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1

Department of Defense

Matloff: This is part II of an oral history interview with General David G. Jones held in Arlington, Virginia on October 21, 1987 at 9:30 a.m. Representing the OSD Historical Office are Drs. Alfred Goldberg and Maurice Matloff.

Gen. Jones, at our meeting on August 26, 1987, we discussed your service as chief of staff of the Air Force, 1974-'78 and had just begun to discuss your role as chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, 1978-1982. We talked about the background of that appointment, your conception of the role, some of the service problems, and your working relationships in and out of the Department of Defense. We just started to talk about strategic planning. We would like to resume that discussion by asking you what role you played as chairman in strategic planning and did the change from the Carter to the Reagan administration affect that role in any way?

Jones: I don't think the role changed. The chairman's role tends to be consistent. The emphasis, and, somewhat, the methodology, changed, but the role of the chairman didn't really change that much.

Matloff: Do you recall how closely the presidents and secretaries of defense were following the development of military strategy during that period?

Jones: Not a lot of effort is put into development of overall strategy. There is a lot of work put in by staffs, but at the senior level there is so much concentration on the problems of the moment that very little time it spent on developing the master strategy.

Matloff: How about in connection with the evolution of strategic doctrine, such things as PD-59--did you and the JCS play any role in the evolution of that doctrine?

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Jones: I think some of our people were advisers in the preparation; but our main role was in commenting on it and expressing our concerns with certain aspects of the doctrine more than the basic development of it.

Matloff: There seemed to be a difference of views between former Secretary Brown and Brzezinski on whether this was a new doctrine or not. Brown called it, "Not a new strategic doctrine, not a radical departure." Brzezinski in his book, On Power and Principle, emphasized PD-59 as "an important new step in American strategic thought." Brzezinski apparently was focusing on the concern about a long conflict instead of a brief apocalyptic conflict which had hitherto been postulated in American was planning, according to him. Brown apparently was looking at it differently. Do you recall whether you thought it was new or radically different?

Jones: I didn't think it was radically different. There are many statements made that give an impression of great change, and maybe those statements imply great change, but underneath that, very little happens. Part of it was that it wasn't that big of a change and that part which was big wouldn't be implemented, anyway.

Goldberg: That's something that new administrations often do. They want to indicate that they are doing something different and original.

Jones: Every administration wants to immediately say they have developed a coherent strategy and it is different from the prior administration. And yet, very little happens underneath that from a strategic standpoint. Maybe decisions on budget or on individual weapons it might change, but the overall strategy doesn't change much. Whether you talk two and one-half wars, two wars, or one and one-half wars; long wars, or short wars, from a philosophical standpoint it doesn't change much down below.

Goldberg: It's all theoretical, at that point.

Matloff: While we're on this subject, what did you regard as the significance of the Carter Doctrine, enunciated in the State of the Union address of 1980?

Jones: Are you talking about the Middle East?

Matloff: It came with that connection, right. Or any aspect of it that interested you.

Jones: I think it was the right approach and it was consistent with what we had been doing. Particularly from the standpoint that the flow of oil is essential to the western world, and we've got to do whatever is necessary. I think he articulated what we were already working on.

Matloff: Was there any consultation with the Joint Chiefs, either on that doctrine or later on, the Reagan doctrine?

Jones: Yes. Not necessarily on how it was written and expressed, but they knew our views and we were able to make them known.

Goldberg: You would consider what's happening in the Persian Gulf now consistent with that Carter doctrine on the Middle East?

Jones: Yes. I think it's consistent. That doesn't mean that President Carter would have done the same thing. But I think it's consistent from administration to administration that the flow of oil out of the Gulf is critical to the West.

Matloff: The early 1980s were a period of renewed ferment in strategic thinking among Defense intellectuals in the United States. Subjects such as deterrence, MAD, SDI, and the like. Did you and the other JCS members keep up with the debate outside DoD and did you have much contact with Defense intellectuals outside DoD?

Jones: I think we kept up in a reasonable way, but there is not a lot of contact. There are certain contracts let, you read certain documents, but frankly, we have gotten to the point where the people in critical positions in the government are so burdened by the day-to-day crises, needs, budgets, and the rest, that they have very little time to really think about the bigger issues and study what's going on outside the community.

Goldberg: That's true probably even down to some of the mid-levels, too.

Matloff: Let's move on to manpower and weapons issues. What led to President Carter's decision to create the Rapid Deployment Force?

Jones: I think it was our informing him of our very limited capability to reject force into the Middle East, into the Persian Gulf area. It was necessary to Marshall the resources we had, organize them, and also to give a public perception of movement in that area. So I think that was the genesis of the RDJTF.

Matloff: It was actually activated on 1 March 1980 at MacDill Field. It came fairly soon after the crises in Iran and Afghanistan. Let me ask you about the strategic nuclear triad. Did you believe in a balanced strategic nuclear triad?

Jones: Yes, very much. Not necessarily one-third each, but one being maintained modern and viable.

Matloff: Submarines, bombers, and missiles. How about advanced nuclear bombers, submarines, and aircraft carriers, how did you stand on those?

Jones: I supported the B-1, the MX, and the Trident submarine. The aircraft carrier is not a part of the strategic nuclear force. I supported all three of the former in both administrations.

Goldberg: You had the support of the B-70 back in the 60s, also, hadn't you?

Jones: Yes.

Matloff: Was there ever a problem in your mind about the MAG bomber versus the missile issue?

Jones: I was always concerned about our ability to convince others of the need to maintain the bomber force. It's interesting to see the cycle we've gone through. The bomber was almost dead in the minds of people for a long time, and we didn't need it. Now we have the modernization of the B-52 force, the air-launched cruise missiles, the B-1, the advanced bomber is coming along, and now it is the ICBM force that is the great debate. People are even talking about whether we will have transparent oceans at some time. I don't think we will in a literal sense, but we're in a cycle and right now the greatest debate is around the MX and the future of the ICBM force rather than the bomber.

Matloff: Did you and the Joint Chiefs agree with the secretaries of defense with reference to weapons acquisition and deployment? Did any differences develop?

Jones: We differed on the B-1; later we differed on the basing of the MX.

Matloff: This is with Brown's decision not to deploy the B-1?

Jones: President Carter's decision against the B-1--we didn't agree with it.

Matloff: How about upgrading the B-52, one of Brown's recommendations?

Jones: We were for upgrading the B-52, but not as an alternative to the B-1.

Matloff: Did he want to go ahead with development of a stealth technology?

Jones: And so did we, but we thought it would follow the B-1, as it is now, rather than being a substitute.

Matloff: Why did President Carter decide to deploy the MX missile, even in the context of severe budget restraints?

Jones: I think in his mind, the arms control issues were very important. If the Soviets were allowed SS18's with ten warheads, it would be impossible for us to ratify an agreement that didn't have a comparable missile, at least in warheads, less throw weight, but with warheads. So I think that was a great part of his motivation in supporting the MX.

Matloff: This is the position you went along with? You advised on that decision?

Jones: We advised positively on MX, not for the arms control reason, but for the strategic need for it.

Goldberg: He had Congress largely in mind, I presume.

Jones: I think he had Congress in mind, yes, and public support of arms control.

Matloff: Did you go along with the plan to deploy the MX in the Reagan era?

Jones: No. I can recall at Santa Barbara and in Los Angeles, we had quite a discussion with the president. At the second meeting I asked Lew Allen, chief of staff of the Air Force, to come along, because it was so critical to the Air Force. We basically told the president we had studied the basing of the MX every which way and had not found a better way than the multiple system. "Racetrack" is not an accurate description of it, that's a press comment. But the multiple aiming point and PS system and the recommendation is to not depart from that basing mode until there was one that was equal or better, for two reasons. One is we were not likely to find one that was equal or better, and second, there were people who supported the MX who would like to get off support of the MX, and this would give them a reason. Frankly, that's what happened when they came up with the idea, which I thought was very ill-advised and so told the Congress, of either putting it aboard an airplane or in Titan holes. This was the wrong way to go. It had become such a political issue, with cartoons passed around as to how ridiculous it all was, that the decision went

against us and we ended up with 50 MXs in a non-survivable mode rather than 200 MXs in a survivable mode, which we could have achieved if we had held a steady course.

Goldberg: Do you think that the Reagan administration position on arms control played a considerable part in this decision?

Jones: No. I don't think there was any thought of arms control early in the Reagan administration.

Goldberg: I mean the in the Reagan administration to arms control, in the earlier days.

Jones: I don't think it had an impact on the decision on MX.

Goldberg: I thought it might have made the MX decision easier for them.

Jones: They were for MX, but wanted it in a different mode. It ended up jeopardizing the program.

Matloff: Let me take you to the neutron bomb and the differences between President Carter and his advisers on this issue. Brzezinski quotes Carter at one point as saying, "I wish I'd never heard of this weapon." How did you and the JCS stand on the question of the deployment of the neutron bomb?

Jones: It took us all by surprise. It was in the Army budget, there had been no real discussion of it, and all of a sudden it became a very hot political issue. Frankly, I didn't think it was all that important as a weapons system, but once we had put in in the budget and were moving forward, I thought we ought to continue it; that it sent the wrong signals by canceling it. And particularly the way it was canceled, particularly chancellor Schmidt, who walked out on a limb supporting it and then we cut it off. If we were going to decide to say no on it we should have let him be a part of the action on it. It became highly political and damaged us by the way it was handled. The problem stuck with us for a long time.

Matloff: You recall the NATO decision of December 1979 to deploy and modernize theater forces of TNF. How was that precise figure of 572 ground based cruise missiles and Pershing II's arrived at?

Jones: I think what happened is that in force structure development there were so many Pershing II's divided into so many units and it came out that that would be about the right program, the Air Force with so many ground-launched cruise missiles deployed on these bases. It was sort of developed as a force structure and then it got into the NATO environment and became cast in concrete.

Matloff: How much of it was a reaction to the Soviets' new long-range nuclear weapons like the SS-20 and the Backfire bomber?

Jones: I think it was almost completely in reaction to the SS-20. Not that we may not have modernized, for example, the Pershing without the SS-20, but I think the great motivation program was because of the Soviet deployment.

Matloff: Was is then a mix of motives, partly to counter the Soviet placing their weaponry and partly internal politics of NATO?

Jones: I think at first it was something to counter the Soviet threat and something to give reassurance to NATO. There was a debate as to whether or not to go with more submarines. The thought was that this would not be as good as forces actually based on U.S. soil. There was a big political content as well as a military one.

Matloff: Do you remember the reaction when the actual deployment was carried out? Did you draw any lessons from the American effort to carry out that decision?

Jones: I think we handled it very well. We had the dual track approach so that we could get political support in Europe, saying that the Soviets would eliminate all of their INF

systems if we wouldn't deploy. The Italians were extremely helpful in this regard. We were able to get the deployment in Europe moving.

We need a lot more money. One thing that is understandable and has always concerned is this image that generals and admirals have insatiable appetites, always demanding more. What people don't realize is that the guidance given is to do far more than the resources permit. Defense Guidance will say to almost everything, "Modernize all the strategic forces now--SDI--a lot of additional--all aspects of the conventional--longer wars--and very poor in putting priorities within that. To meet the Defense Guidance would require tens of billions of dollars more than was within the budget in even the best years.

Goldberg: This is why the budget is a better guide to what the strategy is than is the Defense Guidance.

Jones: But the strategy is, we won't fight a long war because we don't buy the spare parts and munitions beyond a fairly short time period. We bought a lot in the last few years. It's one of the first things that suffers when the budget gets tighter. In Europe our allies are much worse than we are, with not a realistic capability to do even 30 days. Even though they will say 30 days, that is at lower expenditure rates. We're better than that, but we are nowhere near having the sustainability that would be required.

Goldberg: With regard to our allies, how much of this is deliberate in a strategic sense; that is, that they have pinned their hopes on the nuclear threat to such an extent for so long that they don't want to give the inference that they are prepared to fight a long conventional war? So you would agree that it is deliberate on their part? Not overtly, perhaps, but in fact?

Jones: Yes, I think so.

Matloff: Let's move in to the area of foreign area problems and crises. As chairman of the Joint Chiefs, to what extent did you become involved with NATO policies, buildup, and strategy?

Jones: I was quite deeply involved, and I was particularly sensitive to it because I had spent seven years in Europe and had a NATO job as commander of 4th ATAF and had been the father of Allied Air Forces Central Europe which was activated at Ramstein in 1974 to bring together the Air Force six nations central region. So I always had that special sensitivity and was deeply involved in military committee meetings and defense planning committee meetings in Europe.

Matloff: What did you see as the major problems in NATO during the periods of the Carter and Reagan administration?

Jones: A lot of the problems were political, in that people were not sensitive to the issues of NATO. There were some exceptions in the Carter administration, such as the neutron bomb, that weren't handled well, but overall I give that master Bob Komer credit for keeping an eye on the issues, and I think he did a fine job in trying to keep us from committing what I have said was the sin of unilateralism. We tend to make up our minds and then force it down our allies' throats. We have not done very well in discussions with allies ahead of time on issues, trying to bring them along. They have not always done well either, in acting in a mature way. But as leader of the alliance, we are the ones that really should set the pace.

Goldberg: This is interesting, because Bob gives you a lot of credit for this, too.

Jones: We worked closely.

Matloff: Did you and presidents Carter and Reagan view NATO as a permanent U.S. commitment?

Jones: I think so, as far as anybody could see.

Matloff: How about your attitude and their attitude toward the reduction of U.S. troops in Europe? the proposals that come up periodically in Congress?

Jones: I think both administrations were opposed to the Mansfield-type resolutions. They pretty well disappeared in the Reagan administration. In both cases, a strong commitment to NATO.

Goldberg: It's reviving again.

Matloff: In a sense, Brzezinski has been writing along that line, too, to have a reduced number of troops there.

Jones: Yes.

Matloff: Were you pleased with NATO's progress in revitalization when you left office, that pledge of the members in 1977?

Jones: Earlier I was pleased that we got a commitment to increase the defense budgets in a NATO nation to three percent in real terms. We were moving up that, even though it was spotty and some didn't. But at least there was a goal against which to measure countries. When the Reagan administration came in they dismissed it, they said it was an artificial number, and more than that was needed. That let nations get out of it, there wasn't anything to measure them against any more. Well, we're never really satisfied with our allies. Some do much better than others. There is a general frustration within the NATO alliance, but I think that alliance is stronger than a lot of people believe, so we can afford to have these types of differences and still have an alliance that is meaningful.

Goldberg: Can you get enough information under such circumstances to permit you to really measure what they are really doing?

Jones: It's may be hard to determine whether it is three percent or not, and people will use different measures and so on, but you can get a good enough feel as to whether they are heading in the right direction.

Goldberg: But generally speaking, has there always been a reluctance on the part of members of the alliance to give complete information about what they had. From the very beginning they were reluctant.

Jones: Yes, but you can generally get a good feeling of which way they were going.

Matloff: What did and do you see as the future of the alliance? Do you view it primarily as fortress, forum, or instrument of detente?

Jones: I think it will continue basically in its current mode. There are great strengths to the alliance; clearly a military alliance directed at deterring any Soviet or Warsaw Pact action in Europe. It becomes much more difficult when it tries to take on something beyond that. We've tried to get them to play a role out of the NATO territory. It's been impossible to get any involvement. Individual nations, the British, French, and others, may send some ships into the Persian Gulf and so forth, but that's not under NATO. We'd like to have them take an interest particularly in southwest Asia, but it's been very difficult. As arms control progresses beyond nuclear weapons, NATO will play a much greater role, particularly as we get into conventional force reductions and discussions. They will be a major part of those discussions, so they will take on that added role.

Matloff: Did you have a general attitude toward the relation of alliances to the United States national security, as necessary or desirable?

Jones: I think alliances are necessary. Whether it is in NATO or in the Pacific, and whether it's an alliance in the legal sense, but strong cooperation among nations is necessary. We are spread thin, we can't do everything in every place in the world, so we have to have good support from others.

Matloff: Let's go to the other side of the world, to China, Japan and Korea. The normalization of relations with China that president Carter sought and had achieved, he thought, by end December 1978--to what extent did U.S. security interests, vis-a-vis the Soviet Union, determine his positions in his attitude toward China?

Jones: I think it had a major role to play in normalization of relationship. I think it was not only the Soviet contacts but that we'd been in two wars since World War II, and both had involved the Chinese. In Korea, the Chinese directly with their troops, and in Vietnam, the Chinese supporting the opposition. I think even if the Soviets didn't play a role, a good relationship with China and mainland China was essential if we were to have stability in the western Pacific. It was two-fold.

Matloff: Did the view of the JCS and Harold Brown play any role in normalization?

Jones: Not a major role. We were supportive of it. We always had concern about not completely alienating Taiwan. Taiwan had been good support, so we were a little nervous on how to handle China without completely cutting off Taiwan and making Taiwan vulnerable. It was a difficult path to walk down. We didn't play a major role in it, but we were involved.

Goldberg: Did you feel that the Chinese were behaving rather realistically as far as Taiwan, or Hong Kong?

Jones: Over time, yes. Initially we were wondering what would happen.

Matloff: The Carter administration, particularly toward the end of its tenure, began to press Japan for a larger defense effort. Were you and the JCS consulted on this question?

Jones: I think we were involved in the discussions and were supportive of getting them to do more.

Matloff: Did you have any views on the role that the Joint Chiefs should play in the process?

Jones: I was supportive of a role that would be primarily defensive. There were many nations still in the Pacific that would be apprehensive about the Japanese developing an offensive capability. It was anti-shipping, anti-submarine warfare, air defense, defense of their islands, support of us, and that sort of thing, more than an offensive capability.

Matloff: When we interviewed Secretary of Defense Laird he remarked that while Kissinger was busy opening up relations with China Laird had gone to Japan, feeling it was very important that more be done by Japan at the same time. Secretary Laird wasn't sure everyone in the administration was happy about this, but he was felt the importance at least of that opening.

With regard to Korea--the Carter administration shelved its plan for a phased withdrawal of U.S. ground forces from the Republic of Korea after deciding on it in 1977. What was the JCS position on this question?

Jones: In a meeting with President Carter before the inauguration he raised this issue. I can recall Gen. Rogers, in answering the question of could we withdraw our troops from Korea, replied, "Yes, if we make major improvements in the Korean capability." That's true. Even though there is a very political dimension of the Americans being there, if you make the South Koreans strong enough in comparison, particularly, with the North

Koreans, but any support they could get, they could do it. I don't think the "if" was listened to enough, and it caused a lot of problems. I don't mean Rogers was in favor of it, but was basically saying we could make some reductions and maybe withdraw "if"--but the "IF" was in capital letters. I think for a number of reasons it was determined not to be practical to do it later, and the idea was dropped.

Goldberg: How did the Joint Chiefs stand on the relief of Gen. Singlaub at that time?

Jones: We didn't even address it. That was up to the Army. I think if we'd been asked, regardless of our feeling on withdrawal of troops, what he had done was inappropriate.

Matloff: On the subject of the Middle East--the Camp David Accords of September 1978, which was the highlight of the Carter administration and the first peace treaty followed in March 1979. How much did Carter rely on Harold Brown and the JCS during the negotiations?

Jones: We weren't really involved, to speak of. We provided information now and then and were supportive of it, but had no major role in that.

Matloff: Brzezinski quotes the president at one point in the negotiations, that he did not want "Harold Brown wandering around the desert trying to figure out where to put the airfields for the Israelis, with us having to foot the bill." What was he getting at, there?

Goldberg: As part of the agreement, we did agree to put in new airfields.

Jones: To provide them some support.

Goldberg: That did cost us a lot of money.

Jones: But we weren't involved.

Matloff: Let's shift to Iran, the period of the fall of the Shah in January 1979 and the hostage crisis from November to January 1981. The fall of the Shah is usually regarded as

the greatest setback for the Carter administration. In retrospect, could more have been done; could it have been saved, in your view?

Jones: When you look back, more could have been done. We had prided ourselves not to spy on our friends. Clearly, we should have recognized that the Shah didn't have the support that we thought he did. So we were caught off base there. I think the Shah was sicker than we thought. He was a strong, dynamic leader until he got sick, then he began to vacillate and lost control of his situation. In retrospect, yes, there were some things we could have done. Whether we could have prevented the fall, I don't know. It may have been preordained, not in the literal sense, but even if we had known about his lack of support in this country the question is whether we could have done anything about it or persuaded him to do anything about it. He had a blind side and thought all the people were behind him, and I think he made tactical errors. One of his greatest errors was persuading the Iraqis to agree to throw Khomeini out. As long as Khomeini was in Iraq he had no voice to the world. When he got to France he started sending tapes into Tehran and throughout Iran and started to create great turmoil. That was a tactical mistake. So we could have done better, but perhaps not prevented the fall of the Shah.

Goldberg: What happened was that Khomeini brought to a boil what was already simmering.

Matloff: One of the points that Brzezinski makes is that the attention of the top decisionmakers, including himself, was riveted on other issues, until the crisis became very serious.

Jones: I guess that's true. Until near the end, we didn't expect the Shah to fall.

Matloff: How good was U.S. intelligence during that crisis, in your view?

Jones: I thought it was pretty good.

Matloff: Were you and the JCS consulted in the Gen. Heiser mission?

Jones: Yes.

Matloff: Did you go along with the military options for that mission?

Jones: The decision was to send some senior military officer, and Gen. Heiser knew the Iranians well and had a key position and responsibility, so he was the logical person to go.

Matloff: Did President Carter give serious thought to supporting a military coup?

Jones: It's hard to say what he thought about it. Most of us felt that a military coup when it was finally discussed, was probably too late. A guess was that the leadership in the military was very weak and weren't convinced that the soldiers would follow the orders. But it was a big military, and not that well trained group of people who would be dedicated to the military. Their dedication had been to the Shah, and that was seen to break down. It wasn't to a military organization or anything like that. So by the time a coup was discussed it probably was impractical.

Matloff: In the crisis that followed the storming of the American Embassy in Iran, how did the JCS and you keep informed of the situation?

Jones: Our best information came from television.

Matloff: Public sources?

Jones: We got some intelligence information, but basically it was reading the newspapers and watching TV.

Matloff: On whose advice did the president rely on making the decision to try to rescue the hostages by force? Did he turn to the JCS?

Jones: Yes. We were given instructions right from the beginning to develop the capability for rescue, so our advice was more on how to do it and when to do it.

Matloff: Why were resort to blockade, mining, or concurrent attacks ruled out?

Jones: I think it was basically for a number of reasons. One is that mining and blockading before the hostages were out would have jeopardized the hostages. To try to do it simultaneously would require deployment of a lot of forces and that might tip the hand. After the hostages were out, then there was a possibility of some punitive action, but because of the failure to get them out, punitive action then would have jeopardized the lives of the hostages. I'm not saying we wouldn't have taken punitive action if the rescue mission had been successful, but it made it impossible to do without jeopardizing the hostages afterwards.

Matloff: President Carter emphasized that he would not interfere with the operational decisions. Do you think he was influenced by the example before him of Kennedy and the Bay of Pigs operation?

Jones: He said what?

Matloff: That he would not interfere with operational decisions. This is according to Brzezinsky's account of what happened. Excepting this statement, do you suppose he was influenced by Kennedy's handling of the Bay of Pigs affair, where he did get in on the operational decisions?

Jones: I don't think Kennedy got in on the decisions on the Bay of Pigs until it turned out to be a disaster. In fact, he felt he didn't get into it enough and got some bad advice on it. First, I think on the Iranian mission, President Carter got a bum rap, that somehow he interfered with things. He handled it better than any president I had seen with regard to the

role of the White House. In some crises we have ended up with the National Security Adviser or someone else calling over for information and interfering with what was going on. We told President Carter about that and he was very good to say that only he or Harold Brown, who would be at the White House, could call and ask for information or give instructions. We told him we would have the capability to communicate directly with the desert. We had resisted, though, doing that, because it would have bypassed the commander, who was forward, and we would get into the details. President Carter throughout the whole thing handled himself very well. He did not get into the decision of how many helicopters to use or the rest, basically it was when to go, if to go, and when to go. In April the nights were getting shorter and pretty soon would be too short to go. It was getting somewhat critical. He was in on it, all the chiefs were involved in the whole discussion strategy and how to do it and so forth. But he didn't tinker with the operation at all.

Goldberg: What were the criticisms of the services, the insistence that all the services be involved affecting the outcome?

Jones: There were legitimate criticisms of what went on, but the criticism that each service wanted part of the act was not valid at all.

Goldberg: This is the same criticism that was made in Grenada, also.

Matloff: Did you come away with any lessons in the handling of that crisis? of how the national national security apparatus was operating during that crisis?

Jones: The lesson was what we have so concentrated on East-West/U.S.-Soviet, that special warfares, special operations, hostage takings, rescue missions, all the rest, didn't get much thought. There had been very little interrelationship or working of various

elements. The whole dealing in areas of gray, we hadn't been very good at. We deal in black and white--here are the Soviets, they have so many divisions, we need to do this and this. Frankly, even in the aftermath not enough was done in creating and resulted in Congress insisting a command be formed, and an assistant secretary appointed, and so forth. That may or may not have been the right course, but I can understand why Congress jumped in, because not enough was done in the aftermath of that.

Goldberg: Why wasn't more done?

Jones: I don't know. I think it's the inertia of the bureaucratic system. Things were started at the end of the Carter administration to fix it. When the Reagan administration came in they had almost a total fixation on the Soviet Union and didn't pay a lot of attention to the special warfare area. It had gotten it's attention in the Carter administration. The Reagan administration took a long time, it took the Grenadas, the Beiruts, and the rest, to get that type of thing going. Congress got impatient and impulsive.

Goldberg: Do you think there was resistance within some of the services to the special forces idea?

Jones: Yes.

Matloff: How about Afghanistan, were the JCS consulted during the invasion by the Russians in December 1979, the implications for American security policy and what might be done?

Jones: Yes, we had discussions on Afghanistan. It wasn't a critical issue at the time, and we didn't think they were going to go beyond Afghanistan. It did provide them some capability, but it also resulted in a lot of problems. In the end, I think it's going to be a big minus for the Soviet Union. There were people at the time who thought the Soviets would

then get bases in Afghanistan that then could strike into the Gulf, and so on. I never felt that that was the big threat.

Matloff: We touched last time on the Panama Canal, you had spoken somewhat about it. About the role of the JCS in the negotiations--certainly Carter made use of Secretary of Defense Brown in the difficult fight to obtain Senate approval of the treaty. Did he make use of the JCS at all in the negotiation?

Jones: Yes.

Matloff: In what way?

Jones: He knew that JCS had to be supportive in order to get right-by; first. Secondly, I give great credit to the two Browns. The second treaty was the idea of the two Browns, Harold and George. The idea is that in perpetuity we have a responsibility and right to defense of the canal. Without that, I don't think we've got right-by. So with that it relieved a lot of the Chiefs' heartburn. There is enough ambiguity in that second treaty to where we can take the action necessary to defend the canal.

Goldberg: Some general questions about Cold War policies. We're heading down the home stretch. Did you believe that containment was a realistic policy, that its assumptions were valid; or did you envisage detente as a more realistic policy?

Jones: I don't think there is inconsistency between containment and detente. Obviously, as a fundamental you want to contain the Soviets. You want to prevent their expansion. There are a lot of ways you can work on preventing their expansion. One way is through military action--strengthen, shoring up and assistance to the country. Another way is to try to bring the Soviets into the family of nations, not expecting a radical change, but through a stick and carrot approach get them to act in a more responsible way. Former President

Nixon's characterization, "What we need is hardnosed detente," is about right. Detente got a bad image as being soft on the Soviets, but a relationship with the Soviet Union that is advantageous to them and to us in trying to stabilize the world, I think, is the right course of action.

Matloff: Were the JCS disturbed at all by the bid for Ostpolitik by the Germans, coming out of Bonn with Helmut Schmidt?

Jones: It wasn't a big subject for discussion.

Matloff: How about the whole area of military aid, on the basis of your experience and reflection, how effective was it as a tool in the Cold War?

Jones: I think it has been very effective. It's been spotty, and in some areas very inefficient, but overall I think it's been a critical part of our national security policy.

Matloff: Are you pessimistic or optimistic about the possibility of eventually dampening down the Russian threat?

Jones: I think in the long term that it will evolve. Not that the Soviet will become a Democratic society, you can't predict what will happen long term, but we're finding in this crisis we have in the market right now how interrelated the world is. The Soviets don't have a market like this, so they are not involved, but the Soviets are getting more involved in the economy of the world. They are hoping to sell automobiles in the United States, they are trying to increase the trade around the world. As countries get more involved in that way, there is a greater penalty for not acting within the overall code. I don't think we will see the Soviets all of a sudden start to behave themselves, but I think there will be increasing penalties for misbehavior, and the more we can use that stick and carrot approach, the better off everyone will be. I am hopeful. Not that there won't be rough spots, but I think the

Soviets recognize that if they go as they are going now, they will not go into the 21st century as a superpower. Therefore, they must do something about their economy, and something about a lot of things. It doesn't mean that they will cut their military way back, or that they won't be aggressive in certain parts of the world, but I think they are going to concentrate on their internal economy to a great extent in the next few years.

Matloff: How did you view the whole area of arms control and disarmament, and its relationship to U.S. national security policy?

Jones: I thought it was in the best interests of the U.S. to improve its relationship with the Soviet Union. Arms control measures in themselves, at least in the initial phases, weren't all that important. SALT II really doesn't mean much in the way of restraining forces on either side. It gave us some benchmarks to plan against. It restrained certain things, but one of the big criticisms of SALT II was that both sides could continue to build warheads. INF, I think has more importance from the political standpoint, and I am in agreement with the Soviet Union that it is a few INF being destroyed. Supportive of arms control, but recognizing that there are pitfalls. We worked the problem very hard. In SALT II the Chiefs unanimously said, "Modest, but useful," and I think that's what it has turned out to be. The Chiefs generally want to go down a fairly moderate path and tend to pull administrations towards that middle. In Carter trying to pull towards the middle levels, in arms control, rather than all of a sudden to get rid of all nuclear weapons or go down to a few, kind of euphoria in the initial days. Reagan initially not interested in arms control and wanting to throw SALT II out the window, bringing him to the middle. Initially there weren't any discussions, and then there were and they broke off. I tried down this middle of a hard-nosed approach to arms control, but a realistic one.

Goldberg: Do you think this was true of the Joint Chiefs before your time and since? They have been fairly consistent in taking a middle course?

Jones: Yes. There has been a cycle as to how vocal and how much role they play in doing it. They would always be somewhat cautious, but not extremists.

Matloff: Were the JCS consulted during the Carter administration on such things as SALT II and the comprehensive test ban, and arms proliferation?

Jones: Frankly, consulted more, I think, in the Carter administration than in the seven years of the Reagan administration. I was a major part of the discussion with the Soviets in Vienna. I met with Marshal Ogarkov. Adm. Crowe wouldn't take endicement.

Goldberg: But you were the exception over the years that didn't have either the Joint Chiefs or the defense secretary present at the summit meetings from the very beginning. That was an exception for both you and Secretary Brown.

Matloff: What lessons did you come away with from Carter's efforts to reach an accord with the Russians of, let's say, SALT II?

Jones: First, you should have, at least initially, very limited objectives. One thing always discussed was linkage. Somehow, we couldn't come to an agreement unless the Soviets behaved all around the world. What we ought to do in arms control is not isolate it in total, but say if we can get an agreement that's in our best interest, then we ought to consummate it. Whether or not they are in Afghanistan is important, but is not the determination of whether we can come to an agreement or not. There were people who thought we couldn't come to an agreement if they were in Afghanistan. One, if we can verify, not to 100 percent assurance, but to the point where any failure to comply isn't meaningful. Like the kid taking money out of the loose change box in the candy store. You want to stop it, it's not good, but

it doesn't mean the store is going to go broke. There are certain areas of verification that will have uncertainties, but it's how important they are, not only to the current agreement, but to future agreements. I think we have the possibility now of moving on to some subsequent agreements with the Soviets once we consummate the INF. There will be rough spots in the road and there will be a lot of concerns, but I think generally we are moving in the right direction.

Matloff: This is a subject which has interested you greatly, how do you see the roles of the JCS and its chairman? Do you see the need for changes at the top level in the OSD structure?

Jones: I wrote about my concerns in the article in the beginning of 1982 in Directors and Boards magazine and was republished in the Armed Forces Journal early in 1982. My New York Times magazine article in November of 1982 articulated my concerns and what changes had to be made, in my judgment. We were able to get an excellent bill just a year ago out of the Congress, strongly supported by Barry Goldwater, Sam Nunn, Bill Nichols, Ike Skelton, Les Aspin, and others. There are a few rough spots that I and other critics have been working with Adm. Crowe and the personnel area to get smoothed out, but overall it's a very good piece of legislation. I think it will take a number of years before it is fully implemented. There are further steps that I would like to see taken, that I think will come. I would like to see the war colleges become joint schools. I'd like more cross-service assignments. There is a lot more in this evolutionary process that I would like to see to truly build a strong joint system. I think the progress has been relatively moderate. I think Bill Crowe has been doing an excellent job of moving things along. He hasn't gotten full

support from some other on the changes, and therefore it's been somewhat difficult, but I'm encouraged.

Goldberg: Why do you think that the Navy and the Marines are still running scared on this whole business of unification. They have been utterly consistent for more than 40 years now on this issue, and seem to get even stronger on it. This resistance to the role of the Joint Chiefs, OSD, and the whole business of unification. Originally, they perhaps had reason to be frightened of it all, they thought they had a great deal to lose, but they are riding pretty high now.

Jones: You may hear more on that than I do, I thought that it had been softened a bit in the sense of the bill that was passed last year being catastrophic. I think fundamentally in the Navy, there is a culture, since they have their own army, navy, and air force, of wanting to go back to the days of Admiral Dewey where he was sent a message, "Defeat the Spanish navy and report back," sort of total independence. I guess if you are a ship's captain or a task force commander, you get that feeling that you are an entity, you are in charge, and you don't want anyone else to interfere or give you orders, and you will do your mission. There is that cultural upbringing among the Navy.

Goldberg: So this is what they see as complication; it's not necessary; there's too much complexity in establishing a large structure which inhibits and limits them in a way that they weren't limited before. This is the culture, I think.

Jones: We're becoming a very complex world, so political, that that context has to get into any decisions going on right now. What happens in rules engagement in the Persian Gulf has worldwide implications. The Navy would prefer that they write the rules of engagement

and be given the latitude on the spot. That was true, years ago, that you could do that. Now they have to be well debated in the political context of the world situation.

Goldberg: A striking illustration of this, of course, is the discussion between McNamara and Adm. Anderson back in 1962, at the time of the Cuban missile crisis. The Navy said, "Look, we know how to do this, just let us handle it."

Jones: I think there were probably wrongs on both sides, with McNamara trying to go overboard one way and the Navy trying to resist anything, and there was a happy medium in there of accommodation. My guess is that they both went too far, with Anderson demanding independence and McNamara getting into the details of what was going on.

Matloff: The last question At the end of the interview we always ask our interviewees how they would characterize the styles, personalities, and effectiveness of the secretaries of defense and other top officials in OSD with whom they served. What impressions do you have of the secretaries of defense?

Jones: I am reluctant to compare the four.

Matloff: What was it like to work with them?

Jones: I had a particularly close relationship with Jim Schlesinger and Harold Brown. It was a very easy, warm friendship. At times I could almost talk in half sentences with them. Don Rumsfeld I had known when he was in NATO, we got along well, but he wasn't there long enough and as chief of a service you don't get as close to the secretary as to the chairman. Except in my case, Jim Schlesinger and I developed a very close relationship when I was chief and he was secretary of defense, so that was an anomaly. He would call me up on Saturday morning, we'd sit with our feet up and talk for a couple of hours. We never developed that relationship with Cap Weinberger. He's a very courteous individual,

and I'm not saying it was a bad relationship, but it was not a close personal relationship. We had some very fundamental disagreements right from the start, which I think made it a little bit more difficult. I strongly supported continuation of abidance to SALT II. I found it interesting in the National Security Council meetings, the three people who were strongly counseling not to depart from SALT II were three military, Al Haig, Bobby Inman, and Dave Jones. That was one of the first discussions we had, and we were on opposite sides of the issue. AMEX basing was an early discussion and we were on opposite sides of the issue. We were on the opposite sides of a number of issues. Harold Brown and I were on opposite sides of a few issues, yes, but, first, he understood the system, having been in it, and the independent role of the chairman at the NSC meeting. I was a holdover from the last administration, even though I was in a non-political position, it was considered to be political. Even on the defense buildup, I had been around for so many years, and seen the cycles and inefficiencies within the system, that I was concerned that going flat-out we would cause ourselves problems that would come home to roost.

Goldberg: That they did.

Jones: In my first conversation with Weinberger, even before he took over as secretary, I talked about the problems in the organization and the need to reorganize, particularly the JCS, but also the Department of Defense. He wasn't happy with that, because he thought that would interfere with the Defense budget. So there was that kind of unhappiness, never expressed, but never developed into that warm relationship I had had previously.

Goldberg: Compared with Brown, where your differences didn't impair your position, with Weinberger they probably did, to some extent.

Jones: I think it was less understanding of the system by Weinberger, he was new to it, hadn't been in the Department of Defense before. And frankly, Harold Brown went further in accommodating the positions of the chiefs than Weinberger did. When we had some very strong fundamental issues, he went further in trying to work our problems and accommodate them within the system.

Goldberg: He was better informed overall, wasn't he, in every way? and less doctrinaire.

Jones: Yes. I think everybody knows Cap Weinberger. Once he makes up his mind, it's hard to change it. That can be a good trait, and other times it can provide inflexibility. I don't mean it as a matter of criticism, but we were able to have deeper substantive discussions with Harold Brown and understanding of our concerns, and greater accommodation on his part to our concerns.

Goldberg: Compared with his previous positions with the government, Weinberger has been very doctrinaire as secretary of defense, and this has made the difference, I think, in his relationships.

Matloff: How about on the same question of styles, personalities and effectiveness, raised to the level of the presidents--Nixon, Ford, Carter, and Reagan? In the field of national security, what was your reaction, your impressions, in your relations with them? How knowledgeable and effective were they, from your standpoint?

Jones: I did not have a close relationship with Presidents Nixon and Ford. With president Carter I had some very fundamental disagreements, but a much greater understanding on his part of the issues and our disagreements. With President Reagan, being a strong supporter of the military and the budget a closer compatibility of views but far less understanding of the issues. At times President Carter might know too much about the

subject, but I felt that President Reagan didn't know enough about the subject, very frankly, and went, to a great extent, by instinct. A lot of times those instincts were right. If it had been a six-year term he would have gone down in history as a really great president. I think we still have a year or so to go to determine about his presidency.

Matloff: Were there any other personalities that impressed you particularly in the national security field, in and out of Defense, in Congress, or the State Department?

Jones: I worked with a lot of people. Generally, I've come to the conclusion that in our system today from the secretary on down people are quite constrained on what can be done and therefore leave a minimum impact when they depart. Impacts come by major changes, like deregulation of the airlines has changed the airline industry. Those types of things make fundamental change. I haven't seen anybody in recent years who had a profound impact on the organization in the real long term. When President Reagan came in, the momentum in the country was to increase the Defense budget. We would have been better off increasing it at a better pace, but I don't see, except for the reorganization of the JCS, much difference in the way the Pentagon is run now than the way it was run seven years ago, or ten or fifteen years ago, in the basic way it operates. One secretary can be more efficient than the other, but the system now has tended to, because of congressional action and the bureaucratic process, and the whole thing, limit what a highly effective person can do, but also limit the damage that an ineffective person can do. There are so many tight controls on the system, of what one is able to do, that the impact of individuals is not as great. It may be on a specific operation, or crisis, but in the long sweep, the Defense Department is not operating that much differently than it was when I first got involved with it, 28 years ago.

Goldberg: Aren't there cycles, in terms of the role of the military vis-a-vis OSD, when there are times when OSD permits the military more of a say on the budget and weapons systems and the rest of it, and other times less?

Jones: Yes, there is a cycle of centralization and decentralization, but we end up with problems in both cases. Decentralization is best if there is a good drum beat as to what we want to do. Decentralization without good guidance is chaotic. There are bad things about over-centralization, too, in that they don't provide incentives and creativity down below. But decentralization, by not establishing real priorities, each service can go off and do what it really thinks are important, and things aren't well integrated.

Goldberg: Which is why the Navy likes the idea.

Jones: Yes.

Matloff: When you left, were you consulted on your successor, and did you brief him?

Jones: I wasn't consulted in that sense. Weinberger and I had a discussion in a nominal way.

Matloff: Did you get a chance to brief him?

Jones: Yes, I had to brief Vessey.

Matloff: What do you regard as your major achievements during your tenure as chairman, and were there any disappointments in tasks that were not completed?

Jones: There were a number of disappointments. The Iranian rescue mission was probably the greatest disappointment, that it failed. I think the greatest achievement was getting the momentum going in reorganization of the JCS before I left. I started in 1980 at the time of my reappointment, in discussion with Harold Brown, and my congressional testimony. I had a study effort and went public well before I left. I think as a sitting

chairman, testifying, and then getting Shy Meyer, chief of staff of the Army, doing it, and getting two of the five members of the chiefs supporting it. One was kind of ambivalent, the Air Force, and the Navy and Marines opposed. We got a little stature for it and a little momentum going in the reorganization, which I think has resulted in a change which has been helpful up to now and will be of fundamental importance in the years ahead.

Matloff: Thank you, Gen. Jones, for your patience and cooperation, and for sharing your recollections and insights with us.

Jones: Best wishes.