don't think any of us at that time in Washington—and I think this could well apply to all but maybe a very few people in the State Department and the Pentagon—knew that it was essentially an American creation and only very obliquely and later on a Japanese product. I think there was not any great feeling that the SCAP headquarters was trying to finesse or cut out Washington. I think much of that emerged over time, over a period of years. I would say the feeling in the Commission and in the Department was that, regardless of what the piece of paper that suddenly came out in Tokyo said, we should be very sure that in the language made sacrocanct by the various policy papers, anything that was decided reflected the freely expressed will of the Japanese people. And we wanted to be sure that there was no impression of pressure or taint, and that there was full consideration and free expression of view. That I think was the purpose of the Commission and our committee at the FEC /Far Eastern Commission/.
Q: Were there other substantive issues that you were involved in?

RBF: Well, related to the constitution itself, of course, was the review of the constitution. You recall that the Commission, finally losing the battle really on policy guidance for the constitution itself, then passed a decision which the United States, of course, had to concur in, that there should be review after one year, I believe it was, of the constitution to insure once again that it expressed the free will of the Japanese. General MacArthur reluctantly and in a somewhat unhappy message, accepted that. Nothing ever came of the review. It just dropped totally dead.

Aside from the constitution, of course, the committee got into a number of things: the policy on war criminals, policy on various types of legal reform in Japan. Many of these were really after-the-fact endorsements of what either American policy said or what was already being done by the occupation. Several of the policy statements were almost verbatim repeats of what had been in the basic initial post-surrender policy. It was that kind of operation, somewhat frustrating in the sense that no new ground and no original contributions were being made by the Far Eastern Commission. But on the other hand, a reflection that the occupation was doing all right and one couldn't really argue about it. The lines that the United States and General MacArthur were following were right and good and acceptable.

Q: That was an interesting comment about MacArthur. From Washington what was your sense of Washington's role in policy formulation and SCAP's role? What were the feelings that you were developing about the way MacArthur was
handling things out there? He was implementing, I assume, more than he was formulating policy. But did Washington seem to have a role in what was happening in occupied Japan?

RBF: I think the feeling on the Far Eastern Commission was that General MacArthur was out in front, that Washington was following behind him, being pulled by him as much as it was pushing him to do what it wanted to do, and that the Far Eastern Commission was well behind this fast-moving vehicle, trying hard to get aboard and find a role, but not finding much of a role and not frankly being very much helped by the United States or certainly by MacArthur in doing anything useful. I think Hugh Borton would generally concur in that analogy. You remember when Hugh Borton was out at Maryland a year or so ago, he told us about some of the things with the dealing with General MacArthur, how the Far Eastern Commission would ask the State Department to find out from General MacArthur what the occupation was doing on this, that, or the other issue. Would General MacArthur assign an officer or send officers back periodically to tell the Far Eastern Commission what was being done in Tokyo. And General MacArthur would not be willing to do this. He could not assign an officer because only he knew really the broad picture and could give the information. Requests on specific issues would often get very little in the way of an answer that would be at all satisfying. And sometimes they were even ignored. It was that kind of relation.

And let me make a somewhat broader and maybe more complicated, I hope not confusing, thought. This is policy versus implementation. It's
MacArthur's role as an Allied commander contrasted with MacArthur's role as an American commander. (1) Policy and implementation I don't think had a clear distinction in the mind of General MacArthur. He had policy in the sense of the basic initial policy SWNCC 228 general statements. Political reform should reflect the freely expressed will of the Japanese people. That is a very big hole for an active commander to drive through. The whole constitution right down to all the specific details could be considered the way it was maneuvered by General MacArthur as the freely-expressed will of the Japanese people.

Related to this, point (2). Very early General MacArthur avoided the sort of directive role with the Japanese, except on rather minor issues. He did not say, "You will reform the constitution to do (a), (b), (c) and (d)." There would be a letter to the Prime Minister or there would only be a series of meetings between the SCAP authorities and the Japanese and a bill or what have you would emerge from that. No slightest intimation of a policy statement or a directive, and yet everyone knew this was the wish of the occupation. The line therefore was very blurred between policy and implementation. Was SCAP telling the Japanese what to do or was even Washington telling SCAP what to do.

Point (2). The Allied role versus the American role. MacArthur never pushed this to the extreme, but there were a number of occasions where he would take the position that he was the Supreme Commander for the Allied Powers and regrettably he could not respond to an initiative from only one of those powers telling them or advising them to do this or that, even
though that power might be the American Government. The American Government had the authority, under the Moscow Agreement setting up the Allied control structure, to send interim directives where there was not agreement in the Far Eastern Commission and where it was a matter of Allied concern. Several interim directives were sent, but reading through the exchanges between MacArthur and Washington, you will find a number of occasions where General MacArthur was very difficult, very archly turned back suggestions that he do something because he represented the Allies and not only one of the Allies.

One amusing related issue, when Prime Minister Yoshida ran for and was reelected Prime Minister in early 1949, he had during his campaign said that he was going to take steps to insure that the purge was substantially modified, the purge of political activists in the pre-surrender period, the Nationalists and the militarists. He had had some intimation, Yoshida, from Washington that serious efforts were going to be made to change the purge. Yoshida was reelected, his party, by a large margin. General MacArthur responded to a letter from Yoshida regarding the purge by simply saying that any change in purge policy would have to be approved by the Far Eastern Commission, reflecting MacArthur's view and Whitney's view that they weren't going to change the purge and if Yoshida wanted to change, he could go to the Russians which, of course, would not have been the most promising avenue of change. But MacArthur was very clever at this and a strong commander, a strong sense of policy, great confidence in what he was doing, tremendous success, powerful political backing in the United
States. MacArthur had a carte that was almost blanche in doing many things in Japan, and he used that carte.

Q: While you were still on the Commission, did you hear much about economic policy for Japan, about reparations, for example or excessive concentration of economic power, zaibatsu busting?

RBF: I was on the Commission only one year, 1946 to 1947. That was the year when the political issues, of course, were very active and important, as were the economic issues. We had a committee on economic policy, and we had a committee on reparations. Bob Barnett, incidentally, was the American representative at the working level on both of those, I believe. An Australian fellow named Don Badger was my parallel as the Commission's Secretariat working on these things. More and more, of course, these issues became of dominant importance in the Far Eastern Commission. Reparations was important right from the start. We had terrible problems, as you know, on reparations, deciding a policy, then beginning to back off successively from the policy, and then ultimately repudiating the whole approach of reparations by about 1948.

Economic policy, the deconcentration issue, the FEC 230, and even at an early point, how much food to send Japan. That was an issue: should the United States provide food to Japan? There was nothing in our basic policies that said that we should. The whole tenor of these wartime policies was that we had no responsibility for the economic revival or construction or even maintenance of any level in Japan. MacArthur, to his credit, paid very little attention, I think, to those policies. He decided very early that
Japan should have food and that without food, he'd need more men and more bullets. And that would not be a good way to handle Japan, and the United States agreed with him. The occupation took almost no Japanese food literally and brought in shipload after shipload of food for Japan.

Trade then became a problem. To what extent should we promote the development of Japanese foreign trade? And again the United States pushed and pressed and urged and was successful in gradually reopening Japan into foreign trade. And these things were all matters of great issue in the Far Eastern Commission, and I would say, in retrospect, the Commission was more useful and had more of a role in actually laying down policy on issues like reparations and food and trade than it had been in the political area, and that the American Government and the occupation were more willing to accept the Commission's role in these areas. After all, foreign trade needs foreign governments, so the Commission naturally would have a role.

Q: I'm wondering--there were so many things that were attempted in 1945 and 1946, 1947--did the Commission pay much attention to the educational system of the Japanese? I remember one document was called "Reorientation of the Japanese," which was a larger effort at reeducation.

RBF: The Committee on Strengthening of Democratic Tendencies was involved certainly in education and altering the cult of the emperor worship and things of that sort. A number of policy statements were passed on that general subject. I might say, incidentally, that Dr. Blakeslee has done an awfully good summary of the work of the Far Eastern Commission, very short, very frank, remarkably candid and very useful. The policies are listed and of course easy to find
the sum total of FEC policies that were enacted. Not many were in that area. They were not particularly controversial. I don't think they were probably particularly useful. General MacArthur, you recall, had an Education Commission at his request visit Japan from the United States in early 1946, and they made a number of important recommendations, a very short, effective report. Most of those were implemented, I would say, shortly after the Commission left Japan in maybe the summer of 1946, long before the Far Eastern Commission really got around to doing much. I would put, therefore, the work of the interallied body on things like education and social problems as much in the category of the political work, me too, Johnny-come-lately, and not terribly important.

Q: How did you happen to move from the Far Eastern Commission to the Department of State?

RBF: Well, when I left Japan in 1945 in the Navy, I thought about a Foreign Service, a U.S. Government career. I wasn't able to take the Foreign Service exam at that point, so I had to wait, as I recall, until the end of 1946 before there was a Foreign Service entrance exam and I took it at the end of 1946. I passed it and I took the oral exam and passed it, I think, in early 1947, and I was accepted into the Foreign Service. So I had the alternative of staying on with the Commission; Interallied and something that didn't have a long-term assured future, or entering the U.S. Government as a career employee. And I did enter the Foreign Service at that point in the summer of 1947. Having been a lawyer, I was hoping I might get some legal work because there were some very good legal jobs opening up in Europe in
connection with the peace agreements with the Access Powers, Italy, Roumania, Hungary, and the rest of them. I thought I might be able to get a job as a reparations lawyer sent over there, but I was, of course, immediately sent to Japan in September of 1947 by the State Department as an FSO /Foreign Service Officer/.

Q: Were you given any particular briefing before you went over about conditions in Japan?

RBF: I'm sure that we met a number of times with the desk. I might say, incidentally, that John Emerson, John Allison were around at that point on the desk, people that I'd got to know. John Allison was on my oral examining board. He asked me questions in Japanese. Fortunately, I would say my Japanese was not as bad as his Japanese, so I think I looked good on that part of the exam. Did you hear where he died just--

Q: Yes, I did.

RBF: And John Emerson was one who had called me when I got into the Foreign Service and said he hoped I would come to Japan. I was a little bit cagey because I knew you couldn't take your wife over there, and conditions were all sort of distraught. And I thought, "Well, maybe I ought to try something else for a while." I'd spent all this time on Japan. But I think I had a fair contact with what was going on/Japan, having spent a year on the Far Eastern Commission. I don't think we had anything more than fairly perfunctory, you know, a couple of hours here and half a day there and some file reading at some other points as far as specific orientation went.

Q: I asked because September 1947 is the beginning of a crucial period in the
FEC 230 controversy, and I was wondering a little bit about the atmosphere in the Department of State at the time that you departed for Japan.

RBF: That would have been way over my head. I'm sure I knew what FEC 230 was, and I read, of course, at the Commission. I knew much of what was going on throughout, but I don't recall FEC 230 as being anything that was of great significance in my life. I might say, too, that at that period we were all, were we/worried about democracy in Japan. We felt Japan had been a militarist, Nationalist, in some senses a Fascist style country, certainly economically, and that a lot had to be done, politically and economically, to bring Japan around to being a democracy. There was a very strong tendency to think of Japan, Germany, and Italy all pretty much the same way. Tojo was Hitler, you know, and the zaibatsus were the big cartels in Germany. And they all had to be treated much the same way, and if you pressed the right buttons, you'd get democracy. That, I think, was very much the American feeling.

Q: Do you at that time pay much attention to accounts, say, in Time or Newsweek about Japan? Do you recall . . .

END TAPE I, BEGIN TAPE II
RBF: I don't remember press reporting on FEC 230 with any degree of vividness. My bible in the media, of course, has always been the New York Times, and I'm sure the New York Times had reporting on this, but not perhaps of as political a nature or critical a nature as might appear in some of the magazines. I don't really remember that much about the FEC 230 controversy, and I think probably my own sympathy at the time was in favor of those who said you had to have purges and you had to have deconcentration and you had to break up these powerful economic groupings that had cooperated with the military and helped lead the nation to war. That's fairly simplistic, but that would have been roughly my reaction, I think.

Q: How did Japan look to you when you arrived back there again in the fall of 1947?

RBF: Well, of course, some of the bomb damage had been repaired. The country was certainly not on the road to reconstruction, but it seemed a little more active, a little more cheerful. People seemed a little better off, and Tokyo, a great international city, of course, is an enjoyable place to be. It's not like being in Kyushu, where I had first landed several years before. I stayed, I recall, in the Yashima Hotel. I had wanted to get where everybody liked to get, in the Dai Ichi Hotel, but the Yashima was a nice little hotel down near Tokyo Station, not very many people in it. I had a nice little room, and it was to live in Japan, and of course as an occupationeer, you had a pretty nice as well. It was a pleasant way to live. Our office, incidentally, was the main Mitsui Building down on the Ginza, next door to the . So living at the Yashima was a lot
nearer the office than living at the Dai Ichi Building would have been. But all in all, Japan is just a place I've always felt very comfortable with, and that was not from the point of view of an American at all difficult or unpleasant time to be there.

Q: Did you come up through Yokohama to Tokyo on your second trip?

RBF: No.

Q: I was wondering what Yokohama looked like.

RBF: I came in, of course, by air from the United States, came by Northwest Airlines through Alaska and Shemya into—I remember they had free martinis on Northwest at that time, which was thought a custom the airplane industry has regrettably abandoned but should have continued. Yokohama, well, I do remember this: going from Haneda to Tokyo, you were struck with how there was an awful lot of damage, there were a lot of wide, gaping holes, a lot of buildings that were in ruins, and this was true generally of the whole Tokyo-Kawasaki-Yokohama complex. That had been very thoroughly plastered many times, as I'm sure our bombing survey pointed out. And reconstruction in the sense of rebuilding homes and dwellings had not really started at all. So the evidence of wartime damage and the feeling of desolation was still very much present.

Q: When you returned to Japan, you were assigned to the Diplomatic Section?

RBF: Yes.

Q: And what were your immediate responsibilities?

RBF: The Diplomatic Section was the State Department office. It was the hybrid function of both representing the State Department and being the diplomatic arm of GHQ SCAP. The section had, I suppose, maybe 20 officers and 10 or 15
secretaries, most of the people being State Department, but a couple being Department of Army civilians. Mr. Sebold, William J. Sebold, was the head of the Diplomatic Section and the acting political adviser. George Atcheson, who had been both of those titles, had just been killed in an airplane crash flying back from Japan to Washington in April, I think it was, of 1947, and Mr. Sebold had been designated by General MacArthur as head of the Diplomatic Section. And he had been designated by the State Department as acting POLAD. He remained acting POLAD for a couple of years. It was one of those curious bureaucratic situations.

Under Mr. Sebold in DIPSEC—we were always DIPSEC. POLAD was a bit of a formal title that didn't have much meaning and didn't get much use. There were, I think, three main divisions. There was a sort of a political section, reporting section, contacts with the Japanese on politics and diplomatic problems. Then there was a foreign liaison section which as much as anything was sort of a visa office, I suppose. Any Japanese who wanted to go abroad or any foreigners who wanted to come in, they had to get some kind of accreditation. There were a number of diplomats, of course, coming in as well, foreign diplomats. And then there was a consular section that didn't have an awful lot to do but had a sort of a normal consular function handling Americans in Japan, non-military. Those were the three sections, and I was in the political section that was headed by Mr. Cabot Coville, who'd had a number of years pre-war in Japan and was one of the Department's authorities on Japan. We had maybe three or four of us on the section. I'm a little hard-pressed at the moment to think who the others were,
but there were others. Henry Lawrence was one, Rollin Buschner was another.

Q: What sorts of things did the Diplomatic Section do?

I did

RBF: I remember, just to cite a couple of things /that I thought was quite inter-
esting, fascinating work. The fact that I was a law school graduate may
have commended itself to Bill Sebold, who was also a lawyer, and he wanted
someone around who could be on the same wavelength, in a sense. One of the
first things I did was help negotiate the Awa Maru Agreement. The Awa Maru
was a Japanese commercial vessel that took relief goods to several ports in
Asia before the war ended, pursuant to an agreement between the United
States and Japan that the ship would be used to take relief commodities to
American and Allied prisoners, in this case down in the Singapore area, and
then would be granted safe conduct, of course, both going down and returning
back to Japan after it had delivered its relief goods. Coming from, I think, the
Singapore area just before the war ended, the Awa Maru had over a thousand
Japanese officials and others who were being repatriated to Japan as well,
I believe, as a number of valuable commercial items, including some gold,
operating, as I say, on a safe conduct, sunk by an American submarine off
Okinawa. It was a little off course, but here was a submarine skipper who
didn't get the word. So all these people went down and the Japanese filed
a claim for, I think, $55 million indemnity. The war ends, nobody does
anything about the claim periodically revived. In 1947 Washington decided
that we would negotiate again for settlement of the claim. Mr. Sebold goes
to MacArthur. MacArthur says, "Well, the Japanese had unconditionally
surrendered. They waived their claim for any damages for wartime activity.
No obligation to pay the Japanese on this." We negotiate, if that's the word, an agreement with the Japanese, saying that in consideration of the generosity and equipment and services and materiel provided Japan during the post-war period, Japan hereby waives any and all claim for damage done as the result of the sinking of the Awa Maru. My job was to sort of work out the language on this deal with the Japanese to get their agreement.

Mr. Sebold went to Katayama, who was then Prime Minister. Katayama said, Okay. Katayama falls out of office. Ashida comes in and out of office. Sebold goes to Yoshida, who is then Prime Minister. Yoshida says Okay. Someone in Washington thought of the very bright angle that, gosh, if Japan waives this claim in consideration of all we've done for them, they may construe later that we've waived our claim for any payment for all the goods that we've provided in the way of relief and rehabilitation. So we very quickly add a clause or a codicil that Japan understands and accepts the American claim for compensation to be determined in the future for the goods and services provided by way of relief and rehabilitation. The agreement gets signed. Everybody's very happy. General MacArthur signed as a witness. There are those who feel that there was undue pressure exerted on Japan. I don't think it was undue. I'm not even sure it was pressure, but it was not, I suppose, the kind of agreement that one would like to conclude. And yet, as a realistic matter, it made some sense, I think. I suppose the poor surviving families of those who went down on the Awa Maru never got very much for it, but...
A second project I got involved in—you can see how proud I am of my efforts—I did a long paper on the status of Koreans in Japan. There were, as there are today, hundreds of thousands of Koreans brought into Japan, Koreans: ethnically, pure Koreans most of them, who had been brought in really to do almost a form of slave labor in the coal mines, steel mills, and things like that. They didn’t want to go back to Korea when the war ended, and the Japanese wanted to get them back to Korea. The occupation sort of wrestled with this problem, and they asked DIPSEC to do a policy statement. We did one, and the general tenor of the policy paper was that if we would pay them enough and make it worth enough their while economically to go back, why we could probably persuade a lot of them to go back. We didn’t want to pack them up on ships and force them to go back. That was the jist of the policy, and it took a lot of work with the economic people and the restitution people and all the rest. We had a pretty good policy statement, I thought, and I remember I went off on a trip to Kyushu after I finished it, my wife and I, just on vacation. I got a call down at a little, nice little yadoya down some place in Nagasaki saying, General MacArthur had thought this was a great paper, and I thought that was very nice. The upshot of the paper, of course, was that not a damned thing happened. The Koreans weren’t about to budge. I suppose if you’d offered them half the assets of 1980 Korea, they might have gone. But they weren’t going to go, and their families and progeny are still in Japan and will probably be there for an indefinite period. But those are, I think, representative, maybe with some gilding of the lily, of the kinds of things I did.
Q: When you returned in 1947, how did the occupation seem to be going to you? Its political policies, economic, educational, in particular the constitution? You'd had some involvement with the constitution through FEC.

RB:F: As general observations, I would say that the occupation was going well in terms of relations with the Japanese, total lack of opposition or resistance in any activist way by the Japanese to anything the occupation was doing, but a definite feeling that the Government Section on the political side was pushing too hard, that the purge had gone too far, that the constitution—although even then I didn't know the details of how it was written—was a rather far-out kind of document. I remember I used to have great fun at parties with Japanese talking about the provision, the equality of the sexes. You could always get a good joke out of a Japanese man or woman by telling them, "You are now—" either in the case of a man, "The women were equal to you," or in the case of a woman, "You can now tell him what to do because you are equal to him." But all of that sort of thing just would strike one who even had a fairly rudimentary grasp of Japan as rather excessive legal and social machinery for a country with a very different kind of tradition and background. Not that a lot of it wasn't desirable and needed, but it went too far. The purge, of course, I think one could say that. Anyone with a legal background would feel that the purge, having just been done by categories—there was no individual appeal, hearing or appeal or anything. Just if you'd been a member of the Yokusan Kai, the Imperial Rule Assistance Association, or you'd been a village mayor or
what have you, thousands of these categories, bingo, you were purged. This seemed exaggerated and the Government Section was a strong, powerful, arrogant--arrogant's a little strong, but they didn't take discussion or argument or words of wisdom from anybody. And Mr. Sebold, as his memoirs indicate, on several occasions was led to believe very clearly that any views he had were on subjects that were none of his business and were not particularly appreciated or helpful.

On the economic side, one had the feeling that ESS/Economic and Scientific Section/ was a bunch of guys out there enjoying life, many of them not knowing an awful lot about Japan, a fair amount of economic bungling, people floundering around for solutions and approaches without knowing very clearly what they were doing. That again is probably an exaggerated description because ESS had enormous problems to wrestle with and they probably, in retrospect, did a rather good job in starting to solve the problems, even though, in an area like that, the Japanese had to do the solving and not the Americans.

I suppose we had our own arrogance in DIPSEC that we had more expertise on Japan than the rest of them did and weren't being given much attention.

Q: What about material conditions, problems of food in 1947 and 1948? What about black marketeering? What about inflation? Do those things stand out in your mind?

RBF: Yes. Certainly the food stands out vividly. The trains going out into the countryside on the weekends full of people going out to visit their families to try to get a little food. The onion existence, so-called, where the
people in Japan and Tokyo were peeling off their assets, their cultural objects to start with, just to get a little money in order to live. These things were very characteristic. Candy bars and cigarettes selling for all kinds of exaggerated return by the Japanese, and I'm sure lots of Americans used those commodities in order to make killings for themselves. It took, I think, a long time for that sort of thing to begin to improve. I guess it's very hard to attach a date to it. Even throughout the occupation I suppose Japan was a relatively poor country. The food was not readily available, certainly in the amounts they needed. It was very expensive. The difficulties of livelihood, the numbers of Japanese who were repatriated from Asia or who were in the military and tossed out of jobs, hundreds of thousands, millions, and it's—I find it hard to recall individual cases, but for example, you'd have a maid who'd be a very well educated woman from a very good family. Her husband had been a navy captain, and he didn't have a job, and she had to go out and work. It was that kind of thing all over. I suppose in retrospect one should be a lot more sympathetic with the Japanese of that time and have greater respect for how they dug in and put their country back together. But it was that kind of thing that, as you think back, was very sad and in a way very impressive of Japanese character that they could live with it.

Q: What sorts of living arrangements did you and your wife have and other people involved with sections of SCAP?

RBF: I got to Tokyo as part of DIPSEC in September of 1947, and I lived in the Yashima Hotel. My wife arrived—wives couldn't come immediately; they were
on sort of a waiting list. She came in January of 1947. I then got a room in the Dai Ichi Hotel, a pretty darned small room, I don't know, 15 feet by 8 feet or something of that sort, two people living in it. We got on the list for occupation housing. I think being an FSO 6 in DIPSEC was about the equivalent—we may have parleyed ourselves up to captain or major. Sebold always worked terribly hard to try to get good arrangements for his staff, but they weren't easy to do. And if you compared our salaries, we were more like a top sergeant, I suppose. But eventually we got a very nice house out in Gotanda, the house of a later Supreme Court Justice of Japan. It was Western style with one Japanese room, had a nice plenty of space, and at that point there were only the two of us. We had a child in November of that year. But we lived in that house until I was transferred to Yokohama to be a vice consul in 1949. And in Yokohama, we decided we weren't going to live in old beaten-up Yokohama. We got a house in Kamakura, big, beautiful place, a little rundown and of course not much in the way of plumbing or heating, big yard, a yard big enough to put a couple of basketball courts in, with a little pond. Little old Japanese ladies came every week and tended the lawn. They didn't have lawnmowers. They just got down on their hands and knees and made a much more beautiful lawn than Scotts lawn products could ever think of creating. A very nice setup for a year or so commuting from Kamakura to Yokohama where I did consular work. Went up to Sapporo for about six months late 1950, early 1951. The Korean War was at its height. Sapporo was denuded of Americans then. The Army camp out in the suburbs, Camp Crawford, the whole First
Cavalry Division was of course fighting for its existence in Korea. We had a very nice old house in downtown Sapporo, cold, snowy. Allison, our daughter, got pneumonia up there, I remember. Our existence was princely, compared to the Japanese.

Then went back on leave to the United States in March, April, May of 1951. Oh, incidentally, we took a ship home. We went the long way home through the Indian Ocean and the Mediterranean, again in the days when there were amenities to foreign travel for the Government, a very nice trip back home. MacArthur was sacked in that period, no connection with my home leave.

Then we returned again to Tokyo and the first house we got was in Shibuya. We were in two-thirds of the house and the Japanese owner in the other third. It was a very big house, nice lawn, very pleasant place, the kind of housing today that in Tokyo, I suppose, is a couple of thousand dollars a month, if not more.

And then when the occupation ended, we had to scramble around. You had to sort of go on your own arrangements, and we again got Judge house in Gotanda where we'd started off years before, but again a very nice house. Please don't hold this against me for having nice housing in Japan.

Q: I won't. I'll just be envious. Going back to your routine as you were a third secretary, second secretary, in 1947 and 1948?

RBF: Right.

Q: Did the routine of your job bring you into considerable contact with Japanese officials?

RBF: Oh, yes. That—one of the—in contrast to being there in the Navy for a
couple of months in 1945, I had a lot of contacts with the Japanese, and Mr. Sebold thought it was important that we meet Japanese and get to know Japanese. After all, this was Japan and Japan was going to be running the place before too long. And he himself had known Japan well, known many Japanese, had many friends. And I might say that the fraternization policy was never all that rigid in Japan. There were no arbitrary rules about not going to restaurants or the theatre or being seen with a Japanese individual. Every now and then the MP's would go to a restaurant on the theory more that we shouldn't be eating their food than that we were fraternizing with them. But it was flexible and intelligent, I think.

And MacArthur, according to Sebold's memoirs, understood and agreed that particularly people of the Diplomatic Section, their job as diplomats required that they get to know the Japanese. I got to know a lot of them and of course even though I was very junior, you could know everybody. I knew—well, I knew the Foreign Minister quite well, several of them. I remember we hadn't been in our Gotanda house very long and we had a big party and we had lots of Foreign Office and political people that we got to know like Matsumoto, Frank Matsumoto. Gee, you would invite the senior people, and they'd be happy to come. It was easy to meet them, they were terribly happy to deal with Americans, to know them socially, brought their wives. One could meet anybody and develop a friendship with almost anybody in Japan in those days, and that's been one of the better things, I think, about my career. I met a lot of Japanese then who I know well today and who were grateful to find friendships with
Americans at that period, and these friendships have been lasting, more
with the Japanese in our case than any other nationality we've dealt with.

Q: How about these Japanese in their official capacities? Were you forming
any impressions about the way in which they were reacting to SCAP directives
or SCAP policies? Were they evading or were they acting with alacrity to
implement? Were they changing as they implemented the orders and directives?

RBF: As a general matter, that's terribly hard to give an answer to. I knew a
lot of the people, of course, in the Central Liaison Office. The Central
Liaison Office was really the main role of the Japanese Foreign Office, and
it was manned by Foreign Office people. The orders went from GHQ, SCAP,
Adjutant General to the CLO. "You will do this." And then the CLO had to
farm them out to the Japanese Government, and they had to go all over Japan
very
for implementation. The Japanese in their typical Japanese fashion, they'd
get an order, and they'd scratch their heads, and they'd say, "Sa." They'd
mutter under their breath, and they'd have excited, unhappy, little conver-
sations with the general tenor, "What do we do about this foolish thing?"
And the impression I always had was they made a good-faith effort to do
what they were asked to do within a Japanese context. The context would
mean the words would not always be the same kind of words the Americans
would use and the actual carrying out of the order would not be maybe what
a colonel might have thought, sitting in the Dai Ichi Building, ought to be
done. And by the time it got out to Fukuiken or down to Yamaguchi, it
might have been a fairly attenuated kind of policy. And we didn't have
many Americans in the field toward the latter part of the occupation to
check up on these things, but in general I would say the efforts made were reasonably good faith, and were rather realistic and intelligent, and the results largely what one could have hoped for.

Q: Could you tell me a little bit more about bureaucratic infighting within SCAP? You mentioned the arrogance of the Government Section, for example. To what do you attribute that? And how did the Government Section get along with ESS or other sections of SCAP?

RBF: The infighting, I would say to start with, has been grossly exaggerated by Japanese historians. Any Japanese book on the occupation you read can't get to page 10 without saying, "G2 and GS fought all the way and all the time."

To some degree there was infighting between them, I think particularly on certain issues like what individuals might be released from the purge or how far the categorization of the purge system might have gone. I think the people in G2 felt more keenly that a lot of the people at the Government Section purged were people that were desirable to have in Japan, particularly in the face of the internal instability and the possibility of Communist inroads against the government. In other words, I think there were policy differences more than there were individuals fighting with each other. I'm told that the same thing is true of General Whitney and General Willoughby, the top men in the two sections, that personally they got along all right. They dealt with each other socially, they did not have animosity against each other, but they would naturally debate sometimes in front of General MacArthur or against each other in memoranda about what ought to be done on a certain problem. The same thing is true of ESS and Government Section
on the general problem of economic reconstruction versus political reform. They would have differences on how far the purge of economic leaders might go or on the degree to which there should be a pay raise for government workers in Japan. An example, you may recall when the National Public Service Law was finally passed after a tremendous fight in 1948. The occupation felt and as part of a deal with the Japanese Government, they decided to have a pay raise for all government workers to salve over the problem of a number who were getting fired. The feeling in ESS was that Japan couldn't afford a pay raise. The feeling in Government Section was it was politically important to tide over the problem created by the Public Service Law. This became an issue, but Whitney went to MacArthur, and MacArthur said, "There will be a pay raise." And Whitney so told Yoshida. Yoshida, I think, was on the side of ESS. Very often on these infights, of course, the Japanese had their own points of view, and they were siding with one or the other. And I think that the historiography of Japan, after all of these events, tends to pick heroes and devils and side Japan with them, but to say that the devil was the American and not the policy or the hope of Japan that was intimately involved in the same kind of difficulty. I hope I've made that point clear.

I don't think, in other words, that there were the battles and the dragons and the problems that sometimes appear in Japanese writing, and that the Japanese tend to insert their own judgments and own points of view and to personalize them by being either for or against supposedly contending figures in the occupation.
And could I add one other thing not directly related? I think Japanese historiography has picked a number of devils. It's talked about New Dealers and Communists and Ultra-Leftists. Mr. Yoshida himself is, I think, to be blamed for this kind of unfair judgment. The people that they criticize as being Leftists or New Dealers, sure they may have been New Dealers. Many of us were New Dealers then and still are, and New Dealism was probably good for Japan in 1945 and good for Japan today for that matter. Communists, foreign agents, just absurd. Sure, there may have been a few of them. I've heard of a few in Government Section, people I didn't know, that one was definitely a Communist. Maybe he was, but the others whose names are mentioned, we all know who they are. People like Bisson, for example, I just don't believe were Communists or Leftists or foreign agents. Liberals, good democrats with a small "d", yes. Communists, foreign agents, not at all.

Having said all that, perhaps I've in a general way answered your question about the infighting and the personalities.

Q: In answering, you've mentioned the New Deal. I wonder--this is going back to your youth again, but we went through that very, very rapidly. You grew up during the Depression Era. What were your feelings about Franklin Roosevelt back in the United States or in the time that you were growing up, and his policies to deal with America's domestic problems?

RBF: I was, I like to think, a New Dealer. As a boy I went to a private school where I'd won a scholarship. I couldn't afford to go on my own. And I remember in the election of 1932, one of our teachers, who I found out later was a fairly liberal fellow for that kind of environment, had a class
poll. We were maybe in seventh or eighth grade. How many in the class were for Roosevelt and how many were for Hoover. And I think there was one kid for Roosevelt and 31 for Hoover, including myself. We were staunch blue-collar Republicans from my family background. By the time I got to Harvard, things had changed, and I became a New Dealer and have been a New Dealer or its equivalent ever since.

Q: How do you define New Dealer in your mind when you use that label for yourself?

RBF: Well, say in the context—forgetting the American context in the thirties—in the context of Japan in the forties, I think a New Dealer was one who believed in restoring the role of the Diet, in reducing radically the role of the Emperor, and eliminating any civilian political role for the military in trying to create more favorable conditions for the so-called common man in terms of both economic opportunity, education, and a general social environment. I think that kind of thing was New Dealism for Japan. New Dealism today is perhaps a little more complicated. I suppose one has to associate it more with LBJ/Lyndon B. Johnson/ populism or Jimmy Carter's forms of openness and emphasis on the individual, human rights, and that kind of thing.

Q: Do you think there was a real strengthening of democratic tendencies in 1948/1949? Were you observing the elections, the party politicians, party behavior?

RBF: I certainly feel that in the case of Japan. I've never been one to believe that the Liberal Party, later the Liberal Democratic Party, was really the same old guys from the thirties wearing a different guise. I do not believe that Yoshida Shigeru was anti-democratic or ultra-nationalist. I
had lunch with a very good friend yesterday, a very important man in the
Government Section and a very able fellow in my opinion. And he said
Yoshida was opposed to occupation objectives. I sort of thought of asking
him, "How can you possibly say that? Look at Yoshida's background and pre-
war record." But I think I knew what he meant. I think it is true that
Yoshida was not for the strong purge, the very liberal across-the-board
reforms that the occupation wanted to make in all fields of Japanese
activity. So I can, I think, understand that there was some feeling that
Yoshida was not totally in sympathy with everything the occupation wanted
to do. I think, however, the same thing was true of Ashida, probably even
of Katayama and the rest. And I would go farther, and I would say that the
what I call "moderates" and some call "conservative" Japanese are the ones
that know how to run the country. They've got the leadership and the know-
how and the organizing skill, and I don't think the other parties have yet
demonstrated that, although I personally remain confident. If there ever
should be say a Socialist government of some persuasion in Japan, Socialist,
Komeito, whatever—I think I would probably exclude the Communists, but I
think even those people would be very much like the British Labor Party or
the German Social Democratic Party. They would not, in other words, be
leftists in the sense of economics or Euro-Communism. I think they would
be very much moderate, reasonable people. So I feel that these reforms
have found sympathetic ground in Japan and have been effective and that
Japan, very much certainly after the sort of aberrations of the 1946 election
has found a reasonably stable, intelligent, democratic road.
Q: In that period did you observe any demonstrations, mass parades, in particular some of those May Day protests?

RBF: May Day, yes. May Day, of course, was pretty peaceful during the occupation. I was not in Japan at the time of the February 1947 strike threat. I don't believe that it ever came to the point of any mass demonstrations or people walking up and down the streets of Tokyo. The only real demonstration, frankly, I remember in my whole period in Japan, other than visits more recently, was the May Day of 1952, three days after the Peace Treaty came into force. That was a real good show and a little scary, frankly.

Q: You moved from Tokyo down to Yokohama in 1949?

RBF: Yes.

Q: And were engaged in consular work?

RBF: Yes.

Q: What sorts of things were you doing as a consular official? Was Yokohama a bustling port by that time?

RBF: Yokohama was pretty go-go then, right. It had come back fairly fast, and it was the main port for all Eastern Japan commercial shipping. Well, I tell you one thing I remember, I remember very vividly, was whether or not Suru Shigato should get a visa to the United States. And I remember I devoted an enormous amount of effort to trying to get a visa for Suru and to going into all of the Japanese police records and the G2 records, which were simply a rehash of the Japanese police records, as to whether or not Suru had been a Communist and whether in any case he was excludable from the United States. And there were two or three other Japanese of a sort of
similar background, young intellectuals, economists particularly, who'd studied abroad, who'd got involved clearly in liberal type activities, who'd got on the Japanese police lists of leftists or extremists and therefore were having a devil of a time getting visas to go to the United States. That was probably the most interesting and significant case that I handled.

Curiously, John Allison's memoirs, you may recall, he says that when he was appointed Ambassador to Japan in 1952, he called on President Eisenhower before leaving. And the only request he made of President Eisenhower in relation to Japan was the fact that he thought a visa ought to be granted to this young Japanese intellectual Suru. I was very surprised that he would have raised a matter of this rather detailed nature with the President in his official farewell call before leaving to become ambassador. And Ike's advice generally was, "Do what you think is right," which of course that's pretty good advice. But it was an important case. I was a little disappointed, however, that I who had worked like a dog on it in 1949 had not got anywhere and it was still kicking around in 1952, even though kicking around at a more appropriate level.

Q: What sorts of things were going on in 1949 that were related to your job in Yokohama?

RBF: Well, another great issue was the expatriation of nisei who'd come back to Japan before the war, most of them, many of them as young kids to go to school or to get in touch with the family, and had been conscripted into the Japanese Army. An equally tricky, somewhat more amusing situation, was that of the women who'd voted in the Japanese election. The election
of 1946, of course, everyone wanted to be democratic, so everybody was urged to vote. Everybody went out and voted. Two of the grounds, of course, for losing American citizenship under the Nationality Act, even though you were born in the United States, are serving in a foreign army or voting in a foreign election. So we had hundreds of cases of these people who had served in the army, willy-nilly, or voted in the elections. And automatically you had to expatriate them, and I thought that was just insane. We used to argue and write memos to Mrs. Ruth Shipley, who was the head of the Passport Division, and back always would come the form stamped, "Expatriation Approved. Deprived of all American Citizenship Rights." And then these people, if they had money and know-how, they'd go to a San Francisco lawyer, A. L. Werin, have a case in court. He won every case. They always got citizenship restored. Of course, this is bureaucracy at its worst, you know, sort of up and down the hill. I suppose every one of those nisei who has made any effort at all, has resumed American citizenship. But for years and for mountains of paper, bureaucrats kept busy churning away pros and cons on it.

Q: I understand there were rumors in 1949 that the Department of State might take control of the occupation. Were you aware of--

RBF: Oh, yes. Oh, aware, hopeful, and thinking, "Boy, I'll be the head of the Government Section, you know."

Q: Can you clarify any of that?

RBF: Well, General MacArthur, of course, in 1947 said there should be a peace treaty. Japan had earned it. Peace treaty planning was going off and on
intermittently. Every few months somebody, whether Washington or Tokyo or London, would say, "We need a peace treaty with Japan." Generally everyone seemed to be for a peace treaty, and even MacArthur. MacArthur, to his great credit, early on thought a peace treaty should be given Japan. And of course, for a variety of reasons, it was rather hard to pull one off. I know when I went out to Tokyo in 1947, this was, I think, shortly after MacArthur had made his famous statement at the Press Club about the need for an early peace treaty. I thought, "Gee, I won't be out here a few months before we'll be running the place." I guess my reaction was initially one of blind optimism and enthusiasm and only later, after seeing these balloons come and go, realizing that it was going to be a long way off.

Q: I'd like to ask you some more about 1949. Do you have any spectator impressions, for example, of the Dodge Mission to Japan?

RBF: I do recall that the Dodge Mission stirred up some nervous feelings, even among the various people in the occupation sections, let alone the Japanese. Dodge was famous as a hard-hitting tough guy who had very stern economic medicine to supply ailing patients. He had done this in Germany and done it quite successfully, and that's no doubt why he was picked to come to Japan. I might say that Ralph Reed, Rex Reed whom I have mentioned earlier, was an important figure with all the Dodge missions, knows their work very well, and I hope you can talk to him sometime when he comes back to Washington. He's now in Tokyo as a business consultant.

I would say that, in general, there was a feeling or a concern that the medicine being prescribed by Dodge was a little too stiff for the ailing
Japanese patient. And they couldn't take these tough, anti-inflationary measures, and they... 

END SIDE I, BEGIN SIDE II

... couldn't set a firm exchange rate without running great risk of permanent damage to the economy. On the other hand, I think we might have been somewhat guilty in Tokyo, and this is true of both ESS and the Diplomatic Section, of an over-protective attitude toward the Japanese, and lack of a full awareness of the broader policy considerations that were prevailing in Washington, particularly the consideration that Germany and had Japan had plenty of time to be reformed and reconstructed, and that the time had come for them to start standing on their own feet and walking, getting out of the hospital and leading their own life. And I think as a very general proposition, that was probably a more realistic attitude than the one we had in Tokyo.

Q: Do you have any impressions of the so-called Red purges in 1950?

RBF: Some, yes. I quickly think of Dr. Walter Eels of the CI&E, Information and Education Section of SCAP. He became somewhat the lightning rod, and he was a rather, I thought, bumbling professorial type sent around Japan to make speeches at universities about the threat of Communism and the need to get Communist thoughts out of the schools. I thought maybe the occupation over-reacted on Communism and the Red purge, and some of the reading I've done more recently about General MacArthur, I'm extremely impressed with what I thought was a highly realistic view he took all along, namely, Communism was not a threat in Japan and basically, they didn't have guns and
therefore they couldn't overthrow the government, and that the Japanese politically, psychologically, were not a Communist-prone people. I think that's absolutely right, and that history has totally demonstrated that MacArthur was right and the worrywarts, including sometimes Bill Sebold and certainly including General Willoughby, maybe overdid the Red scare. And I think the Red purge was probably overdone, but maybe that's optimism based on long hindsight.

Q: When one thinks of 1950, the outbreak of the Korean War immediately comes to mind. Could you tell me a little bit about the reactions and the attitudes in Japan about the Korean War?

RBF: First of all, the reactions of the Americans was one of almost disbelief that it could have happened on any major scale and then one of considerable confidence that we would knock them in the head if it was only the North Koreans; and then great pessimism during the summer months of 1950 when the American and South Korean forces were practically tossed out of Pusan in a Dunkirk style situation; and then again great optimism when the Inchon landing was successful in September and hoped that it would all wind up quickly and successfully with another major feather in the cap of General MacArthur as he marched towards the Yalu late in the year; again a new dose of pessimism when that became almost a disaster. In other words, the Americans were on a somewhat psychological toboggan. I think we were up and down on that thing, and it ended with a very nervous kind of attitude about where we stood and how well we'd handled it.
The Japanese, I think, had tremendous, well, poise or even indifference about it. I think they felt basically it was not their fight, not their struggle. They hadn't started it or been involved in it, and they were not going to worry much about it, incidentally, an attitude they take toward many of the problems in Asia and have for years. Number Two, and even more strong, however, I think was their feeling that Uncle Sam was there. He was big and powerful, he was a super power. He'd shown them who was who in 1945 and Uncle Sam was probably big and strong enough to take care of it and it would all work out reasonably well in the long run, which probably was a fairly realistic judgment.

Q: From where you were in the occupation, did it seem that Japan was playing any kind of a significant role in a support capacity during the Korean War?

RBF: It became very apparent early that Japanese support in terms of supply, logistics, and as a base for all operations was absolutely vital, of course. And the kinds of things that our security treaty with Japan and its accompanying note exchange would make impossible in any Korean war today were freely resorted to in 1950, 1952, and made the difference between certainly a successful resolution from our point of view, and I think it was successful, and what could have been a very awkward, drawn-out situation. And from Japan's point of view, the tokoju, the special procurement, billions of dollars pumped into the big companies, in fact, all up and down the Japanese industrial complex. Commercial sales was, I suppose, more important than the Dodge Mission and FEC 230 and cancellation of reparations and everything else in terms of starting Japan on the economic road that it has successfully
trod ever since.

Q: How are you and your wife continuing to enjoy Japan and to learn more about Japan?

RBF: Today, of course, Japan is, I think, our main intellectual interest. We both do quite a bit of reading and going to meetings and talking to people and belonging to groups that deal with Japan. My own interest has become fairly developed on this very period we're talking about, the 1945-1952 post-surrender Japan. My wife has developed an interest which to me is somewhat esoteric in Meiji Japan and Meiji architecture and the early Western architectural influences in Meiji Japan as part of a more general interest in foreign influences in Japan after the Restoration and in Japan's Westernization at that time.

Q: Were you doing some traveling around, seeing parts of Japan, and were you continuing to enjoy the Kabuki theatre and learning more about Japanese culture in off-duty hours?

RBF: Well, certainly when we were based in Japan and the two times that we've been over there since more recently we did.

Q: I was referring to the 1948-1951 period.

RBF: Well, starting with my first meeting with the Kabuki actors in 1945, we went to Kabuki quite regularly, you know, every month or every couple of months at least. We met a number of the actors socially, we had them out to our house. I would not say that I'm an expert on Kabuki or that I understand Kabuki either as a cultural force or as a linguistic phenomenon when I go, but I enjoy it and I think I understand it well enough to
get tremendous thrill out of seeing these things, Kabuki plays like the
so-called (the tales of the haikai, the
or the noh show. The noh show, I think, is--I know it well enough
now to enjoy it, either as a no form or as a Kabuki form. To me, that's
as enjoyable as going to Hamlet, and I think that's a certain form of
acculturation when you can enjoy something like that. We are unabashed
Japan lovers.

Q: Did you have any involvement in the Peace Treaty negotiations or the
U.S. Japan Security Treaty?

RBF: When I came back to Japan after home leave in 1951 in May, I think it was,
right after General MacArthur had left, Mr. Sebold wanted me to be his
collector and repository of all the papers dealing with the Peace Treaty.
The Peace Treaty negotiations were then fairly well advanced. Mr. Dulles
had started it a year ago, a year before, in I think April 1950, and by
April/May 1951 the treaty was in an advanced form and the final negotiations
were going on ahead to arrange for a peace conference and hopefully a con-
clusion, a signing in other words, of a peace treaty with Japan. So I was
the fellow in the office that had all the files, handled all the telegrams
and all the contact work at the so-called working level on the Peace Treaty.
I regretfully didn't get invited to go to the San Francisco conference. I
had sort of wished I had, but Bill Sebold, I gather, had a little trouble
getting his invitation. So the rest of us didn't make it, but I did have a
close bureaucratic involvement in the latter stages of the peace negotiations.
Q: What were the issues at that stage and do you have any comments to make about Dulles and others who were directly involved in those negotiations?

RBF: First of all, I think Mr. Dulles' negotiation of the Japanese Peace Treaty was an absolute masterpiece. I am not a total admirer of the moral crusading ethic of Mr. Dulles as Secretary of State particularly, but as a negotiator of the Peace Treaty, it was an incredible performance and just magnificently done. It was virtually a one-man show, a shuttle before the days of shuttle diplomacy, going all over the world, visiting the important capitals, trying to line up the vote, including the Russians. He practically got the Russians to sign, that's how good he was at it. The main issues: what about American forces, defense of Japan after the treaty. Solution: a separate security treaty. The Security Treaty was never mentioned. It was totally different. It was the skeleton in the closet you didn't talk to or show to anybody. Yoshida knew about it, he was prepared to sign it, and it was the total easy solution and nobody made an issue about the security. Reparations: terrible problem. Australia, Philippines, all the Asian countries, of course, wanted billions out of Japan. The formula was that the Japanese would work this out after the treaty, agreeing in the treaty to a very general formula about reparations for governments that had suffered at the hands of wartime Japan.

Yoshida had to write some letters that were a little more specific to the Indonesians, I think, and the Filipinos, but at no point did the Japanese really commit themselves to any specific amounts of money. And the final solutions were terribly advantageous to Japan because they were
based really on trade, and they gave the Japanese trade a foot in the door to these countries and to Asia which was very remunerative for Japan in the long run.

The solution there was simply Japan gave up all the foreign territories that it had conquered and no statements or provisions were made as to who would take over those territories. So the Kurils and Taiwan, just as two examples, are still question marks today. But that's in very broad brush the problems and the solutions. But I think it was a great show.

Q: And you were also involved with the Administrative Agreement?

RBF: Yes. The Administrative Agreement was to implement the Security Treaty. The Security Treaty was signed the afternoon of the day that the Peace Treaty was signed in San Francisco in September 1951. The Security Treaty provided that America would have the right to keep forces in Japan for the defense of Japan. The Administrative Agreement was the agreement that provided the specific rights and privileges, the taxes and the import of equipment and the maneuver rights and the criminal jurisdiction and all of the details that go into these agreements that we Americans as fire insurance lawyers like to have with governments around the world. And it was not easy. The Japanese knew that if they didn't sign the Administrative Agreement, we would delay the coming into force of the Peace Treaty and the Security Treaty. So in February of 1952, four or five months after the Peace Treaty and before any date was set for the bringing into force of the Peace Treaty, we started this long, hard negotiation, and it wasn't easy. The criminal
jurisdiction was particularly difficult because the United States wanted the right to try American troops for most of the offenses and the problems they might get into in Japan. But we finally worked it out. The Japanese wanted the agreement and like everything else in the occupation, the Japanese had their positions, had their objectives. But they knew that if it was an issue of major importance, the will of the United States would prevail. In other words, the United States had the high trump cards for any situation that came along. And the kind of administrative agreement we wanted was important to us, and the Japanese, although they got modifications and they got an agreement that worked extremely well, there was no real damage to their interests. They fought hard and finally agreed to the type of arrangement that was good for both of us.

Q: By that time MacArthur had been dismissed. Do you know anything about that dismissal, or what were your reactions to it?

RBF: I knew nothing about it in any inside first-hand way. I would say this though, and this is a hindsight observation. I think General MacArthur, and I've gleaned this from a lot of reading, looked upon the Communist attack on South Korea in June 1950 as an attack by the Communist World on the Allied World, the Free World, a chance at last to have a showdown and to defeat the forces of Communism. And I think he looked upon this as a worldwide challenge, not just a localized challenge. His statements, his VFW /Veterans of Foreign Wars/ address, his letter to Congressman Joe Martin, all of these things are cast in a very broad political framework. And General MacArthur liked to think in broad geopolitical terms. He was,
therefore, not in sympathy with the localization of the war. He found it hard to understand that he couldn't at least go to the Yalu River with his forces and bomb anything beyond the Yalu River that would achieve the victory for his forces. And if the Communists wanted to make an issue of that and broaden the scope of the war, so be it. The gauntlet was thrown down and we fight unto the end. This was not the view of Washington, and I think this was a basic difference between them. And it was a terribly dangerous threat, I think, to American interests at that time. I don't think it was very well handled by Washington. As a result of many years of dealing with MacArthur, they were not in a position really to deal with it very effectively, and he almost, it seems to me, involved us in a broad war we didn't want to get into. And I think his relief was absolutely essential to our interests at that time, no matter how much you admire MacArthur for all the other things he did in his career.

Q: Could I shift to the top man on the Japanese side? Did you form any particular impressions of Prime Minister Yoshida Shigeru?

RBF: I had met Mr. Yoshida, met him in a number of meetings and social occasions when I was working with Mr. Sebold on the treaty, starting in May 1951. Yoshida was a rather delightful little fellow. He would wander around at parties and meetings with a sort of benign smile on his face and with a cigar. You were never quite sure he knew who you were or for that matter who most of the other people were, but he had a terribly witty sense of humor. He was unserious in most conversations. I get an impression from various people's memoirs he was not even serious when they wanted him to be
serious. But he was, I thought, a man who took a sort of relaxed, self-confident view of his role in Japanese politics and in dealing with Americans. Many Japanese, you worry about them. You're a little nervous with them, and you know they're very nervous with you. But Yoshida wasn't that way. He seemed to sort of enjoy it in his own puckish, somewhat detached manner. As I say, I never got a feeling of what his political substance or long-term political goals might be. But I think he did have an attitude and a manner of dealing, maybe partly because of his diplomatic experience that was quite successful and quite enjoyable frankly for Americans who found dealing with some of his colleagues a little more uncertain and Oriental and maybe indirect is the word. Mr. Dulles, I think, found Yoshida however a strain sometimes. Yoshida had a very Oriental Japanese tendency to talk away from the issue when you wanted to pin him down on some issue as to what he thought, for example, about rearmament of Japan, about which Mr. Dulles felt rather strongly. Mr. Yoshida would sort of laugh and get puckish and change the subject. And Mr. Dulles, of course, was not that easily dissuaded and he'd come back. And Mr. Yoshida would then crack a joke and go off again on another tangent. Mr. Sebold, who was sort of the matchmaker between the two of them, sometimes felt that his bride was not acting very responsively to the prospective groom's approaches. But this was Yoshida's character, and I think on the whole it was rather successful. And I must say that on the rearmament, I agreed with Yoshida and fortunately, he had an even stronger protagonist in his corner, Douglas MacArthur. The author of Article IX also believed Japan should not rearm. It would be dangerous. So Yoshida again,
diplomacy. And Yoshida, he had a real sense of humor. You could chitchat
with him.

But the main point I would make about Yoshida is I think he was a man
who saw what he wanted to achieve and things he didn't want to achieve.
And he was rather clever at keeping the Americans looking toward economic
reform and the economic reconstruction of Japan and eventually getting
their minds off the purge and the constitution and the Emperor and all
these things that were rather neuralgic for the Japanese. So when a
Japanese asks you the question—well, I remember Sodai, Professor Sodai,
one of the historians of the occupation. He said, he teaches a course
on the occupation. And he said, one of the opening courses, lectures
that he gave, a girl student stood up and said—the fact that she was a
girl is not important—stood up and said, "Was there actually a war be-
tween the United States and Japan?" And he said, "Yes, there was."
And she said, "Who won?" And he found that sort of interesting, showing
that even in Japan people aren't all that aware of their past. And I
that
would cite that as showing/maybe there is a real question as to who won
the war after all.

Q: What do you know about the relationship of MacArthur and Yoshida?

RBF: I guess not a great deal. The thing to me that's rather interesting about
that is we know quite a bit about what Yoshida thought about MacArthur and
the Americans. We know very little about what MacArthur thought about
Yoshida and the Japanese. This is all in keeping, I think, with MacArthur's
sense of aloofness and greatness and that one of the essential principles of
command is a sense of mystery and an uncertainty on the part of everybody
a very shrewd fellow, he could play off two Americans against each other and usually come out the winner or at least sometimes come out the winner.

More on Yoshida. I remember when he came to America after the Peace Treaty was in force in 1954. He was making sort of the Hanamichi tour. Everybody knew he was going to leave office in a matter of months, and he did a few months after he got back. But he was going to visit the United States and Europe, see all the potentates and the powers and express his best wishes to them and thanks for what they had done for Japan. He came to Washington, and he saw Eisenhower and Dulles. I was the honsho, the arranger for the trip, and I know we took them over to the Pentagon one day, and we saw the Secretary of Defense, Mr. Wilson, and then we were going to take him to Admiral Radford's office, the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs. And I very carefully set up all these things, and we went from Wilson's office to Radford's office, which I managed to find and then lo and behold, Radford was not there. He was in Europe. This was rather awkward. If I'd been a Japanese kamaamochi, my neck would have gone the next day. But Yoshida was very charming about it all, cracked a few jokes. We wandered around the Pentagon, didn't get too lost, managed to find the automobile, and returned back to his hotel. But I sort of thought of that as an example of maybe foreigners can get away with things that a Japanese lower bureaucrat would have lost his political or professional life for doing wrong. But it was sort of fun to walk around with this old fellow. You could talk with him and comment on how complicated the Pentagon was and how finding your way around the Pentagon was even harder than finding your way around world
around you as to what you think and what you want. But we have no records. I think that's literally true, no records of meetings between MacArthur and Yoshida, MacArthur and the Emperor, or MacArthur and the other Japanese. Here again, a curious footnote. MacArthur was an Allied commander. He wasn't an American commander so that the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs couldn't send a cable the next day and say, "What the hell did you really talk to the Emperor about yesterday?" MacArthur would have given him a very curt reply that the Chairman knew would be curt and therefore didn't invite trouble by asking for it. This was a MacArthur technique. Manchester calls him "the American Caesar," and if he was not the American Caesar, he was certainly an American sleight-of-hand artist who knew how to handle Washington or London or even the Russians in a way that left MacArthur sort of standing out in a strong position.

But I think it's pretty clear that MacArthur had a certain definite admiration, if not secret admiration, for the Japanese. I remember his aide-de-camp, Colonel Bunker, whom I had a talk with a couple of years ago, saying, of all the Asians—and MacArthur rather prided himself on knowing Asians—he felt that the Filipinos—I'm rather doubtful about that score—and the Japanese were the two peoples in Asia that he respected most and felt had the most to offer the United States. And I think that, although he had no particular affinity for Yoshida personally, he found that Yoshida was a person he could deal with; Yoshida would do what the occupation wanted him to do, and that Yoshida, after a couple of years of juggling in the Japanese political scene, emerged as far and away Number
One, and therefore Yoshida was the boy we would work with. I think really it was sort of that kind of relationship between them.

Q: Could we move down just one level or so, down to Willoughby or Whitney or Sebold or Marquat and others who were high up in the occupation? Do you have any observations about their interaction with Japanese officials and politicians?

RBF: Sebold, of course, knew all of them, saw a lot of them, had a lot to do with them. And Sebold was a very, I suppose, pro Japanese. It sounds a little bad in English.

Q: He wouldn't have been arrogant?

RBF: He was certainly not arrogant. I think Sebold was old-style in his approach. He believed in the values of the traditional Japanese system. I think the idea of the purge really shook him badly. He believed the emperor system was good for Japan. He adhered to many, what people, Japanese included, would have considered traditional Japanese values. But he liked Japan and the Japanese, and I think was an extremely good influence in the occupation where you had a lot of people who knew nothing about Japan. That's true of all of them, including MacArthur, and people in many cases who were sort of suspicious of the Japanese or who wanted to play around and change the Japanese system.

Whitney I think was on the political make for his idol, MacArthur. I think he wanted MacArthur to be President, and I think he chose policies and approaches that were designed to enhance MacArthur's world stature, increase the possibility that MacArthur might be an important political figure and
as I think one historian said, maybe Whitney might even be Secretary of State some day if all worked out.

Willoughby, German background, brilliant man in many senses, a linguistic genius, a man with a great social presence, but I think a very conservative man, pro-Franco, that sort of thing probably, although again exaggerated by historians. I think he adhered to the sort of old-style Japanese approach because he was a conservative man, resisted, was afraid of any Communist inroads in a place like Japan.

Marquat, somebody said he was sort of a newspaper man or a Boy Scout. He presided over the Allied Council as if it were a PTA /Parent Teacher Association/ meeting, everybody called by his first name and jokes and sort of humor. I think that was somewhat Marquat's approach to life. He was a very funny guy at a staff meeting, very unserious. He'd been an artillery officer and a newspaper man. Running the economy of Japan was probably something that was farthest from his dreams and probably farthest from his hopes at the same time. But the fact the thing worked out all right is maybe a miracle of good luck. I suppose those are some comments on some of the leaders.

Q: You mentioned the purges. I should have asked you before if you had any special thoughts at the time about the war crimes trials.

RBF: I guess I'm conservative and old school also. I think the war crimes trials are based on three sets of general indictments: conventional crimes, crimes against humanity, and conspiracy to commit international aggression. I think the conspiracy to commit aggression is a very doubtful one frankly.
It's so close to the winner saying, "You guys started it and then you lost and now you're going to pay the price by going to jail or losing your head."

It smacks of a victor's justice as Richard Minear has said in, I thought, a very good book on the whole thing. I think where you can, on the other hand, document that the individual himself murdered prisoners or committed brutalities, conventional type crimes, there ought to be punishment for that, and there was a lot of it. The only thing that I feel badly about is our side did it, I'm sure a lot less than their side did it. I mentioned earlier in the battle of Leyte Gulf, we sunk a number of Japanese ships in that battle, and I remember, as I said, going out the morning after looking around for the Japanese. We went out in our boat. There were a lot of Japanese swimming around in the water. Their ship had been sunk, they were miles from the nearest land. The guys would unlimber their machineguns and just shoot these Japanese heads like coconuts in the water. I thought that was pretty damned brutal. That's a war crime, I thought, as much as many probably the Japanese committed. But no Americans would go to jail for that kind of thing. Of course, that's maybe one of the horrors of war.

But I suppose I end up in answer to your question that I think the major Class A war crimes trials, Japan and Germany, are rather doubtful. There were plenty of grounds for finding these people guilty of other types of crimes.

One last point: General MacArthur was roundly criticized for his Homma, Yamashita trials, or the American trials, of Homma and Yamasta in the Philippines, Homma at the start and Yamasta at the end of the war. I really think we
probably pushed those too hard as Americans. There's an awful taint and I think particularly in the Japanese mind because Homma beat MacArthur and because Yamashita had been a hero in the early part of the war and had given MacArthur such trouble in recapturing the Philippines in 1944, MacArthur wanted revenge. I think that's probably not true, but I think there again the whole war crimes thing is a rather suspect operation.

Q: Since you remained in Japan after the Peace Treaty, I wonder if you have any especially vivid recollections of what it was like to go from occupied Japan to post-occupied Japan?

RBF: I guess the only real thing--I remember things like we had to find our own housing, which of course was a terrible deprivation for those of us who had been accustomed to having it all handed out on a silver platter.

What else do I remember?

Q: Any feeling of elation among the Japanese? Or were they willing now to make criticisms perhaps that they hadn't made before?

RBF: I would only say that I think Americans, for all our Anglo-Saxon rationality, can be rather silly about things like this. We were scared stiff for months that (1) the Japanese would rise up and give us an awful lot of trouble, and (2) the whole relationship between the countries would change the day after the Peace Treaty. I must say we were a little nervous on May Day, three days after the Peace Treaty, when the Japanese had this big May Day march and they threw some GI's and their cars into the Imperial Moat and set a few more cars on fire. We sort of thought maybe the revolution had come. But I think in virtually general there was no change in the atmosphere or the attitude of people or
even in the economic position of Americans in Japan. It was a very smooth, easy transition. I might say that I and two or three other people had spent about three months in a propaganda effort before the treaty came into force explaining the administrative agreement and how it was all very natural and normal, and nobody was going to suffer, and his servants weren't going to revolt, and he wasn't going to be thrown out of his housing or anything else. But it all worked well.

I might just say that I've been through the very same kind of thing lately on the Panama Canal Treaty. There's terror in the minds of the Americans in Panama that the day the treaty comes into force, which is still almost a year off, there too the revolution will come and there too they will be tossed into the Canal or their houses burned or what-have-you. And I just don't believe that. I think again one has to have some realism and maybe even a little optimism about the fact that the world is not a totally irrational place, including Orientals and Latinos.

Q: You're someone who's been able to go back to Japan many times, and you continue to deal professionally with Japan. I wonder if I could ask you then just one last question. Do you think that the period of occupation, as we see it now with the perspective of 1978, did it make that much of a difference in Japan's social system, its politics, its economy?

RBF: This is one of the great questions: was the thirties and the wartime period a discontinuity in what is essentially a democratic, modern, rational society, the society of Japan? I must say it's a little hard to answer that, I think. Why did Japan do the things it did in the late thirties and
get into the war the way it did? Was that a discontinuity? There's something obviously wrong with the system when the military and national elements could pervert it the way they did. I really come out saying I think the occupation did make a tremendous difference in Japan, not because the Japanese were suddenly converted in five years from ultramilitarist nationalists to democrat, economic capitalists. But rather that whatever the ills were in the system, they were largely purged and that the Japanese, being a very rational, practical people and the example of what was certainly one of the most liberal and generous and understanding type of relationships that you could expect in an occupation between the victor and the defeated, those things put together produced a society in Japan and a relationship between our two countries that couldn't be a more healthy and advantageous one than we see today. And without the war, God knows what kind of a relationship it would have been.