

~~SECRET~~

Office of the Secretary of Defense *Su.2.C. 8332*
Chief, RDD, ESD, WHS
Date: *17 SEPT 2013* Authority: EO 13526
Declassify: _____ Deny in Full: _____
Declassify in Part: *x*
Reason: *1.2(A)*
MDR: *13 -M- 1058*

Interview of

ROBERT A. LOVETT

**DEPUTY SECRETARY OF DEFENSE, 1950-51;
SECRETARY OF DEFENSE, 1951-53**

NEW YORK, NEW YORK

JUNE 7, 1976

INTERVIEWER: DORIS E. CONDIT

DECLASSIFIED IN FULL
Authority: EO 13526
Chief, Records & Declass Div, WHS
Date: **SEP 17 2013**

SECURITY CLASSIFICATION: UNCLASSIFIED

ACCESS CATEGORY: OPEN

~~SECRET~~

**HISTORICAL OFFICE
OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY OF DEFENSE**

~~RESTRICTED DATA~~
~~Security Information~~
~~Administrative and Management Information~~
~~Law Enforcement Information~~
~~Information Concerning Foreign~~
~~Dissemination Control 1.2(A), Atomic~~
~~Energy Information~~

13-M-1058

Interview with
Mr. Robert A. Lovett
June 7, 1976

Page determined to be Unclassified
Reviewed Chief, RDD, WHS
IAW EO 13526, Section 3.5
Date

SEP 17 2013

CONDIT: I tell you, Mr. Lovett, I am impressed by the record you have left in the files. I think your secretaryship is going to come across as one of the great ones.

LOVETT: Good, good --

CONDIT: I know that General Marshall wouldn't take the secretaryship unless Robert Lovett was coming down. That is the biggest compliment, I think.

LOVETT: Well, I think so myself -- wonderful man, wonderful man.

CONDIT: When you and General Marshall came into the secretaryship, how did you feel about the Department? What were the first things that you and General Marshall wanted to do when you came in? How did you feel it was running in view of the unification act and all that?

LOVETT: Well now, does your question apply to the Department of Defense?

CONDIT: The Office of the Secretary of Defense.

~~LOVETT: I had served in the War Department for five years before I got~~

into this Department of Defense, and I was instrumental in trying to unify the Services because there was a terrific amount of duplication, as is obvious, in those years. There were three of everything, or at least two. When the Unification Act was passed that reduced some of the duplication, but you must understand the situation as it existed at that time compared to today to see the problem.

We had at the end of the World War II -- my recollection isn't very accurate about this -- an Army of 8.4 million and an Air Force of 2.2 million, and a Navy of 4 million or something like that. We ran the War Department with Secretary of War Stimson, Under Secretary Patterson, Assistant Secretary of War Jack McCloy, and myself as Assistant Secretary of War for Air (now the Secretary of the Air Force). That is, there were four senior officers there. There were three Special Assistants: Harvey Bundy, Goldthwaite Dorr, and Howard Petersen. Now you have to compare that organization, which was for the largest force we had ever had in this country and undoubtedly the most powerful military force that ever existed, with what came later.

The last time I looked at the Directory, which was some years ago,
there were 34 assistant secretaries in the Department of Defense:

There were deputy assistant secretaries, and assistants to the deputy
assistant secretaries.

CONDIT: Well, not under you.

LOVETT: No, this is before the Department of Defense. I am comparing
the early days of the War Department with what now exists, as against
what I think was originally in mind under unification.

The transition of going back as Deputy Secretary of Defense in
1950 and then Secretary of Defense in 1951 was very simple because I
had been all through it, both from the point of view of the Air Force
and the War Department. I knew all the men, I knew them well, great
friends. It was a very simple thing to step in, it was like going
home. Unlike the Department of State, where I felt uneasy although
my business career had been in international banking, I felt completely
at home in the Department of Defense. So it was a simple step. That
explains, I think in part, the ease with which we did a lot of things

then, which seem to be made great affairs of today. I knew everybody in Navy because I had been a naval pilot in World War I. I knew the State Department because I had worked there as Under Secretary, Acting Secretary a large part of my time because of General Marshall's illness. You could pick up the telephone and call up, and that's the way many meetings were held. You would say, "We are running short of such and such an item. Have you got an oversupply, can you let us have a hundred engines?" Or something like that. And you would get an immediate answer, because the man knew you well and had worked with you before. That is a great advantage, an enormous advantage. Now I wanted to say that at the outset, so that you could see why some of the questions you sent were not applicable in the Department of Defense with General Marshall and myself. When I moved in, I had worked with him for seven years!

CONDIT: There was a complete rapport and feeling?

LOVEIT: Complete.

CONDIT: Well now, what did General Marshall set out to do when he came

back? What did he say to you? Did he say anything about his plans, what he wanted to do in that year he was Secretary?

LOVETT: Well yes, what we wanted to do was to try to get the whole machine of Defense reduced in scale and increased in efficiency so that it would be viable in peacetime.

CONDIT: Was Marshall responsible for the limited mobilization?

LOVETT: In what sense?

CONDIT: When Korea broke out, Mr. Johnson said we were in a great spot to realize our potential strength. That may or may not have been correct, but surely our forces were very small when Korea broke out. There was a great attempt to mobilize, to meet the immediate need of Korea, and to get some step on the new international situation that seemed to be developing, a very dangerous situation. Now, in the middle of that, all of a sudden, there seems to have been a decision made: Don't let's go for all-out mobilization, let's go to a plateau, a place where we can maintain a steady pace and have a good base for total mobilization if we have to. Now, I was just wondering, was that

General Marshall's idea?

LOVETT: That was the basic idea. It generated in the National Security Council under the spur of General Marshall.

CONDIT: Under the spur of General Marshall --

LOVETT: General Marshall had been through what I used to call the seven lean and the seven fat kine, the prince and pauper treatment of the military. They overbought when they were heroes, and they ate roots and grass when they were expendable, when nobody had any use for them. What we needed was a stable Army, Navy, and Air Force. A high peak of efficiency, but with a base from which it could expand. You had to have the trained staff sergeants, sergeant majors, that sort of thing. And, of course, General Marshall had been responsible for setting up the magnificent infantry school at Fort Benning and for many of the improvements, for most of the improvements in the military forces. The services of supplies were vastly improved. In the old days those were each little principalities.

CONDIT: The tech services, yes.

LOVETT: The tech services were absolutely murder to tangle with,

I think I said once in a paper I left for my successor.

CONDIT: November 18, 1952, your letter.

LOVETT: I pointed out it would be more "only a little more painful than to back into a buzz saw" to do anything with that.

CONDIT: Wonderful statement.

LOVETT: I got chopped to pieces when I first tried it, and then I found that there was a way to do it.

CONDIT: How was that?

LOVETT: Well, just to get them in and reason with them. Say: Look if you fellows think that the only service that is going to get any money in the peacetime is the Quartermaster Corps, forget it. Engineers are just as important as you are. Beyond that, the Army itself is most important.

I am trying to lay the background of the transition from service in the Department of State to service in the Department of Defense.

Some things were easy for us because of the background, because of the

experience in the War Department and in the State Department. You remember the famous SWNCC -- State, War, Navy Coordinating Committee?

CONDIT: Yes, I recall SWNCC.

LOVETT: That was where everything was composed. It was one of the great developments under Colonel Stimson and Jack McCloy at the time when I was there. That meant that the point of view of your department had to be taken to a central place and discussed. When we decided, the War Department being run by lawyers really; Stimson and McCloy were both superb lawyers and I had gone to law school so I knew a little about it. The doctrine was: Now look, don't go over with divided opinions. Don't have the Army, the Navy, and the Air Force all come in with a separate paper. We will fight it out here in our own building, try to reach a reasonable conclusion, and then we will put it down on paper and have everybody initial it. And then, we will take that paper over and present it to the State-War-Navy Coordinating Committee, because he who starts with a written paper is a mile ahead of everybody else. They generally take this as a start, a working paper; so then you are off on the right track.

CONDIT: When you were Deputy Secretary and Secretary, did you work that way with NSC?

LOVETT: Yes.

Page determined to be Unclassified
Reviewed Chief, RDD, WHS
IAW EO 13526, Section 3.5
Date: SEP 17 2013

CONDIT: You originated papers in

LOVETT: We would originate papers in the Department

CONDIT: Where would they start?

LOVETT: They would start, some from the Planning Section, from the Joint Chiefs of Staff, some in one of the technical sections where we would have some new development.

CONDIT: In the Joint Chiefs of Staff?

LOVETT: In the Joint Chiefs of Staff. The Joint Chiefs of Staff had a Secretariat, I assume that they still do.

CONDIT: Yes.

LOVETT: They were, by and large, first-class people there, absolutely first-class; that we can thank Stimson and General Marshall for. I have never met a group of more highly trained or dedicated men in my life than were in the Army and Air Force at that time. It was absolutely

superb. And the Navy I knew equally well because I had been in it.

I am going into this at some length because it explains many of the things which may seem difficult to someone who is not familiar with what pure coincidence brought about. Here was a fellow who was brought in, but he had worked for five years in the Department, knew the military organization, knew the Washington organization, which is just as important and in many ways more so.

CONDIT: Secretary Johnson had worked there too, and when he came in it was like a buzz saw, as you are saying, so that would not be enough. There would have to be a temperament --

LOVETT: You have to have an understanding of the main objectives and be willing to cut out the nonessentials in order to get there.

CONDIT: When I look at the record, I notice that General Marshall seems to have decided to give you a great many areas of freedom when you were his Deputy Secretary. For example, the whole NATO business appears to have been very much in your hands. Were there other areas?

LOVETT: Well, there were in State. You see, I was really a true

Under Secretary, and then as I say, General Marshall was ill in the latter part of that period and I think I was acting Secretary something like 73 percent of the time.

CONDIT: This is in Defense?

LOVETT: No, in State. Now in Defense, he was Secretary of Defense but -- I suppose the easiest way to explain it -- I was his alter ego. He would simply turn over to me, he would simply say I wish you would handle that. He never called me anything but Lovett. He would call my wife by her first name, but I never heard him call any of his close friends by their first names. He was military right straight through.

CONDIT: What about Eisenhower?

LOVETT: Eisenhower was quite a different man.

CONDIT: Did General Marshall call Eisenhower anything?

LOVETT: Eisenhower. And Bradley, who was, of course, terribly close to him and was in JCS when I was secretary.

CONDIT: I am told Bradley never sat down until he was told.

LOVETT: It was a strange but admirable arrangement. He was so

punctilious about not playing favorites that he was very direct with everybody, on a last name basis. Pat Carter, his assistant, and dear "Colonel" George, Georgy, Sergeant George -- you would think that some time he would break down and say "Pat" or "Georgy", or something like that. No, he would just say "George", or "Carter", or "Lovett", or whatever it was. It was a sign that there was a personality there who was in charge. It was acceptable and I gloried in it. I thought it was superb. Nobody had ever called me Lovett before unless he was going to scold me about something.

CONDIT: In school you might have gotten it? When you became secretary did you maintain the same kind of an arrangement with Mr. Foster?

LOVETT: I couldn't. I was one of the ones who had recommended him to the Marshall Plan and the Director here in this country, and I had known him. I couldn't do it any more than I could do it with my

CONDIT: Was Mr. Foster your alter ego? No?

LOVETT: Well, the situation completely changed, you see, by that time.

We were in a more or less orderly arrangement. I think that you can get

some of the color of what happened under the various regimes there from a little book that was given me by the fellow who wrote it, who ran Armed Forces Management, named Borklund. That is a fairly good, not too good, but fairly good book. He catches some of the color because it was written at that time, you see. And he got that out of this weekly magazine or pamphlet.

CONDIT: How did you feel? Were there strong people in your shop on whom you could really depend?

LOVETT: Oh, yes.

CONDIT: When you were Secretary, who were these people?

LOVETT: Bradley, of course, Joe Collins, Matt Ridgway. Matt Ridgway was one of the finest soldiers we ever produced, as were Bradley and Collins. They were all there then.

CONDIT: What about some of the civilians?

LOVETT: Well, the civilian strength in the Department of Defense at that time was not at that level. They were on parallel runs but not on the same track all the time.

CONDIT: Whom could you depend on, on the civilian side?

LOVETT: Well, Charlie Coolidge (ASD (I&L)).

CONDIT: Frank Nash, maybe (Asst to the Sec Def, ISA)?

LOVETT: Frank Nash, Charlie Coolidge.

CONDIT: How about Wilfred McNeil (ASD (COMP))?

LOVETT: Very, very important. Mac was one of the best we had.

"Admiral McNeil" he was called. He was over here at W.R. Grace for a while. And Felix Larkin was the General Counsel. A lawyer, he is now head of W.R. Grace.

CONDIT: What about Edwards?

LOVETT: Which one of the Edwards?

CONDIT: Edwards, he was Assistant Secretary, I think it was on the legal side, for a short while.

LOVETT: I don't remember him. There were so darn many of them, you know.

CONDIT: Yes, they came and went. I think only McNeil stayed, 12 years

or something like that. How about the operations of the Joint Secretaries?

LOVETT: You mean the Secretary of the Joint Chiefs of Staff?

CONDIT: No, the three service secretaries, who together formed what was called the Joint Secretaries and who wrote long missives every so often. Pace and Matthews and (Finletter).

LOVETT: They met with me every Wednesday in a room to the left of the Secretary's room, between that room and the Assistant Secretaries.

They went over-- Anna Rosenberg was there, she was first class too.

We would go in there and we would have about an hour and a half of

bringing up the problems which were immediately of their concern and

you could get an approval, or what they called "coordinate that stuff."

Rather simply, in person.

CONDIT: This was the three Service Secretaries?

LOVETT: Yes.

CONDIT: And did they give you opinions on NSC documents?

LOVETT: Oh, yes. You always got that kind of thing.

CONDIT: How much import was given to those opinions?

LOVETT: It depended on the individual.

CONDIT: I get the impression the Joint Chiefs really made

a great impression on you and that the Joint Secretaries were something
you sort of operated through but they --

LOVETT: That's about right.

CONDIT: That's a correct impression?

LOVETT: Yes, the Joint Secretaries or the three Secretaries did not all
have the background that the four Chiefs of Services, (including the
Marines) had. The man who had been through the Command and General
Staff school, through Benning, and all those places, had spent perhaps
20 years in the Army or Navy or whatever it may be, had an enormous
head start on a fellow who had been making widgets in western Ohio. The
latter was brought in for quasi-political reasons. Now, I am hardly a
fair judge of the circumstances because Truman was such a remarkable
President that he never let politics invade one of his decisions with
the Army, Navy, and Air Force, as far as I know. He told General
Marshall and me to stay strictly neutral. Don't make any speeches or
anything else. In the campaign, we never made a speech. Only one fellow

did it, and that was Frank Pace in the Army.

CONDIT: Well, I gather that Mr. Pace was a very ambitious man and wanted to move up. It comes through in the documents.

LOVETT: I think so.

CONDIT: What do you think was General Marshall's greatest contribution during the year that he was there? It was a very short year, and you were doing most of the work, but what would you say?

LOVETT: He was of such a towering prestige and so much respected, properly so, in the Congress and generally by the public, that he supplied one of the fundamentals that you cannot operate this country without, and that is complete trust. If General Marshall said something was something, it was. If he said something would be done, it was done.

CONDIT: Was he very upset about the failure of universal military service?

LOVETT: He was upset in the sense that he had been so intimately associated with the Civilian Conservation Corps -- CCC. It served as a sort of feeding ground into the military services during the war. Of course,

it was good in that way, but he felt there was an inequity in simply going to people and tapping them on the shoulder and saying it was their turn to come and get shot at now. I think that a lot of us believed in it. I believed in universal military service.

CONDIT: Well, in your letter of November 18, 1952, you said that we needed it; but was this more as a social measure than a military measure?

LOVETT: That is quite right.

CONDIT: Is that the way General Marshall felt about it -- as a social measure?

LOVETT: I think he felt it was both a social measure and a protective military measure. Without the power or the threat, if you choose, of the draft, you would not get the enlistments.

CONDIT: You said that General Marshall generated trust and that's credibility. Would you say that showed up very much in the Far Eastern hearings following General MacArthur's firing?

LOVETT: Yes. I think so.

CONDIT: Mr. Secretary, what would you say was your greatest contribution?

Date: SEP 17 2013

LOVETT: I don't recognize any except the ability to serve with these men. I think that my contribution, if any, was a result of unique training. After all, there was nobody prior to that time who had been trained through college and a graduate school afterwards, two graduate schools, and then been thrown into international banking in this turbulent period where you went out to foreign countries and were compelled to know at least one other foreign language and knew people abroad. I lived and worked in London two years, Paris the same thing. With that as a background, it was very much easier to deal with international affairs. To give you an example, the firm from which we got the basic raw materials for the atomic bomb was the Union Miniere du Haut-Katanga, a Belgian concern operating in Africa, in Katanga. The head of that was a friend of mine, because we -- Brown Brothers in those days -- had an account from them, and I used to go over and visit with them twice a year. I spent two months a year abroad. Since there were only steamboats then, it took about three-and-a-half months out of your life for that service. I had served with the British in World War I

SEP 17 2013

under their command, so I knew the British Air men and the Navy men because I was serving in a naval squadron which was on land. I trained in France, and I knew the French Command at that time, not the political, but the basic military men. So this was a unique background. From that I stepped into the AF business, which I had been in since 1915. I learned to fly then; my naval wings are number 66. This is an advantage which is magnified under the pressures of time and necessity. I knew exactly, or thought I knew, what the British reaction would be if we did this, and what the French reaction would be if we did that. I knew whom we could talk to. When I moved into the War Department, I began to learn something about our own system, about which I must confess I was abysmally ignorant. I said somewhere, I guess it is in testimony before Scoop Jackson's Committee, that I thought it would take a fellow two years to learn his way around, this absurd governmental machinery we have, which you know is really run by a bureaucracy and by the combination of the bureaucracy in government and the labor unions. You have to know that. So going back and trying to answer fully your question,

it was an unusual series of coincidences in background and previous experience that brought me into this thing at just the right time to be useful.

CONDIT: Now, with that background and everything, what did you feel were your greatest contributions? In NATO maybe?

LOVETT: I think probably in the establishment of the NATO organization and the Marshall Plan because the Marshall Plan was turned over to me and I never worked as hard as

CONDIT: Well, that was earlier, the Marshall Plan was in State Department --

LOVETT: In State Department.

CONDIT: But when you were Secretary of Defense, did you feel that your State Department experience was more important than your OSD experience?

LOVETT: No, but it supplemented.

CONDIT: Did you feel that your secretaryship was the most important

period of your service in the Government? Does it strike you that you made more contribution than perhaps?

LOVETT: It is awfully hard for me --

CONDIT: I saw the correspondence the other day of your writing to Bruce, Acting Secretary of State, on the Iran business when Mossadegh was acting up over there. I could see in this episode that you were pushing the State Department and that it was not initiating this thing. You were saying that the British were leading us astray, that their policy was bankrupt, and that it was up to us to do something, I thought, well, my goodness, here is the Secretary of Defense telling the Secretary of State and isn't this interesting. And Acheson wrote you one of his wingding letters in which he politely told you that this was his area. But you came back again. The Secretary of Defense came right back and said -- I really think this, and I hope you are discussing alternative plans and how to act, because we here in Defense do not think that the alternative to Mossadegh is necessarily a better deal for the West, it may be a pro-communist regime.

LOVETT: That was an unusual circumstance, because Dean and I were very close friends.

CONDIT: You were Yale?

LOVETT: Yes, I was "Bones," he was "Keys," but we were very, very close friends and our wives were close friends too. There could be an exchange there that would not be possible under the protocol of today, you see. Unfortunately. Let me see if I can nail that point down. You've read Present at the Creation, and there is a section in there which shows my relationship with Dean Acheson very clearly. Alice and Dean and Adele and I were very close friends. We could talk about things that would raise the temperature of our subordinates to a boiling point, you know, without any feeling of invasion of the other person's turf.

CONDIT: Onething Acheson said in Present at the Creation disturbed me a little. He questioned why General Marshall, who was very disturbed by General MacArthur's troop dispositions in Korea at the time of November 1950, didn't do something about it.

LOVETT: General MacArthur got into trouble by considering himself omnipotent, or probably even worse, by thinking everybody else considered him omnipotent. His great mistake was in trying to run for the

presidency from the springboard of his work in the Far East. That was what upset Truman and Acheson more than anything else. He was competing in politics, which was "country from which he was banned." He would have nothing to do with politics, he kept saying. A military man had no place in politics while he is a military man. (Of course, they grabbed the good ones right away.) But telling a commander of a theater that he is making an ass of himself by splitting his force and sending one up one side of the mountain range and the other up toward the Yalu River is just not done. You can remove him, but you can't scold him publicly and destroy his position with his troops.

CONDIT: But I meant privately. I think Acheson meant privately. Why didn't Marshall say anything privately?

LOVETT: I don't know, I suspect he probably did exchange some rather hot messages. I never saw them. I was fairly remote from MacArthur.

(Change of Tape)

CONDIT: You are saying such lovely things about Dr. Winnacker. Can we put that on the record?

SEP 17 2013

LOVETT: Yes. I wanted to know about Winnacker, if he is still there?

You told me that he was, as a consultant, and had a room somewhere near you in the same hallway, and you asked me then what about him?

And I said he is a wonderful man, he is a very fine man. You are very lucky to have him.

CONDIT: That's just excellent.

LOVETT: Now, let me pick out some of the things you have here in this question sheet, shall I?

CONDIT: Right.

LOVETT: You ask first about operating relations between the Secretary of Defense and the Joint Chiefs of Staff "on a day-to-day basis in policymaking. Did the Secretary have a definite role in advising or acting with the JCS informally in reaching military decisions?" Well, I tried to explain to you that the relationship in General Marshall's time was somewhat unique, because the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff would come up every morning and brief the General and me on whatever was going on. He would call you into the meetings that they had.

SEP 17 2013

He would bring them up to the General's office or mine and sit down and discuss it there, or he would invite you down if he wanted you to be briefed by his briefers.

CONDIT: Did this continue in your secretaryship?

LOVETT: It did.

CONDIT: Very fine. So question number 2 then. "Were there any specific differences in General Marshall's role and your own vis-à-vis the JCS?"

LOVETT: Except that he had earned, deserved, and got the respect and the affection of his military colleagues there by his amazing competence in that field. And I was, I think, tolerated in large part by reflected glory from him.

CONDIT: I think you stood on your own reputation by that time.

LOVETT: Atomic weapons, that's question number 3. "Was serious consideration given to using the atomic bomb during the Korean War in President Truman's tenure?"

It was always in the back of our minds, and we did ship bombs out to a nearby place.

CONDIT: When was that?

LOVETT: Well, it must have been when there was a breakthrough at the Yalu. You remember, they came down?

CONDIT: The Chinese came down. That was November 1950.

LOVETT: 1950 was it? That was about the time. Maybe a little bit before that.

OSD
Section 6.2 (a)

CONDIT: And they were sent out to [REDACTED]

LOVETT: I thought they were sent out to [REDACTED] I don't remember which.

CONDIT: And then, of course, when Truman said something about it, remember the British got very upset. When he commented on November 30 about consideration of the atomic bomb, within a week Atlee was over here and, --

LOVETT: That's right.

CONDIT: It was really quite an exciting time. After that, was there more quiet on the atomic front or was it still under active consideration?

LOVETT: I don't think it was ever under active consideration. The

military, as you perhaps are more aware of than I now, always have contingency plans. That's why these leaks -- the press -- get so many people fouled up. They don't realize that it is a contingency plan. For example, what would you do if Canada decided to invade? Well, we don't really anticipate that kind of thing.

CONDIT: How about the Eisenhower period, remember at the very end of the war there was some talk that, if the Chinese didn't come to the truce table and negotiate seriously, we would really think again about using the atomic bomb. This was under Eisenhower. Do you think that was real?

LOVETT: I don't think so.

CONDIT: All right. Do you have an internal security question there?

LOVETT: Yes, and it is number 4. Mine reads, "Security within the United States seems to have been a major concern during the Korean War days. As you look back, would you say this concern was realistic in relation to the threat?"

SEP 17 2013

I will have to make too long an answer on that. It is not realistic from the point of view of invasion or air attack -- or submarine-launched missiles.

CONDIT: This is for 1950?

LOVETT: For 1950. It was not, in my opinion. But, there was an internal security problem because we were afraid of just the form of terrorism you see going on in the Far East now. The Koreans, as you know, were regarded as the lowest grade civilians in the Japanese Government. The Japanese never even let them have any soldier above the rank of, I think, a sergeant, and no officers in their Army. They (the Koreans) were filled with fanatics, and we were always worried about the fanatical group of men that are landed by a rubber boat at night and come in and try to blow up the President or the Congress or that sort of thing. The military establishment.

CONDIT: Well, you had the Puerto Ricans.

LOVETT: Yes. There's an industrial mobilization question, number 5.

"Apparently there were certain concerns by the end of 1950 in getting

sufficient aircraft for military use. Aircraft engines became a bottleneck and obtaining sufficient facilities and lag-times were factors in reaching the goals for FY 52. How seriously did the Secretary of Defense view these problems? Were they problems of an immediate or future nature?"

In 1950 the aircraft situation was in a rather unusual circumstance. We had so many aircraft they were coming out of our ears, you know.

CONDIT: In 1950 you had so many aircraft?

LOVETT: Yes, in mothballs. Out in Davis-Monthan Air Force Base. There were the flying fortresses (B-17's), the B-24's, and the B-29's. (The B-47's and 52's were just coming in, you see.) We had this stuff. We were cannibalizing them at Davis-Monthan, just outside of Tucson. As you flew eastward on a Mercator's projection route from Los Angeles, you could look down and see what you thought was a silver ocean or a silver lake shining in the sun. It wasn't. It was these darn aircraft. They were just stacked bank after bank after bank, hundreds of them. We were short of certain critical items because we were just going into

the full jet period and there were some shortages, but there was nothing serious. Nothing at all.

CONDIT: Would you say that the Korean war really enabled us to modernize our equipment?

LOVETT: I think so.

CONDIT: You would agree with that?

LOVETT: I always thought so. Or, forced us to, really.

CONDIT: Right.

LOVETT: Or put the Congress in a temper where they would permit you to.

CONDIT: Yes. Well, you know VanFleet said there was an ammunition shortage.

LOVETT: That, of course, was utterly -- They had it all, the Army had it all (in the pipeline). You start with Washington, let's say, then you go to the main depot, then you ship it to a sub-depot, then you ship it to a sub-sub-depot, then you get it out into the staging on the west coast to ship, then you ship to Hawaii and store some there, then you ship to the Philippines and store some there. That kind of thing.

Reminds me of the famous time when they told me that the Army was going to run out of pants. (That was in Frank Pace's time). I remember going down to Rosenberg and saying, "Anna, you are going to be very embarrassed one of these days. You are going to have an Army marching around here with no pants on, and that's going to be unfortunate." And I told her the story and she said, "Well, let's get to the bottom of this because it's too ridiculous." There was a shortage of some kind of twill that the Army uses, but they had 3,000 packages of Army trousers and uniforms stored somewhere out in Kansas. It was just a question of finding it. You didn't have computers for that sort of thing then.

CONDIT: I see.

LOVETT: That foulup happens all the time.

Worldwide defense, that was one of the problems you had to deal with. ~~Question~~ number 6. "What did you feel were the most difficult problems you had to deal with in regard to strengthening NATO?"

To be quite honest about it, the most difficult problem was to get our NATO partners to do their part. Witness the French. They wanted all

the benefits but didn't even want us to have the land necessary to build bases, that kind of thing. It was the acquisitive instinct of human beings, regardless of nationality, that was the most difficult thing to deal with.

CONDIT: Well, the question of German rearmament really did set off the French in an unbelievable way. I don't know whether that was real or whether that was a good pley.

LOVETT: Well, I don't know whether it was real or not. You talk to the average intelligent Frenchman, he would shrug it off.

(Change of Tape)

LOVETT: I think that covers the last of those questions, unless there is something on your list that we haven't covered. If there is and in your writing business you come up with something that is unclear or that you want some further talk about, you just telephone me. I come into town a couple of days a week. I am limited in what I can do now.

CONDIT: I do appreciate your time.

LOVETT: Telephone here, you know, and we can make a time. Seriously,

I know what you are up against, because I have apparently participated in the writing of 27 doctorates in the last three or four years. Everybody is writing about this, so we have had a long series of . . .

CONDIT: Well, I am very aware of the revisionist view of history, and I want to put the facts on the table. I feel very strongly against the non-factual basis of some of the revisionists.

LOVETT: It is William Williams, or whatever his name is.

CONDIT: William A. Williams, yes, Wisconsin.

LOVETT: And his buddy, I have forgotten his name. And there is a woman out there who is equally objectionable, I think, from a historical point of view. They have done a great deal to foul it up, and they have put interpretations on matters which are completely false. If you want to get another blast on that, you can get it from Averell Harriman, who feels the same way about it.

CONDIT: I have seen Mr. Harriman and he certainly does feel the same way.

LOVETT: Well, it is awful, it is an awful thing to have that happen.

But in the hurried time today, I just wanted to say that this is not any

indication of my unwillingness to devote whatever time you need.

CONDIT: I do appreciate this, and I will take advantage of it.

LOVEITT: I would be delighted to come in.

END

ROBERT A. LOVETT
59 WALL STREET
NEW YORK, N.Y. 10005

Page determined to be Unclassified
Reviewed Chief, RDD, WHS
IAW EO 13526, Section 3.5
Date: SEP 17 2013

February 1, 1982

Dr. Alfred Goldberg
OSD Historical, Rm. 5C328
The Pentagon
Washington, D. C. 20301

Dear Dr. Goldberg:

Thank you for your letter of January 26th
regarding the OSD Historical Office oral history
program.

In regard to access to my interviews, my
preference is "open with permission required to cite
or quote."

Sincerely,

