Interview with Max Bishop, Thursday, February 22, 1979
At the Metropolitan Club in Washington went to Exeter

T: I'd like to talk about the Peruvian Business. At that time you were the third secretary in Tokyo?
B: I was the third secretary in Tokyo and was ordered back to the Department of State as a Japanese expert to serve in the Far Eastern Division of the Department of State. A day or two — several days, I don't remember exactly how long before I was due to sail I went down to the bank to change my money and get Traveler's Checks and so forth, and in the lobby of the bank there was a Peruvian ambassador and he called me over to one corner of the lobby and told me about his learning from his intelligence sources that the Japanese had a war plan involving a surprise all-out attack on Pearl Harbor if and when they decided to go to war. I thanked him for it. We had a brief conversation then left. I went straight back to the Embassy and began, through my own sources, to do what I could in the way of checking on it, including checking with a confidential source that the United Press Correspondent used, some of our own sources in the Embassy, and mentioning it to some of our military attaché people there. After this, I drafted a telegram, took it up to Mr. Grew (? Sp) I think Duman (? Sp) went with me, I'm not sure, but I believe he did, doesn't matter, anyhow I sent it up to Mr. Grew. He was very impressed with it and told me to, after making a few minor changes, told me to have it encoded in B-1. B-l was our most secret code at that time, held only by, I think, the Embassy in Britain, England, that is, London, Paris and Tokyo. And the

Telegram was sent and I left Japan and I guess about two weeks later was in Honolulu and met all my Navy friends from —

T: May I interr — was the message that was eventually sent yours word for word?

B: Yes, Yes. I saw it when I came back here —

T: So that was your message?

B: As I drafted it — it wasn't my message.

T: Well, I mean, it was your draft?

B: That's right.

T: I mean it hadn't been watered down or anything —

B: Oh, no. No. no. It was not watered down. The paraphrase — now, it's been published as you know, it's been published in the official state department documents, the paraphrase is a good paraphrase but still it doesn't have the original punch of the original telegram.

T: Do you have — what was the punch of the original?

B: Well, we could not confirm this because we could not read the Japanese War plans but as best we could gather this was a reliable interpretation of Japanese war planning.

T: And Mr. Grew took it extremely seriously?

B: Yes, he did, very much so — he sent it off immediately.

T: Did he make any comment to you at that time about the seriousness of it?

B: Well, no- not — just trying to think back. Of course that was a long time ago. As best I can remember, I think he made some remark that he doubted that they would get a hot reception or something of that sort but that it could be extremely serious

Bishop
if they caught us by surprise.
T: Um-hm.
T: He didn't send it off offhandedly — it was —
B: Oh, no, no, good heavens, no - no — you see, Mr. Grew and the Embassy there — Doctor Grew and the Embassy, all of us were worried about the danger of way and had been, as I think I mentioned earlier, since 1938, when we first ran across Japanese plans for — or preparations, let's say, legal preparations for a war far more extensive than the China Incident — and I might just, in this connection, again, go back to what we called the Green Light telegram which was sent I think in the summer of 1940, the famous telegram in the department, Grew's Green Light telegram, in which he said, look, the Japanese have got to be stopped. This going on and pushing further and further is not good and we've got to be prepared to stop them, etc. etc. You could get that out of the files, the so-called Green Light telegram. Grew wrote that himself and circulated it to the staff in the Embassy, that is the military attaché, and the naval attaché, and the commercial attaché, and the foreign service staff. Everyone agreed with Grew's original draft except myself and I —
T: This is the Green Light —
B: This is the Green Light telegram
B: And I said that I — I'd been talking — Ned Cronker (? sp) was the counselor at that time — Gene Newman was back here — and I said well I agree with it but I think he's got to add one paragraph and that is that if we set about this business to stop the Japanese, we have got to be prepared for war — and Ned — we talked and talked, debated back and forth, Bill Turner was then the Senior Japanese

Bishop
Officer – he was second Secretary, I guess, and Ned was first Secretary, and acting counselor – we didn't have very many in those days, and Ned said, well, I think what I'll do is just to have the Ambassador say "All of my senior staff agree with this," and I said, well, that's all right with me, but Ned went up and talked to the Ambassador and the Ambassador asked me to come up, I told him what I thought and he said, "I agree, I think we should add this additional thought, that the United States must be prepared for war. Now that was in the summer of 1940.

T: So, we've got that – Now let's go to Pearl Harbor. Two weeks later after the bank meeting with the Peruvian ambassador, you landed in Honolulu for a day?

B: Yes, I came in there in the morning and, oh, I would say three or four Japanese language officers – naval officers who had studied Japanese in – Joe Finnegan, that the name I was trying to think of – Captain Joe Finnegan –

T: That's two N's? Finn-?

B: Good gracious, I don't know if he's still alive or not – Joe Finnegan –

T: Captain Joe Finnegan, and he was –

B: He wasn't a Captain then, I'm sure – he was probably a Lieutenant – a former language officer was in O.N.I. and told me that Ralph Austee, who had been the assistant Naval attaché, and was then the senior naval intelligence officer in Honolulu –

T: That's Ralph Austay

B: Ofstie – O-F-S-T-I-E, Ofstie –

T: He was admiral, right?-

B: Yeah, no, he wasn't then

Bishop
T: Or captain –
B: He was captain, or he may have been only a commander. He was O.N.I. senior ONI officer in Honolulu – had sent Joe Finnegan down along with – oh, gosh, I can't remember those other names –
T: Finnegan and several others –
B: One or two others - it was an old Japan hand reunion, I guess –
T: But these were all ONI people?
B: Yes, O.N.I. people…came down to ask me about Grew's telegram which had caused quite a stir in Honolulu – Pearl Harbor –
T: You mean you had this interview in a nearby hotel or something?
B: Yes, we went to the hotel and, you know, off the ship – I don't remem – I don't think we – we may have gone – they had a downtown office as I remember, we may have gone by the ONI office downtown because they did have an office downtown, I remember that now – anyhow, some office downtown, and I didn't go up to Pearl Harbor – they asked me about it, I told them exactly what I've told you that – you can't confirm things obviously unless you have a defector or espionage agent in the war plans division – the best we could find out it was a serious war play. They said, well, we're ready for it, we have put our submarine patrol out so many hundred miles further, constantly going around the island, and we fly a dawn to dusk air patrol. Then we went on and had a good social time after that –
T: Any did and – were you ever asked to testify at the Pearl Harbor?
B: No, I was not.
T: I know you're awfully busy – is there anything when you were in Washington from February to December that you think I should

Bishop

know? When you were down in Washington working with —

B: On the Japanese conversations?

T: Yes. Oh, anything leading to the breakup of Japan —

B: Well, that would be from — you said from February —

T: When you got there.

B: Well —

T: For example, that I don't have in my book or where you feel there is something wrong —

B: Well, I think that you haven't characterized Hull correctly

T: Well, fine

B: Hull was very serious in his conversations with the Japanese and definitely wanted to bring them to a successful conclusion —

T: And Hornback was — you felt —

B: Well, I think Hornbeck felt that the Japanese were international criminals who didn't deserve very much consideration —

T: Yeah, yeah —

B: Because of their taking of Manchuria and their attack — war in China, and so on and so forth —

T: But how sincerely in his — in modus vivendi and everything this was not just sort of like a trick as Hornbeck indicated, but the real thing —

B: No, he definitely — I worked — well, I'll tell you this — let's go back in the conversations. They went fairly well until the summer and Konoyi Conoy (?sp) wanted to come see President Roosevelt —

T: Right

B: Now, I'd have to go into the archives and dig it all out, but

Bishop

about that time the Japanese agreed to everything that we had asked them to agree to except one thing, that one thing was that they said "we want to station troops, unspecified number of troops, in northwest China under an agreement which we will work out with the Government of China, Chiang Kai-shek's government, to guard — to help them guard against the infiltration or the intrusion of the Chinese communists from northwest China. That was the only point of disagreement.

T: And this was summer of...? —

B: This was the summer of '41, and as I say that was roughly around the time that — it may have been fall of '41 —

T: I think it was probably after September.

B: It probably was, come to think of it, because in October I went home, October 2nd or 4th note, I forget which it was. The Japanese had agreed to everything which we had said except that one provision —

T: Yeah, that they could go along with all our principles, etc., etc., etc,. You know, all these documents that we gave them were tentative, strictly confidential, tentative and without commitment and we handed them back and forth. I did the initial drafting on all of them. Then on October 4th I believe, we handed them a note which was one paragraph long, which I had been working on all summer long, and I give you my word that is one paragraph which says absolutely nothing, and that brought down the Conoy cabinet. And I went home after that note was agreed and sent — I went — sent to Grew, I think, and he delivered it to them.

T: Well, that was that note, you say, that said —

B: It just said, well, look, let's just start all over again and

work out the basic principles for peace in the Pacific — (laughter)

T: There was nothing they could hold onto?

B: Nothing! I say, I said absolutely nothing.

T: And you say this brought down the Kanoi —

B: I think it did — I mean — he had, as I say, he'd gone all the way — agreeing on every principle that we had suggested and everything we had said except this one point which was still hanging fire that they were going to station troops in Northwest China.

T: What was the purpose of doing it, then>

B: I don't know.

T: I mean, why did you send that — were you conscious that this —

B: Well, you see, we had to say something — we wanted to keep it going —

T: Oh, in other words, you didn't want to bring down Kanoi necessarily —

B: No, we just didn't want to admit that we had reached an agreement, I guess, I don't know —

T: I see.

B: I was the lone — I was the —

T: You prepared it but it was —

B: The low man. I was told to write this and just keep it on the basis of principles.

T: I see. Did this come from Hornbeck.

B: Well, no, it came down — the hierarchy — there were five of us who were involved in this, only five. There was Hull on the top, Hornbeck next, Hamilton next, Ballentine Valentine and myself at the bottom

On the totem pole. And, as I say, I guess for two months there I'd write something and give it to — Valentine and I would take it in to Hamilton, and then Valentine and Hamilton would go in to Hornbeck and then Hornbeck and Hamilton and sometimes Valentine would go down to the Secretary —

T: How did you — did you get along with Hamilton and Valentine?

B: Very well — oh yes,

T: In other words the three of you seemed to be more of less in tune and out of step with Hornbeck, is that right?

B: Yes, I don't know as I'd say out of step with Hornbeck —

T: Or out of synchronization —

B: Out of synchronization — he was a stickler for words, oh, Lord, he just — I remember he told somebody I want you to spend the next few hours telling — studying what the difference between "in regard to" and "with respect to" or something (laughter). But Hornbeck seemed to be trying to draft something but you never could satisfy him — as I say — we got all the way up —

T: You don't think this was a point of sabotage on Hornbeck's part — to send something because he was a brilliant man —

B: I wouldn't was to use the work "sabotage". I think he was just convinced that the Japanese were not sincere.

T: I see —

B: That we should not reach an agreement with them — unless and until they had purged themselves of their guilt in China.

T: And how would they do that?

B: (Laughter) Lawdy, I don't know.

T: Because they offered practically everything except their shirts —

Bishop

B: Yes, they did and I – one time there I told – gave my opinion in the summer of '41 yeah, it must have been sum – after we embargoed oil, when we embargoed oil, I think – these dates don't come back to me – but I said "This is a definite declaration of war, I mean the Japanese can't live without it, and they've got to give in, because in those times – in those days we didn't have.

T: That was in the spring.

B: It was in the spring of '41?

T: Yeah, yeah. You paraphrased the New York Times which said the same thing, it was a declaration of war.

B: Is that so? I didn't know that.

T: You said that – you said that to Hornbeck?

B: Well, I said, they'll have to fight.

T: Or to Hull?

B: To Hornbeck. I didn't – oh, I don't suppose I talked to Hull more than once or twice.

T: Everything had to go through channels –

B: The only time I could talk to Hull would be when he'd call me down and tell me about a conversation and then I would have to write up the memorandum –

T: I see. Because I think that's important, right in there.

B: I was too low on the totem pole.

T: And how did Hornbeck react when you said that was tantamount to a declaration of war?

B: I don't know – he didn't seem to care.

T: Do you think he might have wanted it that way?

B: I wouldn't say that. I'd hate to say that about anybody, particularly somebody not able to defend them –
T: Well, it seemed as though he was deliberately not accepting Japanese terms –
B: He was sure that – in his own mind, I think, that we could get away with badgering the Japanese and not go to war.
T: I see.
B: I think he thought that he could put them down –
T: He really thought that he could – in other words, he didn't want a war –
B: I don't know whether he did or not, but I don't know that he did want a war –
T: He was such a bright man I don't see how he could be so dumb that he can't realize that this was goading and even –
B: Well, the funny thing –
T: How could the Japanese, who are a proud people, not do it?
B: In the – during that summer, in that same time there, now what was his name, he was Japanese Lang – Langdon. Langdon? Bill Langdon. Bill Langdon came back here, he was much senior to me and he was in the department, and he had been in Mudken Moukton (? Sp) and we used to argue. He lived out on Connecticut Avenue –
T: Is he still around?
B: I don't think so. Bill Langdon, William Langdon, no, I think he's dead. He was senior (cough) Anyhow, we'd walk home sometimes. I lived at the Kennedy Warren, out on Connecticut Avenue –
T: That's L-A-N-G-D-O-N?
B: I think so, yes. William Langdon. We would argue, and he

Bishop
Had been serving in Mulden and he'd seen the Japanese there in Manchuria and he said the Japanese only strike where there's weakness, and I said, "N-nn, I think you're wrong," I said, "They'll hit Pearl Harbor someday."
T: You said that?
B: Yeah, that sort of thing.
T: You were thinking, of course, you were thinking in terms of Pearl Harbor probably because of the Peruvians —
B: The telegram? What we heard. Anyhow I said I thought that that was a possibility and we argued and argued and as I say this went on for several weeks and friendly enough, back and forth, and finally I said, "Well, Bill, if you feel that way, if you really think that way, you're a Japanese expert, you're senior to me, for God's sakes, write it down, and send it up." I said, "I'm sending up my ideas all the time." So he said, all right, he would. He wrote a memorandum, I think this was about two weeks, maybe, ten days, three weeks, I don't know, it should be in the archives, on file, he wrote a memorandum in which he said the Japanese are notorious for striking where there is weakness, you know, they went into China, they went into Manchuria, they went into China, they went into French Indochina when there was nobody there, the French were busy elsewhere, and if they strike anywhere they'll strike Indonesia where the Dutch have no, etc., etc., in other words they'd go south, they wouldn't hit where there was any resistance. It wasn't about ten days or two weeks they hit Pearl Harbor. Well, Hornbeck, the memorandum went to — through him.

Bishop
From Eppie, to Hornbeck and on up if Hornbeck wanted to forward it on up to the sector, and under sector. Hornbeck wrote a memorandum "This is the most brilliant memorandum that's been written in Eppie for the last two years." We had Pearl Harbor shortly thereafter. (Laughter)

T: I see.

B: That gives you an idea. I think Hornbeck thought there's be a war, that the Japanese would probably go south, but he was certain they would —

T: I see. Wishful thinking, then. Now I'd like to ask you a question. Did you ever bring up in these arguments with Hornbeck or Valentine or Hamilton, the business of the Peruvian telegram? About Pearl Harbor?

B: Oh, I don't — that's a detail that —

T: You don't recall —

B: No, we were working too hard and thinking too hard on policy and on peace, and so on and so forth, rather than on military strategy or military threat.

T: I was wondering at the time, you know, in those last days people were saying, well they're going down —

B: I'll tell you one instance, that did, though, by cracky, I remember this now. We talked to the Embassy in Tokyo, to Ambassador Grew, Mr. Hamilton did, Max Hamilton, the night (this is Washington time) the night of December 7th, so that would have been December 8th out there, that night, we got through —

T: This is after the attack?

B: After the attack, after the declaration of war —

Bishop

T: I got it.

B: And then we were all there in – Hull, I mean Hornbeck was there, Hamilton, Valentine, myself, I don't know, one or two others –

T: You were at the State Department –

B: I was at the State Department –

T: Which is the old State Department?

B: The old State Department, yeah, FE, the offices, Hamilton's office, in the Far East Division, Division in those days –

T: This is the night of the 7th

B: I guess there were six or eight of us in there. Anyhow, I remember very clearly saying to the assembled group: I'm going to tell you this, and I'm never going to say it again, but I told you so."

T: Oh, I love it! (Much laughter).

B: I told them that every time I got a chance, I'd say, I told you that they'd go to war.

T: Did you mention Pearl Harbor?

B: I don't remember –

T: Because of the Peruvian thing, I was wondering – I was wondering what their reaction was – here is Hornbeck who has been saying all along – do you recall when you heard about Pearl Harbor?

B: Lord, I don't know. You mean when I re---

T: Yeah, you personally.

B: When I first heard it – the Peruvian was the first –

T: No, no, no. I mean when did you – on December 7th.

B: Oh, I went to the office that morning. In those days we

Bishop
Were very busy and I went down and my wife was —
T: Did you know about the messages coming in and all —
B: Yes, I helped draft the statement that Hull gave to Carusou and Nommer when they came in. You see, we read that message the night before — and of course they came in after Pearl Harbor. We knew about Pearl Harbor — that Pearl Harbor had been attacked. I guess it was, well, let's see, we were right up here in Lafayette — not Lafayette Park, but Farragut Square here, when we always went outdoors to talk when you wanted to say something like this — and they told me that we'd lost every battleship we had, something like that —
T: This was while you were -?
B: That was Sunday, about noon, about 2 o'clock, I guess, after Hull and Nomer had had their conversation.
T: Well, this was after you'd learned about the attack.
B: Yes.
T: And that was the first time you'd learned -?
B: Oh, we knew about it — almost —
T: What I was wondering is when that news came in that Pearl Harbor — I was wondering if you had any thoughts, "Oh, my God — why couldn't they have listened to Grew back in — a year — beck in January —
B: No, I didn't —
T: This didn't occur.
B: Just didn't occur. Although, you see, Grew had sent telegrams, "You cannot hold me responsible or my military attaché, or my naval attaché, we've lost the fleet."
T: Mm-hm.

Bishop
B: That's on the record. It's gone somewhere. We don't know where it's gone.
T: I see.
B: And I'm sure Grew had in mind that, look boy, look out, Pearl Harbor. But he didn't know whether they were going south or whether the were going to —
T: Yeah. But he never mentioned Pearl Harbor —
B: Not in that telegram, no. No one did. I don't — you see, it was a very, very, what'll I say, danger out attempt.
T: Well, it was a wild one — that no one —
B: It was a wind one — if it could succeed it would be a spectacular success. If it failed, it would have been dismal.
T: Interesting thing is that no one thought about that — back to the old warning — at that time.
B: I think it had been going on, as I say. That Mavees told me in January or February, that they'd put the patrols out, they were flying daily air reconnaissance, dawn to dusk, and that they probably got — well, hell, they're not coming in here - ? — For ten months.
T: It's the cry of Wolf, Wolf!
B: Yeah, Wolf, Wolf, Wolf!
Phone rings intermission.
T: You were meeting with them and you said, "I told you so, and so forth.
B: That was Pearl Harbor night, when, we, of course, well, there's an interesting anecdote in that connection, I guess it was in the middle of Sunday, right after lunch, or before it, soon after Pearl

Bishop
Harbor, no, it would have to have been after Nomer went back because we immediately placed a guard —
T: That's after Nomer and Carusu left —
B: Left the Secretary of State and left Hull — uh, the FBI brought into my desk in the State Department a telegram in Romanzi, that is Japanese but written in Roman characters or alphabet, and they asked me, "Shall we send this, or what?" I thought, "My God", they picked it up just like that!" Well, I read it and it said, "We are in the Embassy and we are being protected and everything is exactly the way it ought to be and America is observing all strict protocol, etc., etc., etc. and we're saying Good-bye" and I said, my God, send it quick.. as fast as you can! Because, you know, we want — the Japanese would react the same way out there. So it went off, and that's why — then we kept trying to telephone to Grew to see, you know, and finally I guess the Japanese foreign office or somebody over there probably the same? (laughter) said, "Hell, let 'em through —"
T: You got to talk to —
B: So we talked to Grew and he said there were in the Embassy and they were being protected —
T: You talked personally to Grew —
B: No, no, no, no. Max Hamilton was the only one that talked.
T: I see, Hamilton was talking to Grew personally. I see.
B: And then, after that was when I said, "Well gentlemen, I'm going to say this now and only once, I told you so." (Laughter)
T: But that's remarkable, that these things were allowed to go through. I think you're probably right, neither side wanted to endanger their own people.

Bishop
B: That's right. Both governments I think wanted the government — each government wanted the other government to know that everybody was being treated properly,
T: Did Hamilton ever mention to you how Grew was taking it — whether he was shaken or his usual calm self?
B: Oh, we heard the conver — he was his usual calm self.
T: You could hear it, right?
B: More or less, yeah. I mean we didn't have a loudspeaker — but we could hear and we could hear? What Hamilton said —
T: There was no — panic?
B: No, no, no, no, nothing of that sort —
T: We gotta get out of here sort of stuff —
B: Oh, nothing — no nothing like that.
T: In other words, he was the same as ever?
B: Just the same as ever. Wonderful person, really a man — just — I mean, we don't make them like that any more.
T: You were mentioning — you helped draft the reply to Nomer and Carusu, right?
B: Well, I should say, helped draft it, I mean there was — as you know, he gave it more or less extemporaneously —
T: Uh-huh.
B: We put down ideas that he could use — this is a bunch of lies and all this stuff —
T: But he see — I talked to Nomer about it and I talked to Madame Carusu, told by her husband, and both were quite surprised that he seemed so personally angry about it and — was this a put on?
B: Well, I think that was, if anything, a reflection of his anger

Bishop
over the failure of the modus vivendi and for that to be – because he really felt done in that we hadn't gone on with the modus vivendi –
T: Well, did he –
B: That was primarily Chiang Kai-shek and Churchill himself, the modus vivendi
T: Yeah. But he couldn't blame the Japanese for that, could he?
B: No, but I mean – everybody was pretty hot when they heard about Pearl Harbor – is what the fact of the matter is –
T: Well, I was wondering –
B: In other words, this was not an act on his part?
B: Oh, no. No. He was mad as hell.
T: It doesn't sound like a gentleman from down South who wouldn't be serious at it, but Nomer wanted me to find out, he said, "Could you find out for me, did he really dislike me or was –
B: Oh, no, no, no. He didn't. No, no, no.
T: He felt quite hurt about it –
B: Yeah, and he was angry, I mean, that's all. It was a pretty dastardly attack –
T: Because – do you think he suspected that Nomer and Carusu knew, because they knew absolutely nothing.
B: No, I don't think so.
T: Year. So it wasn't that –
B: No, because you see, we read the telegram. We read the telegram before Nomer and Carusu did.
T: Yeah. They were trying to retype the damn thing.

Bishop

B: Yeah, and get it straight – it had some garbles in it.

T: You had them all ironed out –

B: We – I didn't read it – I wasn't cleared for we called it ultra during the war. I wasn't cleared for it at that time – I think Hamilton and Hornbeck, maybe Valentine, were the only ones that were allowed – and of course the message came in the night before –

T: Yeah.

B: And they didn't get down to the office much before I did at nine o'clock the next morning, or something like that, nine or ten o'clock – but they had – they were then getting the reports from the desk (unintelligible)
It wasn't Defense then, it was Army and Navy Departments, the reports of Pearl Harbor.

T: There's one thing, if you don't mind me asking you, I got from this Colonel Morland who was at that time a young fellow – he was monitoring all calls at night, one of the three officers –

B: The Watch Officer?-

T: Yeah. And he was telling me that he got to know Hull in some respects quite intimately, because of this, and he said that Hull was really furious that summer and fall when he found out that the Army and Navy Departments had absolutely no security because these night officers used to have to go around relaying these offices and reported back that they had no trouble just walking in and he was furious with them and complained to Roosevelt about

Bishop
The lack of security and said that the State Department had security. Do you know anything about that?
B: Yeah. Well, what he means — had security —
T: Do you want to take your coat off, Harry?
B: We had —
T: He said you could walk right in the Navy Department and see secret papers on the desks — and Hull apparently was very hot about this —
: That could be, I don't know —
T: You don't know if this is just someone's afterthoughts —
B: I don't know — I have no — I know that in the State Department, as I told you, I kept all the files, the Japanese conversation files, and I had a filing cabinet — you remember those old cabinets you used to have, the push-in lock ones, you know, that drop and lock ' em all — well, I found out afterwards that my key would open practically every cabinet in the State Department, and everybody else's key in the State Department would open mine —
T: I see.
B: And I used to lock them up at night and put the key, I guess, in my desk or somewhere, and then we had these big long keys, I the Old State Department, big long keys and you'd lock your door and take the key downstairs and leave your key at the door and there was a guard down there, and you'd pick up the key the next morning.
T: Well, they didn't even have that over at Army and Navy —
B: Is that so. In those days I didn't have any reason at all to go into —
T: Apparently Hull was a little more careful than the rest of the —

Bishop
B: We all locked our doors at night and, as I say, we locked the filing cabinets, although the filing cabinets (laughter)
Strange voice interjects: There were swinging doors, I remember them now.
B: Yes, we had swinging doors. But then there was a big door behind that, that's what you locked at night, not the swinging doors, but that big door behind it, the swinging door, you left your big door open all during the daytime –
T: I see.
B: And people could walk in and out, I guess, but then –
T: Well, it's not the open door – where were you at this time?
Strange voice: I was in Washington, working for the State Department, to be precise, not at Pearl Harbor.
T: Who was over there with you? Because I interviewed a couple of guys – I remember the – Hooper was out of town and so was the head of the outfit, and so this fellow had – when the messages came in that night – that day- he had to go over and deliver to Roosevelt that there had been a war and what the hell were we to do about it?
Did you know Judge Tam?
Reply: The Attorney General, was, as far as I remember, Frank Murphy –
T: That's right – he was out of town.
Reply: And I worked for Thurman Arnold ??? and then I ultimately worked for ? Hamlin who because assistant

Bishop
Attorney general in charge of the War Division but that was created about 1943 —
T: Where did you go — your career, just shortly and briefly?
B: Well, I stayed here. My wife was taken ill with cancer a few months after we were married and I stayed here until he passed on in 1943. I went to 'India in '44 as political advisor to the Southeast Asia command, the American section of it, and was there until the end of the war as political advisor to General Wheeler, first Wedemeyer, who was the Chief Operations officer for, not operations, yeah, I guess it was operations — planning officer for Montbatten, and the to Wheeler when he became Commanding General of the theatre, and then to Tokyo as political advisor to MacArthur.
T: Oh!
B: I was #2, but that's an interesting story. I was in the War with — in — well, to go back, I don't know whether you're interested in this, or not, but in the winter of '44, '45, see, I was then cleared for Ultra which was the decoding, reading of mail, and I was reading the traffic between Tokyo and Moscow and I saw, to me, just as plain as black and white, that the Japanese wanted out, and I sent, if you got a message —
T: Because I know the guy that sent the message —
B: If you got a message through Ultra you had to send it back through the same channel, you couldn't send it through any — it had to go through Ultra channels, so I sent a message back to Grew and I said, "Are you reading these telegrams, please read them."
And he never

Bishop
replied, no reason for him to reply. But he had been reading them and he knew the same thing, but he had drafted the Potsdam Declaration and I read that here, right over here in the State Department, in the spring of '45. I had a race with the British political advisor to get back here before he did, from India, and I went to see Mr. Grew and he gave me this to read, this memorandum, which was for the President. He was then acting Secretary of State and it said, in essence, look, unconditional surrender means that the Japanese can decide their own form of government.
T: They wanted to keep the Imperial Way, that's all they asked for.
B: That's right. And this was the essence of what they said.
T: The State Department denied it to me for many years, until I found the message.
B: Is that so? Well, anyhow, he said, "What do you think of this?" And I said, "Well, the quicker you can get it out, the better." Well, he told me afterwards, he went to the President and the President said, "I think that's excellent, go see Marshall and Stimson and see what they think." And he did and Marshall — Stimson said he thought it was great and Marshall said, "I think it's great except this is not the right time."
T: Typical Marshall
B: Then — they went off to Potsdam and of course Stalin had the surrender message in his pocket and didn't even give it — he knew he had it, too, by the way — but then put out the

Bishop

Potsdam declaration and the thing wound down. Then Stimson wrote this article, you know in the paper — in the magazine, did you read it? In Atlantic Monthly, I think, wasn't it? In which he justified dropping the bomb, and Grew wrote him a letter and said I wish to recall to you some facts — have you seen that letter? — I want to recall to you some facts with which you were then familiar, and laid it out on the line, and he sent me a copy of his letter to Stimson and asked me what I thought of it. Well, I picked up the telephone and dashed over to see General MacArthur, and I said, "Sir, what do you think of this?" and he read it.

T: About what time was this?

B: Oh, I don't know, I've got copies of the correspondence somewhere. This was right after Stimson's article, this was in — let's see they surrendered in '45, '46, early '46, I guess, somewhere along there — '45 or '46, and I told General MacArthur, "I'd like to ask you two questions. 1) Were you consulted? and 2) Do you think it helped to end the war?

I don't know — did you ever see General MacArthur, he smoked matches, he didn't smoke a pipe, he smoked matches. He was always lighting his pipe. It would always go out. He started walking up and down and he told me that 1) he said he was never consulted. He said he knew vaguely that there was some kind of super weapon that they were going to try out, or super something, but whether it would be helpful or harmful to the war effort, his opinion was never asked.

T: You mean about the A-bomb?

Bishop

B: About the A-bomb. That's incredible. Here he is the commanding General of all the allied forces, given the job of bringing Japan down and they're doing to drop this think on 'em and they don't even ask him.

T: We asked everybody in Europe, including Ike, you know. You know Ike said that will be the greatest mistake we ever make if we drop the bomb —

B: Oh, he did? Well MacArthur was never asked.

T: I wonder what he would have answered?

B: Well, then, he said, and I'll tell you something else, he said, "When I went to Pearl Harbor, he talked like that, it wasn't — it was just natural, it was just his way, "When I went to Pearl Harbor, I told the President if and when I land on the Philippines and hold the war will be over, and Max, by God, it <u>was</u> over.
And another think, then he said, I said, well what about the bomb?
And he said, "Max, having made it, they <u>had</u> to drop it. It would <u>have</u> <u>ruined</u> them if they hadn't."

T: How did he feel about it, do you know?

B: He never expressed a personal opinion, he hated war, MacArthur hated war, you should read that speech I ???
He hated the war and the death and destruction that go with war, but he never commented — he never went to Hiroshima, never went — he didn't travel in Japan at all — he didn't leave Tokyo, back and forth, from his home to his office and back, and that's all.
I don't think he ever went anyplace, not that I know of — but he hated war. I wouldn't go there — I never have been there, I've been to Hiroshima once, my wife christened a taker down there

Bishop
And we had to go there but I didn't go see the bomb? It was just too horrible. I think it was a mistake for the Japanese to memorialize? As long as they have that you will never vent — never destroy the feeling —
T: But you know the Japanese, I found out, they don't have that bitterness about the bomb. The people I talked to suffering the bomb -
B: They blame their own people for not protecting them —
T: And they blame the Atomic Commission for not letting them have their records so they could get treatment. Do you know we took all their records home with us? If you were so many meters within the epicenter, you got treatment. Well, you had to have a record. Well, many that I know were within 500 meters could not get treatment because -
B: They couldn't prove they were —
T: Yeah, we help up their — it was a bad deal. My wife if Japanese and I've talked to so many of them. They seem to feel, we made a mistake, we hit Pearl Harbor, you hit the atomic bomb — even.
B: Well, I'll tell you this, in my opinion you have not yet vented the felling in Japan and you won't until another two or three generations, and I think the same is true here. We haven't gotten over the anti-Japanese feeling in this country, as nation, that's one of the reasons I think this recognition of Communist China was a big mistake. All American? now is going to go on to China.
Here Japan's our best customer and here — so on and so forth, it's the key and actually we've destroyed out strategic position in the Pacific today.
T: The Japanese are all for it.

Bishop

B: For what?

T: Our approachement to China —

B: Because it puts us they think in their boat, you see. But they're wrong. They aren't thinking. They aren't thinking. Do you think we're going to continue to treat Japan — it's going to go around just like this — what the hell, they're keeping our oranges and our meat and everything else out of Japan, they're exploiting us with my tractor — John Deere tractors, made in Japan. You see, the Japanese as a nation are hard to know and they're not, what'll I say, as a nation they're not popular they're not attractive, as individual, they're the most loveable people you'd ever want to know, and the country itself is beautiful.

T: They always put their worst mouth forward.

B: They always do, and, now, the Chinese, you know, the Chinese can fool you six ways to breakfast, really, and unless I miss my guess, we're going to swallow this Chinese line, hook, line and sinker, and you will see anti-Japanese sentiment rise and we'll loan the Chinese money, tell your friend in the bank to steer clear of — there's another thing, if you want to understand the Asian policy, you ought to read the MacMurray memorandum, written way, way back in which he points out that in a war between Japan and the United States only the Soviet Union would gain. This was way back in the '30's. John Van Ant — MacMurray. Never could get it published. I did my damndest. I sent it to ? and tired to get your friend, Beard to use it — to get it published. It's a masterful piece of writing in the first place.

Bishop

T: By the say, how about your title as ambassador?

B: What about it?

T: I mean, you went from MacArthur — I never got —

B: Please return this to me — this is the only copy of this that I have, so that's Hornbeck, 1938, you see Hornbeck's comment — this is the MacMurray memorandum —

T: Oh good, I'll ship it back in a week.

B: That's the most brilliant piece of statecraft to come out of the State Department since 1938.

T: I never heard of it before, so I'd like to see it. On you.

B: I went from the Department to Southeast Asia command and then MacArthur and then back here to the National War College in 1947.

T: Oh, that's when you met Tom Kimmel? Weren't you in the same class with him.

B: No, no, no, no. I came back to the National War College in '47 and then in '48 I went back to the State Department on the Policy Planning Staff and was assigned from there to the National Security Council, became coordinator of the staff of the National Security Council, that's when I wrote that paper. I was there until '50 — 1951, I guess, when I went to Saudi Arabia as Consul General, and chairman of the Dow — liaison group which covered evacuation — emergency evacuation. We could have got them out — in my day we could have got them out of Iran in 15 minutes — I exchanged messages with the ambassador in 15 minutes from my desk, encoded, to his desk, decoded in 15 minutes. But we have a plan for emergency evacuation for that whole area from Suez to Burma.

Strange voice: Well, number l, there weren't as many Americans

Bishop

In there, in that area as there are Americans – there were Americans in Iran – and number 2, I don't have the impression that it depended on the speed –

B: Here, in '53, I guess it was, that's a little over two years in Dowfan (?) and again to the Department and was assigned to the, oh, what do they call it – not the Psychological Warfare Board but OCD – Operations Coordinating Board, under a GSA man, what's his name, the head of the GSA? – he's now the head of the I don't mean GSA – what's the watchdog, Congressional watchdog General Accounting Office, GAO, I guess,

Voice: That's head by Statz –

B: Statz, Elmer Statz, that's right. Then I became the operations coordinator of the State Department under Herbert Hoover. I was picked to go to Burma as ambassador and Hoover asked me to stay and be his assistant as operations Coordinator, which was the OCD in Eisenhower's set-up. Then I was assigned as ambassador to Thailand and then came back here –

T: How long were you in Thailand?

B: A little over two year, just over two years. Harry was my economic counselor out there. 1955 to 1958.

T: Those were some interesting times.

B: Yep, we turned the communists around then –

T: Was that the same time you were there, that? was overthrown?

T: Too bad you couldn't do it again.

B: Then I came back here and I set up the senior staff course –

Bishop
Foreign service, senior office course, they call it. It's supposed to be the level of the National War College, and then, that didn't take very long, just a few months to set that up, and then I went up to the Naval War College as political advisor, State Department advisor to the president of the Naval War College and retired from there. In 1961. And that's where I met Tom Kimmel, he lived next door to us up there. And that's
B: John Davies was there, and Frank Schuller and
T: Emerson was there?
B: No, Emerson was in - he was in China — no he wasn't there. Let me see, I'm trying to think on the China side who all was anyhow there was a group that felt, that's mentioned in that Homer memo ?? — that the secret conversation, as I say, there were only five of us that knew about that, that we were selling out China, and they wrote up a memorandum that because quite famous in that it broke in the press and one thing and another that they were selling out China and so on and so forth and I told them if they would make — set it straight, I said, I'll sign the memorandum, nobody want to sell out China, but there was that group in there who were not privy to what was going on who were afraid we were going to sell out China or Japan —
The position of Wells, I think is interesting, Sumner Wells.
I've got a memorandum by him, a memorandum of conversation he had with the British Ambassador right at the time of the modus vivendi.
T: I would be very interested in Wells because he figures in my

Bishop

B: Wells took no active part in it except to be informed. But Wells was on the side of we who were working to try to get a settlement.

End.

Remainder of tape blank