

**MR MARTIN FAGA INTERVIEWED BY GERALD HAINES
24 NOVEMBER 1996
CHANTILLY, VA**

RLW #
CL BY: #####
CL REASON: 1.5 (c)
DECLAS ON: X1
DRV FROM: NRO SCG 5.1
1 May 2000

~~SECRET/BYEMAN~~

~~SECRET/BIEMAN~~

FAGA

Mr. Gerald Haines: With your general background, education, family, where you are from and then we'll move into how you got into this business. Mr. Martin Faga: I was born and grew up in Bethlehem Pennsylvania. Probably about 50 miles north of Philadelphia. My father was an accountant for the fuel company there. I went to school there, to Lehigh University. Graduated in '63 in electrical engineering. I joined the Air Force through the ROTC program and was assigned back to Lehigh as a graduate student for an MSEE, which I completed in '64. I left Bethlehem then in '64 and moved to a first assignment at Wright Patterson Air Force Base in the avionics laboratory, and became involved in reconnaissance for the first time in airborne reconnaissance, development activities in the lab emphasizing infrared cameras which were brand new at the time and laser line scan cameras which I was involved in the test program. Cameras that were used to a limited degree in Viet Nam, and really had not been much used since because of the very low altitude capability. I came to Washington in '67 reassigned to the Air Force Systems Command out at Andrews Air Force Base. I left the Air Force in '68, worked briefly for Perk and Elmer, which is ^{an} optical and reconnaissance company. Went to Mitre in ground sensor programs that were supporting the still ongoing war in Viet Nam, then left Mitre in '72 to join CIA and as it turned out, NRO, although I didn't know that until I became an employee. In fact it was the electro-optics background I had gained in the Air Force that interested OD&E, the CIA component of NRO, in my application and brought me the job. I had expected to, shortly after assigned, I'd expected to work right in the then KENNON program. H: When did you become aware of KENNON? Was it with CIA, or had you known about it with the Air Force? F: No, I had never been briefed in the Air Force so I didn't know about it until I was an employee. I was not assigned to KENNON, or but rather to the Advanced Systems branch of OD&E, which had essentially been depleted by all the folks, who had a year before gone off to start the

~~SECRET/BIEMAN~~

program office for [redacted] So I had the opportunity to work on some of the initial design of how (b)(1)-
(b)(3)
to apply the CCD sensor, which the technology staff was supporting, and relayed that to a down
stream version of [redacted] work, which finds its way into some of the later versions of [redacted]
During my first few years at OD&E also worked extensively on the development of [redacted] —
[redacted] which was ultimately [redacted] In late '75, I was (b)(1)
(b)(3)
assigned to the NRO staff in the R&D element of the Systems Directorate. H: Did you apply for
that, or did somebody pick you out? F: No, somebody who had come up for a briefing, in fact it
was General Rosenberg, had come out to OD&E for a briefing and recognized that he needed
someone in roughly my background and age. Asked CIA to assign me to the staff, which I was
happy to do, and enjoyed very much. Well, about 18 months into that assignment, the House
Intelligence Committee or more exactly, the House Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence, (HPSCI,
was created and they were out looking for a staff. H: This would have been '78? F: This was '77.
I have laughed at Jim Hill a hundred times since, that he gave them my name, and then came to
me and said well would you be interested in maybe taking the staff job on the ^Hhill, it would be a —
good chance to get yourself promoted fast. So I have kidded him while I was there 12 years, I
don't know if that is fast or whether that is slow but it worked out okay in the end. H: So you
were 12 years at HPSCI? F: Yes, I get a little ahead of my story. Yes, I was there 12 years.
Initially a member of the staff on the program and budget subcommittee and later when the staff
director of that subcommittee left was made staff director in '84, and held that position until '89.
But, during that time I became acquainted with then Congressman Cheney, who had become a
member of the committee in the mid '80s. H: But the chair was then BOLEN and STOKES? F:
BOLEN and then Congressman Lee Hamilton, then Congressman Louis Stokes, and then
Congressman Tony BEILONSON who was Chairman when I left in '89. Mr. Cheney having

~~SECRET/BYEMAN~~

FAGA

become the Secretary of Defense, he invited me to take the role of the Assistant Secretary for Space and the Air Force, and Director of the NRO, which I was most pleased to do. So, like most careers, not a career one could predict or have planned out very exactly, but certainly taken me directions I've wanted to go. People say well it was the common denominator. The common denominator has always been an interest in the sensing devices, the remote sensing aspect of it, starting with the aerial reconnaissance in the Air Force in the 60's to even my interests on the Hill. I had the interesting experience on the Hill, of being the only person on the House Source Senate staff that had a technical background and often laughed at how I would write the basic problem description for both myself and my senate colleagues. Then we would go off in our separate directions, whatever recommendations we had to the committee. I used to argue, well we ought to have the facts right, and then we can argue about what they mean separately. I always enjoyed doing that, and built some really good relationships and friendships that last until today. H: Now, who did you deal with while you remember of HPSCI out at the NRO? F: The NRO was one of my accounts so to speak, so usually it was Jim Hill as Deputy Director during most of that time, or Chief of Staff during a part of that time. There was by then a legislative liaison function worked through them, two program managers. H: What were your impressions of NRO at that point? F: Of course you remember I had just come from NRO, knew it very well, was a strong supporter, in fact I recall while being interviewed for the Hill I job, I told them I said, I think that I am capable of being very objective but you should understand that I would come at this job with the philosophy that is strongly supportive of intelligence, to which they said, well that is the function of the committee. Now some would argue that the committee didn't always live up to that strong and supportive role. I think in the aggregate that it did. The kind of philosophy I held, and my colleagues held toward intelligence was well received so long as every

~~SECRET/BYEMAN~~

question was answered honestly which it always was. H: Now, how big of a staff were you a part of down at the HPSCI? F: The total staff was 17, as I recall, it varied one or two above or below that. The program and budget staff was only 4, or later 5 when an auditor was added. The 17 include security officers and secretaries, so there was a small professional staff on a couple of other^s. H: Did you feel that you could be overwhelmed by the executive branch and the statistics and things that they could throw at you being so small? F: Well, that is a theory that you often hear, I didn't feel^e so, because I didn't think that the committee's role was to deal with problems down at the minutia. I found that at as long as we stayed at the level of problem that was appropriate for legislative oversight it was not really a problem. I did observe though from time to time when people would complain about micro inspection or micro management that from time to time members would say well, I would really like to look at that in more detail, so the usual disposition of the staff to look at great detail, and the members not to be interested was sometimes introverted. Sometimes it never wanted to pursue things in great detail and we would go off and do that. It wasn't very hard, given the wide range of things that they do, it was a given that you knew 10 times what they knew. H: Did the NRO have a special place in the community or, were there particular Congressman that were interested in what satellites and so forth, or did you have a hard sell with them? F: It was not a hard sell. First of all, it was tangible. We must have taken every member who ever served on the committee to the ground station at one time or another, to give them some sense of what this was really all about. I found the hard part was not, should we have satellites, that was a given, was NRO handling them well? That was generally a given. The question was, why do they cost so very much? And, of course, is it worth spending quite this much money for them, and which are the most important for the nation to have? Some members took special interest in the NRO, Congressman Cheney was an example of

(b)(1)---
(b)(3)

one who did, Congressman Dicks who was there by the time I left and continues until at least this last ^Q congress with that interest. But, the committees were interested generally because the NRO is a very big program in every term, especially in dollar terms. It was the biggest single national foreign intelligence program activity. It seemed at least that it was the most discretionary. That is you could just choose to do some of these things or not. There were usually big system decisions being brought forward by the administration that involved hundreds of millions per year, and signing up for programs that would cost [redacted] over ^{li} there life cycle. (b)(1)
Usually even [redacted] in the next few years when they would be initially developed, (b)(3)
acquired, and placed in the service put on orbit. So it's always a lot of interest in the NRO. H: Were there differences between Republicans and Democrats over budget for the NRO? F: Not much, no, not really that I recall. Particularly in those days, the committee was very non-partisan, operated behind closed doors. I used to explain to people that the benefit of service on a committee to members was the standing they could gain, and the leadership of the House, having ⁱⁿ there work observed sometimes, closely by the speaker and others in the leadership. But, there was no political benefit. Folks back home didn't know what they did other than they serve on the committee and couldn't really say anything about it and they accepted that. In my observation ~~was~~ that member's impact on the decisions of the committee was pretty much a function of how much they put into it, rather than which side of the aisle they sat on. At a time when the Democrats controlled the House, Republican members used to get quite involved for that very reason. Some of them said to me, well gee if I do my homework, I can really have an impact here. Other places I can't. H: Which ones did their homework? F: Well, Congressman Cheney was outstanding. Our first subcommittee chairman, who was a Democrat, Bill BARRELSON, worked extensively. The lat^o Kenneth Robinson who was the ranking minority members during

~~SECRET/BIEMAN~~

those early years was a very active student of intelligence. What that meant was, they would come to the committee spaces, which was the only place that the materials could be stored, they would read some of the material that was sent in. They would read all the staff papers with care in advance, rather than just skimming through them at the time of a hearing or a markup. They would ask questions, challenge staff views, challenge witnesses, I mean in an intellectual sense at hearings, make visits, try to see things, go out and visit the DCI, and talk with him, and senior intelligence officials in DoD similarly, and just gain a sense of the subject and develop some of their own views. H: Now, you were with HPSCI at the time that some very serious decisions were made here at NRO, for example going with the shuttle. Was there any reaction there, or was it simply a cost savings? Did you foresee problems coming down the pike? I talked to Pete Aldridge recently he said this is a dumb decision, and yet there didn't seem to be any opposition at the time. F: We were uncomfortable with it. The decision really had been, to move that way, had largely been made even by the time the committee started operations in late '77. I recall that there was an idea that came along '78, '79, maybe '80 of flying all of our area search missions using film cameras on shuttle missions that would have had to be 4 to 6 missions a year of 21 days each. We thought that was crazy, and fought it off. Hans Mark was the Director at the time. He had come from NASA, had a strong disposition to support the shuttle. We just refused to authorize the programs that would have done that, and insisted instead that [redacted] be upgraded to take on the increased mission. It had become evident from lots of testimony from the community that [redacted] could support a higher data rate, and a good bit more information per day, good bit more imagery per day, could be derived from it, for some relatively inexpensive improvements and we pushed it in that direction. I still remember Congressman Robinson challenging Dr. Mark at one point with, well this approach is going to cost some [redacted]

(b)(1)
(b)(3)(b)(1)
(b)(3)~~SECRET/BIEMAN~~

~~SECRET/BYEMAN~~

FAGA

[redacted] of dollars more, I have forgotten the figure, but he knew the figure at the time, and to what should I attribute this higher costs? What value is there to be received for paying this higher cost? I don't recall the answer Dr. Mark gave, but I remember Mr. Robinson saying, that is not very satisfying. So, the committee played a strong role along with Senate counterparts in pushing for improved versions of [redacted]. Of course, essentially all of the changes of the [redacted] programs came that time; virtually every one of them was upgraded. H: Did you remain a strong supporter of [redacted] as a member of the staff? F: Yes. H: Because you had come out of the [redacted] program? F: Well, I had really come out of the Advanced Systems Branch, which had made inputs to [redacted] but also other programs. H: Did you see, or were you aware of the conflicts within the NRO itself? The program divisions here with CIA, and Navy to an extinct and the Air Force? F: Sure, because I had lots of personal friends, all kinds of contact, official and unofficial, in the organization. So, I usually had a pretty good idea of what was going on, and people were very open about it. H: People like General Culpa? F: Jim Hill, various comptrollers, the directors from time to time, certainly Pete Aldridge was pretty open. I had established an approach of having meetings in which it was understood, this is an official meeting, or this is not, meaning if it's not we talk about things I would not necessarily go run to the committee members and say, well you know I was over talking to the NRO, and they told me this. Now, if something was said that was very important, I would say, you know I really have to bring that to the attention of the committee, and we would discuss how it would be brought to the attention of the committee. The issue here was not one of whether they should be fully informed, there is no question of that, or whether they would be told the truth, there was no question of that, but a matter of, they are very busy people, who are covering a wide range of topics in a given time. How do you put this in

(b)(1)
(b)(3)(b)(1)
(b)(3)(b)(1)
(b)(3)~~SECRET/BYEMAN~~

front of them so that it is properly understood, and one doesn't instantly leap? To what could be the wrong conclusion and then try to work away from that. Usually these discussions then would get to well the hearing is coming up, the annual hearing, or perhaps some special hearing. Here are the questions I would put in front of the committee. Here is what I would try to develop on this issue and what you should be prepared for. I had other accounts, other than NRO, and I took that approach with all of them so that they knew they could talk about things in a way of background information which was obviously an enormous benefit to me, without always having to be on guard that every single word. H: But you are also the only technical person, now did you feel a certain responsibility? That you actually had to double-check some of the technical? F: Absolutely, I would frequently go over and say you know, this is a position that I am holding, and I think for this reason, and am I right? People would frequently come back and say you know we really don't agree with where you are going here, but yes you are correct. Or perhaps they might come back and say, we do agree. Or sometimes they would say, we are not allowed to agree because we defend the President's program. Keep in mind a few years later I was doing the same thing myself, but we can certainly understand why you would go in that direction, but usually tried to check any technical assertion that I was making, and my Senate counterparts did the same. Usually we did it together. H: That was my next question. What was your relationship with your Senate counterparts? F: Well, it was excellent. Of course Keith Hall was my counterpart for a good part of that, and prior to that a fellow named Dan Childs who had come from CIA, and IC staff later went back to CIA, and headed a number of major financial organizations in CIA. We were all good friends; we socialized together, never spoke a sharp word in 12 years to any of them, or received any. We would argue, but no sharp words, no personal animosities, no fights other than on issues. H: Do you become politicized down there?

~~SECRET/BIEMAN~~

FAGA

F: Generally you do. But, I was hired in what was called the professional staff, which was hired without consideration of party. Nobody ever asked my party when I was being hired, and I was expected to take pains to hide it, while an employee with any political affiliations I might have, and no one ever asked, it never came up. So, 12 years later when Secretary Cheney asked me if I would like to come to the ^Pentagon, he said I don't really know if you are a Republican or not, and he said, I really don't care, so long as you haven't been an active public Democrat, that would sort of embarrass the administration. I said, no I haven't been an active anything. I have been a government employee, or your employee on the committee actively hiding any political affiliation I have. As a matter of fact, I am a Republican, but it's the first time I have ever said it.

H: You didn't tell Cheney even then? F: No, I did tell him. He didn't know, and didn't really care. That professional staff model was often used on the Hill. It's certainly not universal. It was most strongly used in the ^Appropriations committees, and the initial Chairman of both Senate and House Committees had come from ^Appropriations, Senator INWAY, and Congressman ^{OL}BLLEN. So they used that model, and in fact when our staff of 4, the program and budget subcommittee was formed in '77. The chairman said I want you to hire people from the community who actually know something about these programs. All 4 did come from community jobs, as far as I know it was the only place they looked. H: Let's move from your community assignment, how you then went with Cheney, when Cheney becomes Secretary of Defense, I assume that you formed a close relationship with Cheney is that? F: Right. We traveled together some, just the 2 of us, looking at intelligence matters. We socialized a little bit, become friendly. I still called him Mr. Cheney. H: He becomes Secretary of Defense, what happens then? Does he call you? F: Yes, he called. Actually he had recommended to Senator TOWER'S staff. Senator Tower was expected to become the SecDef in the Bush administration,

~~SECRET/BIEMAN~~

FAGA

~~SECRET/BYEMAN~~

that he consider me for that role. Well then when Senator Tower was voted down, and Mr. Cheney was quickly appointed he simply called and said well are you still interested in doing what I recommended you for? I said yes I am. He said fine. Then he asked me the question about politics. He said I'll take care of it. Of course what I understood from Dave Addington who was his closest advisor, and who had been on the committee, he really had an arrangement in the White House, that says look if I step in on this very short notice, and take this job, I have to assemble a team that is my team, and I cannot have the White House second guessing me about their political pedigree or other considerations, other than suitability, fitness and so on. During the several months it took to go through the process, a couple of times, White House Staff would pursue it, I would tell Dave, Dave would call the White House and say, remember, you know this is my team, and they would say, oh that is right, and onward the process would go. So he moved from being named by the President to confirmation in a week, and I moved through that process in 4 months, which was typical. H: Now, did you transition with Pete? Did he continue on? F: No, he had already left. He left in December '88. H: So Jimmy was acting? F: He was acting, and I was recommended to the President by Mr. Cheney in March '89 and didn't assume the role until September '89, so Jim was acting during all that time. H: But, were you out here? F: No, I would visit, but we were instructed to be very careful to not give any appearance of assuming the role before confirmation, in other words presuming a Senate outcome. We were advised to take briefings and what not for educational purposes, but to avoid anything that would appear to be decision making. Every administration, a few people get into some hot water about that, I avoided that. The department offered to bring me, as it did others, over as a consultant, but there ^{er} own advice me to me was to stay where you are, you are in a flexible situation, you have a good job, you are able to come over and spend time here when you are in town, and when it all comes

~~SECRET/BYEMAN~~

~~SECRET/BYEMAN~~

FAGA

together, depart and take the job, which is exactly what I did. I mean of course Mr. BEALONSON was the chairman, knew all this was going on from the first moment, nothing was hidden from him. So I went on over some months. H: Did you get a little edgy by about the 4th month? F: Well, I mean things were happening, I understood that it was all going forward. The tricky part of course was sort of being the NRO overseer for the committee, while essentially on this path to becoming director, but it all seemed to work out. H: Why do you think Cheney picked you? Because of your close relationship? Because of your technical expertise? Both? F:

Like all such jobs, a combination of things. Like most people in positions, like the one he assumed, I came to understand when I was there, that having absolute confidence in someone including their loyalty to their administration, and the administration of the President, is really a key. So, it had to be somebody he really knew and was comfortable with, and yet this is a technocrat's position, so someone who really came from a technical background, as you see it's harder and harder to get people to do that, as appointed government service gets less and less attractive. If you look at the early directors, many of them came from industry, from very senior positions in industry. Then you move to someone who had been mostly in government, in Hans Mark. Pete Aldridge had been back and forth between industry and government jobs came to me someone who was not in the administration, but was essentially a life long government employee. Then to Jeff who was gone right from the program, and to Keith, who again was drawn from the executive branch. I suspect this is a trend that will continue. I had occasion from time to time while in the role to be asked by the White House to help them on a search for some particular vacant job that had some similarity to mine, like administrator of NASA. H: What was your role with the White House? F: I had very limited role with the White House, but good relationships with the staff and the presidential personnel office, because those are the

~~SECRET/BYEMAN~~

FAGA

~~SECRET/BYEMAN~~

people that administered. H: Your relationship with Gates? F: I had a good relationship with Gates because I had known him for years and to a lesser extent with Brent SCOCROFT. Got to know Governor SUNUNU who was the Chief of Staff during a good bit of that. Had the pleasure of briefing him on the NRO program, and when it ended he said, well now, what does all this cost? I told him, and he says, what a bargain I would have thought it was twice that. I said well Governor I can assure you, that you are the only person I have ever briefed who has ever said that. But he came from actually some background in the field, he had been in the electronics business, and he actually knew something about what it took. H: When you became Director, did you have a set program that were goals that you wanted to achieve, things that you saw that weren't working? F: Yes, in a broad sense. I thought that some reorganization, and some greater collocation of the NRO was necessary that is that really the NRO had to come together in some sense as an agency, which it had not, it had been a very loose confederation of Navy, Air Force, and CIA, and I could see that it was essential that it come together more as a single entity. Not that all those organizations shouldn't participate in them, I thought that was very important, and took many steps to assure that. H: So you saw what we call today, Stovepipe Organizations A, B, and C, as detrimental rather than a possibly a positive competition? F: At that point in history, because what I recognized was that the technology that underpins the systems had advanced to such a degree that the individual systems overlapped enormously as each one of them had absorbed more and more modern technology with the passage of time. To actually integrate them into an overall system could not be achieved with the kind of organizational relationships that we had. Now this thought wasn't new with me. There had been a study in '85, led by John McMahon, and then a later one the Geiger-Kelley Study, it was finished in '88, a little more than a year before I came. I took many of the ideas that they put forward and started to implement

~~SECRET/BYEMAN~~

~~SECRET/BYEMAN~~

FAGA

them at the early part of my term. I think one of the most interesting ones, was the issue of collocation, which had been strongly recommended. I initially set off to simply do that, and I could see that it was just going to be too wrenching for Program A and the Air Force. H: When you say collocation, could you give us a definition? F: Bringing all the people together at one place here in Washington, and this was in '89. By early '90 I announced we should do that, and I could see that it was not going to go well, and we were going to develop all of our energy among the NRO seniors within that organization. H: Why did you see that it wasn't going to go well? Were people dragging their heels? F: Oh yes, there reaction was bad. It was something that would be obvious. H: Can we talk about who? F: Everybody. But I was being pressed by the Hill to do it. It was particularly the Senate Intelligence Committee and Keith, and George Tennes, now the DDCI, but also Senators BOREN, and COHEN. I said look, I'm doing many of the things that Geiger-Kelly has recommended, some with modifications of my own to create more of a single NRO. I think that if I do that, the resistance of Program to moving east will go away if I just give them a couple of years, and let them come to me and say, we want to come to Washington. They said, well, we don't know if that is true or not, but we're willing to go with that for a while, so long as you come up with a facilities plan that allows you to collocate everybody. I said well that is reasonable enough. So, Roger Marsh set out to try to do that, and came back and said you need so much flexibility in this plan because you don't know how many people when, and so on, you are going to have to build rather than lease. I said, oh I really don't want to build, but if that is what we are going to have to do, let's put together a plan, so we did, which is what led to Westfields. H: Now, let me see if I get this straight, this is really driven from the Senate Select Committee? F: Yes. H: They are saying collocate, you say okay. F: I say we will collocate everybody we can, and in time perhaps everybody, but we'll have to see how

~~SECRET/BYEMAN~~

FAGA

~~SECRET/BYEMAN~~

this plays out. H: But, you really weren't thinking in terms of a new building complex? F: Not initially. It came about from recognition that you really can't structure a leasing arrangement for a single facility when you can't tell the developer very much about what you will do. So, the idea of Westfields was, this idea of several towers. We started off with 2 towers. The plan from the beginning recognized the possibility of 4 or even 5 towers, but we started with the 2 towers, then added the 3rd shortly thereafter, and even the 4th while I was still Director, and all this with good coordination and cooperation from the Intelligence and appropriations committees, and also some of the others that we had to work with. When you build a building in government, it's. H: Were you kind of appalled then, when the press gets a hold of the issue, and say that it was concealed from Congress? F: Well, I have lived here 30 years, nothing can surprise me. I was irritated. I was certainly irritated for Jeff who was taking the brunt of this. In fact, I called some of the staff and I said, look I was the guy who did this, not Jeff Harris, why don't you call me down to testify? They decide not to do that. Of course Keith was gone by then, he had gone to the pentagon. George Tenant was down at the White House. Most of the people who really knew the background were gone. So I offered a couple of times to testify, but was never asked to. H: Now, you still have the A, B, and C programs. When did you decide to move to abolish them and consolidate them? F: When Bob Gates became DCI, he said you know we really need to look at the organization of the NRO, which I agreed. So in time honored government tradition we appointed another panel to take a look at it. This was the Burnette panel and the folks who served on it had wide experience in the government, and many of them had been involved with the NRO, some from within the NRO in earlier times, and those who had worked with the NRO as senior contractor officials. They were very open to suggestions from me, and I told them things I thought we had to achieve. Not so much an organizational model, but things we had to achieve in

~~SECRET/BYEMAN~~

the organization and things that I thought would just be accessively disruptive. H: Such as? F: To the arrangements that we had. Well I didn't really initially so much see A, B, and C, going away as their roles in programs becoming more merged and that we certainly had to treat imaging systems for example as an entity, and we couldn't have a situation where we had a [redacted] (b)(1) (b)(3) program at CIA, that essentially wouldn't talk in detail with a [redacted] program in the Air Force. Shortly after the reorganization had occurred, I remember fellas telling me the meeting they had in which someone had said, well gee if we had known that about the way the ground station operated we could have seen this opportunity we are talking about a long time ago, well why didn't you ever mention this before? They said, well you were the enemy then. So, as difficult as it was, and has continued to be even to today, some benefits of coming together in INT based organizations rapidly achieved, that was the general goal, that I had, was to come together in INTs. I didn't fully recognize, although it should have been evident, that it would essentially lead to the disintegration of A, B, and C, as separate entities. I realize today, OD&E is really a holding place for the personnel, and the programmatic powers here in the NRO. Similarly for Air Force programs. But, if I had recognized it more clearly than I did, it wouldn't have changed my view of what had to occur. Similarly for declassification. I thought it was vitally important that NRO, that was now becoming far more important to the military community than it had ever been. My short story view of what happened was, satellite reconnaissance systems became real time, not just [redacted] but also the [redacted] systems, and that meant that they were (b)(1) (b)(3) meaningful in time periods that had tactical significance, and so not surprisingly and with a lot of pushing from the NRO, tactical consumers became important customers of the NRO. Basically I took the view that those forces operate at the secret security level, and that they would have to have an interaction with us, sufficient to at least know who we were, know what we did, know

the organization and things that I thought would just be accessivly disruptive. H: Such as? F: To the arrangements that we had. Well I didn't really initially so much see A, B, and C, going away as their roles in programs becoming more merged and that we certainly had to treat imaging systems for example as an entity, and we couldn't have a situation where we had a [redacted] (b)(1) (b)(3) program at CIA, that essentially wouldn't talk in detail with a [redacted] program in the Air Force. Shortly after the reorganization had occurred, I remember fellas telling me the meeting they had in which someone had said, well gee if we had known that about the way the ground station operated we could have seen this opportunity we are talking about a long time ago, well why didn't you ever mention this before? They said, well you were the enemy then. So, as difficult as it was, and has continued to be even to today, some benefits of coming together in INT based organizations rapidly achieved, that was the general goal, that I had, was to come together in INTs. I didn't fully recognize, although it should have been evident, that it would essentially lead to the disintegration of A, B, and C, as separate entities. I realize today, OD&E is really a holding place for the personnel, and the programmatic powers here in the NRO. Similarly for Air Force programs. But, if I had recognized it more clearly than I did, it wouldn't have changed my view of what had to occur. Similarly for declassification. I thought it was vitally important that NRO, that was now becoming far more important to the military community than it had ever been. My short story view of what happened was, satellite reconnaissance systems became real time, not just [redacted] but also the [redacted] systems, and that meant that they were (b)(1) (b)(3) meaningful in time periods that had tactical significance, and so not surprisingly and with a lot of pushing from the NRO, tactical consumers became important customers of the NRO. Basically I took the view that those forces operate at the secret security level, and that they would have to have an interaction with us, sufficient to at least know who we were, know what we did, know

the organization and things that I thought would just be accessivly disruptive. H: Such as? F: To the arrangements that we had. Well I didn't really initially so much see A, B, and C, going away as their roles in programs becoming more merged and that we certainly had to treat imaging systems for example as an entity, and we couldn't have a situation where we had a [redacted] (b)(1) (b)(3) program at CIA, that essentially wouldn't talk in detail with a [redacted] program in the Air Force. Shortly after the reorganization had occurred, I remember fellas telling me the meeting they had in which someone had said, well gee if we had known that about the way the ground station operated we could have seen this opportunity we are talking about a long time ago, well why didn't you ever mention this before? They said, well you were the enemy then. So, as difficult as it was, and has continued to be even to today, some benefits of coming together in INT based organizations rapidly achieved, that was the general goal, that I had, was to come together in INTs. I didn't fully recognize, although it should have been evident, that it would essentially lead to the disintegration of A, B, and C, as separate entities. I realize today, OD&E is really a holding place for the personnel, and the programmatic powers here in the NRO. Similarly for Air Force programs. But, if I had recognized it more clearly than I did, it wouldn't have changed my view of what had to occur. Similarly for declassification. I thought it was vitally important that NRO, that was now becoming far more important to the military community than it had ever been. My short story view of what happened was, satellite reconaissance systems became real time, not just [redacted] but also the [redacted] systems, and that meant that they were (b)(1) (b)(3) meaningful in time periods that had tactical significance, and so not surprisingly and with a lot of pushing from the NRO, tactical consumers became important customers of the NRO. Basically I took the view that those forces operate at the secret security level, and that they would have to have an interaction with us, sufficient to at least know who we were, know what we did, know

FAGA

~~SECRET/BYEMAN~~

the systems generally and be able to have some interaction with the systems in an exercise and ultimately in an employment situation that was at the secret level. That needed to start with acknowledging the existence of the NRO, and there were many other pressures on opening it up.

H: Did you see that before the Gulf War? Or, is the Gulf War the driving force here? F: Oh sure, No, I mean I believed it when I arrived, and I basically believed it from what I had seen on the Hill. I once said to Secretary Cheney, I said, the fact of NRO is classified, but it's not secret and that is a really corrosive situation. I used to see on the Hill, and now see on the Hill from the vantage point of Director, that it's hard to get serious attention to any of our security needs when we have this top level view that we are a covert program, but were not. Now Bob Gates was quite willing to move to declassification. Secretary Cheney was slower in coming to the view that it was the right thing to do. In fact, I kind of always enjoyed the little story that went with it. One of my sons graduated from the Naval Academy in '91, and shortly thereafter a major article about NRO and my role in it appeared in my hometown newspaper. All based on speculation, but all rather accurate. H: Good reporting. F: Our security officers here, and others said, you know we probably ought to brief your son, because now he's going out to the fleet, and somebody will see this and they'll ask him questions, and he won't know what to do with, we better call him in and brief him. So they did. When I saw him that night, I said well Jeff you got your briefing today, and he said yes. I said, how was it, and he said it was fine. He said, but there was one problem Dad, he said, I never could figure out what the secret was. I said well Jeff, they told you about the National Reconnaissance Office, and he said, every body knows about that Dad, what was the secret? I said, yeah, I understand. I tried to explain, and as I told Secretary Cheney who knew Jeff slightly later I said, you know he gave me one of those looks that your young adult children give you that says, whatever is going through your mind Dad it's scary,

(b)(3)

~~SECRET/BYEMAN~~

~~SECRET/BIEMAN~~

FAGA

because something goes wrong with your brain when you get older, and it makes me nervous. H: What was Cheney's objection. I mean you had Gates with his openness policy I can see that, but what was holding Cheney back? F: He had a very legitimate concern about this and many other matters, that once you do it, you can never back out, if you were wrong, you have created a problem you really can't work your way out of. Remember that the main reason we were doing it at the time, just as CIA would explain in many covert actions, which once they are out there in the world for a while, they are not very covert, such as Afghanistan. As long as you deny it, you still have that official level of denial that we're doing it. The major concern that remained was that other nations would object to our reconnaissance activities, and I always thought that was a legitimate concern, but one that I thought was largely ^{eliminated} ~~emulated~~ by this time by the fact that there was so much reconnaissance, or reconnaissance-like activity going on. H: Even in the commercial world? F: Even in the commercial world, some of it for remote sensing for resources reasons, but nonetheless reconnaissance quality imaging. This was being done by a wide range of countries and was being, seemed to be, reasonably well accepted. Well, ultimately on that score, a couple of countries in the form of their attaches, who I would meet around time from time to time, commented on it, after declassification. That was about it. Interestingly enough, the allied countries particularly England and Australia, with whom we consulted very specifically, encouraged us to do it, they thought we and they would be better for it. So as far as I've ever known, there has been no real effect in the diplomatic arena as a result, and I think a vast improvement, in our ability to relate to that military customer. Now some of us said, well because it was declassified, and sort of out in the open, than the difficulty is '94, and '95, about the building and forward funding and so on, developed as otherwise they might not have. I had two thoughts about that. One is that they probably would have, because the Hill was feeling

~~SECRET/BIEMAN~~

fairly free to talk about the NRO since it was such an open secret, and all the more fun, that it was sort of secret. I shouldn't say it was the Hill, it was everybody. Everybody did that. Including the White House and everybody else. H: You have been on both sides of the issue. Not only that issue, but seeing it from Congressional oversight, then you had come in and you are Director, what is the difference, and how did you deal with that? F: You mean what was the difference in how I saw it? H: Yes, what was your perception as you moved over? F: I think at the philosophical level it was not ^{much} ~~much~~ difference. Obviously you are faced with a lot of practical differences, when you have to direct the organization, and you have a lot of bosses. After all I was reporting to the SecDef, I was reporting to the DCI, I was an appointee of the President, you can't just go off and do whatever it might seem to you, you might do. Certainly the same thing is true when you are a staff member on the Hill. Your only impact is whatever you convince the members to do, and even at that, it's only one committee out of the several that are involved. I felt the biggest lesson, but it wasn't a lesson because I had been in program management activity, but it would be a lesson for many staff, who work only on the Hill, and I used to say this to them when I would go back to them, from the role of Director. That is, it's pretty easy to write a paragraph about what this approach ought to be. It's pretty easy to write some very general questions, probe things, but you know when you actually have to carry this out, and you have to get some employees of the organization to at least generally understand what we are trying to do, and get them moving in that direction, and get contractor employees, with whom we have relationships understand what we are trying to do, and move in that direction, quite another thing, than writing that little paragraph, or that staff paper they used to write a few years before. And, a lot of practical realities, in truth. I sometimes found it hard to get my former colleagues to understand that just being Director, coming to some

(b)(3)

(b)(3)

~~SECRET/BYEMAN~~

FAGA

agreement with them, doesn't mean you just go into the place and say, this is how it is, do it. You know, if we are going to be successful, you really have to develop buy in, in an organization. I did think that it was great background for the job. I would not have wanted to be the only background, but it was a great background. On the other hand, the other side of the detail worked, understand, you have to view things at a philosophical, and political level and appreciate how those forces work and be able to articulate in the kind of terms people in those worlds will understand in order to be effective. All the better that you are known to them, that you have personal credibility with them. It was great experience, and actually it was one that Secretary Cheney emphasized when he was building his team, he said I think that some service on the Hill is a very valuable asset to people who would serve in these appointed jobs in my administration.

H: Did you try to beef up the Congressional liaison staff when you came in here? Did you feel that was something you wanted to keep up, or you did it personally? F: Oh I didn't do it personally, I did personal interaction with the Hill, but I tried never to do it privately to always have or legislatively in some function, involved. It had been developing for some years and I thought it was reasonably strong when I got here. The way I thought it was important to beef it up, and a lesson I had preached to some other agency had it's while as a staffer, and then I think I lived by was, the ~~director~~ ^{of} legislative liaison had to have access to everything that I did or that the management counsel did, during all that time, almost all that time, at least if not all the time. It was Joanne Isham. I told Joanne and all the seniors in the organization, Joanne will come to any meeting that I have that she feels that would be valuable to come to, so that she understands what has been said among ourselves in decision making, ~~not~~ ^{that} that she would go and report that, in some word for word sense, but she has to really have an understanding, and we need her input. She is the one who is in touch with the Hill every day. I could not do that, and we need to know,

~~SECRET/BYEMAN~~

how will this go on the ^HHill? A standard discussion among the many different discussions one would have around the management counsel table would be what will be the Hill interest, response, concern, support, whatever was appropriate. So, in that sense I believe in a very strong legislative program and a very high level involvement of that function. I had seen it so clearly some years before when at NSA, Admiral Inman had a similar relationship with his LL function, and it had gone very well for him. H: He is a very unusual fella. F: Well then Lincoln FARR became that director, and he essentially submerged legislative liaison below the Chief of Staff and what not, and he came over for his first hearing and he just got eaten alive, he just couldn't respond to anything. He came to Dwayne Andrews and me, whom he knew slightly, who were on the staff, and said, how could I do so badly, and it used to go so well? I realize the gifts that Inman has but it's more than that. We said, well all those questions you stumbled on, had been offered to the LL staff in advance, but the Chief of Staff decided they weren't worth your time and attention. So, he changed that. H: I expect that. F: No, not the Chief of Staff, it was the idea that the Chief of Staff had the right to decide and what we were asserting is, you have to have a legislative liaison that you trust enough, that if that person says, boss I know you are busy, but you have got to see this, because it's happening tomorrow or it's happening in an hour, that that's sufficient, that there isn't anyone else who says, oh I don't think so. That is what he moved to, and it worked very well for him. So I wanted to be sure I was in the same boat. F: What about budget while you were Director? I am sure that was one of the major concerns. Budget had been going up throughout the ^{Reagan} ~~Regan~~ administration. F Yes. H: and that doesn't continue. F: No, budget was always coming down when I was here. In fact I used to kid Pete, I said you know it was probably a lot easier when budget was going up 25% a year, than when it's going down even 5% a year. People think that the defense budget was going up until about 1990, but the fact is, it

started dropping off by '85. Intelligence always did better than DoD as a whole, but still we were taking cuts, particularly then by '89 and '90, we were taking cuts. If you would look at the NRP through those days in dollar terms, you would say, gee it was pretty stable, which it was. If you looked at it compared to the program plan, that NRO was working on, in those first couple of years of my term, the plan called for an NRP that was going to go up over [redacted] but in fact never went more than a little [redacted]. So, constantly adjusting that change downward, and of course that growth up over [redacted] involves some new programs that never got started, but also improvements and enlargements of existing programs. So, now all of those things were things that could simply be undone, or that the community wanted undone. So, that meant in some cases other programs died off, as the [redacted] did for example. So, budget consumed a lot of my attention and the attention of others in the NRO. It was always a subject with the DCI's executive committee. It was constantly a subject on the Hill. All the more so as the Soviet Union disintegrated and then people said well, do we really need to do. H: Did they see you as a pot of money that they could take a piece of? F: Yes, yes. I remember shocking Bob Gates one time by saying you know, Bob everybody wants to take money from the NRP so they can keep their agencies sized at the same size as they are today because they think that is important, and it probably is, but I said, we have laid off more people in the NRO, than you have in the CIA. More than the [redacted] people you have. He was shocked. I said I don't mean, of course they were government employees, but the NRO functions through those contractor teams, and we have laid off more than your whole population. Just as it's hard to bring up a capable Intel analyst who requires several years of experience, that is likewise true of an integrated circuits engineer, or an RF engineer, or an antennas engineer, a SIGINT processing engineer, or what have you. None of those people just ~~role~~ out of college and do this work in their first year either, and we just have to

(b)(1)
(b)(3)(b)(1)
(b)(3)

(b)(3)

roll

FAGA

~~SECRET/BIEMAN~~

get better balance in how this goes. Another event in those times, that sticks in my mind, is one of the cutbacks that was made was to reduce the program plan from the [redacted] (b)(1) (b)(3)

[redacted] At the time the decisions were made there were [redacted] and of course they were going to remain for a while. Well, ultimately the [redacted] died, and (b)(1) (b)(3)

I remember being at a meeting of the National Foreign Intelligence Council^{cul} explaining that this had [redacted] ? I said, I have forgotten what it was, but it was a [redacted] and I said that it was this [redacted] whatever, and they were outraged, they said we can't do that; we have to [redacted] I said I can't believe I hear you saying this, we sat right here at this table, right here in this group with the same people, and decided we were going to have a [redacted] so we could cut money (b)(1) (b)(3)

in the program. We've done that during the term, everyone who's here, and now the day has arrived. We still launched. H: You launched [redacted] F: Yes. We never really could back away. (b)(1) (b)(3)

We could have these meetings say, we can do without this, we can do without that, we can do without the other thing, but in the end, people are really unwilling to do that. Nonetheless, one of the programmatic themes that I took and I had a lot of insight into this from Jim Hill, and Brigadier General Don Walker, and others, but especially them, and that was if this is a period in history when we are less worried about conflict than we have been in the past, **END OF SIDE ONE TAPE ONE** We may be again, and the budget is going to decline, What we need to advocate is taking away capability even more quickly than it is demanded of us. Try to retain some of the savings from that rapid reduction in service, and reinvest it in the improved versions, this was mostly in the [redacted] arena. Both the low orbit, and the height orbit modernization (b)(1) (b)(3)

programs were based on that philosophy. I think it's still too early to tell whether that is all working out well. H: Some of the folks in the field don't feel that it is. F: But that is because we

~~SECRET/BIEMAN~~

~~SECRET/BYEMAN~~

FAGA

felt you had to be dramatic and in the field people will always be concerned by that, because today we are not doing so well, whatever so well means in any measure that one would apply. I thought it was deadly to get into a situation where we really couldn't do new things, and couldn't modernize just to maintain capability and just increment it, in small ways. H: What type of new things, hard targets? Is that what you were looking at? F: No, I am talking about really more modern ways to build a constellation, and it really, on the technical side, the requirements are broad, and almost infinite. There were technical requirements that derived from that [redacted] (b)(1) [redacted] (b)(3) and the opportunities to converge some of the constellations into fewer constellations, just as some portions of at least the ground infrastructure in the imagery side could convert. We all saw that opportunity. It's still too early, as I said, to know for sure that I was right, but I think we were and we got good support. I recall saying at the time, at some point down stream, gee there is no way to go back even if we want to, and we are really committed to this and there is no backing out. When they fully understand that on the hill, even though I will testify to it, right up front, it will alarm them, which it did. I was gone by then, but it did, because they realized we are committed to these things, that the usual game that people on the Hill like to play which is where we have version A and we can keep going with the version B, or drop it at any time, in the experimental phase, it really wasn't true. You were now committed to be in, and you had to pursue it, there was no escaping. H: What about relations with contractors? This is always somewhat touchy. [redacted] (b)(1) [redacted] (b)(3)

[redacted] ? F: Of course I served before the era of protests. The NRO always had good relations with contractors. Ranging from clearly the best in the world, through at least the early 80's to good relations when I was there, to somewhat more deteriorated relationships since based on the circumstances that both the NRO and the contractors faced. In the early years, the

~~SECRET/BYEMAN~~

FAGA

~~SECRET/BYEMAN~~

NRO had enough control of its funding and what it would do; enough independent control that it could use contractors in what it thought was the smartest way. It could make promises to contractors that absolutely could keep, and the idea that if the NRO called you up and said you are capable of doing this or that, by the way we don't have a contract in place yet, we will take care of that, and you started off to do it, and incurred costs, you knew absolutely that you were going to be covered. Perhaps more important was the idea that if we said, look we're thinking of doing something like this, we don't have a very good definition of it yet, we don't know what the technology supports, we just know we need to something like this, you need to do some technology work, and later on you need to develop a proposal or whatever it is, things that costs many many millions of dollars, and which would not be directly paid for, contractors could be confident that at least the NRO would go forward and do it. There might a competition and you might lose, but in any case that whatever the NRO was pushing you to do, was actually going to come about, became less possible to guarantee that as frankly the NRO became more apart of the traditional and routine budget processes. Decision-making about NRO programs was made throughout government, not just in the NRO. To the point where when I was director, each contractor would from time to time, and I would always say to them, talk about this change that has occurred. I said, I know you will get lots of requests from enthusiastic program offices to do things for which you might not get paid, and my advice to you is, get paid. H: Get paid up front. F: I don't mean you get paid up front, but don't just go off and do things because you are sure the NRO is so good. What I really said was, if it really looks like something serious, come see me, before you decide to invest, and it's in our mutual interest that you invest your IR&D funds, your discretionary funds, and any of your fee dollars that you invest, in the best way, I don't want you to throw it up, after something that isn't really going forward just because an individual program

~~SECRET/BYEMAN~~

~~SECRET/BYEMAN~~

FAGA

office thinks it might. H: Is there a specific example here that you could? F: No. H: You presided at a time very unique to the NRO when the Cold War comes to an end, and does this play a role in all this special relationship with contractors, and kind of a dedicated sense that you had a horrendous enemy out there, and it's gone away now? So, this National Security concern is lessened, no this thing goes away, but that sense of uniqueness goes away, and you are right there in the middle of it. F: It had a big impact. First of all it contributed to some of these points we have just been talking about in terms of the NRO virtually having complete control of its own funding and program and destiny, because at an earlier time there was this great concern of a wide nuclear war, and a determined and capable enemy. The nation simply wanted of the NRO whatever it could deliver. Other than being assured that it wasn't simply wasting the money, whatever it could undertake to do, even if high tech and risky, was fine. Well now this would be less true, with the collapse of the Soviet Union. I think it had lots of hard to measure effects on contractors and their workforces. It was harder to ask the contractor, send us your best, because they would say well, why are you such high priority, we don't see you being given this very high priority within the government anymore sort of in the society if you will? You really couldn't charge the people up to the same degree of you know, there is the determined enemy and we are on the front line, dealing with it, with the eyes to the whole nation, eyes and ears. It didn't happen to me personally, but I recalled when Congressman Stokes was the Chairman of the Intelligence Committee, and I was a staff member, and he had reason to visit [redacted] I think, at least one of our major west coast contractors, I am pretty sure it was [redacted]. During a trip to California for another reason, and so he asked me for some preparation about this. I said, you know Congressman, since you have never visited one of these contractors; the general public view is that these people are in it just for the dollar, you know take the government for anything

(b)(1)
(b)(3)~~SECRET/BYEMAN~~

it can. I said, but what you are going to find, is a very different attitude. People are really dedicated to this work, people really believe in the United States. People who would take the same oath of office you do if they were asked to. Companies that invest of themselves in many ways, as their best people, often some of their own dollars and so on. So, he took all on board, he went out on the trip. Before he got back, he called me, while on the trip and he said, you understated it, patriots all of them, patriots. Now I understand what you mean. But, it would be a little harder to see it so discreetly, after the end of the Cold War. I almost say, I could point to some way in which I experienced it, but you could sense it. H: How about your own work force? Did you see it there, the Air Force pulling people the other way, the CIA saying well this is not quite as important? Did you get any sense of that? F: I didn't see it from the CIA during my time; I think you could see it subsequently. I did see it from the Air Force. Yes, the Air Force drew back some, and perhaps partly for a reason that Pete thought would be a problem from the start. Most directors had been the Undersecretary. I was an Assistant Secretary. The Undersecretary is in line with every decision the Air Force makes, sometimes as the acting Secretary of the Air Force, and Assistant Secretary is not, you have your particular domain. In some ways it was beneficial, at a time when we were talking about normalization of space, to be in a senior position in the Air Force, pushing as a designated advocate for space, without creating that tension of, well he is the Undersecretary, he just did it to us. Which is how they often felt about many previous directors and Undersecretaries. On the other hand, when the chips are down, and you really need something done, Assistant Secretary cannot necessarily deliver that. I was not very sensitive to this distinction going in, and I wouldn't say it was the right or wrong choice by Secretary Cheney, and Air Force Secretary Rice, to have set it up, the way they did in my time. But, I could certainly see that effect from it. I actually think that what position the Director sat in

was not key; it was the fact that satellite reconnaissance just suddenly seemed important, but less important, and got treated accordingly. One of my biggest frustrations was in failing to maintain the senior promotions in the NRO, Brigadier General Don Walker is one of the best officers I've know, should have been 2 stars, his predecessors have, and never succeeded in getting him promoted, partly because the system changed some due to Congressional Criticism of Cronyism in the system in ways that I didn't adequately understand as it was happening. So, I was not always advancing his cause or the cause of others in the best possible way at the moment. It has also gotten harder in recent times, to interest Air Force people in coming, it used to be the case that people banged on the door to come to the NRO. H: You could come in and make a career that is no longer the case. F: Right. Not wise to make a career. H: How about relations, let's change the focus a little, how about relations with NASA during your tenure? F: I think I would say we had excellent relations. I hesitate for a moment only to try to think of any circumstances that went badly. Remember during that time, NASA was launching some of our payloads. H: But, they never launched the numbers they had projected, that they could launch. F: No, they never made the number of shuttle flights that they had predicted, and they were certainly not launching very many national security payloads, NRO or DoD in my time. H: But then you had the Titan 4, by then. F: By then it had already been a Presidential policy following the Challenger Explosion that had redefined what role they would play. We were living within that role, so I did not sense a lot of tension about that. We had very good relations with them on a policy side from my job as Assistant Secretary and the role to be an interagency person for space matters, including NASAC, Commerce, DOT, and Dick McCormick who led those efforts was very successful in building and maintaining good relations with them at the policy level. Certainly in the payload launches they made, they were enormously cooperative and highly

FAGA

~~SECRET/BYEMAN~~

successful. The biggest difficulty I remember which is one you would expect, is they're living in a totally public culture trying to do something secretive. We lived in a totally secret culture, trying to do something that was a little bit public. The NASA who were directly dedicated to it who were specifically involved, fully cleared had absolutely no problem, but as you worked your way further out through the organization it would get very tough for them, for our NASA cleared counterparts to maintain whatever secrecy we were looking for. Because in many cases, it wasn't secrecy in the sense that here is a document marked secret, it was just we don't want you to say anything about one thing or another. We just don't want it said, and it's hard to get people to understand that there are things that are not specifically classified, but that you just don't want said. It's something we do in the NRO all the time, and certainly was common at CIA when I worked there. That was totally foreign in a culture like NASA's. We had some very demanding launch situations, regarding security during those times. So, that part of it was hard. It was a difficulty you would expect, and it was one that they dealt with very well. Admiral Truling was the administrator during most of that time, and was totally supportive on all these things. Even when something would start to unravel a little bit, one quick call to Dick Truling, it was fixed in a snap. Every recollection I have was a good one. I enjoyed working with them. H: Let's move to another agency, NSA, relations with. F: Not always perfect. I considered it, one of, first was one of my objectives, and I felt a hallmark of my term to improve relations with NSA. Bill Studeman was the director when I came to NRO, I had known him for years. I first met Bill in the 70's, and I told him I said we have to improve relationships. I said one of the things I would like to do, is recognize that NRO is made up of participating agencies. I'd like to invite more NSA participation. I'd like to have NSA people come over as senior managers within the organization as real players, not just observers or liaison or what have you, real players in the NRO. To which

~~SECRET/BYEMAN~~

he immediately agreed. He sent a number of splendid senior officers into really senior positions here. H: That is a real change. F: It was a change, I recall screams within the NRO about, you said what? I said look, we have to deal effectively with NSA. We all believe in the NRO, we all see Air Force officers come in and they become a part of the NRO and they love it, you see others come in and they become a part of it. I believe these people will come in and they will become a part of the NRO, and they will be our most effective supporters in NSA, because they are from NSA, they know NSA, they know how to be effective, and that happened. They really were, and in fact Bill Studeman laughed a couple years later, and he said, I don't know if you realized it, and I didn't realize it, when you said that, but after I went home and thought about what I'd signed up for, I realized I can only send the best people. We can't fail. And he did. You know the folks who came were really capable folks who did understand the concept of partnership that we were trying to build. Bill Studeman was enormously supportive of that other seniors in NSA became more and more comfortable with this, and tried to open up our decision making process so they would understand what we were thinking, and what we were doing. We went to them and asked advice. I thought it got a lot better. I was as honored as by anything that I had received by some of the comments that NSA people made to me when I left, about how much we had grown, the relationship and how much they appreciated my dedication to them. I am very proud of that. H: Let's move to the Gulf War now. NRO support to that conflict and the problems that surfaced, or at least the criticisms that surfaced, and this was a large part of your tenure as well. F: Yes. One of the fascinating things about the NRO in war time is you have to realize just as in the Gulf War that military services had to realize for the first time, you don't fight the war. What the NRO does is design, acquire, and operate satellites and every operation is directed externally from DCI committees. So in some sense, at least to me as Director, there was

~~SECRET/DIEMAN~~

not a great impact of the War or huge involvement in the War. You may remember that operational control of imagery satellites in the vicinity of the Kuwait Theatre of Operations, was moved from the DCI to the Secretary of Defense, right at the time of the invasion in August of '90. He reposed that in DIA and CENTCOM, but DIA was the implementer. One of the fascinating things I discovered, and imagery was more an issue here than SIGINT, because many of the SIGINT collectors were indifferent to the increased tasking, except for the high altitude birds that at many frequencies had a huge area of coverage, but the imager is being low alt and when they ^hover they could be devoted only to that area and no other. Over the period of the War, from the invasion in August, through the end of the conflict in February, the number of satellites available to watch the area was the same, but the product almost doubled. The reason for that was, DIA had control but they were not very experienced at using them in the best way, and the NRO spent a good bit of effort, trying to educate those resource managers. You can do anything with the satellites you want, you are in charge of them, but let us help you use them smart. H: Did they take that advice? F: They took that, and some of them using smart, meant things like, use our simulation capability, and we'll run it for you, to run the test problems. We'd say, well we want to achieve this and that the other thing, let us run it for you, let us suggest what the tasking could be in order to ring the most out of the satellites. They did work. You know the take kept going up, and up, and up, but there were interesting lessons there. The famous Hill statements by General ^{ch CAPS} Swartzoff after the War, about failings and intelligence are a partial statement. What he actually said was in the first phrase was, I was a battlefield Commander who had better intelligence than any Commander in history, but, and of course there were some butts, some big butts, and to a large extent it had to do with dissemination, mostly in imagery. There was a widespread view that much of the imagery didn't

(b)(1)
(b)(3)

*

~~SECRET/DIEMAN~~

~~SECRET/BYEMAN~~

FAGA

get to the Gulf. Generally that wasn't correct. Most of it did get to the Gulf. The problem was to get it from [redacted] out to the troops, and it was a problem in which this relatively new kind of operation, a joint task force, had no really organized way to settle that up. The equipment to do it, provided by the services, only the Army had a significant capability to do it. They had a range of equipment that could take incoming imagery and direct down linked operational [redacted] and move it to division levels. But, because only they had had, General Swartzcoff had to reassign much of their equipments to support the Air Force in the air war. We did that, and neither of them were served very well. Basically the chain in the Army system was broken, and the Air Force was served minimally but not adequately. That isn't to say he did the wrong thing. I suspect the situation would have been worse if the Air Force had been left unserved. I remembered not too long after the war, General McPeete, then Chief of Staff of the Air Force, talked to me about this, and I said, you know Chief you have to realize that the Army since the early 80's has been spending a hundred million dollars a year acquiring equipment it needs to use satellites. He said, wow, how much have we been spending in the Air Force? I said, in a good year, 3 million, and I said, usually about half of that gets reprogrammed away. He declared that an outrage, and went charging through his 4 star ranks about ways to improve that, and it has improved since my time, because this was getting close to the end of my term, but still has a long way to go. And, actually it gets to a point that you raised with me, as we were starting and that is the concept of end-to-end. We did a good bit of strategic planning, and tried to develop a vision of the NRO in my time, and of course repeatedly that occurs, as is should. The vision statement that I wrote said somewhere in it, end-to-end, or when and where needed, was a phrase I remember from it. It's one of those statements like briefing charts, that if you see only the statement, or only the briefing chart, you might not get the whole meaning. I never asserted that

7
(b)(1)
(b)(3)(b)(1)
(b)(3)~~SECRET/BYEMAN~~

the NRO had rewritten a charter, and that it had new responsibilities, or service responsibilities existed for example as in dissemination. What I was trying to say is, we have to take an organizational responsibility to be sure that we start at the beginning and things end at the end. It doesn't mean we have to do every piece of it. We have to be sure that someone is doing it, so that the chain is not broken. If someone who should be doing it were not, we would do it, because what I realized it that if someone is not doing something they should and we did it, the only thing they could say is that is our job to do, and I would say, and when you do it, I'll stop, in fact, I'll help you, I'll do the engineering. If we're putting money into this, I'll even give you the money that we are using, if you will pick this up. Or you can simply take ownership and leave the whole job with us, and we'll do the work because systems engineering is our thing, and we are probably better equipped to do it, than you are no matter who you might be. **END OF**

SIDE TWO TAPE ONE H: The Gulf War, let's go back to that a little bit. When Swartzcoff —
criticizes intelligence, what is your reaction to his criticisms? Did you feel that it was unjust? NRO had done its job. Or was there this, maybe we could do it better? F: Like most criticisms, some of them were on the money, some of them represented imperfect understanding on his part of what was the role of intelligence versus other services that he had, but it was an impotence to this thinking of end-to-end responsibility. That is, that we could never be satisfied just to say well our job stops here, and we're finished, and we noticed that although we have delivered data someplace, that there doesn't seem to be any way for it get picked up or displayed or disseminated or something, but that is not our job, so that is okay. No. It's not okay. That we had to stay involved to whatever extent it took, that we just could never set our responsibility aside unless we were sure that it was making. H: You said the Army was responsive, but the other services were not as responsive. I mean did you have to hit them over the head with a 2x4 to get

their attention? F: It wasn't for me to hit them over the head. The NRO basically delivered data to well known repositories, whether it's a satellite ground station or what have you, and participated in programs to move it out to the forces, and it was their choice of course how much of that they wanted to do. In fact the Army did the most, the Navy did a fair amount, and the Air Force, the least in those times. From an Air Force perspective, I would sometimes say, you know we have been so busy doing the space that we have never gotten around to using it, in the Air Force. Some of this represented a lack of complete doctrinal basis for using what the Air Force now calls off-board sensing. Anything outside the platform that provides data to a platform, and it got very active, and in that field at the doctrinal level, even during the time that I was in the Pentagon and beyond. Usually our way of pushing was not to pound on their table and say, you have got to do this, it was just to start doing something. Usually throughout the mechanism of TENCAP programs, or Defense Support Projects Office, and new organizations like Operational Support Office, or whatever vehicle we had to simply provide the support and we'd develop something a prototype, invent something, ship something to the field and if it worked out well, then to try to get it absorbed into the regular service systems, so they would take ownership of it and move it from prototype or one-of-a-kind, or special equipment, to a routine fully supported program which would include maintenance programs and training, and having the proper people assigned. An example of it is the Defense Dissemination System, which was operated by the Air Force, had an Air Force program office, still does. It had really been developed by the NRO in cooperation with the Air Force, but then moved to be a fully Air Force Program. That is the way a lot of these dissemination systems should work. I really do think the problem is substantially complicated by the fact that services don't fight either. Joint task forces do, and services provide units, and they provide units with all kinds of equipment including communications, and

command and control. It is often hard to bring that together in the best way in a joint task force, with a strong supporter the concept of a joint task force but this is an element of the joint task force concept that hasn't fully caught up with the needs of a task force. Because in many cases, you don't know what organizations will make up the task force, or even who institutionally will command it, so it's hard to know in advance, well how do I arrange all the various kinds of support that will be needed including that support that goes across services? This is a problem that continues today, it's still not adequately worked out. H: At the same time you're getting this tremendous push for support of the military, you have got the other side of the house. Is there any pull from the civilians, National, CIA, State, saying hey wait a minute, we are still a part of your customers, we still need servicing? F: There is but I think you see that more explicitly now than I saw it in my time. The satellite reconnaissance support to National customers was robust, it was immense, it still is. We were at that time in an era, where several new systems had come online so the volumes of information that came flowing out of the systems was rapidly, rapidly increasing, and most of them were reeling under the huge increase and they were getting it, they wanted it, but they could hardly absorb it all. So if you look over time, from that time period, all the way through today, you see the kind of concern arising that you are talking about. During the actual time of my directorship, I don't think we saw it. H: Can you take us through a typical day during this crisis period that you experienced? From the time that you got up, and started to go to the office, to when you got home, or did you go home? Just what kind of things would you experience? F: Oh yeah, I did go home. Well, I always said the Pentagon starts at 7:00am, most people at least in senior position in their support staff in the Pentagon were there around 7:00, as I was throughout my term whether during the Gulf War or otherwise. It nominally ended at 7:00pm, and what I mean by that is any peer or superior would feel free to call a meeting with

you, up until 7:00pm, so that you could actually schedule events until 7:00pm. If you were really scheduled up during all that time, and paperwork, and things that had to be signed and what not, would take longer. But, in fact the normal day was ~~7:00~~ to ~~7:00~~, and probably a little shorter in that term than in others, because Secretary Cheney didn't believe that staying all night was a good thing, and he made it a practice and was very adamant about it, that he would leave at 6:30, and he thought other people ought to be doing pretty much the same and I don't mean that he checked up on people but he just commented on that regularly. Particularly during the Gulf War there would be great deal of going back and forth between NRO matters and my Air Force role, usually at the very end of the day we had a wrap up from the Air Force Ops center in the basement of the Pentagon. We would go down and get updated on what was actually happening in the war. The beginning of the day would typically have involved a meeting either with the SecDef and his staff, consisting of all the senior officials of the Pentagon including JCS. In between would be of course every kind of routine thing, and status updating from the NRO, examining what extra demands were on the satellites, whether the program offices felt that any extra stresses that users were trying to put on the satellites at that time seemed reasonable. I mean, our view was if we are shortening life, well that is fine, if we have to use fuel, that is fine, we are fighting a war, no question about that, but I was always concerned to be sure that we weren't just destroying a satellite by overusing it, with no one feeling that they could come forward and say so. We kept encouraging program offices to keep informing us of this. H: Did any of the satellites hiccup during the crisis that caused you great concern? F No. In fact, NSA particularly but other agencies, and military commented that, after the war, even thought satellites gave them less total information than they needed, that they never hiccupped, that they were always there. Every other source they had, hiccupped regularly. It was a big differentiator

in their mind. With regard to this point of satellites didn't get them all the information they needed, I kept trying to make the point in that post war period, that it was perfectly true, but they had all performed beyond their specifications. So, the satellites had delivered more information than they had been designed to do, and they all worked. A couple of cases, we had satellites that were way beyond their nominal lifetime, that were throwing in with extra service that we hadn't really paid for in a sense. So, we had gotten all that we had paid for, but the experience had shown us, that prosecution of modern war is a very information rich environment and that folks want it a lot more, information. With the right audience, where there could be a little humor, I'd say you know my order book is ready. Usually you didn't say that. Among the intelligence agencies this point was well understood. With the military, each person you actually got to talk to would understand the point. But, you never really could get it generally understood. Somehow, there was this idea that there was a failure. My argument was, if there was a failure, it was a failure on the part of all of us, to understand, just how very much information we really want the prosecution of modern technology. H: So you felt if you could get to the military leaders that. F: Oh yeah. To the individual H: Did you try to bring them in? F: I would try to talk with them. I remember talking with General Horner, who started off very severe on this point of view, failed us, and so on. By the time we went through the whole thing, he understood the point. It's taken him even some years beyond, we are good friends today, for him to acknowledge that he understood the point, but he understood. Certainly the Air Force understood. I don't know, I never did get a chance to talk with General Swartzcoff, I don't know if he really understood. The point wasn't to be an apologist, the point was to say, don't be mad at me we did fine, it was to identify, you know, what are the real issues? The real issue is not failure of systems. Systems didn't fail. The real issue is not a failure to deliver to orbit that which we were asked to deliver to

orbit. Everything we had been programmed to do we were doing. So it is really something more fundamental of how much information do you want. What kind, where does it have to go, how is it going to get there, and what are the timelines that we really want to meet in modern. We're willing to recognize this was the first time we had really done it, Real time, remote sensing support to the battlefield in big numbers. I used to point out that we at most could produce [redacted] images a day from the region, and at the peak in the air war, we were hitting [redacted] targets a day. Somebody wanted a picture of each one of those, plus they wanted to know where the troops were in movements, and far behind the scenes kinds of information. So the natural volume of demand was in the thousands per day. One of my arguments by the way was, you can't do this with satellites alone. You just can't be there enough of the time. You really need to get more robust with airplanes. ~~Particularly uninhabited airplanes. H: Drones or Long dwell? F:~~

(b)(1)
(b)(3)

✓ Yes, uninhabited vehicles that could stay for at least many hours, if not even days because as high as the throughput was for NRO satellites, typically they are [redacted] and that is what you were accumulating. If you could be there continuously it would be quite a different situation. The U2s that were there often couldn't go where they were most wanted, because we weren't sure we had air superiority that was sufficient, but an uninhabited vehicle would essentially eliminate that problem. So, I was a big advocate of UAV's in that period. We had some programmatic responsibility for them in the NRO, which has subsequently been moved to a separate office, the Defense Airborne Reconnaissance Office. I think that is a good idea. H: After the euphoria of the Gulf War, did you have feelings that you were going to stay on another 4 years? Bush would be reelected? F: Well, let's see, I recall the victory parade was I think in July of '91, more than a year before the election. Bush's approval rating was like 80%, but I've also been around Washington a long time, and I knew how fast those things

(b)(1)
(b)(3)

~~SECRET/DEMAN~~

changed. I certainly thought at that time, that he would be reelected, and that I would probably stay. On the other hand, I had come to the job realizing that unlike any other job I had before, it came with an absolute guarantee you were going to leave, and quite possibly in 4 years. Even if the President won reelection, you might have a different SecDef who wanted a different and so on, and you were there as the piece of paper on your wall says, ^{ok} the pleasure of the President. So, — my career plan allowed for the idea that I would leave at that point. I would like to have stayed. I was enjoying it. Whether I would have stayed as Director of the NRO, or in some other capacity, I enjoyed government service, but I wasn't surprised or embittered in any way. H: What about the transition? When Clinton administration takes over. Was it smooth, was it difficult, was it easy for you, how close were you to? F: Well, I knew Secretary Perry who came in as the Deputy Secretary but that's really, ³ and I knew Mr. Aspen from the Hill. I had spoke to both of them in — their early days. I was one of the few that had been asked to stay on for a little while, most people left January 20th, I left March 5th. I had particularly a long time and a good relationship with Secretary Perry, so I was able to discuss with him in the earliest days of the new administration, what I thought were the big issues for the NRO, things that would come to his attention within the first month or two, a range of things. We had a very pleasant discussion, and we discussed my departure, and he said you know, over a period of a few months, you just decide for yourself. H: What did you see as the big issues that are going to confront the Clinton administration as far as NRO? F: Well, I operated with the expectation that the new administration would drive the defense budget down, and we had now adjusted the NRP to essentially flat budget, but we had these development programs going that simply couldn't go away. We were really committed to them, so while one had chopped away at the budget plan of the NRO, during the previous 4 years, you would not be able to do that very much without pretty

~~SECRET/DEMAN~~

~~SECRET/BYEMAN~~

FAGA

catastrophic results, and he understood that well. He had been on the PIFIAB, he was reasonably familiar with the program, and had been involved with the NRO in many ways for years. We had a very good talk about all that. There were a number of operational matters that I don't recall now, but I remember there were several of them, just things, this will come up within a month, just want you to know so that you are not surprised when first the papers start rolling up here, and then the events start to unfold. I think the hardest part was that Jim Hill was again left as the acting Director for 14 months. I left in March '93, and Jeff Harris wasn't confirmed until May '94. Jim had been in that position several times before, in fact his total service as director probably exceeds any other director, actually other than Pete Aldridge that might even be true. Jim was always careful, that while he would administer the NRO, during such a period that he wasn't setting direction, and setting policy, and essentially taking the role, that the incoming director would have to take. To try to do that for 14 months is very, very difficult, and really an unfair burden for him, which he carried as he always did very, very well. Jim is one of those few people who handed great power, refuses to use it all, and did only what he thought he should do, and trying to leave everything open for the new director that he possibly could, unless events just required that he move forward. I found it personally a comfortable departure, and transition. I laughed at somebody when we were coming in to some fanfare, I said, they won't be cheering when we leave, it just seems to be the nature of it. But that actually wasn't true, the Air Force was very generous, and I actually retired from Federal service, and they held a big ceremony about that and the NRO held a farewell, and filled up a room of my house with memorabilia, which I enjoy immensely. It was very comfortable. H: I know you are going to have to run, I hope we can get together again and do a little more detail on some of the projects and that. I do appreciate your time, coming in and seeing us. F: All right, I enjoyed it. How are you going to

~~SECRET/BYEMAN~~

~~SECRET/BYEMAN~~

FAGA

catastrophic results, and he understood that well. He had been on the PIFIAB, he was reasonably familiar with the program, and had been involved with the NRO in many ways for years. We had a very good talk about all that. There were a number of operational matters that I don't recall now, but I remember there were several of them, just things, this will come up within a month, just want you to know so that you are not surprised when first the papers start rolling up here, and then the events start to unfold. I think the hardest part was that Jim Hill was again left as the acting Director for 14 months. I left in March '93, and Jeff Harris wasn't confirmed until May '94. Jim had been in that position several times before, in fact his total service as director probably exceeds any other director, actually other than Pete Aldridge that might even be true. Jim was always careful, that while he would administer the NRO, during such a period that he wasn't setting direction, and setting policy, and essentially taking the role, that the incoming director would have to take. To try to do that for 14 months is very, very difficult, and really an unfair burden for him, which he carried as he always did very, very well. Jim is one of those few people who handed great power, refuses to use it all, and did only what he thought he should do, and trying to leave everything open for the new director that he possibly could, unless events just required that he move forward. I found it personally a comfortable departure, and transition. I laughed at somebody when we were coming in to some fanfare, I said, they won't be cheering when we leave, it just seems to be the nature of it. But that actually wasn't true, the Air Force was very generous, and I actually retired from Federal service, and they held a big ceremony about that and the NRO held a farewell, and filled up a room of my house with memorabilia, which I enjoy immensely. It was very comfortable. H: I know you are going to have to run, I hope we can get together again and do a little more detail on some of the projects and that. I do appreciate your time, coming in and seeing us. F: All right, I enjoyed it. How are you going to

~~SECRET/BYEMAN~~

FAGA

~~SECRET/BYEMAN~~

put the product together? Do you intend to write something? H: Well, that is a good question. Right now, it's just the sense of trying to preserve some of the thoughts and background of each one of the Director's tenure, and then how we use it, we may do a video, bits and pieces from all of you and do a collage, which I think would be of some interest. So, there are several approaches that we are looking at. F: Yes, it's interesting that even though the NRO has existed for 35 years, all of the former director's are still alive. H: It's a very unique situation. F: I haven't met every one of them. I haven't met Brock McMillan. H: We were just up in Maine. He is still very outspoken. F: Well the older you get the more outspoken you get. H: I believe that. You are allowed that, nobody can do anything to you. But he is still totally control of his faculties, and he is 82. F: I did meet Joseph Charick, the first DNRO, at one of the former Director's meetings that Jeff Harris held here. In fact I guess we actually only had one, although a couple of those were planned, they didn't come together. I guess he was the only one there that I hadn't previously met, because I knew John McLucas from a range of involvements. I had met Alexander Flax a few times. Everybody from Flax on. H: It's quite a group. F: Yes it is. H: I have one other question for you. There is a popular theory in the history about leadership and the position of where you were born in your family. Where were you born in your family? First, second? F: First. Of just two children. I have a sister who is three years younger. Do you have to be first? H: There is a lot of work being done. There is a certain leadership aggressiveness that comes with that. F: Well, that is interesting. I have two sons. One, a Navy lieutenant, and the other one finishing law school. I think the younger one is more aggressive. H: Well they are more willing to take chances, but the leadership comes with the older. F: That shows up later probably. H: The younger one has to prove themselves, so they go off and do. F: That is true. Well actually until they completely diverged as brother^s going into the Navy, and into engineering and he going into

~~SECRET/BYEMAN~~

~~SECRET/BYEMAN~~

law as he gotten past that, you know I have to match Jeff one for one, especially when they were 20 months apart in age. Close enough to really be competitive. H: I know you have to run. **END**
OF SIDE ONE TAPE TWO

-END-

~~SECRET/BYEMAN~~