THE RULE OF LAW ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

The Reminiscences of

Joseph P. Hoar

Columbia Center for Oral History

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PREFACE

The following oral history is the result of a recorded interview with Joseph P. Hoar conducted by George Gavrilis on March 13, 2012. This interview is part of the Rule of Law Oral History Project.

The reader is asked to bear in mind that s/he is reading a verbatim transcript of the spoken word, rather than written prose.

VJD | Session One

Interviewee: Joseph P. Hoar | Location: Washington, D.C.

Interviewer: George Gavrilis | Date: March 13, 2012

Q: This is George Gavrilis. It's March 13, 2012. I'm here in Washington, D.C. with General Joseph P. Hoar for the Columbia University Oral History Project on the Rule of Law.

Thank you for doing it this morning. Thank you for making yourself available for the whole day. We're hoping to do two sessions and talk about a number of things. In a preliminary conversation we had over the phone—and before I hit the record button—we were talking about a number of things, including your—I suppose a good way of putting it is many hats—the many hats you wore in your career. You've been in the military. You've been stationed a lot of places around the world. You've worked in the private sector. You've worked with think tanks, and you've also been very outspoken in your views on a number of issues that the Rule of Law Project intersects with. So I'm hoping to talk about all of these things over the next few hours with you.

But I would like to start with something that you did very recently that is quite relevant. We spoke—I think it was in early February—and you told me you were going to be going on a trip to the Middle East, and that it was a trip that is, in many ways, work-related, and intersects directly with your experiences before. So I would love it if you would be able to tell me a little bit about that trip.

Hoar: Sure. The program is under the rubric of the Capstone [Military Leadership] Program. It is an outgrowth of the Goldwater-Nichols [Defense Reorganization] Act of 1986, which included a statement that said, "All newly promoted brigadier generals and rear admirals must attend a course to better acquaint them with joint operations." This requirement has been in place for some time—obviously since 1986, when the law was enacted—and it's under the aegis of the National Defense University over at Fort McNair, here in Washington. It has evolved to be a five to six-week program, with class work in Washington—down in Norfolk, where the joint forces command is—and then an international trip. Some years ago I was asked, on short notice, if I could fill in as a "senior mentor" for a Middle East trip. I had been interested in doing this earlier, but at the time the person who was running it said, "Well, you can't just pick and choose what you want to do. We want you here in town. If you're here in town, then we will allow you to make the trip."

Long story short, I filled in on short notice to act as the senior mentor for the Middle East trip and have been doing so ever since. The trip I just completed was either my eighth or ninth. I should say that the Middle East trip is just one of several that's run by the school. There's a South Asian one; there's a European one; there's a South American one, and so forth. But this is the one I've chosen to be a part of because of my own professional experience and because I've also maintained relationships out there, because of my consulting business, that brings me out there on business from time to time.

The three countries that we visited were Jordan, Saudi Arabia, and Tunisia. This was a departure from previous years, which had normally included five countries and had been a little bit

longer—two or three more days. But in recognition of the reduced funding that's available in this fiscal year, the course has been set back somewhat. I argued vigorously that Tunisia was an interesting place to go but wasn't very valuable to these guys—that we should have continued to go to Egypt, as we had been doing for several years. But apparently somebody over on the joint staff had decided it was too dangerous. I had been in Cairo in October, and in a city of nineteen million people you can manage to stay out of Tahrir Square—and stay out of trouble—if you want to.

The whole idea was to go and visit these countries, listen to the U.S. mission there. The ambassador talked to people in foreign affairs and the military side of the business and other things that might be of interest. In Jordan—the first country on the tour this time. Because I've known the king for, I don't know, twenty-five years or so—when he was a young major in the Army. We always get to see him if he's in town, which is wonderful. He's the only head of state that anybody sees on any of these trips, so it's kind of a kick. They all get a picture with the king, which makes everybody feel good when they go back and have to debrief on how they spent a couple of hours with the king.

Q: Tell me about him.

Hoar: Well, he's a marvelous guy—and I really mean this. I was a great fan of his father. I have a story—the ending of which I'm not sure is true but I think it's true—about his father, who was an extraordinary leader; who had more sense of the granularity of his own society and how to rule that country than you can ever imagine—because there's no money out there, George.

There's always the need to try to figure out a way to get a few more bucks to run the place. He, of course, made an unfortunate misstep after the invasion of Kuwait when he attempted to bring a negotiated settlement to the invasion and get the Iraqis to withdraw.

At the same time he was attempting to do that with the GCC [Gulf Cooperation Council] countries, what was going forward here in Washington was General [H. Norman] Schwarzkopf [Jr.] came up to Washington—it must have been the fourth or fifth of August. The attack on Kuwait was the night of the first or second of August—and briefed a plan that nobody in Washington had seen yet, but we had worked on for really about a year and a half down at CENTCOM [United States Central Command]. Mr. [Richard B.] Cheney and the chiefs—I was there because I was what we call the operations deputy. I attended all the tank meetings with the commandant of the Marine Corps, but I was his backup—not allowed to speak unless spoken to. You could comment on the time of day, but nothing substantive. So I heard Norm Schwarzkopf give the brief. Mr. Cheney was present—secretary of defense at the time—and said, "Let's go see the president." So they went that afternoon to see the president, the president said, "Take it to King Fahd [bin Abdulaziz Al Saud]."

So they flew out that night. Schwarzkopf didn't even have a toothbrush with him. He had flown up that morning from Tampa with just his clothes on, and they left. The next midnight they briefed King Fahd in Jeddah, and he said, "Do it," and we were off and running. Poor old King Hussein [bin Talal] was in the midst of trying to figure out a negotiated settlement. He took it personally. He said a few things that he probably regretted afterwards, so for a while he was on the outs.

But the story that I think is best about him is there is a law in Jordan that says you can't defame the monarchy. So there's a guy who is head of the engineer union there that went ahead and defamed the democracy. I don't remember exactly what his words were. He was tried and put in jail for some period of time. After being in jail for two days, the king got in his car, drove down, got this guy out of jail, pardoned him, and drove him home, and presented him to his mother. Now if that isn't pretty smooth stuff, I don't know what is.

This was the kind of granularity that he had. The ability to do—which is also a great part of Arab culture—the ability to do something that's unexpected, that's generous, that puts you one-up among your interlocutors. You start by a gracious move. That's how he ran that country.

Q: And this trip, when you met his son, did you get the sense that that is something he passed on to him?

Hoar: I think so, in one sense. The trouble is that the nature of the country has changed a great deal. His father granted citizenship to these bankers—the Palestinians that were there. They now represent a numerical majority in the country. The country is gerrymandered to protect the West Bankers—the old Bedouin crowd that are largely the backbone of the military and the government service. The Palestinians are entrepreneurial. They're becoming wealthy. They're becoming dominant in some other ways. Plus, they don't have a political say that is justified based on their numbers. So he's operating from a difficult situation and the difficult situation has worked out so that it's zero-sum. Anything he does for the Palestinians who are citizens is

viewed as giving in to the enemy by the part of the country that long has been the support of the monarchy.

But he's very quick. He, of course, went to Deerfield Academy in Massachusetts and then to the British Officer Candidate's program—the name of which escapes me for the moment—but his English is—he's absolutely fluent. In fact, I'm told that his English is better than his Arabic. His father, for example, could go and sit by the fireside with a group of elders and make literary allusions to poets, and, obviously, the Koran and other things, that Abdullah can't. But he's much more sophisticated than his father, much more aware of how Washington works and how this place plays out. I don't think he has quite the standing with his subjects, but they are a very different group than the group that was ruled by his father.

Q: What were the other meetings like that you had in Jordan?

Hoar: Well, we went and visited the senior military guys. The chief of the armed forces and his service chiefs gave us a brief—plenty of give-and-take and questions. We went to the foreign ministry, the same sort of arrangement. I'm trying to think of what other agencies. The meetings were pared down again. They were foreshortened because of the whole trip, but those were the principal ones. In the past, when we've had more length, more time, it wasn't unusual to see the minister of transportation, and the minister of planning—who is a woman, educated in the United States, who worked for one of the big investment banks in Washington before she went back to that job, very westernized. These are the things that people who aren't familiar with that part of

the world are always shocked at—that there's a woman who's a minister, who is American-educated, very western.

Q: Was there surprise at this among the members of the Capstone program?

Hoar: I think among some of them. You get a wide variety in this group. It's normally fifteen people who go on the trip, because there will be three trips that are run simultaneously. I'm not sure how the fifteen are chosen. In that group there will probably be two civilians. Ideally, there would be one from Foreign Service and usually somebody from the intelligence community, but not necessarily. This time we had a guy who was a general officer equivalent in the border patrol business. Then there will be a split among the other services. In my group this time there were two civilians, one guy from the Coast Guard, one Marine, and then the other eleven were divided up among the Air Force, Army, and the Navy. But what happens when you get into this is that you get guys who have spent their whole lives in the acquisition business. They've never had a shot fired at them in anger. You have sailors who are supply guys. So you have a very diverse group of people.

For example, in this group of fifteen there were probably four or five soldiers in the group. Some of them were reservists who were called to active duty, to be allowed to go to the school. But there was only one Army combat arms guy in the whole group—active duty—who had been a battalion commander and a brigade commander in combat. The only guy like that. The Marine in the group had been out there a couple of times, but he'd always been on a staff someplace. He hadn't been a commander out there. So you don't get a lot of guys who have had a lot of

experience out there. Further—and this is not uncommon—the guys who have been out there and have been in command have a very narrow view of the people who live in that part of the world because the ones they've been associated with are, for the most part, bad guys.

Q: That's interesting. Do you have an anecdote or an example of that?

Hoar: It's hard to put your finger on. But you get this "radical Islamic terrorism"—terms like that. That somehow this is religious, and radical, and terrorism all in one line. I'm made uncomfortable by those kinds of terms. That is certainly a misnomer, in many cases. And to the degree that it's true, it frequently means that there are Muslims who are using religion in countries where education is very poor. The one that comes to mind is Pakistan, which I know well. If you can do something in the name of the Koran and Islam, you can get away, literally, with murder, as we see all the time. The fix for that is education.

But in Pakistan, for example, where literacy among women in the provinces is around twenty-three—twenty-five percent—the money is allocated at the national level to the provinces and then it's skimmed, so that all the education that should be taking place in places like the Sindh, for example, doesn't happen. It's very poor. It looks like the nineteenth century with indentured servants who are tied to the land, who have borrowed money from the landowners and will never be able to pay it back. Couldn't leave if they wanted to. They spend $10,000 on a wedding because, culturally, that's the way you do it, for people who probably make $2,000 a year or something like that. That's kind of off the point, but this is the kind of problem that you face out there.

Q: I see. Now on this trip—you mentioned that you also went to Saudi Arabia. I really wonder about Saudi Arabia. Even though I work on the Middle East, it's a country that I feel I may never get to see. Would you share some of your experiences on this trip?

Hoar: Sure. Do you say your prayers, George?

Q: [Laughs] No comment.

Hoar: If you have a chance to say a prayer, say a prayer that King Abdullah lives for another ten years. Okay.

Q: Why is that?

Hoar: Well, I'll give you the best example. I think three or four years ago there were about forty thousand citizens of Saudi Arabia attending university outside the kingdom, and they were principally in the United States, in the UK [United Kingdom], Australia, and New Zealand. The next year there were fifty-seven thousand. Last year it was sixty-some-thousand. This year it's over one hundred thousand. In addition to that, he has created this knowledge city north of Jeddah, with a fence around it. There are two universities in there. They're co-ed. Women wear what they want. Women drive in that city. It's interesting. My friend, Chas [Charles W.] Freeman [Jr.], who's a former ambassador out there and an extraordinary guy, has characterized the sovereign there as "not ruling the country, but presiding over the four thousand princes who

are floating around the country." So that a major imperative of Bedouins—that you have to find consensus, that you have to work through these things—is very much in play. Where instead of Abdullah, by edict, saying, "Women drive. Women wear what they want," and everything, he has undertaken a program that is just going to change the society little by little.

The trouble is that the new crown prince, Prince Nayef [bin Abdulaziz Al Saud] , whom I don't know—I do know Abdullah well—let me explain that. Because when I was at CENTCOM he was the crown prince and he was the most senior non-military guy that I visited routinely. I made it my business—if he would receive me—to see him every time I was in the kingdom, which meant sometimes traveling to Jeddah from Riyadh, or wherever, to find him. But my recollection is such that he was always there when I was visiting. I always saw him and I was always enormously impressed by him—by his world outlook. To use a Christian phrase, I would say that he's devout in the way he handles his personal life and his own value system. He's a very, very thoughtful person, very concerned about how to do things, what he could do, what he couldn't do, very worried about the poorer people in the country—of which there are many—the devout in the countryside, that space between Riyadh and Jeddah. If you travel by car out there, these are people that are largely herders—maybe some farming but very, very little. They're poor and there are a lot of social services that are available, but when you get into areas where there aren't a lot of people, your ability to provide social services is pretty difficult.

Anyway, his whole style of ruling really is dependent on some longevity. His changes have not really taken hold yet, in my judgment. I think in another five years they probably will have. He will have been king for fifteen years, maybe, at that time. But the likelihood that he is going to be

around that long is anybody's guess. He's in his eighties and he's not well. He's overweight. He's got bad knees. I think he's got diabetes, but, really, really, really a straight-shooter and a guy who is very outspoken. He wire-brushed Mr. Cheney not too long after we invaded Iraq when the U.S. government was looking for money to buy the sheikhs in Al Anbar province. You know, the Marines took credit for the pacification of Al Anbar. They spent a lot of blood and treasure to get where they were, but, in the long run, the fact that the U.S. government—with Saudi money—bought the sheikhs didn't hurt either.

I'm told that Abdullah said to Mr. Cheney, "We told you not to invade Iraq. We told you if you invaded Iraq, you would make Iran the regional power. Now you've gone ahead and done it anyway, and now you're back for more money." [Laughs] The more money includes the half a billion dollars that Mr. [Donald H.] Rumsfeld gave to Saddam Hussein during the Iran-Iraq war to help him continue to fight the Iranians. The picture taken of Mr. Rumsfeld shaking hands with Saddam was after he had just delivered the suitcase.

Q: Incredible. Well, we're going to talk about all of that. You not only mentioned the Iraq war, but you also previously mentioned General Schwarzkopf . We're going to talk about all those experiences, but before we do I'm going to take you from your latest memories of this trip to perhaps some of your earlier childhood memories.

Hoar: Okay. Sure.

Q: So we're going from one extreme to the other. But tell me about where you were born and grew up. Tell me a little bit about that.

Hoar: I was born and grew up in Boston, in a section of the city called Brighton. I don't think I ever saw a tree or a Protestant until I was probably fifteen or sixteen.

Q: I understand the Protestant bit. I don't quite understand the tree bit. Brighton has no trees?

Hoar: They have a few, but most of the houses are built down to the sidewalk. [Laughs]

Q: Was it a working-class neighborhood?

Hoar: Pretty much so. Pretty much so. The part where I lived was largely ethnically Irish, Italian, and Jewish, all kind of mixed in together.

Q: What are some of your memories from living in that neighborhood?

Hoar: Well, most of the people that I knew, kids, the places I went—because I was in the church choir. I was an altar boy. I went to parochial school for the first through the eighth grade. The nuns taught. My kids are appalled at the fact that I was never in a class with less than forty-five kids in one through eighth grade. It was ethnic, narrowly focused, and the person who probably had more to do with breaking me out of this was my mother, who was convinced that there was a way out of this kind of neighborhood and arrangement. It wasn't necessarily religious; it was

sociological—about breaking loose from this crowd. When I was in the eighth grade, I could have stayed and gone to high school in this same Catholic high school that was a part of the local parish. My mother would have none of it. I had to go to the Jesuit high school, which was, at that time, all the way into the city, and I didn't want to do that. I wanted to stay with my pals. There was no argument that would work.

So that was probably one of the more defining aspects of growing up—was to spend four years in a Jesuit high school. I can't tell you exactly why. The motto for the school was "To be a man for others," which I've reflected on many times. And the Jesuits represent an extraordinary group of men, anyway. My high school class, by the way, has four college presidents and four bishops in it.

Q: Really?

Hoar: Yes—out of a class of about 270, or something like that. More recently, we have now four—four-star generals who have come out of there—Hoar and [John J.] Sheehan. All the Irish kids. [Laughs]

Q: Why do you think that is?

Hoar: I don't know. Well, which part do you mean? The military part?

Q: I suppose both. The concentration of—

Hoar: Of course, the Jesuits were founded by a soldier who got wounded and got religion, sequentially, so that may be part of it. But let me tell you a little bit about the curriculum. My junior year in high school, five classes—the first one was Latin, the second was Greek, the third was German, the fourth was math, the fifth was English. That's the way the day went.

Q: Those are a lot of languages.

Hoar: No shit! [Laughter] Well, it gets worse, because I'm dyslexic. [Laughter] I never knew that until my son was diagnosed. I had never heard the word. The nuns used to chastise me by saying that I was bright but lazy.

Q: Were you?

Hoar: I think I couldn't put three numbers together and make them work. My mother, in the summer, used to make me do multiplication tables. I'd have to recite them, particularly the seventh, eighth, and ninth. If I couldn't get them, I had to write them out ten times before I could go out. The same way with spelling. It was just that these things that had sequences in them—I still can't spell worth a darn. Every place I stop in the house where I'm going to write something or whatever, there's a paperback dictionary there. My Blackberry corrects my spelling, so it works nicely.

Anyway, I just had a hard time. Even in college I didn't start to do well until I got away from these kinds of things like math and language and got into psychology, sociology, history—the soft stuff. But I all of a sudden brought something to those kinds of courses that I never realized I had a capability to do, until I got away with the things that are required—sequential writing and learning and so forth.

Q: Then you went to Tufts [University].

Hoar: Yes, and that's interesting too because my senior year in school the teacher I had for my homeroom, which meant Latin—no Greek now. Two years of Greek was all you needed. Latin, German, English. I don't know. Physics was the other one. I just didn't get along with the guy. He made life difficult for me. He felt I wasn't working hard or whatever. I was playing football at the time and after a football game one weekend—we played in the Boston league and played the public schools in the Boston league—one of the officials came up to me and asked me if I might be interested in going to Tufts. I said, "Sure, I'm interested." Well, what that amounted to was that that was my ticket away from the Jesuits and away from what I'd been experiencing with this priest—who I think had some serious emotional problems. But that's neither here nor there. But I just decided, unlike most of my classmates, that I wasn't going to a Jesuit college. Boston College—I could have taken a streetcar ride for ten minutes to attend school there, or, if I had had the money to go to Holy Cross, which was out in Worcester.

Q: Tufts is in Somerville, right? So it's not a terribly far jaunt from Brighton. Did you live on campus or did you commute?

Hoar: No, I lived at home. I traveled in on public transportation. At times I had junky old automobiles that I could drive back and forth. I met my wife while I was there, and so forth.

Q: At Tufts. How did you meet?

Hoar: Yes. Well, I majored in psychology and somebody asked me one time, "Why did you major in psychology?" Well, probably because that's where the girls were. [Laughs] There might have been some other reasons. I think it was also because it looked like I could get C's without a lot of trouble there. I really hadn't, up until that time, figured out where I ought to be in school. So we met in school. She was a year behind me in school. We did a project together and got to be pals. She was going with some other guy. Then, little by little, we saw one another more and more, etc., and got married. And she's a lot smarter than I am, by the way. There's only one Phi Beta Kappa key in the family and it's not mine.

But someplace along there, in my last two years in school—part of it because of my wife's view at the time—she said to me one time, "You know, I like you a lot, but you're not a very good student and I'm not really terribly interested in somebody who can't do well in school." So I did well in school.

Q: Do you remember when she told you this?

Hoar: Yes.

Q: What year of college?

Hoar: It must have been—no it wasn't after. It was during my junior year. In fairness, I had started to get to the point where I was comfortable. I was now in small classes, mostly in psychology, and some things in the sociology department. There was no anthropology department at that time at Tufts. It was sort of folded into sociology. Cultural anthropology, right from the beginning, was something that always fascinated me. Still does. So I sort of chased along in that direction. I had already, by that time, declared myself as a psychology major, but I certainly had enough credits to be a sociology major, mostly in anthropology and related kinds of subjects. And I started to do better.

Q: So you turned your grades around in your junior year. That's a lot of C's to make up for, though.

Hoar: Yes. Well, again, there was no Phi Beta Kappa at the end of the rainbow.

Q: So what happened in your senior year? What was that like?

Hoar: Well, it was a lot better. I was a lot better student. My wife and I got engaged before I graduated and we decided we were going to get married. She decided that she would accelerate and finish in three-and-a-half years, which she did, because she did so damn well in school. She

just had to pick up three more courses or something. So we got married the summer after I graduated from college.

I took a job in New York City with a company that no longer exists but at that time was American Metal Limited, which was an interesting place, largely owned by South Africans. It owned mines in Rhodesia and stuff like that. I was on my way to learning how to trade on the futures market for non-ferrous metals when—lo and behold—I got a draft notice. I had been deferred while I was in college. You used to be able to take a test, and if you passed the test you had an S-2 draft rating, which meant that you were deferred by virtue of the fact that you could read and write. So I never gave it any thought, and I was working in Washington. My wife had just graduated from college. We were living in Brooklyn Heights, in New York.

Q: What year was this?

Hoar: It would have been—by this time, 1957. Early 1957. The draft notice came in January of 1957. What I was concerned about was that I was going to get drafted. I was going to get sent to Europe for two years on $60 a month, and that just was not workable. So one morning, in the office, I opened the Yellow Pages and called all the recruiters around town. I called the Marine recruiter, got a master sergeant, and he said, "Yes, we'd be interested in talking to you. Let me just ask you a few questions to make sure that you're qualified. How tall are you? How much do you weigh? What's your eyesight? Is it correctable, or do you need glasses? Where did you go to school? What did you major in? On the face of it, you're qualified. You'll have to come and take a paper-and-pencil exam, and you'll have to pass the physical, but why don't you come on

down." The paper-and-pencil; the physical. I get a clean bill of health. They swear me into the Marine Corps Reserves on the sixth of February, 1957. In early March I go to Quantico for the officer-training program, which will finish in June, and if I successfully complete that, I'll be commissioned a second lieutenant, and off we go. Here I am.

Q: This is interesting. Am I wrong—? So you preempted the draft, in a sense—

Hoar: Oh, yes.

Q: —so that you would get a better position.

Hoar: Well, the thing I didn't want to do—I was afraid that I'd be assigned someplace where my wife would, first of all, probably have to work, but could very easily have been in Arkansas or the Carolinas or God-knows—or Germany. No telling where I would have spent those two years, and I just wasn't prepared to do that. So I'm willing to serve for three years as an officer and would make enough money so that my wife could accompany me—$222.30, I think, was what second lieutenants got in those days, but that was a lot of money.

Q: Not bad. Not bad money in those days.

Hoar: Not bad. Not bad. Enough. I had no intention of staying beyond three years.

Q: But you did, and I want to talk about that. But first I want you to tell me a little bit about the year that you were sworn in. What was that like? What was 1957 like in the world in terms of America's position, foreign policy, and so on?

Hoar: I don't have any idea. [Laughter] First of all, I was the wrong guy for this job, working futures in the non-ferrous metal market. I'm the guy that's dyslexic. I probably screwed that up for a hundred years for that company, doing the sums every day. I never had an idea what it was all about. They would have caught up with me sooner or later. I probably got out of there with my hat, ass, and overcoat, just in time. [Laughs]

Anyway, what was going on in the world? Well, the Korean armistice had taken place in 1953.

Q: 1956 was Suez [War].

Hoar: Suez. I never realized the significance of that. I remember listening to it on the radio and the wonderful story—this is a departure, again.

Q: That's okay.

Hoar: It goes back to Iran. In 1952, Mr. [Mohammad] Mosaddegh was freely elected—the first time anybody had been freely elected in a national election in Iran. Mosaddegh said, "I'm going to nationalize the oil industry." Mr. [Winston] Churchill came to President [Dwight D.] Eisenhower and said, "We want to overthrow Mosaddegh, but we don't have the resources. We

need you to help," and he said, "No." Churchill said, "If you don't help, we'll pull the commonwealth division out of Korea." Eisenhower rolled. We overthrew Mosaddegh. As you know, there's no record of that. The CIA [Central Intelligence Agency] destroyed all the papers associated with that. Of course, Mr. Eisenhower got his comeback with the Suez crisis when he told the Brits and the French and the Israelis to go home. To this day—you know, [Robert] Anthony Eden was the prime minister. The government fell, and to this day the Brits talk about the "Suez catastrophe." It was the beginning of their end. 1967 was the end, with the White Paper in the Middle East. But that was the beginning of the end of something that had existed since 1814, at the end of the Napoleonic wars—Gibraltar, Corfu, Malta, Cyprus, Suez.

Q: You've got the sequence.

Hoar: It couldn't have happened to nicer guys, by the way.

Q: So this is a really interesting period for someone to start on a military career, even if they don't realize it's a life's career at the time.

Hoar: Much of this is realization afterwards, particularly about the British in all of this business. But it's part of the continuing narrative of how this stuff played out. When the British published the White Paper on pulling out of east of Suez in 1967 or 1968, I was in Washington. I had been to Vietnam and was back from my first tour, in Washington. I remember standing, looking at a map with one of my colleagues, and I said, "You know, it would be worthwhile to hire the Brits

to continue doing what they're doing rather than to go in there and fill that vacuum." I'm not altogether sure that was a bad idea, then. Anyway, all of this is interesting.

Q: Tell me about those first years in the military.

Hoar: Okay. Well, the first thing—this is an impression that I've gained from thirty-seven years in the Marine Corps. Success in an institution is really dependent on your ability to adopt the norms of the institution you're associated with. If the things that the institution values become your values, you have a pretty good chance of being successful. This was a good fit for me. I was always a jock. I always stayed in pretty good shape. And to be a combat arms guy in the Marine Corps is pretty important. That's part of it. You don't have to be a genius to do this kind of work. One of the things I found when I found to the OC program—officer candidate program [OCS - Officer Candidate School]—was that there were guys who came out of school in the deep South who were fucking stupid. Really dumb guys. So much so—fast forward—I'm the commander at Parris Island in South Carolina. There is a private school in the adjacent town to Parris Island. We got a flier about their graduation exercise, which they had asked me to come and speak at. The thing that was so funny was that the guy who was my aide—the guy who works in my office and keeps track of my schedule and travels with me and everything—a hell of a good guy and a great friend over the years—he did his undergraduate work at Harvard. In this brochure they stated, with great pride, that the average score for your college SATs—the average score for the SATs was 870 for the graduating class.

Q: That's not very good.

Hoar: Well, as my pal—the guy from Harvard—said, "You get 700 points for putting your name on the fucking paper." [Laughter]

Q: So what was it like? Did the military have a place for people? Was the military able to, in a sense, educate people?

Hoar: No. I think some of these guys were good guys. They came in. The ones who were not very bright didn't last very long.

Q: But others muddled through, I suppose.

Hoar: Well, you know, everybody, I'm sure, was on a three-year obligation at the time, I think. I think many of them found that it wasn't good for them and went along. I think of those guys who weren't very bright, there weren't very many who stayed on beyond that. And I don't mean to say this because I feel that I was elite, but I went to a very tough high school and a pretty decent college. I was somewhat taken aback by the fact that there were a lot of guys who weren't very smart in that group.

What happened was—as I was finishing the course, the guy who was the staff person—he was our platoon commander, but he was a Marine captain. He called me in and said, "You have a chance to be a regular officer because of your class standing." It was a very small percentage of reservists who came in through the OCS program who would be offered an opportunity to

become a regular officer at the end of the basic school, which was after—I'm getting way ahead of you. You went to Officer Candidate School for twelve months. You got commissioned, and then the basic school, which all newly-minted Marine officers had to attend, ran for about five months. It essentially taught everybody to be an infantry-platoon commander. Then, if you were going on to something else, you went to a follow-on school.

So this fellow said to me, "You can get a regular commission."

I said, "I don't think I want to do that. I'm not sure I want to stay in the Marine Corps."

He said, "Well, it doesn't entail an obligation for greater service. You're still only in for three years. It would be important for you to take it, because if you don't, in two years there may not be an opportunity." These opportunities are offered, given on the number of regular officers who are in a particular year-group, and that number, in two years, may not allow for anybody else to come on in. He said, "My advice to you is to take the regular commission, and if you choose to get out at the end of the three years, you can."

So I said, "Okay. Sign me up."

I finished fairly high in a class of five hundred people. I can't tell you where, but it was fairly close to the top. The top guys were, I think, three fellows who had enlisted service, and because of the date and so forth, had all served in the Korean War. These were very bright guys who had done their time—probably five or six years—as enlisted men, then went to OCS in my group,

and then were in this larger group of college graduates that had just come out that were in various other programs. But I was fairly close to the top.

I went on out to California, which was my choice, out to the 1st Marine Division at Camp Pendleton, which we loved. There's nothing like that climate out there. That's where we live now, of course. Then it started. I did the sort of thing I think most infantry officers did. I served as a platoon commander, got transferred to another battalion, which was going overseas, and moved up to be on the battalion staff in the operations section. Worked for a great guy. He was a major and I was a lieutenant. There was a captain in the office as well who is a friend to this day. I worked for him again later on when he was a battalion commander and I was a company commander. That was a thirteen-month tour away from the family, which was tough going for my wife. But she's tough and very resilient.

Q: The thirteen-month tour was where?

Hoar: In Okinawa.

Q: What was that like?

Hoar: Well, it was a lot of fun. We drank a lot. [Laughs] We played a lot of sports.

Q: It's a small place.

Hoar: Yes. Our battalion spent a lot of time aboard ship down in the Philippines. We did an exercise with the Brits, and then it was Malaya. The British Borneo, into Hong Kong, on the ships and so forth, standing by to go to Vietnam.

Q: What year was this?

Hoar: It was Labor Day, 1959.

Q: I should also add that if I'm stretching your memory, you can skip over the year and always add it in.

Hoar: No, I just had to remember that I went out there in 1959 and came back in 1960. I remember distinctly because I had a roommate. Two of us lived in this double room. All the toilet facilities were down the hall. On that same floor, captains had single rooms, and majors had single rooms, and the lieutenant colonels lived someplace else in not-so-humble arrangements. But the XO [executive officer] of the battalion, John Wilson, came on down, banged on the door around 6:00 on Labor Day and said, "Joe Boy, get up. We're goin' to war."

My roommate Dick Harper and I got up, packed our stuff, and we went up to Kadena Airport, which was the Air Force base, and we sat on our gear all day long. Then we were sent home. Actually, it looked like we were going to Laos at that time. As often happens with Marines—and, I suspect, for Army units that are in similar kinds of places like the 82nd Airborne and people like that. When somebody in Washington said, "Maybe we ought to send some military

guys," all of a sudden it comes down to where the rubber meets the road and it means get up at 6:00 in the morning—we're going to war. Even though you don't go. [Laughter]

But the Indochina problem was very much alive and well at that time. Even then there was a thought that they were going to put American forces on the ground. Good idea that it didn't happen, but it was that sort of thing. When we came back from Okinawa, I was assigned—which was kind of a mistake on my part. I wanted to go back to the East Coast, mainly for family reasons—because we had been in California for about a year. Then I was out in Okinawa for a year. So we got orders to the naval base at Yorktown, Virginia, which was a production facility for making nuclear weapons. There was a large Marine contingent there for security purposes of the base. At the time, it was about three hundred fifty Marines. And you won't believe this, but when the ships were getting ready to deploy out of Norfolk—Yorktown was probably about thirty miles north of Norfolk—the nuclear weapons were put in school buses, escorted down to the ships, and loaded onto the ships.

Q: Why school buses?

Hoar: Beats me. Mainly, I think, because children travel in school buses and nobody would have thought there were nukes in them.

Q: That's interesting.

Hoar: Now they were escorted by Marine guards, but, nonetheless, school buses.

Q: So this is one of your roles and experiences in the military, of having escorted nuclear weapons.

Hoar: There was always an NCO [noncommissioned officer] in charge of that detail. My job was initially as a guard officer, which meant that I had about seventy Marines who worked for me, who were day-on and day-off on duty, and the other days they trained and did other things. Then toward the end of that time I commanded a guard company, which was two big platoons of guys like this.

But an interesting thing happened. A neighbor of mine was a Navy CWO [chief] warrant officer named Mike Dignan. A CWO in these days, in the early 1960s, would have served in World War II, as Mike had done. He was kind of a public affairs guy. Very quick-witted. One Friday night we were both at happy hour, and he lived in government housing just down the street from me. So I offered to give him a ride home. We're driving along and he says to me, "Joe, how long are you going to stay in the Marines?"

I said, "I don't know. I'll probably stay twenty years and retire."

He said, "Let me tell you something. That's the wrong answer. All the indignities suffered in the first twenty years are made up for in the last ten." I never forgot it.

Q: So, three years was going to become thirty.

Hoar: Well, it turned out to be thirty-seven. But I never forgot Mike Dignan's description of how all this came about.

Q: That's quite a statement. Did it end up being true?

Hoar: Of course, it did. [Laughs] That's why I remembered it so long. The more senior you got, the better jobs you got, the more responsibility you had. I guess this was another piece—I'm getting a little bit ahead of the military part of it, but to go back to the thing about norms—about what's important. I generally got to do what everybody else did. I got out of that business that I described at Yorktown. I went to the Marine base at Camp Lejeune. I went from there to the division that's at Camp Lejeune as well, so that major that I had worked for out in Okinawa was now a battalion commander, a lieutenant colonel. I'm a captain. He got me over to work for him in his battalion, so I'm a company commander with him and we do a Mediterranean cruise together for seven months.

I was very successful as a company commander. It wasn't that the guys around me weren't successful. I just worked very hard at it and was good at it.

Q: Why do you think that is?

Hoar: Well, I think at that level it's attention to detail. Two things. Everybody in the Marine Corps is supposed to qualify with the service rifle every year. You go to the rifle range and fire.

In the second division, there was a group of guys who were somehow belonged up here in the ether, at the headquarters, who came around, and you had a week of training before you fired your first round for the week that you went to the rifle range. A port stop, two weeks. These guys came on down and were teaching the classes to my company, one hundred eighty Marines, and I want to say that about one hundred thirty of them were going to the range for some reason—the sick, lame, lazy, people doing other things. Everybody wasn't going to the range, and the guys who were teaching this course were terrible.

I stopped them and said, "You guys are terrible. Go on home. I can do this better than you can."

I sent them back to division headquarters and I called up my battalion commander and I said, "I fired these guys."

There was a long silence and he said, "What are you going to do?"

I said, "I'm going to teach the course myself. They're not worth a darn." I think I said, "They're not worth a shit," which is normally how I would have described that.

So I undertook to teach that course. When we fired the next week, everybody who fired in the range, one hundred thirty Marines, all qualified. Very, very rare. It should have been about ninety percent, or maybe ninety-five percent is a really good score. But the fact that everybody qualified was quite unusual. That's the kind of thing I was able to do.

I remember about pre-deployment inspection, and the commanding general came down and inspected the company and told my boss, Bruce [F.] Meyers, he said, "That's the best company I've ever inspected here in this division." I worked really hard at it. Everybody had guys who went away for the weekend and didn't always come back on time—what we called UA—unauthorized absence. In the second division, it wasn't unusual for a battalion of one thousand Marines to have—on Monday morning—twenty or twenty-five of them not back—UA. Now most of them came back the next day or the day after—whatever—but some of them went home and stayed home. Fell in love. Whatever. So in that battalion they would normally be distributed pretty equally among the companies. Five or six guys every week that you would be on your orders [?] in the UA status. I went for like seven months without ever having a guy go over the hill.

Now, what all those guys had was my home phone number. If they had a problem, they were to call me and then we would talk about when they were coming back. Obviously, there were guys who took advantage of this. "My mother's sick." "My car broke down," blah, blah. But that was okay. So give them another day. Tell them to come back on Tuesday instead of Monday. But it worked well enough so that—I did a lot of things well at that level. I all the time was now building confidence. It took a lot of balls, for example, to send those guys from the division back up there—they worked for a two-star—and say, "Get out of here. You're not worth shit. I'm going to do it myself," and then deliver on it.

Then we went to the Mediterranean together for a cruise for seven months, came back. A battalion normally has two majors—the executive officer, the second in command, and then the

operations officer. The operations officer transferred out, so as a captain I moved up into that job—which was, again, I was working for a guy that I'd known for some time.

When we got back from the cruise, my monitor—the monitor is the guy who makes your assignments—called me and said, "Your next assignment is in Vietnam."

I said, "Okay. That's fine. I know it's my turn to go."

He said, "You're going to go as an advisor."

I said, "Wait a minute. I don't want to go as an advisor. I want to as an American unit."

He said, "Well, you've been asking to go for an advisor for three years."

I said, "Well, that was before the Americans got involved. I want to go with a regular Marine unit."

"No, no. You asked to go with the Vietnamese, so you're going to go—"

Q: You went as an advisor to the South Vietnamese units—

Hoar: —Marine Corps. Yes. That was not what I wanted to do.

Q: I think your coffee has run dry. Can I fill your cup? And as soon as it's full, you'll tell me about your advising role.

Hoar: You may. Fair enough.

Q: It's not fair to make you talk about Vietnam without a full cup of coffee, I think.

Hoar: Well, that or a drink. [Laughter]

Q: That I can't give you.

Hoar: Well, it's a little early, anyway.

[INTERRUPTION]

Okay. How I got to Vietnam.

Q: You're headed to Vietnam.

Hoar: No, no, it's more than that. I got word—this was in May. No, it was earlier than that. It was probably April that I got word that I was going. The plan was that I would go in December as a byname replacement for a guy named Tom Kennedy.

[INTERRUPTION]

I'm just back from seven months on the cruise, and this is April I guess. I find that I'm going in December to Vietnam as an advisor with the Vietnamese Marines.

Q: Do you remember the year?

Hoar: Yes. It would have been 1966. The first thing I had to do was go to a course to get some rudimentary training in Vietnamese. That course was taught at Fort Bragg, which is about one hundred twenty miles to the west of Camp Lejeune. So I'd go up there on Sunday night and come back on Friday night, etc. That was a six-week course. The mornings were spent on military subjects. The afternoons were spent on Vietnamese. Bill McManus was an honor graduate, another Marine—a guy I went to high school with, as a matter of fact, who was also going as an advisor. I was the number-two guy in the class. Went back to Camp Lejeune, I'm now filling this major's job as operations officer for the battalion. My wife delivers our son, the fifth child. I didn't know what was causing it; that's a long story.

The day after my son was born, Tom Kennedy, who was the incumbent in this job, was killed. So the battalion commander said, "Don't do anything. Just sit tight. I'll figure out how best to work this." So he called me back and said, "I've talked to Washington. You're going, but you're not going for two weeks." So you've got two weeks. We were in government quarters on the base, so we had to get out of the base and get a place ashore. Now, when a whole unit goes, the families stay where they are. But when you're on individual orders, you have to vacate because you're

not associated with that organization any longer. So we moved everybody out into town. That was the easiest thing to do. We had been at Camp Lejeune for about two and a half or three years at that point. My wife had no great need to go back to Boston. She wasn't close to her family, mainly because her father had an alcohol problem. He was a dentist and fairly successful, but he was a guy who had serious problems and was very, very difficult to deal with.

Anyway, we moved out there, I got my son baptized, and I went to Vietnam. This was a period that, at the end of it, when I had completed the thirteen months in Vietnam, I had been gone twenty of twenty-four months. Not an easy time for a woman with five kids. Well, four, and then five for the last year. Particularly when two guys that we knew quite well—also captains, who were killed in the year that I was out there—their families were in locale. There were a lot more people killed on a regular basis during that war than during Afghanistan and—well, there were some periods in Iraq that were pretty heavy in some units. But, generally speaking, there were a hell of a lot of people killed in Vietnam.

So I think it was probably the most harrowing experience for my wife to be on her own all of that time—and then thirteen months of it—while I was away.

Q: How often did you speak with her?

Hoar: Almost never. There was no way to speak. You could probably make an arrangement to call if you were someplace in a city or something like that. But it was, "I love you. Over." The international phone business was very rudimentary, and in a place like Vietnam, almost non-

existent. You sent letters and that sort of thing. The next time around it was cassettes. You had forty minutes to get through the bad news.

Anyway, it was a remarkable experience for me because it made me realize how little, as Americans, we understand about other cultures, and how important that is to being successful in these cross-cultural circumstances. If you don't understand where these guys came from, what's the narrative—again, what is the story about that family, about that country, about their efforts? Nobody ever understood that Vietnam was a product of a dying concept—which was imperialism. The French couldn't have possibly won it. We couldn't. When General [Võ Nguyên] Giáp, the senior commander of the North Vietnamese forces, was asked, "What was the cost of losing a million soldiers to the United States in the war? Was it worth it?" his answer was, "If it were three million to achieve independence, it would have been okay."

Nobody in this country understood that. Imperialism was dead and we didn't know it. We just took the French place. And, of course, in another sense, we tried to do the same thing in Iraq and Afghanistan. Different circumstances, different requirements, different issues entirely, but at the end of the day, we're still working with another country that we don't understand. We don't understand the dynamic of it. We don't understand about their religion, their concerns, and, as a result, we're almost doomed to be unsuccessful.

Q: You've brought up a lot of strands that I would like to pick up on. We can obviously only do one at a time. You talked about the separation from your family, the difficulties of being in Vietnam, and you've also said a little bit about the kind of macro-level implications of

everything and changes in foreign policy. But tell me a little bit more about your experiences on the ground in Vietnam. Those must have been very difficult years.

Hoar: No, it wasn't all that difficult. It was a hell of a lot more difficult for my family than for me. By this time, I'd been in the Marine Corps eight or nine years, and this was what it was all about. We're at war, that's where I should be, and I should go there and do the best I can. I had no reservations about that. I will tell you about how the next time around, how it morphed and got away from me.

When I got out there, Tom Kennedy's replacement—they had shifted some people around, because when you get killed there was somebody that was put in who was on another job someplace within the group. But the Marine Advisory Unit provided advisory service for the Vietnamese Marine Corps, which was made up—at that time—of six infantry battalions, an artillery battalion, and some dogs and cats. It was really described as a brigade rather than as a division. The Vietnamese Marines and the Vietnamese Airborne—which was a full-size division—made up the strategic reserve for the country.

So while most Vietnamese Army units were in a corps area—Army corps kind of thing, of which there were four, and worked for the corps commander—the Vietnamese Airborne and the Vietnamese Marines were the strategic reserve for the country. Even though there was a large American presence there. When the Vietnamese wanted to do something, either defensively or to conduct an offensive—which was usually either the airborne or the Marines, or perhaps elements

of both—that were involved. In both cases, they were by far the best two units in the Vietnamese armed forces.

I remember the guy who wrote for the *New York Times* on military issues—I want to say Hanson [W.] Baldwin but I'm not sure of that—had said one time that anything you say about the Vietnamese armed forces is true. And that was so, because you had regional forces, and popular forces, units that the regional forces were under the provincial commander. The popular forces were under the local rule, the local guy—mayor or whatever. Very poorly trained. Poorly equipped. Not able to do a great deal. Then, on the other end, you had some very fine soldiers.

When I got down to the infantry battalion that I was assigned to, my opposite number was a Vietnamese major. He had taken over the battalion after a big fight, I think three years earlier, if I'm not mistaken, in which the battalion commander was killed, along with, I think, sixty other Marines. This was the first time that a Vietnamese unit had fought a North Vietnamese regiment. That was the first time that had occurred, when the bad guys, who were in regimental strength, and had ambushed this battalion. In fact, the advisor that was with that battalion was captured, died in captivity, and was ultimately given a medal of honor for his activities while he was captured—his leadership with other POWs [prisoners of war], etc.

So this guy took over by virtue of his predecessor being killed. He'd been wounded three times. He had, I don't know, seven or eight personal decorations. He was not particularly interested in getting killed. Very, very savvy. Very cautious in combat, but he didn't lose a lot of people. I'll give you a perfect example. An American battalion commander, moving in what we would call

"movement to contact,"—where you haven't made contact but it's imminent—would probably have one or maybe two companies out, depending on what he sensed was going on. But in any case, let's say just one. So that lead company would be deployed, probably over a couple hundred meters wide, so you were not only watching the front, but they would have a fairly good observation on both sides as the battalion moved forward. The Vietnamese battalion would move in two columns of one lead guy.

Q: Could you describe that a bit?

Hoar: Sure. One column would have the commander in it with me. The other column would have the second in command with my assistant. The reason was that you almost never kicked over any mines when you did that because you followed the trails that the villagers used in that area. I can remember, early on, going up a fairly steep hill, and there was—if it were a roadway you'd say a "turnoff," but it wasn't. It was just a wider space where, if you stepped out, you could see up the valley. I made a step to step out off the trail into that area and a Marine grabbed me by the sleeve—an enlisted Vietnamese Marine—and said, "[Vietnamese] No, no, no." He used the word for mine. I've forgotten what it was. Fifteen minutes later, an enlisted Marine stepped out into that area and kicked over a mine. I'm sure he lived, but he had a lot of holes in him from fragmentation from a device of some kind.

So the difference is that you had—with that company moving on a couple-hundred-meter front—you had a lot of all-around protection. But the ability to kick over mines and cause those kinds of casualties was exponential in terms of what you could possibly run into. These guys were willing

to give up some of that possibility—that you'd run into an ambush—to minimize the possibility of several guys kicking over mines and being either seriously killed or wounded.

So you learned a lot from them in the way they thought and the way they acted. I guess the most formative part of my time there was we were up along the DMZ [demilitarized zone] in what was called I Corps from early September through February of that year, 1966-1967. The last day of September it started to rain, and it rained every day until we came back down in February. This was the northwest typhoon season and it was—I would guess—probably in the forties and fifties. It wasn't freezing weather, but you were wet all the time. All the time.

I had a recurring cough during that time, as you might guess. It was many years afterwards, when I had had pneumonia and went to see a pulmonary guy, and he did an MRI [magnetic resonance imaging], and he said, "When did you have TB [tuberculosis]?"

I said, "I've never had TB."

He said, "Come on over here. I want to show you what TB looks like," and there were my lungs.

He said, "See that scarring? That's TB."

I said, "Well, I know I have some scarring, but in my annual physicals, when I got an X-ray, it was always described as 'Looks like you had some kind of an infection.'" So I walked around for a couple of months with undiagnosed TB up there. I did what you did every day.

So it was tough in that regard. We went back down to the base camp, refitted, and then we went back up into II Corps, further south. By now the weather had changed. We were into March and the monsoon was largely over. I finished out my time in June, in more commodious weather, and less fighting also—a couple on the DMZ. There were some pretty big fights, in fact. One of them involved a battalion of the Vietnamese Airborne that walked into an ambush. We were not far from there, so we were committed. They were here, under heavy fire. We came in over at this angle and made contact. That's all we did. We didn't continue the attack through. But the senior advisor over here was Barry McCaffrey, whom you see on television once in a while. I said to him, "What the hell were you doing on the nineteenth of September, 1966? Couldn't you have done a better job?" He said, "I don't know. I got wounded in the first fifteen minutes and evacuated. I don't know what happened." He'd been badly wounded.

But that battalion had—I want to say—214 killed that day. A lot of folks. What we were able to do was take the pressure off that. I was awarded a bronze star for that day because I got out on a forward area and was able to control some air strikes that kind of broke the back of the bad boys.

Q: How did you do that?

Hoar: I took my radio operator, ran across an open field while they were shooting at me, got up on a hill where I could see what I wanted to see and called in air strikes.

Q: You realized you were going to be shot at, I suppose.

Hoar: Well, yeah. [Laughs]

Q: How did you make the decision to run across that field and do it anyway?

Hoar: Because that's what needed to be done.

Q: What did it feel like?

Hoar: It felt good when I got there. [Laughter]

Q: So there's that incident where you really put yourself at risk—that's an understatement. Then there was the incident where you almost stepped on a mine. Were there other incidences when you came close to not existing?

Hoar: In one afternoon crossing a stream, a bad guy, no more than twenty meters away from me, stood up and started shooting at me. One of my faithful partners right next to me shot him dead before he'd gotten more than a couple rounds off.

Q: An American or a Vietnamese?

Hoar: Vietnamese. There was no other American. My pal was a couple hundred meters away. Shortly thereafter, an eighty-two millimeter mortar round literally landed between my legs, in the

mud, and didn't explode. All I could see were the tail fins sticking out of the mud. I attribute all of that to my mother's intercession with the Almighty.

Another half hour later, in the middle of this fight, there was a Vietnamese Marine behind a little hillock and he was just lying down there. I walked up and kicked him in the ass, and said, "Bắn!" which is, "Shoot!" He had an M-79, which was this short weapon that fired a forty millimeter explosive round, but it wasn't armed until it had traveled—I think—twenty-six, twenty-seven meters in the air and then the rotation made it. But what he did was he fired it about ten feet away and it started ricocheting off trees and bushes. [Laughs] For a little while I was sure that that sucker was going to blow up and it didn't. It just bounced around in those trees. All these three events took place in the space of a couple of hours. That was probably the worst day I ever had out there in terms of close calls.

Q: Were you thinking about these as close calls, or was the adrenaline flowing too much?

Hoar: No. It's the adrenaline. The fear is that you're not going to do a good job. That's the fear.

Q: Where does that come from?

Hoar: I think some of it is pride. Some of it is the training you received. Now the guy who's lying there on that hillock with the M-79, who is afraid to come up on the edge, has got a responsibility to his comrades and his ability to do a good job. But he has no control over what's going on around him. That guy that's standing up, kicking him in the ass, is the guy who has

some control. That's the thing that makes it so hard for the youngsters. The lieutenant or the captain says, "Here we go. Let's go. Everybody up." Somebody else is the one saying, "Let's go, let's get up." You don't have a vote on something like that. I always felt that what I wanted to do was to do the right thing and that oftentimes entailed risk.

Q: At what point did you go back home?

Hoar: Well, my thirteen months were up. I went back. My wife was still living in North Carolina. I had orders to this town, to come to the Marine headquarters. See, it's really unfortunate, but if someplace along the line they find out you can read and write, you wind up here, in town. If somebody seconds that motion—that you can read and write—you keep coming back again and again and again. [Laughs] So I did a three-year tour at Marine headquarters. At that time, it was not in the Pentagon, it was up in the Navy annex on the hill, across the way. I was very much involved in the day-to-day business of Vietnam. For example, by consensus among my peers, they all gave me the enviable task—since I was in the operations section—to respond to all congressional inquiries that had operational implications.

Q: What does that mean?

Hoar: Well, let's say, for example, that we issue M-16 rifles for the first time to people in combat and they're having problems with the mechanism. Failure to feed ammunition into the chamber, difficulty with the magazines. This became a big deal. So congressmen would write a letter and say, "What are you doing about your M-16s?" I would say, "These are the problems. This is

what we're doing. This is what we're doing to fix it up." Some of these letters went to the four-star, to the commandant, because if you were talking about a letter that came from the chairman of the House Armed Services Committee, the letter went back from the commandant. If he were a member of one of those committees or some other committees—my boss, who was a two-star. I didn't work directly for him, though. A lieutenant colonel, some colonel was up in there—was the guy that signed off on it. But they got a lot of attention.

I had other interesting tasks. For example, the commander of Marine forces in the Pacific at that time was stationed in Hawaii. So he had overall responsibility for the Marines who were in Vietnam. His name was [Charles C.] Krulak. He was kind of famous in the Marine Corps. He published, out of his headquarters, a thing called "Operational Lessons Learned During Combat Operations in the Republic of Vietnam," popularly known around the headquarters as Krulak's Fables.

Q: Krulak's Fables.

Hoar: When that sucker arrived, it had a distribution of twenty-four. One went to the president. One went to the secretary of defense. One went to the chairman, then all the relevant committees—Senate, House, Armed Services, Appropriations. And each one got a letter and it would say, "Dear Mr. Secretary, enclosed for your information is a copy of 'Lessons Learned,' blah, blah, blah, blah, blah. I would respectfully draw your attention to the progress that is being made and is exemplified by the data contained on page thirteen, blah, blah, blah, blah." But every one of those fucking letters had to be different, so my job, when those things came in, was

to prepare twenty-four letters for twenty-four different guys, and make different letters, blah, blah, blah. Those had to go—the top ones—it had to get out of the building within twenty-four hours and the commandant had to sign out the top eight or ten of them. Then my general signed out the rest of them. But it was this kind of stuff.

Q: How long did you do that for?

Hoar: I did it for two years. It was interesting because a guy who was a friend of mine—we had known one another for a number of years—was the aide to the assistant commandant. This is a four-star, the number-two guy in the Marine Corps. We were both working out one noontime, and he said, "How would you like to be my replacement?"

I said, "Tell me some more about it."

He said, "Well, General [Lewis William] Walt, as you know, is the assistant commandant. He's a really nice guy, easy to be around, etc. I think you'd enjoy it."

I said, "Well, you know, I've been here for two years. I'm going to be here for another year, and I'm going to be doing the same thing for the next year. So yes, I'd be interested."

Long story short. I get the job, partially because General Walt and the colonel I worked for were in the same unit in the Second World War. My boss had said, "He's a good writer." What I didn't know was that Lew Walt was putting together a book. He wasn't writing it. He had a guy

to write it for him who was a retired Marine. Well, I found out a couple things. My pal, Carl [E.] Mundy [Jr.]—who freely admitted it afterwards—he said, "I lied. I had to lie. I could never have gotten you out there if I'd told you the truth."

Walt had been the commander in Vietnam for two years in I Corps up north. He had predominately Marine units up there—two Marine divisions and an air wing that really was the size of two air wings, but was commanded by one aviation general. I can't remember the exact number, but it must have been sixty to seventy thousand Marines out there at any given time. He had been out there for two years. He had a continuing fight with [William C.] Westmoreland, who was the overall commander, an Army four-star who was down in Saigon. Westmoreland's belief was that you would win by engaging the North Vietnamese forces out in the hinterland and inflicting enough casualties on them so they would give up. General Giáp told us afterwards, of course, that he would have been willing to lose three million, if that's what it would take to get us out of there. Walt's view was to protect the population, to stay in the populated areas, and to win over the population. They were at an impasse. Walt came home after two years out there convinced that we could still win if we turned the way we did business around.

He and Mr. [Lyndon B.] Johnson—the president at the time—had a very good relationship. They were both country boys. Walt was from Colorado. He visited the president down on the farm, down in Texas, etc. They had been very close together. When I went to work for Lew Walt, Mr. Johnson had left office and Mr. [Richard M.] Nixon was the president. Nixon didn't want anything to do with Walt. He didn't know him. It's not fair to say he didn't like him. He just wasn't interested in being part of it.

So from time to time I would carry a letter over to the president, to the White House, and, of course, he never got a response back from this hand-carried letter. He was also writing a book, which was about his time in Vietnam. Shortly after I got there a chapter came in, and he said, "Read this over and tell me what you think." So I read it over. There was a Marine major or lieutenant colonel who wrote books about the Marines between the First World War and the Second World War. His name was John [W.] Thomason [Jr.] and he had an interesting, flowery style of writing. I had grown up with [Ernest M.] Hemingway stuff—short, declarative sentences.

Q: To the point.

Hoar: Yes. So I remember bringing in this mass of paper. He said, "What do you think?"

I said, "Looks pretty good, sir."

He said, "What do you mean, pretty good? It's got to be outstanding. Fix it."

So now I'm in the business of editing this book he's writing. Colonel "Wyckoff" [phonetic] the retired guy who was writing the book, had just an entirely different view of how this ought to be done. So I'm rewriting what he sends in. In and out. In and out. I'm the aide. The executive assistant is a lieutenant colonel named Paul [X.] Kelley, known as P.X. P.X. was a great hero as a battalion commander, a tough guy, another Boston Irishman. We hit it off from the first five

minutes on and we continue to be great friends. P.X. was the kind of guy who was so self-assured that he never worried about the small stuff. I'll give you an example.

General Walt had a dinner party every Friday night during the parade season at the Marine barracks here in town—the Friday night parade that begins right after sunset. There would usually be about eight or ten couples invited for dinner, and they were always politically important people in one way or another. Some of them would be out of the entertainment business, mostly out of government, and so forth. The first time that P.X. and I did this—because he had just come in to take over the number-one job at the same time—we went and did this thing together. The way the boss wanted it done really required two people to not screw it up, because somebody needed to be out at the sidewalk greeting people when they pulled up in the car, bringing them in. Somebody else was inside, passing out who your dinner partner was.

So there was this problem of having to be in two places at one time about three different times during the evening—which was absolutely choreographed. The last one was your dinner partner was not the same person you went to the parade with. So you had Mrs. X for dinner. For the parade, Mrs. Y was your partner. I learned, to my dismay, I guess, that when I went around the first night I was in this and said, "Excuse me, sir. Your dinner partner tonight is Mrs. Jones," and he said to me, "Who the fuck is Mrs. Jones?" I didn't know either. All I had was this little piece of paper, "Joe Schmuck and Mrs. Jones are having dinner together."

So you had to figure out who all these women were as they came in because you had to deal with this guy who is going to say he doesn't know who his dinner partner is. Then you have this

problem of teaming him up with another woman to go outside. So there was a seating arrangement for watching the parade—boy/girl-boy/girl—sitting with the boss and his wife. Fourteen-sixteen people, keeping it all straight. So you would have to call away Mr. So-and-So, Mrs. So-and-So, and somebody takes them on down there. But, inevitably, it's a big gaggle down there, and they don't sit where they're supposed to. So the boss has the red ass because he wanted to sit next to Mrs. So-and-So, and she's in the third row.

So there are ample opportunities to screw this up. With two people, the chances of screwing it up were reduced considerably. After the first time we did this, P.X. says to me, "I'm not spending all summer on Friday nights going over there to do this. We're going to alternate."

I said, "Sir, we can't do that. It'll get fucked up every time."

He said, "No, don't worry about it, Joe. It'll be all right."

So every Friday one of us would have the responsibility to go handle the dinner. Mr. and Mrs. sitting together or apart, going down different—the whole works. Every Saturday morning—we worked on Saturday mornings at the time—when the boss came in he'd ring the buzzer, and it would be for one of us. Whomever had had the responsibility the night before. So you were going to get your ass chewed first thing on Saturday morning about how screwed up it was the night before. P.X. really didn't care. That just rolled off his back. I was crushed that this four-star was telling me how screwed up I was every other Saturday morning. He was just so sublimely

confident of his own abilities—which were justified, marvelously. He wound up being the commandant some years afterwards.

In fact, as time went on, when something went well—because he had known Lew Walt. He had worked for Lew Walt before when he was a captain and Walt was a colonel. He was not at all concerned about how this was going. I lived in mortal fear of what was going on in that next office. He would go in when something went right and he would say, "Sir, Joe handled this, and he really did a nice job on it." He would have done it. He'd come out and he'd say, "The boss is going to call you in and tell you what a good job you did." Then when something went wrong, he would go in and say, "Sir, I kicked the ball into the stands. I'm responsible for not making this work." That was the kind of guy I was working with. You know, you always got your ass chewed when it went badly. That was just the way every day was around there. It was very tough going. But it just rolled off P.X.'s back. He'd just go ahead and do it. "It's okay. Don't worry about it." He went out from there, commanded a regiment in Vietnam. As it turned out, it turned out to be the last regiment in the country because the withdrawal was going.

I went out the next year. I was due to go back into Vietnam. I had the orders to the third division. By the time I got out there, the division was back on Okinawa, so I missed that second tour—although the battalion I was in was aboard ship during the Easter offensive that year, which would have been 1971, I believe. We were aboard ship for about six months, looking like we might go ashore. We went ashore a couple of times for planning conferences, but never went ashore to fight. So you couldn't say I had a second tour in Vietnam. It was down around there

someplace. Then that started to wrap it up. I went from there back to Quantico to teach at the command staff college.

Q: This is in the early eighties at this point?

Hoar: No, it was in the early seventies—1972—around in there. I was an instructor at the command staff college for a little less than two years—a very pleasant time. Not a lot of pressure. You taught your classes and so forth. Good fun. I met a lot of good guys and had a good time. I had a very good reputation as a teacher, and I worked hard. I taught counterinsurgency operations and worked hard at what were some of the classic things that worked and what didn't work, about Algeria, and Malaya, and our own experiences in Vietnam.

Q: Well, tell about some of that in terms of your experiences in Vietnam and in the military in general. In counterinsurgency, what, in your opinion, worked and didn't work?

Hoar: Well, I hadn't really solidified my view about imperialism, and the fact that—to use the French example—that both in Vietnam and in Algeria, it wasn't that the French army weren't good fighters. It was that history had overcome them. We know because General Giáp said, in Vietnam, that it didn't make any difference how many people you killed. The French, unfortunately, went down the road to using torture as a means of destroying the insurgency in Algiers. Even though the classic movie about the battle of Algiers—which I put together a noontime film program during the period that—.

We taught courses in blocks, so I had about three days in which I had responsibility for the instruction but didn't do all of it. But each noontime I had a movie thing. Of course, it was not compulsory to attend, but I was always out there, searching around for movies. One of my daughters, who must have been in junior high at the time—I took her with me to one of those movie theaters over in Georgetown that showed obscure movies. It was called *Blood of the Eagle*, and it was about an insurgency in Uruguay, as I recall—which was a classic insurgency, by the way. Kristin [?] has never forgiven me for taking her to that movie, which was in Spanish with subtitles, and was all black-and-white. Conspirators talking in Spanish to one another about what they were going to do and everything. Of course, it was all lost on her. But she would sometimes ask me if we could go see *Blood of the Eagle*, or whatever it was, even to this day. Cheeky kid.

So it was another opportunity for me to do well, and I think I was a good instructor there. I think I was considered to be a very good instructor. But I worked very hard at it. For example, I had seen this done at that school when I was a student there, where an instructor got up and never used any notes, just got hooked up this way. In that block of instruction I had a two-hour introduction broken into two one-hours. I got so that I could stand up and do those two hours without ever looking at a note. Not being behind the rostrum but out front, on the stage, wired up like this. I was emulating a guy I had seen do this, and I was so impressed with it that I worked my ass off to do it the same way. I did a good job of it.

I went from there back up to Washington. Now this is my second tour. I was the monitor for lieutenant colonels who had occupational specialties that were on the ground side, as opposed to

the aviation side. I took the place of a friend of mine who had had the job—which was kind of fun, too, because this was at a time when my wife was back in school working on her PhD.

This guy called me one day and he said, "How would you like to go to Paris?"

I said, "What do you mean?"

He said, "We've got an opening for a lieutenant colonel." I was a lieutenant colonel, I think, by then. Maybe I was still a major. I can't be sure. No, I had to be a lieutenant colonel. "As the assistant naval attaché in Paris. Would you like that job?"

I said, "Yes, I think I'd like that job."

Q: Paris, France or Parris Island?

Hoar: Paris, France, one "r". So I went home and said to Charlie, "We're going to Paris."

She said, "What do you mean, we're going to Paris?"

I said, "Well, my pal Mike Sheridan said that if I wanted to go, I could have that assignment."

She said, "Well, you go by yourself. I'm not going. I'm still in school."

I said, "Well, okay. I'm going then."

So the next day I called Mike and I said, "Look, Charlie doesn't want to go, but I'm going."

He said, "No, it doesn't work that way. If you're married, you can't go unaccompanied. The rule is, if you're married you've got to bring your family with you."

So that night I said, "Charlie, I've thought about this a little bit. I don't think I want to go to Paris after all." [Laughter] So I didn't go to Paris.

I was there in Washington in the assignment business, which was kind of fun. I went from there to the National War College, which is, of course, over at Fort [Lesley J.] McNair. Now I'm due to go back to the operating forces again. This, I think, was an important part of how my career now, as a lieutenant colonel, was influenced. The guy that was the division commander in the First Marine Division—out in California—had been my overall boss. The first general in the chain above me. I worked for a colonel, and he worked for the general officer. Oftentimes, I had to go up and brief him on some of these personnel issues about why it was difficult and why he ought to see it so we didn't get blindsided or whatever. I remember him saying to me, "Joe, why do you always bring me these hard questions?" And I said, "Sir, because I do all the easy ones." [Laughs]

So I wrote him a long letter saying I wanted to command an infantry battalion when I got out to his division. My major concern was that I was relatively senior, and if I didn't get a chance it

was possible that I could come up for promotion to colonel without having had a command as a lieutenant colonel. So, unlike what normally happened in that division, I came out and went directly to a battalion. Most of the lieutenant colonels who came to the division went someplace on the staff, then went down on the second half of their tour, after the boss had had a chance to take a look at them and so forth. But this guy knew me.

So I went directly out to a battalion. I had the battalion for a year. I went back up to the division staff, in the personnel end of the business, again. That was kind of what I was doing—making the assignments and so forth. While I was there I got selected for colonel, then started a big campaign to be assigned as a regimental commander. Same sort of business. Going out and hassling my boss about going down the command to regiment.

Q: Why did you do that?

Hoar: Why? Because I wanted to. [Laughs] That's what this shit is all about, is being in command. Finally, [Charles G.] Charlie Cooper was the division commander and I said something to him about that I was ready to go down to a regiment. He said, "I've already Rogered that. I don't want to hear about that anymore." I wound up with kind of a special relationship with him because he got into a dispute with another general officer who was up at Twentynine Palms, and it was kind of one of these things where the commandant of the Marine Corps had said, "I want it done this way," and it sort of—it impinged on how these guys were doing business at the time. There had to be some changes, and neither one of them were comfortable about it. My boss was uncomfortable about going to tell this guy about how it ought

to be done, even though he was junior to him. So he sent me to do it. He just didn't want to tell another general officer. So I was selected colonel—not promoted yet—to go see if I could work it out. Which I did.

He had a lot of confidence in me, to ask me to do something like that. It was something he found distasteful that he didn't want to do. In order to do this, then, I was given another year in the division—four years in the division instead of three—which was very uncommon, because you're keeping somebody else out. I'm a "fresh-guard" [phonetic] colonel, and my first assignment is to command a regiment, which I commanded for two years. I think, again, I was very successful. So when I was getting ready to leave, I was thinking about what I'd like to do next.

There was a job in the western Pacific where a colonel was the commander of a Marine expeditionary unit. An expeditionary unit was a reinforced infantry battalion with tanks, and artillery, and engineers, and medical people, and so forth. Also, there was an aviation unit which was a composite squadron of twelve troop-lifters, four armed helicopters. Depending on the ship, it could have six carriers for short take-off fighters so twenty-six to thirty-two aircraft in this composite squadron. Then a logistics group—about 2,400 Marines altogether, usually on three ships. It could be four ships. It was a one-year tour that you stayed out. The units rotated but you went from one command ship to another, and so forth. It was the only job in the Marine Corps like this.

So the guy who was the overall commander—who was out in Okinawa, who was a three-star—I knew slightly. I had to send him a letter and explain to him all my prowess in amphibious operations, and how I had participated in this exercise, and this exercise, and this exercise, etc. Lo and behold, I got the job. I had just completed two years in command, and then got another year in command aboard ship, and was essentially my own boss. My boss was on Okinawa, and I was mostly in the southwest Pacific and the Indian Ocean. We made three deployments to the Indian Ocean because we were starting to get geared up in that direction. This would have been 1981—1982, in that period.

Q: What do you mean by "starting to gear up in that direction?"

Hoar: Well, there was beginning to be an acknowledgement that this was serious stuff. The Desert One thing had gone very badly a couple years earlier. That was the beginning of the reorganization that stood up a special operations command. The product of which, now is the SEAL [United States Navy Sea, Air, and Land] teams and the Army Special Operations guy—a four-star that runs a separate, combatant command of special operations. So instead of floating around in the western Pacific, the amphibious ships were going to the western Pacific and then making a swing through the Indian Ocean, as well, to show the flag. The only place we exercised was in Kenya. That was the only place that we could actually go ashore out there and exercise.

Those were great experiences. Again, I think in a year I was the commander of the landing force for ten or eleven amphibious exercises in Kenya, in the Philippines, in Okinawa, on Iwo Jima—which was an interesting experience—in Korea. By the time I had finished that tour, I had had

three consecutive years—not consecutive, but two years in command followed by a year on the staff. Then another year in command as a colonel. Pretty rare, in terms of having two operational commands at the same time—again, because I pressed the issue. I went to the senior guy and said, "I want the job and here's why I should get it." And it worked.

Q: Did you enjoy the deployments in the Indian Ocean?

Hoar: I loved it. I was my own boss. At that time, we had the big naval base at Subic Bay in the Philippines. Because of the relative cost of maintaining Navy ships, there was a requirement that when you were forward deployed in the western Pacific that you had to spend twenty-seven of your deployed time in-port, in Subic, doing upkeep—because, on a scale of one to ten, the high cost of ship upkeep in San Francisco Bay was a ten. In Subic Bay, it was a two. So there was deferred maintenance on ships to get the work done at Subic. You had a shipyard there with third-generation guys working.

Q: Why was it so much cheaper at Subic?

Hoar: Personnel costs. There were Filipino skilled workmen—pipefitters, electricians, people who could cut up steel stuff and so forth—that were every bit as qualified as people in the United States but worked at something less than twenty percent of what it would cost to have it done in the United States. If San Francisco was ten and Subic was two, Korea was a four. Japan was a six. Something like that. So you spent a lot of time out there, and we would go into Subic for

fifteen or sixteen days. There was a rudimentary camp that we would move off the ships, and we would train out in the boondocks and everything.

The reason I mentioned it is I got a call from my boss up in Okinawa—the guy who gave me the job—and he said, "I'm having a commanders conference next week, Joe. I'd like to have you come."

I said, "Sir, I'm too busy."

He said, "Joe. I'd like to have you come to the meeting."

"Aye, aye sir."

I was so fucking sure of myself that I could tell him I was too busy to come to his meeting. [Laughs] I was kind of cheeky, probably.

Q: It sounds like it. Yet you wound up progressing through the ranks. By 1988, I think, you became chief of staff at CENTCOM.

Hoar: Yes.

Q: How did that happen?

Hoar: I finished up there. I purposely asked to go to the recruit depot at San Diego because my family was still in California. They'd been there while I spent the year abroad and I didn't want to move again. And I was coming into the zone for brigadier within a year.

Q: What year was this?

Hoar: I think 1983. Yes. 1983—1982 to1983. So it was a good place to hide out for a year and see what happened. I didn't want to go back to Washington again. I'd been there twice. In fact, I disliked it so much that when we moved out to Pendleton, I sold my house here in Annandale and bought a house in California, which is the house we still live in because my wife is able to make a good living. We took some money out of this house here in Annandale. We bought a nice house three blocks from the ocean, overlooking the ocean, in Del Mar, just north of La Jolla, in southern California. We still live in it.

Q: Incidentally, what was the source of your dislike for D.C.?

Hoar: The work. The constant backbiting. The fighting among the services for a piece of the action. The money. The missions. The whole works. The problems with the Congress. Not nearly as pronounced as it is today, but everything was competitive. If you started in your own organization—for money, for resources—when you finally sold the Marine Corps on it, then you had to go down to the Hill and fight with the other services. Go up on Capitol Hill to fight with Congress about it. It was just no fun.

So I'm at San Diego. I reported in. I knew the CG [commanding general] pretty well. I never worked for him but I knew him.

He said, "Joe, what do you want to do?"

I said, "I would like to command a recruit regiment, please." There was just one of those there.

He said, "Joe, why don't you give somebody else a chance?"

I said, "General, you asked me what I'd like to do. I'll do anything you want me to do, but that's what I'd like to do."

So he said, "You're going to be the G-1," which is the personnel guy. I had a history of this stuff.

So I was all set. The board was going to meet in a couple of months, and that was going to be the next milestone—and I failed selection. I don't have an answer to it. I didn't know many people on the board. I didn't make the cut. My friend from my time with working for General Walt, General P.X. Kelley, was the commandant at the time, and he called me.

He said, "You know, there are only two guys I'm calling who were in the zone and didn't make it, and you're one. Would you be interested in coming back to Washington to work for this next year, to get ready for the next year?"

I said, “You know, I’ve been in this gun club for twenty-odd years now. The tickets are either there or they’re not there. I’m going to take my chances because I don’t want to go back to Washington.”

He said, “Okay. I can understand that. But I wanted to give you the choice.”

The reality was that to go back there, I would have wound up being some general officer’s executive assistant. I would have had one more ticket in my book, which would have been a six-month report and a new job, probably working for a guy who didn’t know me—didn’t know me personally—and I saw no value in it at all. In fact, if I didn’t get promoted I was going to stay on. I wasn’t going to retire. I was going to stay on and think about what I wanted to do next, because I really hadn’t given it a lot of thought.

Well, the next year I got selected. My first assignment was at Camp Lejeune as the deputy commander of the 1st Division. Let me just go over this quickly, except for the idea of where I was—because you asked me about going to CENTCOM. The second assignment was here in town as the facilities and services officer. I used to describe myself as the police sergeant of the Marine Corps. What was interesting about that is that I was probably the only guy in the Marine Corps who wasn’t a three or a four-star, who had a budget that I had to defend in Congress. The military construction budget is like no other. It has line-item veto possibilities, which you don’t have in any of the other service budgets.

I had an appropriations committee that I had to report to in both houses and an armed services committee that I had to—subcommittees, I should say. In each case there was a subcommittee, because this was kind of specialized kind of stuff—usually three or four guys. In fact, the first time I briefed the House Appropriations Subcommittee for Military Construction, three members—we were sitting at a table facing one another. I was about as far as I am from you away from the chairman of the committee—three guys, and I'm here. My Navy counterpart is here. We're both in a briefing. I have an opening statement. I read my opening statement, and you and the guy next to you are having a conversation, in a conversational voice. I don't know about what because I was speaking—I was like the cigar store Indian. I was making a statement and they couldn't give a shit less what I had to say. So it was a great awakening to see how the system worked. But, it again put me in a place where I was working with the Hill. I had an opportunity to get a little self-confidence in that area. As you can tell, I lacked a lot of self-confidence. [Laughs] So I needed that help.

But it was really good because, number one, I had a lot of independence. Number two, I traveled all the time, to go around and take a look at the bases and everything, to get out of Washington, and had some interesting dialogue. We were trying to buy some property—we the Marine Corps—right at the end of the runway at the Marine Corps air station in El Toro—which has since been closed down through the BRAC [Defense Base Closure and Realignment Commission] program—the base closure. There was a building on that property that we were afraid that if somebody else bought that property, they would want to build up. Then it would be a hazard to the air station.

The chairman of the committee was a guy who had a seat in the House [of Representatives], had the district that was just south of that area, which was in Orange County, California. His district encompassed the northern part of San Diego County and the southern part of Orange County, and he was the chairman of the House Armed Services Committee for that purchase. He called me over to talk about this, and I went into great detail, explaining to him why this was important to us, far more detail than he wanted. I had him trapped—about building up, building sideways, airplanes crashing in, blah, blah, blah.

He said, "It's too expensive. We're not going to do it."

I said, "All right, sir. Can I make an appointment?"

He said, "What for?"

I said, "I work for a three-star, Lieutenant General Joe "Wynn" [phonetic]. He can't live with that answer, so he's going to be over here to give you his point of view on this whole thing."

He looked at me, and he smiled, and he said, "Okay. You got it." [Laughs]

So, one more time, I got away with my hat, ass, and overcoat. Can we take a break?

Q: We absolutely can.

[INTERRUPTION]

All right. We were talking about the 1980s and the intervening years.

Hoar: Yes. I went from that job in Washington, as a police sergeant of the Marine Corps, to be the commander at Parris Island. I was there for eighteen months. This is recruit training, and also the responsibility for recruiting. In other words, I had responsibility for recruiting for the United States east of the Mississippi, broken into three distinct groups. Each one commanded by a colonel. Then, the responsibility—after they signed these guys up, for training them at Parris Island, for their recruit training. As you know, every Marine goes through boot camp. Parris Island is different from San Diego—the other recruit depot—because it trains women Marines there as well—which, because of the relatively small numbers, is only done on the east coast; it's not done both places.

Anyway, I don't know that that's terribly eventful. It was an interesting time, but it wasn't full of pressure or unusual things. The only unusual thing about it was the uncovering of a group of women in the women's training battalion who were lesbians, and had kind of a subculture there that turned out to get a fair amount of press.

Because what had happened one day was a woman staff sergeant reported in for duty as a drill instructor, went down to the women's training battalion, and when she reported in to the first sergeant, the first sergeant said, "Are you straight or gay?"

She said, “I’m straight.”

The first sergeant said, “That’s okay. There’s room for all kinds here.”

So she did an about-face, went to the base inspector, and said, “This is what’s going on down there.”

In due course it came to me, so now I’ve got his problem of essentially looking the other way—which was essentially what had been going on for years down there. Nobody wanted to step up to it—for obvious reasons. But we now had a formal complaint, so my staff judge advocate—who was a guy from Tennessee, a former infantry officer—he had gone to law school, not very smart. I was really worried about him because he thought all this business was a sin. That was not where I was coming from. But the guy who was my aide—whom I mentioned earlier, had been to Harvard and also been to law school—I told him, “I’m going to need your help on this thing, to keep this thing going.” I told the guy who was the lawyer, “Let the Navy investigative service do it and stay out of it, because we’re going to have some disciplinary problems probably come from this. And you need not to have been involved in the investigation because you’re going to have to help prepare what my position is. I want you to be absolutely clean in terms of your relationship, because whatever we find here is going to be very controversial and there’s going to be a lot of pushback.”

Well, unfortunately, like so many things, it probably starts small, turned out to be—once we started turning over stones—really bad news relationships among women. It’s always hard to get

drill instructors, male and female, because the hours are so long. There's so much pressure to perform, and, unfortunately, there is the element of competition. If your platoon does better than my platoon—better percentage firing the rifle for qualification, better percentage on the physical fitness test, better in the competition for marching, blah, blah, blah. So you're under the gun all the time. It's very difficult. It's much more difficult to get women who want to do this because, first of all, it's not the kind of thing women like to do, generally speaking, where you're a hard-ass most of the time. Perhaps the competitive part of it isn't the sort of thing that's tough.

What happened over years is that some number of women who were gay had kind of gravitated toward this, and there was a general culture—that most everybody knew existed there—that there were lesbians who routinely served in that battalion, but nobody wanted to turn over that stone. I had no choice. I had a legitimate complaint by an NCO that deserved an investigation. There were a lot of bad things that were going on down there about women recruits who were sent to the hospital but they never went to the hospital. They went to somebody's apartment for sexual activity during the day. Businesses of not having sexual relationship with the recruit, but determining that the recruit had lesbian leanings, and, say, "When you get to Camp Lejeune, you need to look up So-and-So." There was a whole arrangement there. We had one first lieutenant—woman, naval academy graduate who had shacked up with a corporal. There were some ugly kinds of things like that. It had nothing to do with—lieutenants and corporals don't live together. We don't do business that way.

There was nobody who was ever tried. There were women who were given an opportunity to resign and things like that, but it was ugly. There was a prominent homosexual who wrote a book

about the military and he devoted a chapter to this event, which was entitled, "Witch Hunt." And it figured into some other things later on, namely—if I forget to mention this—the fact that I was Miss Congeniality first-runner-up to be chairman when Colin [L.] Powell left.

Anyway, I went out to Parris Island. I was hoping I would get orders to command a division. Instead, I got orders to go be chief of staff at CENTCOM. What happened was that when Schwarzkopf was told that he was going to go down to be boss—because the incumbent commander was a Marine, the chief of staff was a soldier. Schwarzkopf knew this guy and said, "I don't want him there when I arrive. Get him out of there, and find that Marine that's supposed to come, and get him down there early." So I rolled out of there fairly quickly and went down. When I got down there, George [B.] Crist was the commander. He was the first Marine to be a combatant commander. He was a very difficult guy to work for. He was not well liked. One of my pals—whom I won't mention by name but it's just too good to pass up—said, "If you wanted to make a bouquet of assholes, George Crist would be your centerpiece." Very, very tough. Very tough guy to work for.

Q: How so?

Hoar: Well, I'll give you an example. He was due to leave to go out to the Middle East at 8:00 one evening, in his own plane. That came with the job. It was a C-135 that had been fixed up so that it had fairly comfortable seats in it and so forth. He was in Washington. He arrived at 6:00. He had called for all these people to be available. This was a Friday night. He wanted to talk to all these people before he left. They were called in serially until midnight, then he got on the

plane and flew out. They worked every Saturday. We were involved in combat operations. This was the time when we were protecting Kuwaiti tankers—reflagging them with American flags and escorting them in and out of the Persian Gulf during the Iran-Iraq War, because Iran had threatened to attack those tankers. So we had substantial forces in the Mediterranean. The largest naval battle fought anywhere in the world since World War II was fought in the Persian Gulf during this period when the U.S. Navy shot down several Iranian airplanes, destroyed a couple of oil platforms, and sank—I want to say—a destroyer.

Anyway, it was serious stuff. There were at least three guys that George Crist had fired who were living down in Special Operations Command, because the deputy commander—who was an Air Force three-star—had said, "Just go down there and hide out. The boss is leaving soon. We'll get you back later on." Three senior intelligence officers had been fired by him, so much so that the Air Force had sent a letter, saying, "Dear General Crist, we would not for a moment say who you could have as your J-2 or not, but, given the circumstances, we are not sending anymore colonels,"—I think that kept getting fired. I don't know. Anyway, it was really kind of notorious.

So I went down. I knew George Crist. We had served in the same infantry regiment years ago when he was a battalion commander. I wasn't in his battalion, but I knew him and he knew me, and I got along with him fine. But he was only there about six weeks until Schwarzkopf showed up, and Schwarzkopf had already done his homework. The first thing he did was, he said, "I'm going to come to work around 7:30 in the morning. I'm going home for lunch. And I'm normally going to leave at the end of the day, around 5:30. Maybe 6:00. You people run your own time. If

you've got to stay longer, that's your business. Just as long as you get the work done, I don't care what time you come and go. And, by the way, we don't work on Saturdays anymore." Well, it was like the sky had opened up, the Angel Gabriel is showing up or something.

Anyway, it just set the tone. Now it was interesting because Schwarzkopf was kind of a controversial figure. He was thought to be very tough but kind of a complainer. I never saw the complaining part of it, although I often saw how he could be disappointed when things didn't go the way he wanted.

Q: Is that what made him controversial?

Hoar: Well, I think some of the Army people thought he was kind of a crybaby if he didn't get what he wanted; he was a pain in the ass. I never really saw that part of him. What I did see was that I had rarely ever been around a guy who was as bright as he. It's very hard to work for a guy who's never forgotten anything he's read. Worse, never forgotten anything you told him. So it was not easy, but what I did figure out—which I've always come to admire—was that Schwarzkopf did a lot of thinking. You say, "Well, everybody thinks a lot," but I've got a story that will illustrate this.

The officer in charge of change has almost certainly got to be the boss. Everybody else has got a responsibility. You do personnel, or operations, or plans, or intelligence, and in many ways, on these big staffs, even if you're the principal, you're kind of like a hamster on a wheel. You know the day is lined up for you. You've got a briefing to get ready for in the morning. You get to the

briefing, then you've got to get other people to come and talk to you. You've got ongoing plans that you've got to check and everything. Change has got to come from the top. You've got to be able to sit back and think a little bit about what the big picture is and how to respond to it. This was not something that I figured out the first week I was with him. It came from watching him over time.

But there was a day, maybe six months or so after I had taken over the chief of staff, and probably five months since he had been there—what had happened was that the Soviet Union had thrown in the towel with respect to Afghanistan and was pulling out. Our major contingency plan was developed when the Soviet Union went to Afghanistan and the belief was, in the early eighties, that if the Soviet Union was successful in Afghanistan, they might come down to the Caucasus [Mountains] and invade Iran. It was a nineteenth-century story of warm water ports and oil and blah, blah, blah. So the contingency plan was based on the fact that the Soviet Union was going to invade Iran, and Central Command was going to put a force of some size—an Army corps and a Marine expeditionary force, roughly the same size—into Iran to defend, in the Zagros Mountains, against this attack by the Soviet Union. Nobody told Iran, by the way, about this. A small detail.

I can't tell you the date for sure, but sometime after the Soviet Union made public the fact that they were withdrawing out of Afghanistan, after the morning meeting—every morning there was an 8:30 ops intel [operational intelligence] briefing—a horseshoe table with the commander-in-chief, the deputy, the chief of staff, and then J-1, J-2 on this side, J-3-, J-4, J-5. I don't know. Everybody—all the general officers sat at that table. Then back here were the children—the

colonels, the lawyer, the financial guy, and the deputies to these guys were all in the back of the room. After the morning meeting, Schwarzkopf dismissed all the guys in the back of the room, and he frequently used this term. He said, "I've got to tell you guys that we're never going to fight the Russians in the Zagros Mountains. The fight that we're going to have is a local conflict that is going to impinge on our vital interests in the region, and we've got to get in to intervene to make sure it comes out the way we want it to. So give me some courses of action."

We'd all been to command staff college. We know you have to have three courses of action. One is always a throwaway. I don't even remember what the throwaway was.

Q: Why is it a throwaway?

Hoar: Well, you just don't want to muddy the water with only two, or have three good ones. [Laughs] Nobody expects you to have three good ones, but you have to have two good ones. The throwaway—I don't know what it was. The next one was that the Iranians close the Strait of Hormuz, and that we've got to force the Strait. The concept was basically that this was a naval and aviation war. The Navy would have to force the straits. The Air Force, shore-based aviation, would be necessary to, first of all, feed air defense so you could fly around anywhere you want. That's always the first step. The next step was to defeat this small navy. But all these speedboats with missiles on them—that we had faced during the tanker go-around—and then actually force that strait, which is only about ten kilometers across. Very valid. But we're talking to an Army infantry officer, so there's not going to be a lot of interest in a fight that's going to be largely maritime and Air Force. The third one was an attack by twenty-two Iraqi divisions, through

Kuwait, into the eastern province of Saudi Arabia to seize Abqaiq, which is the heart of the oil industry in Saudi Arabia. He says, "That's the plan. Put it together."

So we started. We started with allocation of forces—how we would do this, what would be the priorities of getting forces there. Huge disagreements. We would sit at the table. For example, Schwarzkopf wanted Patriot missiles early, or air defense. I argued that they were too heavy and too much problems trying to get them into the area. I've forgotten how many C-141 airplanes you needed to take one Patriot missile battalion. He and I, across the table, argued about this. I said we can use naval aviation and Air Force here to minimize the missile threat forces. This was the way we went through it, down in the weeds. We not only had the concept of operation, but where we would land—which would have to be down in UAE [United Arab Emirates] because the eastern province was going to be held by the bad guys, so the attack would have to come out of the UAE and go north. But we did the bed-down plan where we would put all the airplanes. We did the time-phased schedule, which was this business of where the Patriot missiles fit in, and where the tanks came, and how you were going to do all these things.

The first exercise, to test this plan—command post exercise, nobody on the ground—which was going to be done from home station. In other words, the Marines in California were going to stay in California. The soldiers on the east coast were going to stay on the east coast. The Air Force in South Carolina was going to stay in South Carolina. Command headquarters in Tampa was going to stay there. But it was going to be a map exercise and we would go through the routine of this. It was scheduled for July 2009. In the meantime, I got short-toured out of there because I was nominated for a three-star job in Washington as the operations deputy.

I left in May, before the exercise ran. The exercise ran in July, and the night of the first and second of August was the night that the Iraqis invaded Kuwait. What was interesting about this was—it must have been the fourth of August—Schwarzkopf was summoned to come to Washington to talk about what he was going to do. Now I don't think anybody in Washington had a clear idea of the amount of planning that had gone on for maybe ten months down there. Schwarzkopf got up in the tanks. The service chiefs were all there with their deputies. The chairman—Colin Powell—was there. Mr. Cheney, the secretary of defense, was there, and Schwarzkopf briefed the plan. Bang, bang, bang, bang, bang. Cheney says, "Okay. We're going to brief the president this afternoon."

So they went over to the White House in the afternoon; they briefed the president. The president said, "Okay, go on out and brief King Fahd [bin Abdulaziz Al Saud]." They got on an airplane that night. The next night, at midnight, they briefed Fahd. Fahd said, "Do it."

Abdullah, who was the crown prince, said, "Let's talk about it."

Fahd said, "No. We're going to do it." And we were off and running. Nobody had given much attention to that part of the world up until that time. In fact, within the previous six months, there was a movement in Washington when the national military strategy was being reworked to downgrade the importance of Central Command to the same level as Southern Command—Latin America. Schwarzkopf vigorously fought that, and fought it off. So we were off and running.

But let me back up a little bit. I figured out fairly early in the game, in watching Schwarzkopf, that unlike his predecessor, he was not interested in the details. He was interested in big stuff, in policy. Somebody else could do the implementation of policy. When I got comfortable—we never had this conversation, but what I was comfortable with was that I largely controlled his calendar. If he didn't like it, he would tell me. But he had that ops intel meeting at 8:30. I would schedule no more than one other visit in the morning for him, usually about 10:00, and then no more than 2:00 in the afternoon, maybe 2:00 and 3:00, or 1:30 and 3:00, something like that. His interests were intelligence, operations, and plans. The rest of it was important, but he didn't want to get terribly involved in any of those other things.

Now how do I know that? Because over time, I stopped giving him anything on any of that other stuff. Plans were the most difficult thing because this is all conceptual. How do you want to go about doing these kinds of things? So what we used to do was the J-5 and I would put together a paper—subject, background, discussion, recommendation, and a place for him to put his chop on the bottom. One page. To just go in and say, "We're working on this part of this plan," for example, "and this is what we think we ought to be doing and where we ought to be heading. Would you take a look?" Okay. It makes sense. He marked it and we were out the door. Rather than give them a big brief, just tell them, in the macro sense, where we were headed, and he would be okay with that. Every once in a while, I would overstep my bounds and get into something he considered to be policy.

Q: Could you give an example of that?

Hoar: Yes, I'm about to.

The J-4, in addition to logistics, had responsibility for allocation of foreign military funding, which is a big deal for Egypt, a lesser deal for Jordan, and some of the other countries. But Egypt, for example, gets $1.3 billion a year. That was the blood money after the Camp David Accords. The Israelis got $1.7 [billion] and the Egyptians got $1.3 [billion] every year—have been getting it every year. That was just under discussion here recently over this NGO [nongovernmental organization] business. I signed off on a message drafted by the J-4 about what we were going to do. The next morning we had a visitor coming. I don't know who it was, but this was another thing. He never went down to the airfield to meet anybody. I always went down. That was my job. I would go down, meet the guy at the airfield. We'd get in the car. We'd drive back. I'd take him upstairs. Schwarzkopf would receive him in the office.

On this particular morning we had a truncated 8:30 meeting because there was a visitor coming.

He said, "Who released this message?"

"I did, sir."

"This is policy. That's my business; it's not your business. You know you're not supposed to be doing policy."

There were a few more harsh words, and that was the end of it. Then we went on with the brief. About three quarters of the way through, going around the table, talking about intelligence, operations and plans, and so forth, I excused myself because I had to go down to the airport to meet the dignitary, whoever it was. The guy who had drafted the message that I signed off on said, at the end of the meeting—I was out of the room—he said, "Sir, if you'd tell me what was wrong with that message, I'll fix it." He said, "There's nothing wrong with it. What was wrong with it was that the wrong guy signed it." [Laughs]

That was the most egregious one, and I shouldn't have signed it. But it made sense. It was something we had talked about. I knew what he wanted, signed off on it, and it went to Washington. But he made the point—in front of God and everybody—that I had overstepped my bounds. What was important about all of this was that when the invasion of Iraq—with twenty-two divisions—took place in Kuwait, we were absolutely ready to trigger the response to that. It happened not to be the eastern province of Saudi Arabia, but it was close enough, and it turned out to be with twenty-two divisions.

So Schwarzkopf was so far ahead of the curve, more than any of these other people, and if he didn't spend a good part of his day sitting in his chair, looking out the window at Tampa Bay, that would never have happened. He was the guy who was the officer in charge of planning what it is we're going to do in the future. What it is that's going to affect this entity that's called Central Command. It was a marvelous lesson in terms of how many people, including Schwarzkopf's predecessor, who were so embroiled in the details—details, down to the nuts and bolts of how things were going that they never got a chance to push back and look at the big

picture. He was so far ahead of everybody else in this regard. He never adequately got credit for that piece of the work. He got all kinds of credit for carrying out the attack and so forth, but the real success was to sit back and say, "This whole plan is just never going to happen. What's the new plan? Give me some ideas." His decision. Then put it together, get his approval, ready to go. Very, very smart guy. Very bright. Not easy to be around in many cases, but I have great admiration for him. He's a really tough guy, too.

Q: Do you have other examples or stories about this particular kind of dynamic?

Hoar: More Schwarzkopf stories?

Q: Yes, in terms of your interaction and your professional relationship with him?

Hoar: Well, it was hard. The only time I ever saw him apologize—about anything—was there was a congressman from Texas who was in Ethiopia—[George Thomas] Mickey Leland, as I recall. I'm not sure of that, but I think that's who it was—who was flying around in a chartered plane in Ethiopia, trying to get a scope of the extent of the famine. The plane disappeared. Our responsibility was to conduct a search and rescue, to see if we could find where the airplane went. Well, Mickey Leland was an African-American, and after about two days his wife came up on the net [?] and said how incompetent the U.S. military was, that they couldn't find her husband. Well, Ethiopia is about half the size of the United States. We had some idea of where he was and where we thought he was heading.

Anyway, the J-3—the operations officer—Jim "Recking" [phonetic], an Air Force two-star, a good guy, said, "Don't worry about it," to me. "We know how to do search and rescue. The Air Force does this all the time." When the pressure got really hot, Jim said, "I'm going out there to fix this." Big mistake on my part. The one guy who knew how to do this was going out to get out of the kitchen because it was too hot, and I let him go. We were not making any progress, and we had some sort of a reception or something—some sort of stuff—and the thing ended after 9:00. I called him in the quarters about 10:00 at night to give him an update on this thing, and the answer was, "We still haven't found the airplane." He just ate me out—up one side and down the other side. I never thought about it until the next day that he probably was in the bedroom when he took the phone call because the next morning, after the morning meeting, he called me in and apologized. He said, "I was out of line." I think he was frustrated, number one. Number two, he probably had had a couple drinks, which went in that direction. And I think his wife, who is just a wonderful gal, probably said, "Why are you doing that to that nice boy?" [Laughs]

Anyway, that was the other side of him. I never saw him ever, ever, ever apologize to anybody for ass-chewings. They were a dime a dozen. He used to say, "Don't worry about it. I have a short temper. I lose my temper, but I don't hold grudges." This kind of thing. He was hard to work for, but he was very fair and he was very smart. I think one of the things that was enormously helpful for me was that he had a couple of guys who traveled with him all the time to the Middle East, and they both rotated out my last summer there. So he said to me one morning, "You're always complaining about never going anyplace. From now on, you're on the traveling team." So the last six or eight months, I guess, that I was there, I traveled with him whenever he went to the Middle East. The value of that was to sit in the same room, watching

the principal as he talked with, sometimes, heads of state. More often the chief of the armed forces, the ambassadors, whatever; and how he handled himself, and how he went about it. We had discussions often. Schwarzkopf's first tour in Vietnam overlapped with my tour. He was an advisor with the Airborne Division when I was with the Vietnamese Marines. We talked often about this cross-cultural issue, about the importance of understanding other cultures and meeting other people on their turf, on their terms, with their mores, rather than with your own.

Q: Can you clarify something?

Hoar: Sure.

Q: You spoke about this while you were in Vietnam or at CENTCOM?

Hoar: No, no. This was while I was the chief and he was the CINC [commander-in-chief]

Q: You compared your Vietnam experiences.

Hoar: Absolutely.

Q: Tell me about that.

Hoar: Well, not the bang-bang experiences. The business of living in another culture and adopting the way the Vietnamese did business. Knowing where the pressure points were and how you had to respond. It had to be in that society.

Now the Marines did it a little differently. In an infantry battalion, there were two officers. Usually two captains, but it might have been a major and a captain. But there were no enlisted men, so you were absolutely required to live with the Vietnamese. There was no way to base up at night with four or five guys and somebody on the radio all the time. We didn't do that. When we were in the field, we were always separated. I would be with the commander. My deputy would be with the second command, the battalion executive officer. So my experience was a little bit different because they had two officers and, I think, three enlisted. They had radio operators and, I don't know, maybe a corpsman or something. I don't know what. But there was an ability for them to have a little subculture—if they chose to—when they were out in the field. Which didn't work for us at all.

But that wasn't the issue. The issue was the cross-cultural acclimatization, to realize how, where these guys grew up. How they grew up. What their relationship was with the U.S. government. How they viewed the bad guys. I asked my counterpart one time—because he read, for his own enjoyment, in French—I said, "Tell me about your experiences with the French. What do you think about the French?" He said, "I love French literature. I hate the French." Not bad.

So these kinds of insights, and how, always, they were on a different page than we were—always, always, always. The macro goals might have been the same—defeat the North

Vietnamese—but if you come down one or two steps from there, it was always different. It had to do with being very cautious. Not getting a lot of people killed. Maybe not as aggressive as we—the Americans—would have been, but much more sensitive to what was going on among the people who lived wherever we were—obviously, because they came from that same culture. But it was all of this nuance.

Schwarzkopf and I never talked about it in detail, but we both agreed that that experience was so important to our understanding of dealing with people from other countries. This was in the context of when I was traveling with him and he was working with these senior people—senior military, senior government people—and he was very good at it. He was, again, very different. Not at all difficult. Very open. Engaging. Charming, sometimes, when he wanted to be. I obviously learned a great deal from watching him because I didn't have a speaking part. I was, you know, the principal. Schwarzkopf, probably the State Department guy, the political advisor, next to Schwarzkopf, maybe me, the next guy over—but certainly not a speaking part. Just along for the ride. And, of course, the political advisor and I were the ones who had to draft his report back to Washington, which he sent to the chairman and the secretary and to the NSC [National Security Council]. So it was always painful to write that report—always—because, again, he saw it a little differently than the rest of us did. But we got better at it as time went on.

But, again, it helped me enormously. I had no sense that I was going to go back down there and be the boss. What happened—of course, to me, when I went to Washington, and this thing started—for a couple of weeks I was the smartest guy in town about what was going on. I had drops of blood all over that plan that Schwarzkopf was implementing. I knew all about it. I knew

what he was doing, how he was doing it. I knew Schwarzkopf well enough so that my boss—who was Al [Alfred M.] Gray [Jr.], who was the commandant—wanted to do something, and I said, "General, you can't do that. You're going to piss Schwarzkopf off. It's not worth it. This is what I think you ought to do." Because I knew him well.

Just as an example, the guy who was the commander of the Marine forces at the time out there wound up not only preparing these two Marine divisions for the attack—and a pretty sizable air wing—but he had to go back to Riyadh regularly to meet with Schwarzkopf. Because the Army had had the overall Army commander—or, actually, not. Two corps commanders—but the component commander, the ARCENT [United States Army Central] guy, was back in Riyadh holding Schwarzkopf's hand. When Schwarzkopf had a question about what the Army was doing, there was a three-star sitting there next to him who could tell him. Well, our three-star was doing both jobs.

I said that I thought for sure it was too hard, so he said, "What do you want to do?"

I said, "We need to put somebody in Riyadh."

He said, "Who do you want to put there?"

And I said, "Norm Ehlers."

He said, "He's commanding an air wing in Japan."

I said, “He was at CENTCOM when I was there. He and Schwarzkopf are like that. Of all the people who were on the staff, Norm Ehlers is the only guy I can remember as a general officer who didn’t get his ass chewed one time while he was there. Schwarzkopf knows him. He’s comfortable with him. He can pick up in five minutes and be ready to go, and Schwarzkopf will trust him.” So we sent him, and it was a perfect fit.

So I brought some insights to this that I never would have if I hadn’t spent a year and a half as chief of staff. And, of course, as soon as the eighty hours was over, Ehlers called me every day saying, “Can I go back to Japan now?” No. I kept him for a couple more weeks, until Schwarzkopf had figured out how he was going to send everybody home and everything. But it was those little things that allowed me, first of all, apparently, to give my boss—who was now the commandant, Al Gray—the sense that I knew what this business was all about in the CENTCOM region and to help what we were trying to do in the Marines. Because we got ninety-five thousand Marines out there to fight that battle—which was principally my responsibility to get them out there.

Then, when Schwarzkopf indicated he was going to retire and asked for nominees, Al Gray nominated me and the Army nominated a guy who—there were four guys in the mix. Schwarzkopf supported me, as well, so I wound up getting the job. He supported me over the Army choice, which would have been conclusive.

Then Al Gray said, “You can’t go until you come up with a plan to get those ninety-five thousand guys out of country.” [Laughs]

I said, “I need another general.”

He said, “You’re not going to have another general. You’re going to do it with what you’ve got.” But that received very high priority.

Q: And you did it.

Hoar: And I did it. Yes.

Q: About becoming commander of CENTCOM—you said earlier that you hadn’t seen this coming.

Hoar: Yes. You know, it had only been one guy before me who had been a combatant commander. Growing up—the Goldwater Nichols Act was passed in 1986. This was the one that reorganized defense and forced the Marine Corps—kicking and screaming—into the business of becoming joint, and having guys up on the joint staff, and all the other stuff that goes with making joint assignments—for example—to be the chief of staff down there. These were the things that just made a difference in the way we started to operate, but I didn’t have a sense—. I seriously thought I’d be lucky if I retired as a three-star, when I was a two-star. I really thought that if I made three, I’d be fortunate. Because the Marine Corps had two four-stars—the

commandant and the assistant commandant. These other jobs—somebody else owned the jobs. In those days the Army owned the CENTCOM job, so I was counted against an Army four-star job when I took over.

Now Colin Powell took all of these joint jobs away from the services while he was chairman, during my time, and didn't allocate them to the services at all. They became jobs that belonged to the joint staff, to the chairman. So they weren't service jobs, but the thinking was—it was like getting hit by lightning. You're already in a place that's pretty damned rarefied. The idea that you would ever be a four-star seemed remote. But Schwarzkopf knew me. I went to Washington just before that war started. I was better prepared than anybody else in town about what needed to be done, and how it was going to be done, because I'd been working it for maybe eight months. I knew Schwarzkopf. He had confidence in me because he relied on me in many ways. He had the confidence for him to sit in the office, look out the window, and let me do the day-to-day running of the operation. The only time he was ever angry at me was when I overstepped myself and did some of his work—except for the Mickey Leland thing, when I couldn't find him.

Q: This is a good opportunity to stop this session and to pick up the next session with you becoming commander of CENTCOM.

Hoar: Okay.

[END OF SESSION]

VJD | Session Two

Interviewee: Joseph P. Hoar | Location: Washington, D.C.

Interviewer: George Gavrilis | Date: March 13, 2012

Q: This is George Gavrilis. It's March 13, 2012, in Washington, D.C. I'm here with General Joseph P. Hoar for the Columbia University Oral History Project on the Rule of Law.

Thank you for doing a second interview session with us. I wanted to pick up, this session—well, in the previous session we had left off right up to the time when you became commander of CENTCOM. I think the year is 1991. The month is August—I believe—and if memory serves me correctly, you were at CENTCOM from August 1991 to September of 1994.

These are some pretty eventful years in terms of foreign policy. Globally, we have the wake of the collapse of Yugoslavia. The collapse of the Soviet Union. There's a civil war raging in Bosnia at the time. Then—probably closer to home in terms of what you're doing—we have the wake of Desert Storm. The no-fly zones over Iraq. The Persian Gulf. Somalia. Civil war in Yemen. So there's a lot to talk about. But I'd like to let you pick up wherever you'd like.

Hoar: Okay. I would say, first of all, that my experience with Schwarzkopf and his generous time of taking me with him—to travel with him—was enormously important. For example, when I knew I was going to the job and I was still in Washington—as I told you, I still had some odds and ends to wrap up before I could get away. So it probably was late July or August. The chief of

staff of the Jordanian Armed Forces was in Washington. He went to see Colin Powell, and Colin Powell stiffed him. This was in the wake of the liberation of Kuwait, and Jordan was viewed as the country that didn't participate. As I think I mentioned, King Hussein was attempting to find a non-violent solution, and when we went right through to the Saudis and got an okay to use a military solution, King Hussein felt left out and said some things he probably shouldn't have said.

I don't remember exactly how I had learned that Abu Taleb was in town, but I called down to the joint staff and asked if he was in town and if I could see him—I was in the Marine headquarters—and they said yes. In the Pentagon, there's an office that's called the Visiting General Officers' office—which is about half, again, the size of this one. It's not big. So Abu Taleb and one or two of his guys were with him. I had met him when traveling with Schwarzkopf. We had gone out for a big exercise in Egypt—the bi-annual exercise that CENTCOM ran in Egypt, because we had U.S. forces out participating—an airborne battalion and a Marine unit aboard ship. We planned to not only go to the Egyptian exercise, but to go to Jordan for a follow-on exercise, and then to Oman for a follow-on exercise.

While in Jordan, I had met the chief of the armed forces and I remembered a social event at his house in which he was very kind to me. I was clearly the extra guy in the room, but he took time to be very pleasant to me. I felt that I really needed to see him and to see what was on his mind and how he felt about what was going on.

So we met in this little room. I think—I don't know why we didn't do this—but we sat side by side on a three-man couch, and we were almost in each other's space. You know how you get that way, sometimes? The upshot of this meeting was that my view—which I expressed to him—that what had happened during the liberation of Kuwait was unfortunate from the standpoint of the bilateral relationship. But the relationship between Jordan and the United States was so important in so many other ways—Israel, other Arab countries—but most especially the nature of Jordan and how it had been a friend to the United States right along.

I said, "Let's fix it. We can start with an exercise program. I can do a special operations exercise with your special operations guys without almost any money, because there won't be that many people involved. They can jump out of airplanes together. They can get down on the ground and grub around and do things that they do on the ground, and it will be a start. Let's start right away. After I take over, we'll have the first exercise. It will be very small. It will be your special ops [operations] guys and ours with a representative number that we can both manage. Then we'll build on it from there."

That's what we did, and it was successful. Then we planned something a little bit larger, and by the time we did the next one, the whole atmosphere had changed. The war had been a success. We were moving on. We were now concerned about what was going on in Kuwait and less interested in what was going on in Jordan. We were well on the way to repairing the relationship, and it was to everybody's advantage. Abu Taleb and I became good friends, because we had found a solution to this problem that was beneath the radar. Nobody was watching us do this. I

didn't ask permission to go ahead and do it. By the time the program was mature enough, everybody was okay with doing business with Jordan.

That was one part of it, and it was really interesting because a couple months later, when I was the boss, I was in Saudi Arabia and I was visiting the chief of the armed forces. He said to me, after we were talking about some of our business, "Where are you going next?"

I said, "I'm going to Jordan."

He said, "Why are you going to Jordan?"

I said, "General, you know, if there wasn't a Jordan, we'd have to invent one. We'd have to figure out a way to keep Syria away from Israel. We'd have to have a little bit of space between Iraq and Israel. This is, geographically, an important country to all of us, including you."

He rolled his eyes as much as to say, "You've got it all wrong."

Anyway. As the boss at CENTCOM, that was my first real interaction with Jordan, but it was made possible because I had been there with Schwarzkopf. I knew the guy with whom I was dealing, and I also had a good sense of the fact that Jordan was important to us. We couldn't allow them to languish. For one thing, they needed our help, certainly as much as we needed theirs. So it was a good start.

I think the other thing that was really interesting was—right after I took over I went to see General Jaber [?] in Kuwait, who was the chief of the armed forces.

He said, "We just really need your help."

And I said, "I know that. We've got to figure out a way of doing it."

He said, "How often can you have forces here?"

I said, "Well, it depends on you, really, because I think we could have virtually a constant presence here with the exception of—perhaps—Ramadan and the Christmas holidays, with an exercise program. And we could have aviation guys fly in to do something with your Air Force. We could have the Marines come in off the ship and do an exercise. Have the Special Forces come in and jump. We could even have an exercise with heavy U.S. Army forces, with tanks and so forth, but you'd have to help us."

He said, "In what way?"

I said, "You'd have to pay for some of this. The U.S. government is not going to pay to have a constant presence here. A lot of this wouldn't cost anything at all, because the Marines are going to be aboard ship. If you offer an opportunity to come in and train with your guys, they're going to be happy to do it. The Air Force is always glad to come on out and run some playing." This was just at the beginning of Southern Watch. "So there will be Air Force guys here. The Army is

going to be more expensive to bring them in, but what I would like to be able to do is to have a pre-positioned U.S. entity here with a heavy Army brigade that the U.S. guys could fall in on and train on, and then would make the next time we have to come out here to fight. Make it a hell of a lot easier if we already had a brigade's worth of Army equipment here that a U.S. Army brigade could fall in on."

Q: I have a question. Did you put it in terms of the next time we fight, or, if we have to fight?

Hoar: I'm sure it was if we have to fight. I don't think I was—I'm certain I wasn't in a place to say "When we do it the next time." That wouldn't have made a lot of sense because the question would have been, "With whom?" The answer probably would have been Iraq. But, anyway, no, I think it was certainly conditional.

So he bought off on that. The biggest stumbling block was Colin Powell on the pre-positioned stuff. He described it to me as Iraqi POMCUS [Prepositioning Of Material Configured in Unit Sets]. POMCUS was the term of the preposition equipment that was in Western Europe that the U.S. Army could fall in on if we had a fight with the Soviet Union. He was concerned that Kuwait would get overrun so quickly that we would lose the equipment—and we're talking about brigade set in those days that was worth $1.2 billion. This is not small change. But we continued to talk about it, and he finally agreed that it had some merit.

My argument was that if we're doing the things we're supposed to do, we're going to have warning. We're not going to get caught like we did the last time. We're going to know this is

going to happen, and all we've got to do is get our forces out there by air fall in on the equipment, which immediately is going to reduce the possibility that somebody else is going to start a war. Okay. So he bought off on it.

So it was pretty successful, and we were able to keep almost a continuing presence of one type or another in Kuwait, all the time, during my three years there. I thought it was pretty successful. Toward the end of my third year, I remember going out and watching a tank battalion of the Kuwaiti forces—a U.S. Army tank battalion—and a Peninsula Shield battalion participating in an exercise which was a delay exercise. In other words, you're all the way up to the border. You're being attacked by a larger force, then you have delay positions that you would move through—as you move through as you withdrew from that border. Not easy. It's a timing issue. Decisions about where you're going to withdraw. How long you had to hold each position. It's fairly sophisticated.

So here we had two countries, and then a combined force of GCC countries—which was always interesting to see—working together on something that was pretty darned realistic. So I think it came a long way in those days, and what it did more than anything else was to give the Kuwatis a sense that the American forces were going to be there continuously, even if they were only there in small numbers. Jaber [?] didn't stay in that job very long. He left, and I don't know whether it was under a cloud or not. He kind of disappeared for a couple years, and General [Salem Al] Ali [Al Sabah] took over—a good guy, who followed on from there. It was an interesting commitment, because, obviously, the forces were used during the invasion of Iraq. Huge military facilities have been built out in the desert in Iraq. That was the staging area for

U.S. Army forces going in and out of Iraq, so that a unit that was going to go into attack after the government was overthrown would go to Kuwait, would do some training there, get acclimated climate-wise, then move into Iraq. So it was in constant use.

They have three-story stone buildings—permanent buildings—that were built out in an area called the Udairi Range Area. It's quite large—out in the western part of Kuwait. Of course, that's the area through which all the U.S. equipment—not all, but much of the U.S. equipment—was withdrawn to as we left Iraq. There was a secondary highway built from that area down to the port in the southern end of Kuwait. So that when we were first doing this, we just clobbered the port that's right in Kuwait City. There was no way to handle their routine stuff and also to handle U.S. stuff, as well. The pre-positioned equipment also presaged the larger base, and so forth, that was used as a staging area for the invasion of Iraq, which I don't think—well, certainly, nobody thought about that as a possibility during my time.

Anyway, that was the relationship with Kuwait, which turned out to be, I think, very good on both ends. We satisfied their requirement in terms of their security—long-term—and it gave us a place to pre-position equipment. It gave us a place to train. It gave us a place to stay attuned, culturally, and climatically. We really didn't do any large-size exercises in the other GCC countries. We did Air Force stuff and Navy stuff, but we didn't put ground forces in the other places.

A couple of other things that went on. I always felt that the Navy never gave the Central Command area of responsibility the attention that it deserved. During my time, the commander

of the naval forces in Bahrain was usually a two-star. In my judgment, he was not a varsity-level guy. He was a JV [junior varsity] guy who was probably in his terminal rank. We had an occasion where this ship—and I don't remember the registry that was known to have—I want to say—did it have defense weapons on it? I'm fuzzy about the details, but not what happened.

Q: You can always fill that in later.

Hoar: I don't know whether I could even find it, but I'll try. The point was that we knew that this ship was coming across the Indian Ocean and probably going into Iran. Maybe all the way around to Syria, but it turned out to be Iran. We let them get away. We didn't catch them at sea, and turn them around.

Q: Why?

Hoar: The Navy dropped the ball. It was their responsibility to put up the screen and organize it, and I was assured that it had been done. But it was an embarrassment, and there were a lot of people who were very concerned about it. In fact, there's a congresswoman from Maryland—name ended in "-ski"—at a hearing [Barbara Mikulski], she had just pummeled me. She wanted to know the name of the person who was responsible for allowing this ship to get through the screen.

I said, "You're looking at him. I'm the guy that's responsible. It's my area."

She said, “No, no. Who was the naval commander?”

And I said, “It’s not the issue. I’m the person who’s responsible. That’s my area.”

So that was the end of it. But the guy who should have done it was the commander who was in Bahrain, and he didn’t do the job.

Anyway, I had an opportunity—the naval crosses in Bahrain had been there for years and years. I would say probably fifteen to twenty years. [United States] Middle East Naval Forces I think is what it was called. It had a two-star in charge of it, and there were three ships. One of the ships was an amphibious ship that was flag configured. It had a flag bridge on it, so the admiral could go right around on his ship up on that top bridge. I called the CNO [Chief of Naval Operations] one day, and I said, “Can I make a deal with you?”

He said, “Yes.”

I said, “I will trade you the amphibious ship that’s in Bahrain if you will give me a fleet designation for the naval force, a three-star, and I’ll move that headquarters ashore.” There was nothing ashore. He thought about it, and he said, “Okay,” because he wanted a ship for the third-fleet commander, who’s in San Diego. Why he needed a ship is beyond me. That’s a different issue.

So I gave up the ship. We moved the naval forces ashore. There was a rudimentary headquarters there, and we got a third star, and the fleet designation was the Fifth Fleet. So what I had been—and Schwarzkopf before me—had been working with was the Navy, with the Sixth Fleet in the Mediterranean, and the Seventh Fleet in the Pacific, and these other weenies that were doing something in the Persian Gulf. So we all of a sudden elevated this guy, fleet commander—three stars, good job, by any manner or means—gave the Navy another three-star command possibility and required, then, that they provide us some shipping once in a while, to come into the Gulf and so forth.

The Navy was also changing, because to go back to the liberation of Kuwait—up until that time, the Navy had never put an aircraft carrier in the Gulf. It was perhaps correctly noted that it was too restricted. The water was restricted. In some places it was shallow. Didn't have enough room to maneuver. Schwarzkopf's answer to that was easy, "If the Navy can't come in, we'll go to war without them." You can't have the Navy not going to war with the combatant commander. So the Navy put three carriers in the Gulf and three in the Red Sea during the time of the liberation of Kuwait. So they got used to having carriers in there.

The end result is that we have a permanent headquarters in Bahrain now—huge. Amazing how this works. We have a three-star there, and he plays a very important role in that part of the world because, right now, there tends to be two carrier task forces, either inside or, in the north Arabian Sea, outside—which is two carriers, two Aegis cruisers that have counter-missile capability, and then a couple of destroyers each. So it's a pretty sizable force, and if you have another carrier battle group in the Mediterranean, that carrier battle group could steam around to

the north Arabian Sea in about three or four days if they needed to. So you have a very sizable Navy capability.

The other thing that was going on at the same time was the decision to have a no-fly zone over the southern part of Iraq. That began shortly after the liberation of Kuwait. One of the things that I think most people would find just extraordinary was that the actual fighting lasted about a hundred hours. I remember the day before the cease-fire, I was standing in the Pentagon, in the command center, and there was a television screen up high on the wall. I was standing next to Paul [D.] Wolfowitz, who was the under-secretary—SDP[secretary for defense policy]—yes, for defense planning, the job that he had at the time.

We were getting pictures of U.S. and allied planes attacking Iraqis who were trying to flee Kuwait City, get back and get out of Iraq. And the planes were stacked up about ten high, running bombing missions against these guys who were in trucks, and private cars, and the whole works. Wolfowitz said to me, "They're running away. Why are we attacking them?" And I said, "Because it's much better to attack them running away than when they're running toward you." He didn't understand the concept of exploitation, that when you're in the attack and you've made your initial attack and you're starting to rout the enemy, that's when you exploit the fact that you've got the upper hand. And you can do maximum damage then on the enemy so you don't have to let them get away to fight another day.

Well, that day when we met in the National Military Command Center, Colin Powell—who presided over these hearings all the time with the service chiefs—said, "I don't think it's going to

last more than another day. The White House is ready to call it quits now." So it didn't. It ended the next day, at 8:00 in the morning. The interesting thing was that there was a miscalculation about where the bad guys were. Schwarzkopf's belief was that this wide envelopment that came up through the desert had closed the satchel, so all the bad guys were trapped inside. Well, they weren't. The satchel never got closed. So even after the cease-fire, there were still units that were escaping. Without realizing it, Schwarzkopf designated a rudimentary airfield just north of the boundary, between Iraq and Kuwait, to be the place where the cease-fire was going to be discussed the next day.

Well, the First Infantry Division went up there to that airfield, and there was an Iraqi tank battalion on the airfield. The CG of that division went up and said, "Go away. Fight's all over. Get off our airfield." They chased the guys home. They put up the tents, and Lieutenant General Sultan[Hashim Ahmad al-Tai]—who was the minister of defense for Iraq—came down the next day to meet Schwarzkopf. It's unbelievable—in all that time getting ready for this fight and how it was going to work and where the troops were going to go and how we were going to get there and the time-phased system of getting there—I don't ever remember anybody talking about war termination.

It seems to me, in retrospect, unbelievable that nobody said, "Okay. Let's just think for a moment. We drive the bad guys out of Iraq. What are the conditions now?" There was never any discussion in the tank. Now whether or not anybody at the State Department talked about this, anybody at the White House talked about it—I don't know. But certainly, from my perspective, as a guy who was in all the meetings at the Pentagon, there was never any discussion.

So when Schwarzkopf met Sultan, Schwarzkopf said, "There's going to be a no-fly zone." Sultan said, "Well, okay. Can we fly helicopters in the south?" Schwarzkopf said yes. That came to be a mistake, because when the marsh Arabs conducted an uprising shortly thereafter, the bad boys used armed helicopters to help suppress that uprising. Schwarzkopf had no direction. Nobody gave him a set of talking points about what he should be asking for and what he didn't ask for. So the decision was that there would be no fixed-wings below the 30th parallel, as I recall. Then there was a decision made shortly thereafter that that would be the no-fly zone—that we and our allies—which turned out to be the Brits and the French—would control all fixed-wings in that area. If they went down with fixed-wings into that area, they would be subject to attack. But the terms of the agreement was not helicopters. Big mistake.

Q: And you inherited that mistake.

Hoar: Yes. But I think I was sitting in those damn meetings all that time. I could have given my boss a nudge and said, "How are we going to end this?" It never came up. None of us ever raised that issue about what's going to be the end-game?

Q: Is that a large regret that you have, that you didn't bring the issue up?

Hoar: Yes, it is. All of us—any one of us should have thought about it. I've thought about it afterwards. The army was thinking about it in this sense that they had a plan to continue the attack to Baghdad, which was scorched. That was the White House's decision. That was never

discussed among the military, but somebody should have been talking in the tank and then getting the State Department together and the NSC to sit down and say, "Okay, in a couple of weeks we're going to cross the line of departure and liberate Kuwait. How far are we going? Okay, to the border. What are we going to impose on Iraq after we get there? No question we're going to get there." Nobody home. It never got done.

So we got kind of a trumped-up arrangement for doing the no-fly. There was somebody in the UN [United Nations] who went out and looked around and said, "It's probably important for the safety of Kuwait to have a no-fly zone in the southern part of Iraq." That was done—I believe, with some pressure from the United States—after the fact. Then we got a fairly substantial force of Air Force guys flying out of Saudi Arabia, and we got carriers into the Gulf regularly. The Navy flew fighters off the carriers and the Air Force flew regular flights out of Kuwait—to enforce the no-fly zone—for the whole three years I was at CENTCOM.

It was interesting because, for example, the Air Force wanted people to go out for six weeks. I said, "We can't do it that way." The argument was that most of this was not enhancing the aeronautical ability of the pilots. They were taking off, flying straight and level for a couple hours, retank, and back down again. So they weren't getting any training in improving their tactical skills. So I approved six weeks for the pilots only. For all of the staff members who were doing the planning for this stuff, six months. For the commander at the base where the Air Force guys were housed and where they were flying from—this was all in Saudi Arabia, by the way, it wasn't in Kuwait—that the commander would be a brigadier general, and he would be there for a

year because we couldn't stand the heat of rotating a guy out every few months when you have a permanent one-star Saudi Air Force commander of that base. It just wouldn't work.

So that was not a popular decision, and to the best of my knowledge it didn't survive after I left. I don't know that for sure. But the idea of working with a host country, with a guy who was rotating in and out of there, some even at six months—because it would take you at least a month to get up to speed and know what you were doing and be conversant with what the main issues are and everything. So that was the arrangement.

Now the interesting part about this is that the Saudis paid for everything—the fuel, the rental cars, the hotels, the food—everything but pay and spare parts. Never wanted to have that known. In fact, it was so bad that I had to go and apologize to the minister of defense and aviation because it came to light that TRANSCOM—the transportation command—was directing U.S. aircraft that had no other business in Saudi Arabia into Saudi Arabia to refuel so they wouldn't have to use U.S. money to refuel.

Q: It seems scandalous.

Hoar: Yes. Somebody should have gone to jail.

Q: Was that ever investigated? Was it quietly stopped, at least?

Hoar: I didn't know it until the TRANSCOM guy told us that there were planes going in there. I'm sure it was a decision that was probably made at a colonel, keeping it at a level that was keeping track of the fuel, and said, "Gee, if all those U.S. airplanes are being gassed up there, can't we send in a few, and that will keep our bill down to enough money to build another officer's club or another golf course?"—or whatever they were doing. He was angry—suitably angry—but we stopped it, and I never knew how long it had gone on. It was not something that we in the military wanted to make public. It was theft, is what it was.

There were always things going on that you didn't want to know about. When the new guy took over as the commander of AFCC, the Air Force Component Command—a three-star job—was a guy I knew from Washington who was in the Air Force headquarters—Mike Nelson. The first thing I had him do was to go and spend six months as the commander on the ground. Not at the air base but as the joint task force that ran all the no-fly zones. So he would be intimately familiar with the day-to-day stuff—which he wasn't all that shot in the ass with doing. But we're good friends to this day. But it was very useful for him, and I felt that if he was going to be the CENTCOM Air Force component commander, he needed to have an intimate knowledge of what was going on there. Because if there was going to be another fight, he was going to be Air Force commander and I wanted him to know everything about how we were doing business—most especially about how we integrated Navy aviation and Air Force aviation. Because that's always been a problem, and it gets more complicated when you add Marine aviation to that issue as well.

So that was an interesting aspect of it. I started something very late in my time at CENTCOM, which I don't think ever survived but I thought was a good idea. The idea of having a general officer as the U.S. base commander to be the opposite number of the Saudi commander made for a good working arrangement. We had several air bases in the Middle East that we used as stopover points, or we used them for training, or we used them to refuel sometimes. I'll give you a couple of examples.

Cairo West, which is kind of an expeditionary runway that is out on the west side of the Nile [River]—a very good runway, very little else there. But we routinely—for one reason or another—find ourselves wanting to use that runway—we, the United States. What I wanted to do was for the Air Force to designate a reserve general officer—a brigadier—to be the nominal U.S. commander for Cairo West. When he's designated, he would go on out and say, "Hi, I'm So-and-So, and I'm the U.S. Air Force guy, who—when we ask you if we can use your air field—I'll be the guy who coordinates it, and I want to coordinate it with you. I want you to get to know me, and I want you to show me around so I understand the facilities and what your capabilities and limitations are."

Because, oftentimes, this was viewed as an enormous inconvenience. We're going to go to Somalia and there's no avgas [aviation gasoline] down in Somalia, we've got to refuel someplace, so we tell the Saudi Air Force that we want to use Jeddah. Jeddah's only a bad place during Hajj, when a million people fly in to do the Hajj. But if we had a guy who could call up that base commander, who's a two-star, and say, "Hey, Ahmed, we're going to ask you, formally, if we can use the Air Force. I just want to give you a heads-up. Once we get the okay

from your government, I'll fly out, and I'll hold your hand while we go through this thing. So if you have a problem, I'll be able to solve it on the U.S. side." We got it going with the Egypt thing, but the Air Force was not shot in the ass with it, so I think it died.

But, again, it was a realization that you can't just tell Saudi Arabia that you want to use their base, and expect that all the time they're going to say okay, and, "Oh, by the way, we want you to sell us gas, and get us some hotels." All the other stuff that goes with trying to do this. The idea would have been to minimize the heartache that comes with—. You're frequently told out there, "We know you're the big guy on the block, but you don't have to rub it in. There's a better way of doing it." That was one of the things I thought would have helped, that I thought of late in the game, but never really got it going.

Let's see. I think that, by and large, I had pretty good relations with all the GCC countries. I would like to think that it was a big part of having been with Schwarzkopf, watching him and how that bilateral relationship worked. How it might be made better. What I thought were the weaknesses, and so forth. For example, with regard to UAE, Sheikh Mohammed bin Zayed, who is now the crown prince in UAE but was chief of the armed forces at the time—whom I had met sometime earlier when he was deputy commander of the Air Force—he and I sat down and talked about what kind of a permanent presence we might ask the UAE to accept. It turned out to be about eighty-eight guys renting some office space in downtown Abu Dhabi. No American flags outside. No military uniforms, but a presence there that would be able to work with the U.S. embassy and with the ministry of defense and the services to talk about joint applications of

our armed forces—in our case, frequently, to get permission to do port visits with ships. To run exercises. All of those kinds of things.

Well, with the invasion of Iraq, all that has gone by the board. There is a huge airfield now in UAE that was built as a result of the Iraqi invasion. Dubai is the principal liberty port for the U.S. Navy ships that go into the Gulf. Not a heck of a lot to do there. They've got a little arrangement where there are merchants who will sell you rugs and all kinds of crap right at the fleet landing, and it's pretty humble, but it has worked out. Similarly, there's a huge Air Force base waiting to be occupied in Qatar. A big air field. Big headquarters that served as the forward headquarters for CENTCOM during the invasion of Iraq. All of that is still there. It's probably got nothing much more than some sort of a caretaker headquarters. The CENTCOM special operations guys have a permanent headquarters in Qatar that's out there by the Air Force as well. During my time, we put another brigade set of equipment in Qatar in another pre-positioned site. It was easier to get than the one in Kuwait. So that's been reconstituted.

So going into the invasion of Iraq, a lot of the things that were done on my watch anticipated some sort of future military action, not at all an attack on Iraq. But, nonetheless, they were useful in doing those things.

I should point out that those two airfields—one in UAE and one in Qatar, and the forward headquarters for CENTCOM—were all built after my time, in preparation and acknowledgment of the attack on Iraq. I wasn't that clairvoyant, and I saw the need for all that stuff. But there was a lot of groundwork done, and it was mainly because there was not a view in Washington that

that theater—the CENTCOM area—was going to be an area where we were going to get involved with militarily again. There were always discussions about a major strategy, that there was a possibility that we were going to fight Iraq. After the Kuwaiti liberation, the principal contingency plan was an invasion of Iraq. It was probably refined most during Tony [Anthony C.] Zinni's watch—which was, in my recollection, I think three hundred seventy thousand troops involved—which caused Mr. Rumsfeld to cut back substantially, to the disadvantage of the U.S. Army and so forth. That's another story.

So those were the kinds of interesting things that happened in the Gulf. I became very much involved with Pakistan during my time. Pakistan had been our partner in driving the Soviet Union out of Afghanistan. I think the reality was that *Charlie Wilson's War*—you're smiling—was pretty correct. I can't vouch for the jumpsuits and the hot tubs, but the rest of it pretty much into place. We threw in a quarter of a billion dollars a year. The Saudis put in a quarter of a billion dollars a year, and we hired the Pakistanis to manage the Mujahedeen [Muj]. It started poorly. Then once we got stinger—shoulder-fired ground-to-air missiles—it turned around the war because that gave us the capability to shoot down armed helicopters and things like that. A marvelous example of how you could change history.

My view—which nobody's ever been able to disavow me of—is that the Cold War actually ended in Afghanistan, not in Berlin. That the Russians could not effectively carry out a counterinsurgency operation in Afghanistan—in a country that was immediately adjacent to theirs—and walk away. That was an extraordinary event. What was less extraordinary—and we're still paying the price—was that on the way, a guy named [Abdul Qadeer] A.Q. Khan stole

nuclear plans from—I'm not sure where—European, someplace. A national hero in Pakistan. He was included in several lunches I attended with my Pakistan pals. There was a Pressler amendment put together during the Afghan war. Larry [L.] Pressler told me at a dinner party one night that he really never understood what the amendment was about, but President [Ronald W.] Reagan had called him and asked him if he would sponsor such an amendment, so he said he did. But it essentially created redlines beyond which Pakistan should not go, and if they did go, they would be suitably punished.

One of the unintended consequences of defeating the Soviet Union in Afghanistan was the increased presence of the CIA in Afghanistan and Pakistan. As a result, we knew everything that went on in Pakistan. Everything. So there were no secrets. There was a knowledge in the U.S. government that Pakistan had passed some of those redlines that were outlined in Pressler.

Q: When was this?

Hoar: It probably started in 1992. I was at this a long time. The result of Pressler was, first of all, that foreign military financing was killed, which had been fairly substantial while Pakistan was participating in the fight against the Soviet Union. So much so that they had bought F-15s and had paid for them with U.S. money. Nonetheless, it was money we gave them, and we wouldn't allow the aircraft to be delivered. They were stacked up in the desert someplace in Arizona.

So we killed foreign military financing. We walked away from Pakistan and left them with five million Afghan refugees in the northwest frontier province with no money to take care of them.

It was so bad that those refugees burned virtually every tree in the province for firewood and to cook food, of which there wasn't very much. Additionally, all the stuff that went up to help the Mujahedeen came in through Karachi—over the road and up through the Khyber Pass. Those roads were severely damaged by all the eighteen-wheelers rolling through there. There was a huge, huge meadow on the other side of the Afghan-Pakistan border where they used to dump the big containers that came off the ships. There must have been a three-four football field size where all this shit got stacked up for the Muj to help them—weapons, ammunition, blah, blah, blah.

So the Pakistanis believed that we were walking away and leaving them after we had worked together, cooperatively and successfully, to drive the Soviet Union out of Afghanistan. I tried very hard to turn this around. I said to them—to the chief of the armed forces—. Actually, he was not the chief of the armed forces. He was chief of the army, which was really the most powerful military guy—Asif Nawaz—who died very suddenly after that of a heart attack. But we had become very close. His brother, by the way, is here in town. He works for the World Bank and participates in some of the panel discussions and so forth around town on Pakistan issues.

I said to him one day, "Look, you know the problem with the Muslim bomb—so-called—in Washington is really a problem that emanates from Israel. They're concerned that you're going to sell those weapons to somebody else, and somebody else might use them against Israel. Why don't you go backchannel to them and tell them that your problem is India? You've got enough on your plate without worrying about Israel." He said, "Joe, we've already done that. We've been rebuffed, and I thought there might be some leeway here."

One of the great exponents in the Senate on nonproliferation was John [H.] Glenn [Jr.]. I made an appointment to go see him. I wanted to talk about what I thought were the dangers of isolating Pakistan at the time, and I was shocked. He didn't know what the hell I was talking about. He was the big nonproliferation guy, but he had two young guys in the room—fresh out of the Washington Institute [for Near East Policy]—who, when I asked a question, he'd look over there and they'd give him a no. I'd ask another question, he'd look over, and he'd get a no. It was very disappointing. Finally, he said to me, "Tell me, General, what's going on in the Marine Corps?" You know he was a Marine Corps pilot in World War II. So that was the end of the discussion. But he was a guy who, clearly, somebody had captured and had convinced him that this nonproliferation business was important, and it went forward. It probably was important, but we took—it's not the first time, because the time before that had to do with SEATO. You're not old enough to remember SEATO.

Q: You mean Southeast Atlantic Treaty Organization.

Hoar: Yes. But the Pakistanis were great enthusiasts about that, and all of a sudden we just flushed it. So the Pakistanis have every reason to be concerned about us. I said to Jim [James L.] Jones, shortly after he took over as the national security advisor—I was over there to talk about Guantánamo Bay—a different subject, which we haven't gotten to yet.

He said, "What do you think about Afghanistan?"

I said, “Jim, the center of gravity for Afghanistan is not Afghanistan, it’s Pakistan.”

He said, “I’ll be right back.” He went and got this Army three-star [Douglas E.] Lute that had—.

There was a view late in the previous administration that there ought to be a military czar over in the NSC, and the Army took this guy—who was the director of the joint staff, which is usually a job that’s going to make you a four-star—and sent this guy over to the White House, to the NSC, to be the czar that Mr. Bush wanted. Of course, he was never heard from again.

What happened was that Jim Jones got, “Come on in,” and listened to my exposition about this, which was that the Pakistanis had been trick fucked by us and they’re never going to trust us. After what we did to them—after the Afghan war—you can count on them not trusting us. I don’t know how you have a successful outcome in Afghanistan without the wholehearted support of Pakistan. Short answer. And there’s nothing that’s happened since that has told me otherwise.

In fact, I talked recently to an active-duty Marine two-star who had been the senior guy in Helmand Province, and he told me that at the end of the fighting season—when it gets to be winter—that all the Taliban senior guys go to Quetta. Well, I know Quetta well. It’s the capital of Balochistan Province. But there’s the Armed Services War College there, and there’s a corps headquarters there that has command of three divisions. It’s an Army town. The Taliban guys from Helmand are over there taking the winter off. What more evidence do you need? And,

frankly, I don't blame them. How many times do you sign up a country to help you and then after you've achieved your objectives you walk away from them?

So it gets uglier and uglier as we go forward in Afghanistan, but we don't have the support of Pakistan, and there is a possibility that you could have a situation where we withdraw but continue an intelligence presence and a drone and SF [Special Forces] presence that would allow you to keep the numbers of the leadership down, which would seriously affect the Taliban and the Al Qaeda's capability to do business. Again, looking at the cross-cultural divide, we don't fully appreciate what the loss is—in a third-world culture—of an important leader. I've seen this in a couple places, going back to Vietnam.

The better example is the warlord who was our guy in Afghanistan. I've forgotten his full name, but his family name—because he was from this tribe—as [Ahmad Shah] Massoud who was assassinated within a week or so of our first involvement in Afghanistan. We have never been able to recover in that northern sector of Afghanistan. There was never anybody to take his place who had the same leadership skills, the same charisma as that guy. When one of our senior guys gets killed, we're ten-deep in every position. There's always a guy who's as good—could even be better—who steps up. But it's not true in these places. So it's entirely possible that you could keep Al Qaeda and Taliban under control with a withdrawal of American forces, but to what end? At the end of the day, they're still going to exist out there. That's been a tragic story in our relationship with Pakistan, and it might have been different. This was a self-inflicted wound in my view.

Do you want to talk about Somalia?

Q: I would, if you're willing to talk about it. That would be great.

Hoar: Would you not want to talk about it?

Q: No, no, no. By all means, go ahead. Go ahead.

Hoar: The sun's going down soon.

Where to begin? I got a call one Monday morning from Colin Powell and he said, "There's pressure building to provide some relief in Somalia from the famine." Two things had triggered that pressure, which was coming out of the White House. This was during the Bush administration—the last year of his time. One was the picture of a Somali child sitting on the ground with a great bird-of-prey right behind him—the child clearly malnourished, crying, and this big, old bird looked like he was just standing there, waiting for that little guy to keel over so he could have lunch. The other thing that influenced it was that [Boutros] Boutros-Ghali said, "You guys are so interested in Yugoslavia—so interested in what's going on in Europe—you pay no attention to this disastrous famine that's going on in Somalia." It really started the wheels turning.

Colin Powell and I talked every day—maybe once a day. Sometimes seven or eight times a day, depending on what was going on. Remind me at the end of all of this to tell you a funny story

about these phone calls. He called me up on a Monday and he said, "Joe, there's pressure building. We're going to have to think about doing something down in Somalia, about getting relief in there." I said, "Okay."

Q: This is in 1991, I think, once the severe fighting had really broken out.

Hoar: It came just before the presidential election, so it must have been 1992. It was in the summer of 1992. The lesson that I had learned from the Mickey Leland go-round was that you always have a small nucleus of a joint task force designated and ready to go that had a general officer—in this case Frank Libutti, who was the inspector, but he had other responsibilities as a joint planner, helping countries in the region, doing their contingency planning for their own self-defense. He would be the commander. Then you had an intelligence, an operations, and a logistics office, each one capable of working seven days a week, twenty-four hours a day. But then you had one of everything else—a doc, a guy who was a money-man, a guy who could enter into contracts, to rent a hotel room, or hire a bus, or whatever you needed to do. It was about forty-two people. So I called Frank and I said, "Frank, you may be going to Somalia. How about energizing everybody, and starting to talk about it and how we're going to go about doing this? It appears that the embassy in Kenya is aware of an airfield we can use outside of Mombasa that is not being used. Let's start to work on it."

So we got the J-3 guys, also, to start to work. That was Monday. We were going along. Friday afternoon, about 2:00—no, it was later than that. It was closer to 4:00. I called Colin and I said, "My wife and I are thinking about going across the peninsula and spending the weekend—" I've

forgotten the Air Force base that had a very nice house on the beach. We were planning to go on Saturday and come on back on Sunday. “Anything going on?”

He said, “No, it’s a Friday afternoon around here. Nobody’s here. Go ahead over. Can I reach you?”

And I said, “Sure. I’ll have the phone with me all the time.”

The next morning my wife and I are walking along the beach and the phone rings, and Colin says, “You ready to go? Can you launch that team?”

I said, “I can launch them tomorrow morning if you want.”

He said, “Yes.”

So I called Frank and we got the thing rolling. The next morning, I’m walking along the beach, Frank calls me, and he says, “Sir, we’re down here on the runway, planes all loaded, everybody’s here. Any last minute instructions?” Frank is a Marine.

I said, “Frank, don’t fuck it up.”

He said, “Got it, sir,” and he flew out.

That was the start of it. We went into Mombasa, but we had a lot of problems with the Red Cross and other people about having armed people on airplanes and so forth, but it all worked out. That was in—I would guess—August of 1992. In November, right after the election, I got a call from Colin, saying, "Look, there's talk about going big-time, this time with a joint task force, and we're going to try to get UN Security Council approval and Chapter Five permission," which is to shoot bad guys. He said, "Be thinking about it." I said okay. So we talked a couple of times during the week. He called at the end of the week and he said, "Have you figured out what you're going to do?" I said, "Yes. An Army brigade, a Marine MEB [Marine Expeditionary Brigade]"—which is brigade-size, but it's got its own aviation and so forth—"some dogs and cats. There's already French, Italian, Australian, a couple of other countries there, so we'll put together a brigade of foreign forces, a U.S. Army brigade, and a Marine brigade."

The First Marine Expeditionary Force headquarters had been designated by me when I first took over to be prepared to do disaster relief within the CENTCOM AOR. [Area of Responsibility]. They had run an exercise that summer using Ethiopia as an example on the famine issue, so they were trained up on it. What I wanted them to do—which they knew—was to use that entire headquarters as the joint headquarters and then to just bring in members of the other services that we needed. So we had a presence. I wanted a headquarters that had already worked together, exercised together. We were going to have a provost marshal who was an Army guy. The deputy was going to be an Army two-star. The commander was a Marine three-star. We had our own Air Force people, but we got some Air Force liaison people in there.

I gave Colin Powell an outline on how we were going to do that, and I went to Washington and briefed the chiefs on it. We went to the White House to brief the president, and this was Mr. [George H.W.] Bush, who was past his failure to be re-elected.

He wanted to know if we could get out of there before he left office, and I said, "I don't think we can stabilize it that quickly, sir. We can get out any time you want, but I don't think the job is going to be done."

"How long do you think you will need?" I said I thought five or six months was probably what it was going to look like.

"How many people do you think are going to get killed?"

I said, "Not many, but over that time probably ten. Something like that."

He said, "Okay. I don't want to give my successor,"—he didn't name him—"the dirty end of the stick. Let's get somebody to go brief him down in Arkansas."

Colin Powell spoke up and said, "I'll send my deputy chairman down to brief the case," who was a Navy four-star. We basically laid it out—the headquarters, getting UN Security Council approval to do it, a Marine brigade, an Army brigade, and an allied brigade, and got it started.

There was some fighting on the front end. Very quickly, the bad guys realized it was a no-win situation. They came out on the street and wanted to fight. They were going to get killed. So the fighting slowed down almost right away. Further, we demanded that the technicals—these trucks and vehicles that had heavy machine guns or even anti-aircraft guns mounted on them—needed to be taken off the streets. If they were spotted on the streets, they would be taken and locked up someplace. And if the people who were driving them tried to resist, they'd be destroyed in place. That was the other part, the thing that was key for me when we talked about this. Bob [Robert B.] Johnston was the commander—a guy who was a Marine whom I knew but I didn't know well. We had never served together.

There are ten principals of war—about mass, and surprise, and all those things—but one of them, surprise, is very important. What I emphasized was that the principal of surprise is suspended. We're not in the business of surprising anybody down there. Surprise is probably going to be our biggest enemy in the sense that everybody in that city has got a weapon. Despite the fact that there were people in the NSC who wanted us to have a mission to disarm the people who had weapons—and I had explained to them that we've had such good luck disarming Los Angeles and New York, we'd certainly have no trouble at all in Mogadishu—so they scratched it.

But the point is, we didn't want to surprise anybody. We wanted to make sure that everybody knew where we were going, what we were doing, and why. The surprise that we got is that once you have UN authorization, every Third World country around wants to get in on it because there's a per diem rate for every soldier who goes. That money never gets down to the troops. It always goes into the coffer. We had guys from Nigeria, from all the sub-Saharan African

countries. We must have had eight or ten different countries down there. Some of them were surprisingly good soldiers. They came with their rifles and their web gear, and were waiting for somebody to feed them but they came. And the Saudis and the Pakistanis—the Pakistanis were already there. The Saudis came. The UAE came. The Egyptians came—a little bit of a problem because of the fact that when Muhammed Ali ran Egypt, he had aspirations down in that part of the world, but okay.

Bob Johnston started calling me every morning, saying, "When can I go home?" The thing had really stabilized under Bob and the way we were doing business. We had a couple of problems. We lost two NGOs—one woman who wanted to go out and say goodbye to friends in a village and had ridden with a supply convoy, then turned off, with her vehicle, to go down to this small village to see a friend, and was assassinated in that small village. Another person who had a big box full of money under his bed—that everybody in the village knew about—and somebody finally came up and assassinated him and took his big box full of money. Those were the only two NGOs that we lost during the U.S. period.

When we turned it over to the UN to run, it was a very different story. Both Colin Powell and I were in new territory.

[INTERRUPTION]

We wanted to get a new commander, a UN commander, and we wanted to get a Muslim; this would work better. Colin knew a Turkish general who had been on the NATO [North Atlantic

Treaty Organization] staff when he was corps commander in Europe, so we got him. A good guy. What he didn't do well was he didn't have any of his own troops. So when it was time to send somebody out to do some shooting, he wasn't sending any of his troops. The French and some of the other guys weren't all that happy about it.

For my part—we started to put this together. I didn't want to have any U.S. forces remain. The reason I agreed to keep some forces there—we sent all the Marines home, but we kept a reinforced Army battalion—reinforced with helicopter gunships and helicopter capability—mostly to deal with the problem that still existed in Kismayo, all the way down on the south coast, where we just really didn't have good control. The Belgiques had been down there and done a pretty good job, but they lost a few guys, and they got word from the homeland, "Don't go outside the wire anymore because you're going to get somebody else killed." So we never really were able to finish up that piece of it. We thought that a U.S. Army battalion that was heavy on mobility and had gunships to go with them and all that would work well down there.

The trouble was that as we put this thing together—despite the fact that we left people from all the principal staff sections out there for a couple months—in the operations, and the plans, and the logistics, and the intelligence, we still missed some things.

I'm trying to think. Bob [Robert B.] Oakley was the special envoy who came on out. I'd known Bob since he'd been the ambassador in Pakistan. He was one of the finest Foreign Service officers around, absolutely fearless when he walked around in the villages. He had been the ambassador to Somalia some years before, probably as his first assignment as an ambassador—

just as tough as could be. My friend Frank Libutti who had gone down with the first little jump task force met Bob Oakley, so Bob Oakley said he wanted to keep Frank as his assistant. So Frank was with a good pair of guys.

So we had that group when we turned this thing over to the UN to run, and we took the U.S. headquarters out of there. It became a UN headquarters with U.S. representation in all the key jobs. They were to stay there until we were sure that everything was up and running. One of the things that we had always done was—when we told the warlords to take their technicals off the street, we ran inspections routinely on where they had their vehicles stored. On any given day there were always a few technicals out on the road, but never very many because you had a really good chance of getting killed riding around in one. We didn't see many of them. But what was important was, again, this business of suspending surprise. For example, if we were going to send a convoy of trucks out to Baidoa with foodstuffs, we would call [Mohamed Farrah Hassan] Aidid and say, "Look, we're going to send a convoy through your area tomorrow. It's got food in it. There's an armed escort, so tell your guys to leave it alone. But it's coming through. It's going to be X-number of trucks, and it's going to be through, probably, about 10:00 in the morning. It's going to have a helicopter escort as well, so just be aware of it." That was kind of the way we did business.

When there was going to be an inspection to see what we were doing with the technicals, the phone call went out as well. "We're coming on Saturday to check your vehicles." It would give them an opportunity to get them all back in off the streets—get them all in one place so we could check them. With the change, some of this started to slip away. Nobody was as aggressive doing

this as Bob Johnston had been. He was on top of talking to Aidid almost every day about his radio broadcasts and what was going on. All of a sudden—we didn't know this—all of a sudden that kind of behavior started to fall off. On a Saturday morning in June, a company of Pakistanis went out to Aidid's compound to check on his technicals. They weren't announced. They got off the trucks and started down the dirt road to the compound. Aidid's guys fired on them, and there were fourteen killed. My immediate response was to call President Meles [Zenawi Asres] up in Ethiopia—who had become something of a friend—and said, "Would you sponsor a meeting with the warlords and us to talk about what just happened? Because there's got to be something wrong here. This shouldn't have happened, and there's got to be a reason why it happened." He said, "Sure. If you can put it together, I'll be happy to sponsor it."

Well, Jonathan [T.] Howe was now the special envoy. This is a Navy four-star who had spent most of his senior career right here in town on the joint staff—on the NSC staff. He was the director of the NSC for a while. His wife—you always get interesting information from wives—had said to my wife that she really thought that Jonathan would go from that job to be the chairman, but after Colin Powell dictated that if you wanted to have the top job at the NSC you had to retire before, Jonathan wasn't eligible because he was a retired admiral. Anyway, Jonathan Howe was the wrong guy for the job. The first thing he did was put a price on Aidid's head. I remember remarking that it was not nearly enough. It was about the cost it would have taken to buy a Jeep Cherokee.

So we were off and running. As a result of that, there were more shootings around town. Then the decision was made in Washington—over my objection, and I think, to a degree, even with

Colin Powell's objection. But Colin was about a month away from retiring, and he was no longer as engaged as he had been up until that time. Anyway, it was decided that there would be a ranger task force that would have a SOF [Special Operations Forces] group embedded in it. These guys came—the special operations command—and these were the shooters. They were going to be the guys to get Aidid. I think you know the rest of the story—about how there were seven, eight, nine efforts to get Aidid. All were unsuccessful.

The one before the one that went so badly wrong—they had intelligence that Aidid was in a particular house. They went to the house. They captured—oh, shit. I can't remember his name. Somebody Osman [Hassan Ali Atto] It'll come to me in a moment—who was one of Aidid's lieutenants. But in the process—in that house, they killed about seven Somalis, who were all armed—which was the kind of thing they really did well. In close contact, there was nobody who was as good as these guys—the shooters.

I used to speak every day to the commander of this ranger task force. Every morning at 8:00 he would call me and we would go over the day. I remember saying to him, particularly, "You can't keep going to the well. You can't keep going out into this populated area and expect to get away clean. It's too hard." He said, "Yes, I agree with you. Too hard." What he did every day is we would have the 8:00 discussion. By the end of my day, he would have sent a personal forward [?] to the special operations commander—who was a four-star, who was also there at Tampa—with a copy to me that would describe the discussion that he and I had had in the morning. It was a way of keeping him abreast of his responsibilities to me, which included the fact that we had agreed that doing this in a built-up area was a bad idea. He had the ability to pull the trigger on

any operation. The ability to get good intelligence and to be able to act on it was entirely dependent upon him having the ability to say it's a go or no-go—not having to go back in the middle of the night to find me someplace to see if I was going to buy into it. So he had that ability. It was his responsibility.

I would tell you that we learned, afterwards—to just give you an idea of how far I let this go and shouldn't have—was that anytime Aidid heard a helicopter warming up on the airfield, he stopped what he was doing and went for a walk. So he was right in the heart of the city. He would hear a helicopter ramping up. He would probably be at least five hundred meters away before anybody could have possibly gotten to where the intelligence said that he was. The reality was that we were never going to get him because he had figured out how the whole thing worked. That was probably my responsibility. I fought this business right from the start. I went to see Les [Leslie] Aspin [Jr.]—who was the secretary of defense and Bill [William J.] Perry was his deputy—both in the office, and I told them that there was a twenty-five percent chance of being successful in going after Aidid, right from the start—that it was not going to work. He said, "Do it."

I had a lot more flexibility on what I could do and where I could go then than these guys do now. I went to the NSC twice to see Tony [William Anthony Kirsopp] Lake and Sandy [Samuel Richard] Berger—both times both guys were present—and told them there was a twenty-five percent chance of success. "You need to tell the president this because if it goes badly it's going to be very hard to dig out." "Thanks very much for your interest, General." Nothing done. I was really discouraged about this.

What I should have done was just shut it down. I had the authority to do that. What would have happened to me afterwards is another issue. But I didn't. Everything that I suggested might happen, happened, of course. It was a horror show. There were fifteen guys killed. I think had I done it—could do it over again—I wouldn't have allowed that to happen because I would have just shut it down and told the president that if he wants to continue to do it, he's got to get somebody else to do it.

Anyway, the next day all of us were called to the White House. We met in the cabinet room. We met around mid-morning. Hamburgers came in the afternoon. Around 5:00 killer cookies showed up. About 8:00 everybody was catatonic, so we got sent home and we came back the next day. The secretary of defense now had been relieved. He and I had a discussion about reinforcing what we had out there. He didn't do it. He hadn't been relieved yet. He was relieved in the wake of the aborted raid. So he was there, and Bill was there as well. I said, in the middle of this, to the secretary of state, I said, "One of the first things we ought to do is get rid of Jonathan Howe." The secretary of state looked at me and said—what I thought he was going to say was, "Why don't you mind your own fucking business?," since he was the special envoy. He said, "I'm glad you brought that up. I wasn't sure how to address that. But I agree with you." [Laughs] That was one of the good things that happened.

By the end of the second day, it was decided that Bob Oakley would go and talk to Aidid and get [Michael J.] Durant—the warrant officer who was captured during this time—his helicopter was shot down. The two guys were in the helicopter with him were both killed. They were the

shooters. Durant was captured. Bob Oakley took Tony Zinni with him. They went out and Bob said to Aidid, "I've come here to get Mr. Durant."

He said, "What are you going to give me?"

And Bob Oakley said, "We're going to give you nothing, and if you don't give him back, you're going to wish you were never born."

So Aidid said, "Okay."

Oakley is such a powerful presence. I can just see him doing this. He just scared the bejesus out of Aidid. So we got Durant and got back. Bob called me afterward and said, "You know, as a goodwill gesture, you've got Osman Atto locked up someplace. He's sick. His family is afraid he's going to die. Could you let him loose?"

I said, "Yes, on one condition."

He said, "What's that?"

I said, "Don't tell anybody." [Laughs] So we let Osman Atto loose.

Q: Where was he being held?

Hoar: He was being held on a little island off the mainland. I've forgotten the name of it now. That was not even background noise, after the failure of the raid. But, of course, we're still paying the price for screwing that up so badly. It never should have happened. This is part of the price that you pay for, one, an inexperienced staff—a new secretary of defense, new NSC guys, a new president. The price you pay for never getting all the players together and briefing the president, like the current president did with Osama bin Laden. Every stakeholder and the intelligence guys—everybody—to talk about what are the possibilities. My view is that it's only twenty-five percent effective.

It's interesting that the SAS [Special Air Service] in the UK, when they have a mission like this, the mission commander briefs the prime minister. I asked Michael Rose —who is a retired four-star who had been in this business when he was on active duty—I said, "What's the percentage that you think is acceptable for a mission to go?" and he said seventy percent, which is about what I think it ought to be, as well. Of course, if you use that gauge, we never would have gone to get Osama bin Laden.

Anyway, it was too bad, all the way around. It was badly done. I could have stopped it if I had chosen to step up and shut it down, and I didn't do it. We lost life, and, beyond that, we made all our presidents since then skittish about doing this kind of stuff—which may be a good thing, in the sense that the only one we've done since then is Osama bin Laden. But we certainly had all the right players in the room when the president made the decision to do it, which I thought was really important. Of course, with the exception of the secretary of defense, most of them hedged—forty-nine, fifty-one, blah, blah, blah.

Q: Well, I really appreciate that you told us your story about Somalia. It must be very difficult to talk about it, for so many different reasons.

Hoar: Well, I feel like I might have headed it off. I was so fixated on the fact that I was doing something that I didn't want to do and that I had an obligation to do it. By this time, Colin Powell had gone and there was nobody taking his place. The deputy, the Navy four-star, had no sense of any of this stuff. He had gone combat or some—he was a Naval aviator. I think had Colin Powell been around and had stayed engaged and we were talking every day, as we usually did, that we would have come to the point when it was time to just say—because he was really the confidant. We bounced a lot of things off one another. He did the same thing to John [M. D.] Shalikashvili when John was in Europe. It wasn't just me. But those were the two theaters he paid a lot of attention to, and we talked every day. I think it might have been different. I might have gotten some insights, like, "What do you think? Should we shut it down?" or blah, blah, blah. I didn't have that advice. I didn't have that person. But it was my responsibility. I should have come up with that.

Q: I really appreciate your narrative and your memories, as well as some of the connections you've made in the process. I'd like to shift gears a little bit—but just a little bit, because you've already made certain connections and comparisons, as well as contrast between that period and the 9/11 era, for example. You retired in 1994. You worked for the private sectors, and did a number of things. But you also, in the prelude to the Iraq war, became very critical of the

administration, both regarding the invasion of Iraq, troop numbers, and subsequently, on issues of detainment, Guantánamo—

Hoar: Torture. Yes.

Q: Torture and all that. I wanted to talk about that, but first I wanted to ask you why you decided to become very public about your criticisms.

Hoar: Okay. Let me tell you one more story—because you'll laugh.

Q: Please. Oh, yes. You said I was supposed to remind you about Colin Powell and the phone calls. Is this it?

Hoar: Yes. Colin Powell was going to retire in September. He was, at that time, the most admired man in America. In May, a guy who writes—I can't remember his name—for the *Baltimore Sun* wrote an article saying, "Colin Powell is retiring. We've got to get a new chairman." He listed seven guys who were potential successors, including me—the PACOM [United States Pacific Command] guy, me, Shalikashvili, the EUCOM [United States European Command] guy, the LANDCOM [Allied Land Command] guy, an admiral, and, I don't know, one or two others—some of whom were just not in the game.

This created an interesting discussion point and I used to kid Colin about it. I'd say, "How is it going with your successor? How's that coming?" and he would kind of laugh it off. The guy who

was down at Norfolk—who was very interested in becoming the chairman—invited Mr. [William J.] Clinton down to speak to a group of sailors on one of the aircraft carriers. He had the whole crew of the aircraft carrier on the hanger deck for Mr. Clinton. I've forgotten what happened, but anyway the sailors all booed Mr. Clinton during this performance, and Colin said, "Well, so much for so-and-so. He's not in the running anymore."

So this thing continued. I had occasion to go over and brief Mr. Clinton—I've forgotten exactly what it was—and Colin said, "He likes you. He thinks you're a pretty good guy."

I said, "I think he's a pretty good guy, too."

He said, "Well, you're still a player, so it's good for you to get a little face-time with him."

I said, "Yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah."

So we had these kind of fragmentary discussions all through the summer. In August, he called me up—and I never showed any interest to him in this. I frankly never thought I was in contention. There had never been a Marine as chairman.

He said, "Joe, I've got to talk to you about something serious."

I said, "Yeah, what is it?"

He said, “Well, we’re down to two and a half guys in contention for the chairman’s job, and you’re one of them.”

Shalikashvili was the other full guy. Then there was a Navy guy who was a half a guy because some people thought he wasn’t tough enough to have the job. So he was still in, but he wasn’t really a contender. He said, “We’ve laughed about this a little bit, but I’ve got to know—if the president offered you the job, would you take it?”

I said, “Yes, I’d take it. But there’s probably a problem.”

He said, “What is it?”

I said, “It’s not a big deal, but I’d have to go through the confirmation process, and it might come out.”

Now he was kind of angry. He said, “What is it, Joe?”

I said, “Well, it’s not a big—.”

He said, “Joe. Tell me.”

I said, “Well, I’m a transvestite.”

He listened, and he said, “You’re kidding, aren’t you?”

I said, “Yes.”

He said, “Fuck you,” and hung up. I’ve been dining out on that story for twenty years.

By the way, as I told you, I was first-runner-up—Miss Congeniality—and John Shalikashvili got the job.

Q: He did.

Hoar: And he was the right guy. This was subsequent to the Soviet Union going toes up. What was going to happen with the Warsaw Pact? What was going to happen with Europe? How we were going to deal with the air defense in Europe. All of those issues. I’ve never been any place where the bad guys wore shoes. Shali [Shalikashvili] had just come from European Command. He was the right guy.

Okay. Since I’ve retired, I could tell you I’m not sure how it works, but four years with the Jesuits somehow or other rubbed off on me—about ethical behavior and what’s appropriate and what isn’t appropriate. That’s what got me started on the issue of torture and the business of the gloves coming off. Listening to John Yoo and Alberto Gonzalez on the radio talk about this stuff—like, we’re talking about human beings like we were talking about so much meat. I was on a couple of discussions with these guys—on PBS [Public Broadcasting Service] radio I think.

I subsequently got a call from a woman who said she was involved with a nonprofit called Human Rights First, and maybe the next time I was in Washington I could come by and see them. I said, "Well, when I come to Washington I've got another calendar and it's full. I just really don't have that kind of time. I'd like to. I hear you asking for me to come on by, but it's just going to be too hard. I'm against it, but I'm not sure that I want to get any more involved with that." That half hour, sometime when I was in Washington, morphed into a two-day meeting in which I emerged the co-chairman of a group of general flag officers who were going to oppose all this business, and it started with encouraging—oh, God. The senator from Arizona who was the POW. John—help me.

Q: John [S.] McCain [III].

Hoar: Thank you. It's a name problem, again. So we worked with John McCain's staff to get together some legislation that made it the law that there would be one, uniform way in which detainees were interrogated—that the CIA wouldn't use one and the military another.

Q: When was this, by the way?

Hoar: I think it was probably before the invasion of Iraq. It was pretty early on, when these issues—oh. It couldn't have been, because Abu Ghraib had already taken place. So it must have been within the first year after the invasion. These people have not allowed me to hide anywhere.

They come and find me if I'm under my bed—far away without a phone, or whatever—to help participate in this.

The other thing, however, was that I felt that I knew a great deal about the countries in the Persian Gulf, and I saw that there was absolutely no reason to invade Iraq—no military reason. I think that, from my point of view, it's questionable about the nuclear weapons. I have come to find out, in talking to other people at Langley, that there was clearly no evidence of nuclear weapons. At the working level, everybody knew it, but it never got out of there. When Colin Powell found out was the weekend he was due to testify at the UN. He was out there. He was looking at the paper and was saying, "Where the fuck did this come from? What's this bullshit?" and he rarely used vulgarities. Rarely. He came to find out two days before he was supposed to testify that there was no there, there. But, as he told one of the women interviewers, he would regret his testimony for the rest of his life.

My own guess is that there were two people who might have stopped the Iraq invasion. One was Colin Powell, and the other one was Tony [Anthony C.L.] Blair. If either one of them—or both of them—defected on the president, it might have worked. I could see no benefit whatever to this, and it was generally agreed in the region that if you took down Iraq, you made Iran a regional power. That's not rocket science. We see that, and we see the growing influence of Hezbollah. We see the growing influence in Iraq of a prime minister, who, of course, had done his time in exile in Iraq. We haven't seen the last chapter of this one yet, and the cost has been staggering—in human life, a trillion dollars—not to mention one hundred thousand Iraqis killed.

You know, I had done some op-ed pieces, or written something about this. I testified before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee I think at least three times, and a couple of times before the Armed Services Committee, and one time before the House Armed Services Committee. It was like talking to a wall. John [F.] Kerry, Hillary [R.] Clinton, and Joe [Joseph R.] Biden [Jr.] all had presidential aspirations and were scared to death of voting against this because they would be weak on national security if they did.

John Kerry, the first time I testified—I was due to go on at 11:00. He came down around 11:00 in the morning. Somebody had called him to say, "You're next up in the sequence of asking questions." He came down, asked two questions that had already been asked, and when his time was up he went away. My 11:00 appointment morphed into 11:00 the next day because the hearing went so long, and he never showed up again. All he did was ask two questions that never came up again. Biden, the same way. Nobody home.

Q: How did this make you feel?

Hoar: I felt like we had guys who were abdicating their responsibilities, that these were the people that the American people count on to ask the hard questions to get at what we ought to do, and there was an unwillingness to do this. You had a Republican president. You kind of expect the Republicans to line up and vote with him, but the Democrats are the guys who should have said, "This doesn't make any sense."

These guys, to this day, don't ever talk about nuclear weapons; they talk about weapons of mass destruction—that there were weapons of mass destruction, because there was poison gas in there. They have just eradicated the idea that we went to war because of nukes, and there were never any nukes there. What I'm told is that in the period immediately after the invasion, forces in Afghanistan were minimized because of the search that was going on in Iraq to try and find the nukes that everybody said we'd gone to war about. And there's no punishment. There's no consequence to that—forty-five hundred dead. Someplace around fifteen to twenty thousand wounded. One hundred thousand Iraqis killed. A trillion dollars. It's like nothing happened.

Q: Let me ask you a difficult question about that. Was that unique to that administration, or are there really ever consequences for those kinds of things?

Hoar: Well, I don't know that there was ever, in my recollection, anything quite as egregious as this, where they made it up. I do some work at Syracuse University for the National Security Studies Program. We ran a weekend program for general officers and equivalent civil service guys, and we were doing an off-site down in rural Virginia, down near the overland campaign from the Civil War. There was a guy who introduced himself that afternoon as an intelligence officer with the counter-missile missile organization.

So as it happened—quite by surprise—he and I were the first two guys in the bar that afternoon when we wrapped up. I said, "Help me. What does an intelligence guy do in the counter-missile missile department?" and he said, "Well, I'll tell you. When the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Defense for Intelligence Office was set up, I thought at long last we had done the right thing

and we were going to have an intelligence staff—professional staff—to support the secretariat. So I signed up right away. I've been in this business for eighteen years and this is the first time I was ever anyplace where I was told what the bottom line was and how to build the case to support the bottom line. I threw my hat back in the ring and I took the first job that was available," and it was the counter-missile missile job.

I'm also told by guys who were present that out in Langley, at the working level, there was no support for the presence of a nuclear device in Iraq. That decision was made at a higher level—I assume the director, but I don't know that part of it. But at the working level there was no evidence to support it. And, of course, this is basically what Colin Powell found when he was getting ready to talk about yellow cake and all the other crap that had been put together to make the case.

You know, there's clearly a case in this country that, with few exceptions, if you're rich enough or you're in a high enough place, the likelihood you'll ever be punished for a transgression—whether it's in the stock market, or the real estate business, or in national security—is probably remote. Rumsfeld should probably have been tried. Mr. Cheney should probably have been tried.

Q: You've brought up a number of strands that I would like to pick up on. Let me start with one. You mentioned the CIA. You've also mentioned it before, so I wanted to ask a question—I don't know if it's one you can necessarily answer. The CIA—in one role or another, or in how its evidence was used—was crucial in how we went to war in Iraq. But you also said that the CIA intelligence that you had been given on Pakistan was wonderful, in many respects, or very

detailed. But then I had heard somewhere that, for example, when it came to the Gulf and Iraq, that General Schwarzkopf was always very dismissive and dissatisfied with what he had gotten from the CIA. So I'm wondering if you can speak to the input or the role of the CIA over time in these various theaters, and also with respect to policymaking or politics.

Hoar: Of course, I wasn't with Schwarzkopf when he was getting ready, or when he actually was responsible for the invasion to take back Kuwait. But I can tell you that a senior commander never has enough intelligence, and it's never good enough. For Schwarzkopf, under a huge amount of pressure—you're the one guy. You've got a quarter of a million guys out there. There was the threat of the use of poison gas, which was a big concern for us, from my Marine Corps chair. We thought we could suffer as many as ten thousand casualties if the Iraqis used poison gas when we were making that penetration of that fortified line in the south of Kuwait.

So he was under an enormous amount of pressure. I don't know how much he got from the CIA, but I would say—as a matter of course, knowing how all of us view intelligence and knowing Schwarzkopf—I would say that no matter what he got it wouldn't have been enough. I don't say that pejoratively. That's the way we are. I need more. I want to suck every bit of information I can out of you because you may not realize it, but some little piece may fill out the puzzle in a way that I'm worrying about. You can't get blood out of a stone. I don't think I ever remember anybody going around and congratulating the intelligence weenies, saying what a great job they did. You never get enough information. After you win, you can go around and say to everybody, "It's okay."

The difference was that in Pakistan the CIA had been running a covert operation for years against the Soviet Union—in Pakistan and in Afghanistan—because the support for all that business was in Pakistan. We were just wired up so that we knew everything they were doing. Everything—phone calls, everything. So every time somebody sneezed, we knew what was happening out there. I say we. I didn't know, but the agency did, and that information was in the system. Of course, they knew all kinds of stuff about A.Q. Khan. The chief of the armed forces in Pakistan confided to me how many nuclear weapons he had, where they were stored, and how long it would take him to activate them so they could be launched. I told this to some people at CENTCOM recently, and they were amazed. They said, "We don't have a clue where they are and how many there are."

That's the difference. That relationship has changed. It was not a Houdini trick on my part. It was a belief on their part that I was serious about trying to help them—and I was. Absolutely serious about trying to help them to get away from Pressler. To be allowed to pick up this foreign military financing. The whole works. There was a concerted effort in Washington to pull the rug out from under them, which we're being punished for right now.

Q: On the detainment and torture issue—that's inevitably been a huge part of a lot of these debates. It was—I think—January of 2005 you had signed a letter that went to the Judiciary Committee about the nomination of Alberto [R.] Gonzalez. In there, you and a number of other retired generals made a really interesting point that the abrogation—or the intent to abrogate, or do away with—the Geneva Conventions was doing away with, "decades of knowledge amassed

by the U.S. military, regarding what works and what doesn't work." Can you speak to that? Because I found that point really fascinating.

Hoar: Well, the Geneva Accords are, first of all, the basis for all of this. They are adopted by the U.S. government, which gives them the force of law in the United States. This is the same problem we have with Israel. When we signed up to the UN, we signed up for the proposition that no country can keep property that has been acquired by force. It's against international law. We signed up to it, so it is against U.S. law as well.

This is essentially the same thing. This is the bedrock from which all these other things come from—how we treat prisoners and how we expect our people to be treated. I don't know this, but I'm told that where we got off the track in Abu Ghraib is that there were military interrogators, there were CIA interrogators, and there were contract people who were interrogators. It's never been exactly clear to me where the business of abusing prisoners started among those groups, but it spread through the whole prison.

You get a guy who's a law professor from UC [University of California] Berkeley—what does he know about these kinds of things? What does he know about the problems that we have? We see it every day in Afghanistan. You're giving twenty-one-year-olds automatic rifles and ammunition and they do dumb fucking things, just like they do every day around out here. But we hope they don't have automatic rifles in their hands when they drive under the influence or they do something else that's stupid. It requires a lot of work to keep all the marbles on the table and keep it going in the right way.

We see, because of the nature of the news media today—and I don't say this pejoratively. A lot of people do—but the point is, nobody gets away with anything anymore, whether it's urinating on a dead body; whether it's shooting somebody you shouldn't. These kinds of things have been happening for years in the military. We're talking about young guys under enormous pressure who do dumb things. It's responsible for the adults to make sure that these things are absolutely minimized and to punish people when they do something wrong.

This applies to interrogation as well. There are rules for what you can do and what you can't do. When the vice president says, "We've got to take off the gloves," and Alberto Gonzalez says "The Geneva Conventions are quaint and outdated," what kind of a message does that send? And you have people working for the government who have acknowledged that and are not paying attention to the rules—what that does to our soul as a country. These are not youngsters who can't cause any mischief. These are guys who have the capacity to kill multiple people on any given day—as evidenced by this soldier who killed sixteen people all of a sudden. It's a hard job to keep these guys going straight, doing the right kinds of things—particularly hard under the current circumstances, where we have people that we think are on our side and they turn out not to be on our side. To think that this kind of business was spread by Cheney—who was a draft dodger—Rumsfeld—who was a Navy pilot—who has no idea what ground combat even looks like—and a couple of law professors. It was an insult to anybody who has been in this business, who has worked hard to make sure that the people around them are doing the right thing all the time.

Q: Let me ask you a question, and press you a little bit, though. Are there people in the military that you know who are okay with putting aside the Geneva Conventions or "taking the gloves off?"

Hoar: I don't know anybody, but I'm sure there are—because there are guys in this country today who, if the Republicans say it's so—it's okay. Retired military guys—just like "the president isn't an American citizen," and all the other bullshit that's out there. Yes, I think there are guys who probably don't think so. My guess would be that there aren't many guys who have been in combat arms units, be they Marines or soldiers, who would say this stuff isn't important.

Q: Where are we headed with this?

Hoar: With the detention and interrogation?

Q: Yes. With a lot of these debates—a lot of the detention issues? Is this a blip, but a large blip, in our history? Or is this something you see as fundamentally changing the way we do business?

Hoar: Well, I think the president has walked this back. He signed an executive order two days after he became president that outlawed torture. Many of my colleagues who had been in this effort of ours to clean this up were present when he signed the executive order. He had a guy who was doing this kind of work—he only lasted a couple of months— [Gregory B.] Craig. He was in the White House, and he and John [O.] Brennan were the two guys who were touched by

these issues. This guy, I think, tried very hard, and found that the residual Republican effort on these issues was such that it just got to be too hard.

Today, we have substantial numbers of Republicans who don't want these guys to be tried in federal court. They want them to be tried in a military court that has no standing. It's never been used before. We don't know how it would work. We could set up new rules for it, but we have no precedents. The federal courts have tried over four hundred people successfully and put them in jail. They're the people who ought to be doing this.

I think the most interesting aspect of this is that I was with the Capstone group traveling here several years ago, and we were in Morocco. There was an FBI agent who was on the staff of the embassy in Morocco. I suspect there's probably one in almost every big embassy, but I don't know that. But this guy had briefed us, so I ran him down at a cocktail party that night and I said, "Can I talk to you a few minutes?" and he said yes. I said, "Tell me what's the policy in the FBI about interrogation."

He said, "Well, the first thing is we don't interrogate, we interview. Yes, we lie. Yes, we disassemble. Yes, we threaten people. But we don't interrogate them. We warn them of their rights. We get pretty good results."

The underwear bomber was a great example of this. They got this guy to spill the beans. They brought his family over from someplace else. My God, they warned him of his Miranda rights, and he still spilled the beans. These are the professionals in this business. I said to this guy,

"Why hasn't your director spoken up?" His common boss on this issue was the attorney general. He said, "He did not want to get involved in this fight."

What do you say to that? Here are the guys who are doing this for every single day of the week, year in and year out. We took a bunch of ideas from a course that was supposed to prepare fighter pilots in case they got captured, based on what the Chinese did to military guys in Korea sixty years ago, and that was the basis of the waterboarding and all this other bullshit. When I was at CENTCOM there were seven or eight general officers around the table. Three of them were aviators. All three had been waterboarded in one of these Escape, Evasion and Resistance to Interrogation courses [SERE - Survival, Evasion, Resistance, and Escape]. They all agreed it was torture, by the way.

There's just something wrong with all of this. But to your point—there's no downside. John Yoo is in trouble, I guess, because he's at Berkeley—

Q: Well, Berkeley is what it is.

Hoar: Careful now. Nothing wrong with Berkeley. [Laughter]

Q: It can't be too easy to be John Yoo at Berkeley.

Hoar: So it's a very fundamental issue, and it again goes to the business of standing up for what you believe. Standing up and saying what's on your mind. I told you—I kicked the ball into the

stand over this Somalia thing, and I will regret that the rest of my life. I should have killed that sucker because it could only have one end, and it did.

Q: Tell me, regarding some of the things that you've gone on the record about, for example, the detention issue, the Iraq issue, and so on. You also wrote an op-ed—it wasn't too recent, it was back in 2007—called "It's Our Cage, Too." That was with Krulak. You wrote it with Krulak. You also wrote another one more recently called "Guantánamo Forever?" What has been the reaction over the past several years to some of the things that you've written?

Hoar: I'm not sure. There are peers—guys in the military that I've known—at least one of them is a retired three-star—he doesn't talk to me anymore. I went against the government, criticized the government, criticized the president, the vice president, the secretary of defense—anybody I could find. So there is a lot of hard feeling about this stuff.

Tony Zinni, who's a very good friend of mine, has said the same thing. There are a lot of guys that he's known over the years who don't email, don't call, don't talk, avoid you at parties. It's a little bit easier for me because I'm on the other coast and there aren't that many senior guys out there anymore. It used to be very popular, but it's so expensive that most of the guys who want to live in genteel poverty wanted to live in places like Florida and stuff.

Q: Do you have any regrets about anything you've written?

Hoar: None.

Q: Would you have changed anything at all?

Hoar: No. I would have said more.

Q: For example?

Hoar: I wish I had written or said more about the Iraqi business. I testified—I don't know—six or seven times. You would think that that was enough.

Q: You mean to stop the invasion.

Hoar: Well, and to talk about how wrong it was, in terms of what was the purpose? I think because I'm associated with Human Rights First and that group of people, a lot of the ideas come from their staff on some of these articles. I don't sit down on Sunday morning and write an op-ed piece for the *New York Times* just because I think—. I've done that, but most of the ideas come from these professionals who work for Human Rights First, who do the research, pull it together, and then it becomes a cooperative effort—happy, glad kind of stuff.

Q: What's next?

Hoar: Iran. I signed a letter—no, an ad—that was in the *Washington Post* a week ago about not going to war with Iran. It was in the LA [Los Angeles] paper last week. I got an email this

morning saying that a group of churchgoers in Oklahoma want to republish the piece in the paper, adding seven or eight Protestant churches to the view. They agree with us.

The thing that concerns me about this is, we're headed down this road. The president has said we're not going to allow nuclear weapons. I know that Marty Dempsey went out to see Netanyahu a month ago to tell him that if they're going to strike they're going to do it on their own. We're not going with them. That was the message I'm told he took to [Benjamin] Netanyahu. Netanyahu has come to Washington a month earlier than usual to speak to AIPAC [American Israel Public Affairs Committee] and to show the president what he's up against. Because if the president disavows Netanyahu in the next couple of months, when Netanyahu does a strike—for example—they don't have the capability to do it right. They don't have the planes. They don't have the tankers. They don't have the electric birds. He stands an excellent chance of losing Florida and New York State in the next election. It's pivotal for Democrats to win those two.

That's why I think this meeting came as it was. I don't know that, but I think it is. I'm continuing to see more and more information about the Israelis think it's a bad idea. The Israeli public thinks it's a bad idea. Overwhelmingly so if they have to go it alone. But if they do it and it goes badly, and we decide to get in to help them out, God, the consequences within the Muslim world would be a mess.

I was on a panel—I think two years ago—when this subject came up. In my discussion of it, I said that Hamad bin Jassim [bin Jaber bin Muhammad Al Thani], the prime minister of Qatar,

had traveled to Tehran and had said to his interlocutors that Qatar had supported the United States in the liberation of Kuwait. It had supported the United States during the invasion of Iraq. But he said to the Iranians that Qatar would not support an attack by the Americans on Iran. The Iranians reportedly told him, "You've got it all wrong. We may not be able to reach the United States but we can reach you guys, and you're in the pocket of the United States. So if the U.S. attacks, we will, in turn, retaliate against the Gulf states."

Qatar, for example, has a joint venture between Exxon Mobil and them for liquefied natural gas. In 2010 their CAPEX [capital expenditure] was $20 billion. It's scheduled to go to $50 billion by 2020. That whole business could be wiped out with scuds in a day. The UAE has got silos 187 miles at sea from Abu Dhabi, which is a collecting point for all the offshore oil wells—almost indefensible it's so far out. It would be easy to take it down. To destroy it, easy. To take it down and occupy it, probably. All these countries are terribly vulnerable. Kuwait is an oil well with a city sitting on top of it. There's hardly anything else there. Bahrain has nothing but our fleet. But Saudi Arabia, the Eastern Province—very vulnerable.

I said in this particular talk that I thought that if this were to happen the price of oil would go to $150 a barrel. In the wrap-up, the moderator went around to all of us who had something to say on this issue. Brent Scowcroft was on the panel. When he was asked if he had any final notes, he said, "Yes. I didn't agree entirely with Joe Hoar. He said $150 a barrel. My guess is $200 a barrel." You can imagine the impact on Western Europe and the United States at $200 a barrel of oil. It's nothing like a recession. In California, that means $10 or $11 a gallon.

Q: The Iran issue makes me think a lot about what it means for the military. On the one hand, given what you've told me about your career in the military and the way the top leadership of the military makes risk estimates and victory estimates—I can see, I suppose, how part of the military, or a large part of the leadership, may be averse to going into Iran because of a relatively low risk of success, not so much of the strikes but the aftermath.

Hoar: Yes. What do you do when you get there?

Q: What do you do when you get there? But I can also see why various branches of the armed forces—of the U.S. military—also have certain budgetary concerns. There might be a desire for war because of what that means for continuing funding levels. Is there that kind of attention?

Hoar: I have—in thirty-seven years—never seen anything that would indicate that military people were interested in seeing a conflict either initiated, or continued, or increased as a way of getting money. This is really serious business. This is lives—people you work with. People you encourage to come in and serve their country. If it exists, I've never seen it. The only place I've seen it exist is in storybooks.

Q: I appreciate your thoughts on that.

I'd like to put an end to this session, but—in a very open-ended way—by having you talk in the final stretch of this interview about any particular issues that you'd like to expand on. It's entirely up to you.

Hoar: Okay. You know, I consider myself blessed, in the religious sense. I grew up in a hardworking family. Both my mother and father were children of immigrants. My mother, in particular, demanded that I was going to get enough education so that I was going to be able to do better than she was able to do and my father was able to do. She was one of ten children, and it's an interesting family because the last three children—one was a priest, one was a dentist, and the other one was a woman with a PhD. in sociology from Yale. The older kids paved the way for the younger kids, and it was probably my mother who pressed the importance of education and continuing to go to school.

It's very hard to assess my experience with the Jesuits. There was very little talk about religion. There was a class that masqueraded as religion—last period, Monday afternoons—that was often more than case studies about ethical issues on how you responded. I couldn't tell you one that was discussed over four years, but in talking to my classmates—many of whom I remain close to—it was a defining moment for all of us, in ways we're not sure of. But there was something going on there that was important in terms of trying to excel—being open to helping other people and doing the right thing. I don't know where it came from, but it was four years with guys that made an impression on most all of us. I think I told you that it's a group of guys who have done pretty well, for the most part.

I think it's amazing for somebody who had learning disabilities—to this day I still have problems writing and spelling and things like that. It's not that I had trouble writing content. My problem was putting words on paper, and remember "i before e," and blah, blah, blah—which is helped a

little bit by a BlackBerry that spells words for me. Then to be married to a woman who insisted that I be a better student and work harder in school, before we got married, and to be married to somebody who's a hell of a lot smarter than I am, always helps. But there's a great tradition in our family of men marrying up, so it's okay.

I don't know how to do it. I never had aspirations about being a general officer. I wasn't brought up that way. I never knew a general officer. I never knew a colonel. I never knew a major. It was something I did because I had to serve, and for my own reasons I felt it was better to serve for three years as an officer than to get drafted for two. Yet I found a home—as the saying goes—and I couldn't have imagined being a four-star. I couldn't have imagined that that four-star and the relationships that I made during that time have allowed me to run a consulting business—largely based in the Middle East—that has been very lucrative for me. I'm probably going to shut it down this year, just because I'm seventy-seven years old and I'm tired of traveling and doing a lot of these things—and I don't have to do it anymore. I've been very successful in that respect.

So it's a remarkable story in the sense that I didn't have high expectations, but a lot of things have come my way. Did I make some of them come my way? You bet. When I saw an opportunity to make it come in my direction, I certainly did. But there were other things that affected it, as well.

Q: General Hoar, I'd like to thank you very much for participating in these two sessions of the Columbia Center for Oral History Rule of Law project. Thank you very much.

[END OF INTERVIEW]