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RONALD REAGAN ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

FINAL EDITED TRANSCRIPT

INTERVIEW WITH FRANK CARLUCCI

August 28, 2001
Charlottesville, Virginia

Interviewers

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Zelikow: I wanted to take a moment with you to go through the ground rules and be sure you are comfortable with our procedures. When you were at the Miller Center in '94, you gave a talk—

Carlucci: Right.

Zelikow: And then there was a lunch afterwards. That was a more informal type of oral history. What we are doing now for the Reagan presidency (and the Bush and Clinton presidencies) is an oral history project. This project has briefing books and a more formal process. We are taking a little bit more time to gather people's recollections. Did the Reagan Library ever conduct an oral history session with you on the Reagan presidency?

Carlucci: No.

Zelikow: We didn't think so. We're doing this with the support of the Reagan Library because they really haven't been able to conduct an oral history of the Reagan administration. Because we've developed some expertise in doing this, we're trying to help them, and I'm grateful for your participation in this effort.

Under our ground rules, we will prepare a draft transcript of this session. We will supply you with a copy of that draft. You're then free to edit that draft in any way you deem fit. We do that so that today you don't have to feel that, gee, if I don't answer the question precisely right, they're playing "gotcha" with me. If you decide later that you want to amend your answer so it would be more accurate, you're free to do that. Our purpose here is not to catch you. It's to give you an opportunity to record as best as you can, with our help, your recollections of these experiences, the way you want them preserved for others to read, maybe even generations—

Carlucci: Is the end product a book?

Zelikow: No. The end product will be a finished transcript of what you've said, which then will be held in our files and in the Reagan Library's files and made accessible to scholars. Let me say a word about how that is made accessible. Once you've cleared the transcript, it's up to you to tell us what conditions you want placed on how this material can be released. You have broad discretion there. This is not a government document.

You can call me and say, "This is all fine to be released except this paragraph that I've marked, which I would like held back from public release until a year from now." In other words, we'll

tailor this in whatever manner you feel is appropriate to protect the equities that you want to protect. It's your call. What we want you to do is participate in this very candidly in the confidence that you are going to be able to control how this document comes out. You're going to be able to review the transcript. You're going to be able to edit it. You're going to be able to tailor the timing and character of its release in a way that makes you feel comfortable, should you wish to do that.

We have a long track record now. We've done dozens of these interviews. No one has ever found that we've breached this trust in any way. I wanted to go through that with you so you understood what to expect.

Carlucci: That's fine.

Zelikow: For the benefit of the transcriptionist, my name is Philip Zelikow, I am the Director of the Miller Center. Steve—

Knott: My name is Steve Knott and I'm an assistant professor at the Miller Center.

Oberdorfer: I'm Don Oberdorfer. I'm nothing, really. Johns Hopkins.

Carlucci: The most famous guy here.

Zelikow: And Mr. Carlucci, thank you for participating in this session.

Carlucci: Pleasure.

Zelikow: I'd like to kick this off. We've talked a little about the topics we wanted to cover. Rather than run through your whole biography we'd like to concentrate on the Reagan era, but I want to take a few minutes at the beginning to go back to one episode early in your career, which has come up again recently. You might want to comment for the record on your service in the Congo during that period of turmoil as a Foreign Service officer. That is a period I've studied a little bit. We may even have a mutual friend. Do you remember a young CIA [Central Intelligence Agency] officer named Chuck Hogan?

Carlucci: Yes.

Zelikow: Chuck's a friend of mine. When I was teaching at Harvard, he wrote a case study for Ernest May and me, *The CIA and the Congo from 1960 to '64*. I recently wrote a letter to *Foreign Affairs* to correct an assertion that they made about the U.S. and Lumumba. When did you serve in the Congo?

Carlucci: I arrived in mid-May of 1960. Independence was the first of June, and I arrived fifteen days ahead of independence. Actually, I did get to know Patrice Lumumba quite well when we were bringing UN [United Nations] troops into the Congo. They were being flown in by U.S. aircraft called Globemasters. I was at the airport helping to get the airplanes landed when I received a call in the morning from the DCM [Deputy Chief of Mission], Rob [Robinson]

McIlvaine, asking me if I could take Lumumba and [Joseph] Kasavubu to Stanleyville. That's where they wanted to go. I said I could probably arrange a plane.

We waited and waited. They didn't show up until about five or five-thirty in the afternoon. When they came out on the tarmac near the airplane, I flagged them down. At that point the pilots came to me and said, "We can't go to Stanleyville because we hear that the controllers have been arrested and the landing lights have been shot out." Lumumba's assistant Maurice Mpolo got out of the car. Mpolo was Lumumba's military man. He later became chief of staff of the army, prior to [Joseph] Mobutu. Mpolo said, "We have to go to Stanleyville."

I said, "We can't take you to Stanleyville at this time. We expected you earlier. We have to go in the daytime." At that point two things happened. Lumumba got out of the car and started berating me. A Belgian colonel came up to me, tapped me on the shoulder, and said, "Unless you get these people out of here in five minutes, I'm opening fire." I had a problem.

Zelikow: Fire on them?

Carlucci: On them. And they were serious.

Zelikow: Why would they have opened fire?

Carlucci: Because the Belgians were in charge of the airport and they had no use for Lumumba at this point. They believed that Lumumba had stirred up the rioting. Belgians were being beaten up, killed, and raped. All kinds of things were happening. The Belgians were in a state of considerable irritation. I grabbed the pilots and said, "Look, I don't care if we have to fly over Stanleyville, turn around and come back—we're going."

They said all right. We put them in the airplane and they rode in the cockpit all the way. Lumumba later told me the reason he was so irritated with me was that he thought I was a Belgian. I said, "I thought that you could have told from my French that I was not a Belgian." In any event we made it to Stanleyville.

The Belgians appealed to me to help them get out of Stanleyville. I said, "I'm not your consul." They said, "We tried and tried and we can't get out." I said, "All right, I'll go talk to Lumumba." I went around to see Lumumba who was having a cocktail party at the governor's residence in Stanleyville. I said to him, "Look, we brought you up here. I told you on the way up we wanted to take out some Belgians. You didn't object. These people feel their lives are in danger. I'd like to take them out."

With that he launched into a tirade against Belgians and called them dirty Flemish—

Zelikow: A tirade in French?

Carlucci: Yes, in French. He suddenly stopped and he said, "But you're my friend." He was tall. He dropped his arm on my shoulder. I'll never forget it. He said, "You're my friend. I like you. Je vous donne les Belges. C'est un cadeau. I give you Belgians. It's a present."

I said, “I don’t want them as a present, but I’ll take them and fly them out of here.” I took them out. Thereafter I got letters from the Belgians for many years. Whenever Lumumba saw me, he would greet me warmly. He governed by press conference so I arranged for press credentials, threw away my diplomatic credentials, rented a Volkswagen, and acted like a journalist. I went from press conference to press conference. He’d single me out at every conference. I’d see him in the parliament from time to time. I followed his activities in the parliament.

We in the Embassy had no foreknowledge that he was being sent to the Katanga—

Zelikow: What was your job at the Embassy?

Carlucci: I was second secretary. I was a junior Foreign Service officer, thirty years old. In those days I was what was called an FSO 6. You went in at FSO 8 and I’d been promoted once or twice.

Zelikow: A political officer or a consular officer?

Carlucci: Political officer. I was the junior man in the political section, but I became the outrider in the political section. I was the person who was outside the Embassy almost full-time. I phoned in my reports of what was happening. That was about the only way you could operate in the Congo. I got to know the journalists quite well.

We talked to Arnaud de Borchgrave last night. We would exchange information because things were moving at such a fast pace. Some things were very unusual. At one of Lumumba’s press conferences, he called on the Soviets to come into the Congo. Henry Tanner, Wells Hangen, and Arnaud said to me, “Frank, it’s more important that the State Department get this information quickly and accurately than that we file our reports. We’re coming back to the Embassy to help you write your cable.”

I can’t imagine that happening today. They came back to the Embassy. All four of us worked on a cable informing the State Department that Lumumba had called on the Soviets to come into the Congo.

Zelikow: Did people like [Lawrence] Devlin make you aware of the U.S. government’s musings on how to do away with Lumumba or—

Carlucci: I didn’t become aware of that until after I’d read the Church Committee hearings. I did not know that anybody had even talked to Devlin about that. None of us had any foreknowledge. You’d have to ask Devlin. He tells me he had no foreknowledge of the plan to ship Lumumba to the Katanga. The film portrayal of the meeting regarding Lumumba is gratuitous, inaccurate, contentious, and libelous. It never happened. Other than that, it’s a great movie.

The very idea that, first of all, Kasavubu would invite a young Embassy official to attend a cabinet meeting, and secondly, to vote on Lumumba’s certain death, is absurd. The idea that a 30-year-old second secretary of the Embassy would be empowered to pass on a sanction, in

effect killing a Prime Minister of a country, is absurd. The meeting never took place. It was a cheap shot. I guess it was done to sell the film.

Why they singled me out, I can only guess. Maybe they picked me because it's harder for a public figure to sue. It was totally inaccurate. It was an inaccurate portrayal of Lumumba too, by the way.

Zelikow: In what respect?

Carlucci: It portrays him as a stable, messianic personality. There was a messianic quality to him, but he was anything but stable. In the early days Ralph Bunch said, "This man is totally unstable," and Ralph Bunch left the Congo in frustration. Lumumba was mercurial. He had a vision of a unified Congo. I've always thought that was a correct vision, but the means that he used to implement that vision were erratic at best.

Zelikow: That's all I have on the Congo unless either of you have some other questions—

Oberdorfer: If I may tell a Carlucci story—

Carlucci: That was subsequent. I came back from the Congo and was Congo desk officer. Charlie Whitehouse and I were the two people on the Congo desk. By then Lumumba had been killed and Cyrille Adoula was Prime Minister of the Congo. I had gotten to know Adoula. When he paid a visit to the United States, I was assigned as his escort officer. That was quite a chore. I went through the UN with him and brought him to Washington. Jack Kennedy held a lunch for him at the White House.

Zelikow: Do you remember when this was?

Carlucci: 1962.

Zelikow: Do you remember when in '62, approximately?

Carlucci: It was during the summer. I was over in Blair House and far too junior to be invited to a White House lunch. Kennedy had Adoula on his right and a man named Albert Ndele on his left. Ndele was governor of the Congolese Central Bank. He was the Congo's only Ph.D., a very bright man. Sometime during the lunch Adoula looked around, but he didn't see me in the room. So he turned to Kennedy and said, "Ou est Carlucci?"

Kennedy said, "Who the hell is Carlucci?" The word bounced on down, "Who is Carlucci?" [Dean] Rusk didn't know and it worked down to Soapy [G. Mennen] Williams who was Assistant Secretary for African Affairs. Soapy knew me well. He told Angie [Angier] Biddle Duke to get me over there. I was summoned from Blair House to the White House. When I came in, I said to Angie Biddle Duke, "What am I doing here?"

He said, "I haven't the faintest idea, but there's an empty chair over there. Congressman O'Hara hasn't come. Take his place." I took Barratt O'Hara's place. I started to eat, and Soapy Williams

came up and tapped me on the shoulder. He said, "The interpreter hasn't shown up. Go up and interpret for the President, please." So I went up.

Instead of turning to Adoula, Kennedy turned to Ndele on his left and said, "What's the economic situation like in the Congo?" He said it through me. And with that Ndele took off like a rocket. The gross national product so many billion francs, national debt so many billion francs and went on throwing out all kinds of statistics. I'll never forget. I was trying to convert the francs to dollars at the rate of 60 francs to the dollar—yes, I still remember the exchange rate—and it felt like he went on forever. Probably only went on for two or three minutes, but it felt like fifteen.

When he finished, they both looked at me and I looked at my notes. I couldn't make head nor tail out of my notes. Kennedy said to me, "What did he say?" I said, "Mr. President, he says the economic situation in the Congo is not very good right now." With that Kennedy tried his French. That was my one experience serving as an interpreter for the President. Actually one other time I served as an interpreter for Ronald Reagan in Portuguese. Don wrote an article on that. [laughter]

Oberdorfer: You keep mentioning it. Every time you got a bigger job I'd bring it up. There were a lot of times, so I brought it up a lot.

Carlucci: I didn't think it was funny at the time, but it looks pretty funny now.

Zelikow: So now we move forward. This time the person asking "Where's Carlucci?" is Cap Weinberger because he'd like you to help him run the Pentagon in 1981. Your last post in government prior to that had been as DDCI [Deputy Director of Central Intelligence]? Is that right?

Carlucci: Yes. But I'd known Cap from OMB [Office of Management and Budget] and when I was in OEO [Office of Economic Opportunity].

Oberdorfer: And HEW [Health Education and Welfare].

Carlucci: And HEW. I probably ought to give you a thumbnail sketch. Don Rumsfeld brought me into OEO. I was a Foreign Service officer, transiting Washington. He persuaded me not to go to MIT [Massachusetts Institute of Technology]—State Department was going to send me to MIT—and join him in OEO. When Don left OEO, I took over just in time to get into a big fight with Ronald Reagan over California Rural Legal Services. That fight went on the better part of a year until I finally met personally with him and we settled it. It's a long involved story.

During that episode I came to know Cap Weinberger. Cap took the Ronald Reagan position within the Nixon administration. Even though we were at odds, somehow we hit it off. I'd been in OEO about eight months. George Shultz asked me to replace Arnie Weber as the number three man in OMB, which I did.

Weber later became president of Northwestern University. George Shultz left OMB to go to the Treasury, and Cap became director of OMB. Cap asked me to replace him as deputy director of OMB. Then Cap went to HEW and asked me to go over to HEW. So I went there. Subsequently I went to Portugal and then worked for the Carter administration as DDCI [Deputy Director Central Intelligence]. I really wanted to get out of government at that time, but Cap asked me to join him at the Defense Department, just for two years. I said, "That's about all I can do."

I went over as Deputy Secretary of Defense. Not without some controversy, by the way. There was considerable criticism of me on a number of counts. Jesse Helms held me up for about four months. His criticism was that I had known Lumumba in the Congo, had supported the Legal Services Program, and that I had worked—

Zelikow: Could you just finish the thought? You said his complaint was that you had known Lumumba in the Congo, then you moved to another point. There's something left unsaid.

Carlucci: The implication was that I was part of the group that had supported radical elements in the Congo. That was the implication. It wasn't expressed.

Zelikow: Which is counter-intuitive. His concern was that you had been insufficiently sympathetic, that you had been too supportive of—

Carlucci: I was the person inside the Embassy who was arguing for a political solution. I believed Lumumba could have been voted out of office. When they held the parliamentary meeting at the Louvanium University with UN protection, the Lumumba forces were outvoted. I'd done the vote counting. I remember writing an aerogramme saying first of all, these people were not Communists and secondly, here is the vote count in the Congolese parliament. It was a high-risk thing to do. I remember my boss calling me in and saying, "Remember the old China hands. Do you really want to sign this cable saying they're not Communists?" I said, "Absolutely."

I was more on the side—I don't know what you'd call it—that was arguing for a political solution to the Congo—

Zelikow: When you say your boss called you in, do you mean the ambassador?

Carlucci: No, I mean the head of the political section. The ambassador was always quite supportive. The last Jesse Helms' criticism of me was that, although Portugal came out all right, I'd supported the Socialists in doing it. He generated about four votes against me. A lot of it was stirred up by a man named Van Cleave who wanted the job—

Zelikow: William Van Cleave.

Carlucci: —yes, who wanted the job of deputy secretary. I wasn't really seeking the job, but Cap insisted that I take it. There were several articles in Evans and Novak. They went after me. They've since told me that they're sorry, but it didn't help much at the time.

Zelikow: In the past you've shared recollections of your experiences with the Reagan administration. That was when you came back at the end of '86, beginning of '87. I wanted to spend a little time on your experience in '81 and '82. You were Deputy Defense Secretary. It was a very important period of change in the Defense Department. As you look back on that period now, what do you think were the most significant issues or accomplishments that dominate your memory of your stint?

Carlucci: Two things. We had a division of labor worked out that was rather strange given our respective backgrounds. Cap focused more on the foreign policy and operational aspects. I focused very much on budget and procurement. I ran the budget process and brought about some procurement reforms which are called the—you were in the military at the time, weren't you?

Oberdorfer: Yes, sir.

Carlucci: The so-called 32 Initiatives that bear my name, which substantially changed the procurement system at the time. We put into production the various weapon systems that resulted in the Reagan buildup, and I essentially developed the budget that did that. I think you even have in the notebook you've prepared [David] Stockman's criticism of me that I tricked him—

Zelikow: With a calculation error. a calculator error.

Carlucci: I shifted the base—

Zelikow: Is that story true?

Carlucci: More or less. It was a meeting between Cap, David and me. I said we had an agreement on—I think it was a 30% increase in a supplemental—but I didn't mention the base. I took it off a better base than David thought we were taking it off of. Yes. He's got a legitimate complaint.

Zelikow: What you're describing is a little more subtle. You're saying that you were operating from a different baseline, which is less that Stockman punched the wrong number on the calculator and you let him.

Carlucci: He may have punched the wrong number on the calculator, but Stockman also talks about changing the base. Steve has it there.

Knott: Yes. Would you like me to read the excerpt?

Zelikow: Sure.

Knott: This is from David Stockman's The Triumph of Politics.

"There was one last question about the base year from which you started the 7 per cent real growth calculation. But by now I wasn't listening very well and simply took Carlucci's suggestion that we start with the 1982 level after the "get well" package had been added. I took

out my calculator and went to work. Carlucci and [William] Schneider took down the numbers as I called them out. When we had finished, Weinberger looked at his watch, yawned, and noted that it was not yet eight o'clock. 'I'd call this a good night's work,' he said."

Then Stockman adds, "Or so I thought, until the constant dollar figures we'd come up with were translated into current dollar values. When I finally took a hard look at them several weeks later, I nearly had a heart attack. We'd laid out a plan for a five-year defense budget of *1.46 trillion dollars!*" It goes on.

Zelikow: Does that account sound accurate to you?

Carlucci: Quite accurate.

Oberdorfer: Was there ever an attempt to roll it back?

Carlucci: We had a constant fight with Stockman. It got to the point where David and Cap would march into the Oval Office and argue about it in front of Ronald Reagan. Usually Reagan would side with Cap. Sometimes he'd compromise. At times David and Cap wouldn't speak to each other.

That was particularly the case after we did the big soldier, little soldier bit. We were in Los Angeles where the President was on vacation. We went out there to make a budget presentation on defense at the Century Plaza Hotel in Los Angeles, where Reagan used to stay. I'd developed some charts, which we hadn't shown to Stockman. Cap made the presentation but he used the charts I'd developed. One chart had a big strong looking soldier. It said, "Reagan soldier." There was another chart with an anemic looking soldier and it said, "Stockman soldier." Ronald Reagan loved it, of course, but it infuriated Stockman and thereafter he wouldn't talk to Cap.

Basically the dealings were done between David's deputy, Ed Harper, later Joe Wright. Relationships between OMB and the Defense Department were a bit tense.

Zelikow: You began saying there were two things that stood out to you in your memory of this—

Carlucci: The first is the procurement changes and the second the budget and its development. Those went hand-in-hand. Without the procurement changes, we would have had a very inefficient system. The procurement changes were designed for a period of budget increase, such things as multi-year procurement, which has made a significant impact. I developed the first multi-year procurement bill and had to overcome the opposition of a very powerful chairman, Jack Brooks. I took it to the floor.

I'll never forget the meeting I had with Jack Brooks afterwards. We won on the floor. I immediately called Jack Brooks and said I'd like to call on him and make amends. As I walked into his office, Brooks said, "Carlucci, you son of a bitch. You called out every contractor you could find. You did every lobbying tactic you could develop, just to beat me." I said, "Mr.

Chairman, if you'd been in my shoes, what would you've done?" "I'd have done exactly the same goddamn thing," he said.

Brooks and I got along quite well thereafter. We developed the multi-year procurement, which produced considerable savings over a protracted period of time and is still in use. But most of it was a Congressional battle. We wouldn't have the air lift that we have today had we not put into production the C17, the C5B, and a whole host of programs including the M1 tank. While I'm telling stories, I'll tell you another amusing one.

The so-called "reform caucus," which continues to exist today, had a habit of opposing a large number of the proposed weapon systems. One day I received a call from a member of the reform caucus. He said he was going to oppose the M1 tank. I said, "Do me a favor. Go to Aberdeen like I just did and drive it. Then come back and tell me what you think."

He went to Aberdeen and when he came back he gave me a call. He said, "Great weapon, I'm going to support it." That congressman was Dick Cheney. We convinced Dick to support putting the M1 into production.

Oberdorfer: I'd like to get back to talking about Weinberger, the budget and the President. There's a wonderful story I quoted in my book. At some point in the constant struggle between Shultz and Weinberger, Reagan says something—I think about the Soviet Union—like, "I agree with George, but Cap is my friend. I can't just tell him 'no' on this." To what degree was the personal friendship between Weinberger and the President important or unimportant in these early administration battles over the budget and Stockman and all the rest of it?

Carlucci: It was extremely important. Cap had unique access. We wouldn't have passed the budget we did had Cap not had that kind of access. Ronald Reagan could do no wrong as far as Cap was concerned and vice versa. They'd been together in California many years. It was a close relationship, I think it had impact.

When I became National Security Advisor, there were occasions when I told the President that Cap was wrong. Cap came in one time with the idea that we ought to have a national defense lottery. I told the President that was a crazy idea. He was constantly telling the President that we were going to deploy SDI [Strategic Defense Initiative] next year. After he'd meet with Cap, I'd say, "Mr. President, this thing is nowhere near being deployed." I could tell Ronald Reagan that Cap was wrong, and he would accept that. He wouldn't accept everything that Cap said unquestionably.

Zelikow: Looking back on the battles of '81, '82, do you have qualms about the buildup? Do you think there were ways the buildup was mishandled, perhaps in a rush to spend the money while the political window was there to get it?

Carlucci: I have no qualms whatsoever. I think it was essential. It hastened the end of the cold war. Don is the expert on how the cold war ended, but I've been told by any number of Russians that the buildup had a decided impact. If you were watching Gorbachev, you'd have no doubt

that our military buildup convinced them, particularly the deployment of GLCMs [Ground Launched Cruise Missile] and Pershings in Europe and SDI.

Maybe the people here didn't believe SDI, but the Soviets sure believed we could do it. Those weapons had a decided psychological impact. Had we not had the military buildup, I don't think the cold war would have ended as quickly as it did.

Zelikow: What about the criticisms that are levied against it? The claims that it was wasteful, that the money came too fast and thus wasn't spent very efficiently, that prices on some systems were run up higher than they needed to be?

There are people who say the buildup was fundamentally a bad idea. And then there are people who say some buildup was needed, but the way the administration went about it was too heedless, saying yes to every system, not thinking enough about strategic direction.

Carlucci: There were certainly a lot of "no's." We weren't indiscriminate. I didn't say yes to the services on every proposal. I'll tell you how we got the C17. I squirreled away some money. At the last minute, just before the POMs [Program Objective Memorandum] were due, I called the Secretary of the Air Force, Vernon Orr. I said, "Vern, if I gave you some more money, how would you use it?" He said, "We need more F15s." I said, "Wrong answer." He said, "Oh, I know what you want. You want air lift." I said, "Absolutely."

So I dictated to the Air Force that they were going to have C17s. The Army said they desperately needed air lift. I'd had David Chu do an analysis of what our funding needs were. He identified the critical shortages and air lift was one. The buildup had a certain symmetry to it. It matched the strategy and future needs of our military in war. We couldn't have conducted Desert Storm had we not had the air lift we have today. That's just one example. But there were plenty of requests from the services that were turned down at the time.

Moreover, we went through the 32 procurement initiatives, which were designed to make the system more efficient. We saved a lot of money on multi-year procurement. A host of other initiatives were rather widely praised on the Hill and in the press as improving the efficiency of the system. No system is perfect, of course. When you put the amount of money into the system that we did, there's no question that there are going to be some abuses.

When I went back to the Pentagon as Secretary, I had one hour's notice that the Attorney General was going to announce the ill-wind procurement scandal. You can have corruption in any system. We managed our way through that. In the larger scheme of things, what we did was absolutely right.

Oberdorfer: In the first year and a half of the administration, Al Haig was Secretary of State. He'd been a career military officer and then head of NATO [North Atlantic Treaty Organization]. We tend to think about Shultz versus Weinberger, but Haig must have had a lot of ideas about what he wanted the Pentagon to do.

Carlucci: Vicar.

Oberdorfer: Right. Vicar of foreign policy. How did it work for the Defense Department with Haig as Secretary of State?

Carlucci: Let me tell you the vicar story. Cap came back from the inaugural parade. He had a memo from Al Haig, which said that Al was going to be the vicar of foreign policy. When Cap told me that he'd told Haig that was all right, I said, "Cap, that's a disaster. You can't do that."

Cap went back and said, "No, you can't be the vicar of foreign policy." That's how a lot of the to'ing and fro'ing got started. Al did not interfere in the procurement decisions. The problem was that Al became paranoid about the White House. It's quite clear.

Oberdorfer: And they became paranoid about him.

Carlucci: Every meeting you had with Al he'd talk about the White House. It was hard to get to the foreign policy. While Al was a military man, he'd never been on the procurement side. He didn't play any role in the procurement decisions. I used to talk to Al about sales overseas. We gave some equipment to Morocco during the war with the Polisario—

I was the one who talked to Al about the famous F16s to Pakistan. I was a supporter of the F20. I wanted the low end of the mix that would be sold to countries like Pakistan. But the F20 never made it through the process for a host of complicated reasons, Tom Jones being one of them.

Zelikow: You said, "Tom Jones being one of them."

Carlucci: Yes. The CEO of Northrop. He was a good friend of Ronald Reagan, but somehow he rubbed Cap the wrong way. When I left the Pentagon, the F20 died. I'd kept it alive while I was there, believing that we should have a low end of the mix for overseas sales. I thought the F16 was too sophisticated for overseas sales. I lost that battle. There were some differences between Al and Cap on Middle East issues. I can't recall the specifics of those.

Al's only issue was with the White House. I suggested that we have weekly breakfasts, which we did. Most of the breakfasts Al would spend complaining about the goddamn bastards in the White House. That becomes clear in his book.

Oberdorfer: Including your classmate, Jim Baker.

Carlucci: Yes. I can't remember if he had more of a problem with Jim Baker or Ed Meese. It was both of them, I guess.

Zelikow: Did you know Baker at Princeton?

Carlucci: Yes. He's my partner in Carlyle too.

Zelikow: Yes. Had you stayed in touch with Baker when you found yourself working in the government together? Or was it like, "Hey, buddy, haven't seen you in twenty-five years"?

Carlucci: I was not in touch with him until I saw him. He emerged as Under Secretary of Commerce.

Zelikow: That was his first Washington job.

Carlucci: Nixon administration?

Zelikow: No, it was Ford.

Carlucci: That's when I saw him for the first time after college.

Zelikow: So you'd renewed your acquaintance with him before 1981. In that sense the White House wasn't strange and foreign to you.

Carlucci: No, it wasn't strange and foreign to me as Deputy Secretary, but Cap handled most of the White House relationships. He'd take me to the odd meeting with the President. Most of the time he'd go alone.

Zelikow: From your description it seems that you were not deeply involved in the big arms control fights of '81 and '82 over the zero options, START [Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty], INF [Intermediate Range Nuclear Forces]—

Carlucci: I would attend some of the meetings. Richard Perle was really quite good at keeping me informed. Richard is a night person. He would come up in the late evening and give me briefings on where he stood on these issues. Basically the arms control issues were handled by Cap at that time. I had my hands full with the budget and procurement issues.

Zelikow: Any other outstanding problems from the '81-'82 period that stick in your mind? Sources of stress or—

Carlucci: No. I'd like to note for the record that Cap was a wonderful guy to work for. He and I would talk two or three times a day. Wherever he was, he'd call in, so we were in constant communication. There were two or three of us: myself, Will Taft and Colin Powell. We were probably the only three people in the Pentagon that could get Cap to change his mind. Cap, as you know, is very tenacious. Once he takes a position, he digs in. Particularly if it's a public position. And he's quick to take positions. He has a lawyer's mind.

I would save up the issues for the evening, go in and brief him on all the things I'd done during the day. I'd save the contentious one for last and say, "Cap, you know…you really ought to take another look at this one." Usually I could get him to modify his position. It was an extraordinarily good working relationship.

The reason I mention that is that in the past Secretaries and their Deputies have had tense relationships, have not always been totally harmonious. Ours was totally harmonious.

Oberdorfer: That's really unusual, I mean with Weinberger. In my impression, I don't know him that well, he was out front with his opinions and it looked like he would never bend them at all.

Carlucci: He used to drive the Congress nuts.

Oberdorfer: Yes. Somehow I suppose your ability to persuade him was due to your long-time relationship, but Will Taft didn't have that long-time relationship.

Carlucci: Oh, yes, he did.

Oberdorfer: Did he?

Carlucci: Will and I would frequently conspire, sometimes along with Colin, to convince Cap to reconsider something. Rich Armitage would get involved from time to time. Will was working for Ralph Nader when Cap hired him as a speechwriter. Then Will was his assistant in OMB and ended up his general counsel in DOD. Will has always had, and still does have, a very close relationship with Cap.

Oberdorfer: How come he had such trust in you two or three people but didn't trust anybody else?

Carlucci: You'd have to ask him that question. I don't know.

Oberdorfer: What is your own analysis?

Carlucci: That he knew that the three of us had his interests at heart. None of us had ever played any tricks on him. Even when I was opposing him in OEO, I was always very straightforward. It was a trust that was built up over a period of time. With others he would feel that they were playing a game with him. Part of that was tactical. It's a lawyer's approach. At hearings he would answer the question he wanted to answer, not necessarily the question that was asked.

You can get away with that with journalists, but not with the Congress. They get upset. Frequently Cap would take a rock hard position on the Hill and the Hill would come to me. I'd go in to see him and say, "You've taken the right position, but we're not going to get anywhere unless we modify it. Here's what we need to do. Why don't you let me talk to so-and-so and I'll see if I can get…." Cap would say, "Oh, okay." And that's the way we did business.

Zelikow: What were your impressions of Reagan then, at the beginning of the administration? I know you dealt closely with him later. It sounds like you had some direct contacts with President Reagan in '81 and '82. There must also have been meetings where you were sitting in as the Acting Secretary.

Carlucci: I probably ought to mention the CRLA [California Rural Legal Assistance] episode because it does have a bearing on the relationship I had with Ronald Reagan. Back during the Nixon administration, I'd just succeeded Don Rumsfeld as Director of OEO. The California

Rural Legal Assistance was a flagship legal services program, loved by the ABA [American Bar Association], but hated by Ronald Reagan because it supported the grape pickers in the Napa Valley, where lot of hiss political support came from the growers. It was a very controversial program run by a man named Cruz Renoso. He later became a Supreme Court judge in California.

I told Don that before he left OEO and turned it over to me, he'd have to fire the head of legal services and convince Reagan to agree to a grant from OEO to the CRLA. Governors had the right to veto grants, but the director of OEO had a veto override.

Don told me that it was straightened away. I guess he'd received some assurance from the Reagan camp that the grant would go through. After Don left, I was nominated. The very next day Ronald Reagan vetoed the CRLA grant. The organized bar, the ABA, went berserk. Ronald Reagan not only vetoed it, he also called Richard Nixon and said, "Don't let Carlucci override the veto."

John Ehrlichman called me, saying, "Don't override the veto." The same day Alan Cranston called. He chaired the committee that was going to confirm me. Cranston said, "Unless you override the veto, you're not going to get confirmed." So I had a bit of a problem.

There were some public comments by Ronald Reagan. I retaliated with some public comments and John Mitchell got into the act. Ehrlichman had told him to get involved. I finally told Mitchell that I didn't work for him. So he got Pat [L. Patrick] Gray involved.

Zelikow: Pat Gray, the then director of the FBI?

Carlucci: I think this was before he was director of the FBI. He was assistant AG [Attorney General] or something like that. Everybody was telling me what I ought to be doing. I opted to set up a three judge commission which looked into 586 charges against the program that had been developed by Ronald Reagan's man Lou Yuler. Yuler later became famous for Proposition 9.

The commission ran hearings up and down the state of California, which drove John Ehrlichman and the White House nuts. John would call me periodically and say, "When are you going to call off that three ring circus of yours?" To my recollection, I still wasn't confirmed because Alan Cranston was holding me hostage.

The commission produced a report after three or four months that said none of the charges were true. Two of the justices were Republicans and the report said that none of the charges were true. The program instantly sued me under the Freedom of Information Act to get the report. I dove underground, called Ronald Reagan personally, and said I needed to meet with him alone. I flew out to Sacramento and had a clandestine meeting with him.

In that meeting I said, "Governor, I have this report by three Supreme Court justices that says none of your charges is accurate. It's an embarrassing report. I have not yet released it. I can put rhetoric around it that will make it palatable. I'll take all the heat. I'll take the Congressional

hearing and I'll give you the funds for your own legal services program. In return for which, I want the longest grant in CRLA history." A two or three year grant, I can't remember which.

He said, "You need to talk to Ed Meese." So I spent two days with my general counsel in a hotel room with Ed Meese. We seemed to be getting nowhere when my general counsel startled me by saying, "Look Ed, there's the A movie and the B movie. The A movie is: you go our direction and everything works out. The B movie is: we level all the guns we have in Washington at Sacramento and we shoot it out. And we'll win."

I knew I had no backing in Washington. I was appalled. Ed thought for a moment. He said, "I'm going to make a call." He called Ronald Reagan. When he came back, he said, "We'll take the A movie." We issued the grant for CRLA. I had a very stormy hearing with the Democrats on the Hill, a hearing that lasted something like twelve or thirteen hours.

Zelikow: Why so stormy if you had just saved CRLA?

Carlucci: That was my point, but I put around it a lot of rhetoric, which was supportive of Ronald Reagan. They didn't like the rhetoric. They had to concede that I'd saved CRLA, but they wanted the rhetoric as well. At the end of something like an eight or nine hour hearing I went back to my office. There was a phone call from Ronald Reagan and a bottle of California brandy for me from Ronald Reagan. That's how we developed a relationship.

The next time I saw him, I was Deputy Secretary. Cap took me over for one of the meetings. I'd see him from time to time in meetings.

Oberdorfer: Did he remember you? Did he say anything to you about the other stuff?

Carlucci: When I became national security advisor, he once poked fun at me on a platform about the legal services program. I don't know whether it was him or his speechwriters who were having some fun with me. You could never tell how much Ronald Reagan knew about you.

In her book, Nancy Reagan has it pretty well. She said, "Even people who know him well don't really know him well." He has this very congenial personality, yet there's a certain distance. You're never quite sure how well he knows you or if he recognizes you. We never had a subsequent discussion on the subject, though he must have remembered. I'm sure he remembered the episode. It was a big deal out in California. It made headlines every day.

Zelikow: I'd like to ask you to think about how Reagan was in '81 and '82. Especially in contrast with the way he was later. Was the atmosphere around him different? Was the way the White House was set up markedly different? Leave aside issues of staffing arrangements, because we'll get into what those were like in '87. But would you comment on your impressions of how Reagan and the White House seemed to you in '81 and '82 in light of those later reflections? If there's a marked contrast, that would be interesting. Did Reagan seem different then?

Carlucci: I don't really think I can answer that. In '81 and '82 I only saw Ronald Reagan at large meetings. Other than one small meeting with him, the rest of the time it was budget presentations or meetings with the Congress. Or I'd be sitting in on a Cabinet meeting with Cap. I didn't have the intimate relationship with Reagan then that I had when I was national security adviser.

There's one conversation that sticks in my mind. Reagan always liked the B-1. One time Cap took me over for a budget session with Reagan. I can't remember who else was there. It was one of the very few small sessions that I attended. Reagan liked the B-1 and Cap liked the B-2. I played Solomon on that one. I put a small amount of B-1s into production because I didn't want to put all our eggs in a basket of a plane that hadn't yet been developed. I wanted to keep Northrop honest on the B-2. My plan pleased both Reagan and Cap because both were being put into production. It was a compromise.

Bill Perry had talked to Cap about the B-2, and Bill can be very persuasive. Cap liked Bill. At this particular meeting we were talking about the B-1. Ronald Reagan said, "Gee, if only we could find a defensive weapon that would end wars." I thought, *That's a pretty utopian idea,* but didn't think much about it until after I left the government and SDI was announced. My mind flashed back to that particular conversation.

Zelikow: Do you remember when that conversation was?

Carlucci: It would have been around 1982.

Zelikow: Would you just rack your brain for a minute to try and remember when? People have been picking over the chronology of this idea's development. If you can remember when he said that—

Carlucci: I can't.

Zelikow: Why did you leave the government in '82?

Carlucci: I ran out of money. I told Cap I couldn't afford to take the job for very long. I had a young daughter. I'd been nothing but a government servant. I was about fifty years old. When I got down to the last couple of hundred dollars in my bank account, I went into Cap's office and said, "Cap, this is it. I can't do justice to my family." Bless his heart, he offered to lend me the money.

I said, "You can't do that. I've just got to get out." That's when defense had the Paul Thayer debacle, after I left. I thought Paul Thayer would be good, but I didn't know about the skeletons in his closet.

Zelikow: Then you went to Sears. But while you were at Sears, you kept an eye on the government.

Carlucci: George Shultz asked me to chair a commission on AID [Agency for International Development]. Which I did.

Zelikow: And then there's the Packard Commission.

Carlucci: That's right. I was fairly active on the Packard Commission. That's how I got Transcom. Back when I was Deputy Secretary, it became obvious to me that our transportation networks were uncoordinated. So I conceived of the idea of a transportation command. We had separate Navy sea lift commands, separate Air Force air lift command, and a separate Army military transportation command. I wanted to combine them.

The idea provoked howls of outrage from the Navy. The Navy lobbied against it and they got to Sam Stratton, I think, who blocked it. I got it into the Packard Commission report. That caught everybody's attention and we got it through the process. The transportation command is a successful command today.

The idea of a Middle East command was mine. Every member of the Joint Chiefs except the Marine Corps commandant, Bob Barrow, lobbied me against trying to create that command—

Zelikow: CENTCOM [Central Command].

Carlucci: CENTCOM. And I went into Cap's office and said, "Cap, we need this command. I know the JCS [Joint Chiefs of Staff] is uniformly against it, but we need to create it." Cap agreed with me and we overrode the military. The myth is that Cap never overrode the military. We overrode the entire JCS on this.

Knott: What was the military's opposition based on?

Carlucci: Just their normal opposition to change. "It could be best handled out of Europe," they said. "We already have the European command. It will drain resources from the European command." It was just lobbying from the European command.

Oberdorfer: Why did you feel it was important?

Carlucci: I had done an analysis of the threats. When I first came into the Pentagon, I said, "Where is the balloon likely to go up?" The answer was clearly, "The Middle East." That led me to two conclusions: air lift and a Middle East command.

Zelikow: If I could get you to digress on this subject, I'd be interested in your reflections at this moment, the end of August 2001. Your old boss Don Rumsfeld is running the Pentagon. He's trying very hard to put in place a series of defense reforms, somewhat different in character from the kind you were working on, but some very big problems. According to the press, he's having a hard time.

You've been in that spot, you've worked the problem of defense reform from a number of different angles, especially the management side, and he's a friend of yours. I'm curious about

your reflections on what your old boss is going through now, and the issues involved in trying to change the military.

Carlucci: I called him the other night and told him to hang in there. I've been very careful to avoid going to see him because we own some defense companies—

Zelikow: "We" meaning the Carlyle group.

Carlucci: Yes. We're the twelfth largest defense contractor. We own four or five defense companies. Despite what you've read in the press, I've not lobbied him. I tell our companies, "I do not lobby the Pentagon. I'll talk to people on the Hill, but not the Pentagon." So I've not had a lot of contact with him.

Don's approach comes as no surprise to me. He's always played his cards close to his vest. He will bring about change. He has an agenda in his mind, I'm certain. The problem is the lack of money. You have to put some money in just to sustain the existing infrastructure.

The CBO [Congressional Budget Office] estimates you need fifty billion dollars a year. The Rand study (which I co-chaired) came up with the same kind of estimate. CSIS [Center for Strategic and International Studies] made an even larger estimate, 150 billion. So, are you going to sacrifice today for the sake of tomorrow? If you sacrifice today, it's a big sacrifice. Bush's 18 billion dollar increase doesn't come near to meeting current needs.

You have to slice into the existing structure in order to pay for the transformation you're trying to bring about. It's very painful. The better option is to slice into the logistic support. The logistic support has grown way out of proportion. The tooth-to-tail ratio was about 50-50 during the cold war. Now it's 70-30 in favor of the tail. We ought to be closing more bases. I'm the one—

Zelikow: You helped invent BRAC—

Carlucci: Yes. Working with Dick Armey, the two of us came up with the idea. We should be closing bases and contracting out—

Zelikow: For the transcriptionist: BRAC is the Base Realignment something Commission?

Carlucci: Closure Commission.

Zelikow: Base Re-Alignment and Closure, is that it?

Carlucci: I think so. The BRAC name was attached after I established it. But they ought to be contracting out. Yet there's a bill in Congress going the other way. The bill would make it more difficult to contract out. We should be taking down the infrastructure so we can give more tools to the fighting forces, but that becomes politically unachievable.

It's difficult for me to see how the Bush administration can do what it wants to do, given the financial constraints and the political opposition. Don's panels have come up with some good

ideas. It was certainly a useful exercise to go through it. Whether he should have depended so much on retirees is another question, whether that antagonized the existing military, the active duty military. Obviously there's some resentment because he brought in a lot of former people. That's complicated his life, but the military will get over that. I can tell he's developing a good relationship with them now.

Zelikow: Reflect for a moment on the challenge of change. Why it is hard to change the Pentagon? Is it as hard as people say it is? What about civilian control of the Armed Forces? Effective civilian control of the content of the defense budget is a subject you've dealt with from several different angles.

Carlucci: Don't forget I've been out of the government for twelve or thirteen years. A lot has happened during those years. Don made this point in a press conference the other day. He said, "It's very different than it was." He'd been out 25 years. Despite Maureen Dowd's article—I don't think Don was sleeping during that period—he points out that the Congress has gotten more into micro management. The press is unforgiving. They're looking for one scandal after another. There's certainly a feeling that the military is less responsive than it was in the past, that the military has its own agenda.

I didn't have a lot of trouble when I was in the Pentagon. I worked with some wonderful people. Colin Powell was my military assistant. Grant Green was one of my military assistants. My chairman was Bill Crowe. Then when I was Secretary, Colin was at the NSC [National Security Council] and he was very supportive. I had Bill Owens as my military assistant, absolutely superb. I had really high quality people working with me when I was Secretary and when I was Deputy.

It was a very different environment when I was Deputy. We were building up the military and they were responsive to that. When I became Secretary, I started the downturn. The secretary of the Navy resigned when I took away some of his ships. There was some resistance, clearly, but it was manageable. What Don's trying to do now is on a far broader scale than the modest decreases I was then putting in. He's causing a lot of pain and there'll be a lot of resistance. The Pentagon has become more set in its ways in the past eight or ten years. I have to take Don's word for that.

Oberdorfer: You mentioned Colin Powell several times. You and Colin Powell are a mystery to me. You met Colin when he was a White House fellow and you were at OMB. He was your military assistant, but only for a short time. You got there in February and you weren't confirmed yet. He left some time in the spring. And when you went back to government as national security advisor, you insisted on Colin coming back from his command in Germany. The whole rest of his career wouldn't have happened without that. He would have been retired as a lieutenant general somewhere. Why did you feel, in '87 or whenever you were given this national security council job, that Colin was a guy you had to have with you?

Carlucci: Grant Green, who is now Under Secretary of State for Administration, management I guess you call it, was with me over at the Sears World Trade when I was asked to become national security advisor. I remember turning to Grant and saying, "Grant, for my deputy I need

the very best person I can get. I think that it's Colin Powell. What do you think?" He said, "Absolutely."

Oberdorfer: What was it that so impressed you in the relatively short time you worked together?

Zelikow: And you'd worked with all these other talented people. You need to say more. It's not good enough to say, "He impressed me."

Carlucci: Let me tell you one story. It's in his book but I'll give you more detail. The story may tell you why I think the man is exceptional. I'd been in the Deputy Secretary's job a few months. Colin was my military assistant. He came into my office and said, "Mr. Secretary,"—he didn't call me Frank in those days—"Mr. Secretary, I've got a confession to make."

I said, "What's that, Colin?" He said, "I've been holding in my desk drawer a Congressional Medal of Honor citation." And I said, "Why have you done that?" He said, "Because it's known that Jimmy Carter would not present Vietnam Congressional Medals of Honor." I said, "Let me see the citation."

It was a citation for a man named [Roy] Benevides. The citation described incredible acts of heroism, dragging wounded comrades back while wounded himself. It was just unbelievable.

"Give it to me," I said. I walked into Cap's office. I said, "Cap, you have a meeting with the President in half an hour. Read this." Cap read it and he said, "My God." He handed it to Ronald Reagan at the end of the meeting. By the time Cap got back to his office Ronald Reagan was on the phone. He asked me how soon I could come over to the Pentagon and present this Congressional Medal of Honor. He called Cap three times saying, "When are you setting up the ceremony?" and "Let's move." And we had a ceremony at the Pentagon that was electric.

Ronald Reagan was obviously in his element. This was a genuine hero and the effect throughout the military establishment was electric. It restored morale in an instant. And that was due to Colin Powell's savvy understanding of the process. When you get a person who is that astute, you want to use him in bigger things.

Moreover I knew that Colin was a people person. I knew I had a problem with George Shultz. Don can elaborate on that problem. George was traumatized by the NSC and he wanted to reduce the NSC in effect to an executive secretariat. I told him I wouldn't do that. He didn't want me to see ambassadors, he didn't want me to travel, he didn't want me to chair meetings. He describes all these things in his book. We had a tense relationship. I needed somebody who I knew could get along with George. Somebody George would be taken by. And I thought Colin was that kind of person.

Moreover I wanted somebody that Ronald Reagan would be comfortable with. I knew Colin was that kind of person as well. He fit the bill to a "T," and I was very comfortable with him. I called him. I had him 90% of the way convinced, when he said, "I really should have a call from the President." I said, "Fine." Ronald Reagan gave him a call and he came back.

Oberdorfer: Had you had any contact with him from the time that he left as your military assistant until then?

Carlucci: Oh, yes. While he was here in the states, I went gone down to Georgia to visit him once. We met once in Germany. After I left the Pentagon, I would see Colin on social occasions. From time to time—this is probably one of the parts that ought to be off the record—Rich and Colin would come to my house and ask for advice on how to deal with Cap. Sometimes they'd even ask if I'd go in and see Cap.

Oberdorfer: Rich Armitage?

Carlucci: Yes. Colin and Rich as you know are very close. The two of them would keep me informed on what was going on in the Pentagon.

Oberdorfer: So you had more of a relationship with him after your service?

Carlucci: Oh yes, it was a continuing relationship.

Oberdorfer: You saw something in him. Here's a relatively young general. There were probably dozens, hundreds probably, of generals at his level. You saw something different in him.

Carlucci: I told him he was going to become chairman.

Oberdorfer: You told him that when he was your military assistant?

Carlucci: I told him that when he came in as my deputy. He talked about my spoiling his career. I said, "Colin, you're going to wind up as chairman, take my word for it."

When Dick Cheney became Secretary, he came to the house to chat and get advice. As Dick was getting up to leave, I said, "Dick, you're going to have one big decision during your tenure and that's who the chairman should be. There's only one person and that's Colin Powell." Dick said, "You're right." It was another year or two before Colin was named chairman.

[Break]
Zelikow: It's time to think about the merry Christmas you had in 1986. Over the holidays you were thinking about taking a new job, this time in the White House. Could you recount how it was that you got such a wanted or unwanted Christmas present?

Carlucci: It's a simple story. I was totally unsuspecting. On a Sunday night I received a call from Arnold de Borchgrave. He said, "I've heard a rumor that you're going to be named national security advisor." I said, "That's absurd." He said, "No, I think it's real." I said, "Thanks, Arnold. Good talking to you." The next day I was having lunch at—what's that restaurant by the Willard? The Oriental?

Zelikow: The Occidental?

Carlucci: The Occidental.

Oberdorfer: The opposite of the Oriental.

Carlucci: My office called and said I'd been asked to go over to the White House, Don Regan called and said to go in through the Treasury entrance. So I interrupted my lunch and went to the Treasury entrance. I was led into the basement of the White House, and the President was there with Don Regan.

Zelikow: So it was not in the Oval Office?

Carlucci: No. Those were the only two people in the room. Ronald Reagan started out by saying—after the pleasantries—"I would like you to be my national security advisor." I must have had a startled look on my face because he then said, "Because you're the only person that George and Cap can agree on." I thought to myself, *Well, he didn't say I had talent or background. My sole qualification is that George and Cap can agree on me.*

I said, "Before I accept, Mr. President, you ought to know what kind of a person you're getting. I think I can bring a team together. I can repair the damage. But I'm not a great visionary. I'm not a Henry Kissinger. I'm not going to be trying to move the blocks of the world around. You also ought to know that I disagree with you on two things. I was uncomfortable with Reykjavik and I disagree on the arms for hostages, Iran-Contra." I thought that ought to be on the record. He didn't respond on Reykjavik, I later had that out with George, but he did go through the whole Iran-Contra speech—where he starts out saying that it wasn't arms for hostages, but ends up convincing you that it was. I said, "I want you to know I disagree, but I'm looking to the future, I'm not going into the past. If you want me to do the job, I will."

George Bush then asked me to come to his house where he gave me some background on the position. I'd known him quite well for a number of years. He offered to be helpful, and in fact about a week or two into the job I was busy firing people. George Bush called me in and said, "The President is a little upset because you're firing so many people. Maybe you ought to write him a handwritten note." So I wrote him a handwritten note, which essentially said, "I really need to do this to reshape the NSC. Don't worry, it'll come out all right." I never received any response, but I guess it had the desired effect because George didn't raise the issue with me again.

Nancy Reynolds was helpful as well. Nancy Reynolds was Nancy Reagan's best friend. She would give me some early warnings, particularly as concerned the relationship between Nancy Reagan and Don Regan. You probably know that I fired Don Regan.

Zelikow: You told that story at the Miller Center forum that you gave in '94. Your account of it was that there had been some kind of a press story that drove it—

Carlucci: CNN.

Zelikow: CNN. And since the story was already out there, somebody had to—as the child's tale puts it—bell the cat.

Carlucci: Yes. Don Regan's got some of it in his book. He doesn't have the full story. But if I've told it once, there's no point in going into it again.

Zelikow: Tell it again. You might be able to embellish it with some new details.

Carlucci: I'd had breakfast with Don Regan that morning—

Zelikow: Embellish is the wrong choice of word, I know.

Carlucci: I'd had breakfast with Don Regan that morning. I said, "Don, there are rumors that Howard Baker is going to replace you. Anybody said anything to you?" He said, "No."

Zelikow: Where had you heard these rumors?

Carlucci: I can't remember. It may have been Nancy Reynolds. I characterize it as a rumor, but coming from Nancy it—

Zelikow: If I was in Don Regan's shoes and the national security advisor said he'd heard rumors, I would quickly ask. I wouldn't assume that you had heard it from your cab driver.

Oberdorfer: Wait a minute. Regan had already agreed to resign. This is nothing new. He's already on the way out the door. It was just a question of when it was going to become effective.

Carlucci: I don't have that recollection, Don.

Oberdorfer: I think that's the case.

Carlucci: He knew the handwriting was on the wall—

Oberdorfer: According to his book, he'd already even submitted a letter—

Carlucci: No, he didn't. He submitted the letter at the end of the month.

Oberdorfer: The letter was like that.

Carlucci: Yes, but that was [both talking at once]

Oberdorfer: More politic type operation.

Carlucci: No, he hadn't submitted a letter because he dictated the letter in my presence.

Zelikow: Let's go along with the story.

Carlucci: Bob Tuttle called me about two-thirty in the afternoon and said—

Oberdorfer: Who called?

Carlucci: Bob Tuttle. He was the personnel director, Holmes Tuttle's son. He said, "Frank, it's all over CNN that Don Regan is out and Howard Baker's replacing him." I said, "That was my understanding, but why are you calling me?" He said, "Because you're the next senior person in the White House. I'm not sure the President has said anything to Don Regan. You probably ought to tell him." And I said, "Wait a minute. Before I do that, I better call the President."

I called the President in his quarters and I said, "Mr. President, this is all out on TV." I could hear the "Oh-oh" on the other end of the line. I thought, *Oh, my God*. I said, "Have you said anything to Don Regan?" He said, "No, I have not." And I said, "Let me see what I can do." It was a foolish thing to try, knowing Don Regan's temper. But I went down and there was a *New York Times* reporter in his office. I kicked the reporter out and said, "Don, you know we talked about this this morning. I've got to tell you: I've checked with the President and it's true."

Don Regan just exploded. "God damn it! I've been his Chief of Staff, I've been loyal—" I can't remember all the things he said. I went scurrying back to my office. I told the President, "You're going to have to call him. There's no way out."

I went running back to Don Regan's office just in time for the phone call. Regan wasn't going to take it. I said, "For God's sake, Don, he's the President of the United States. You've got to take the phone call." It was one of the shortest phone calls on record. It was "Yes, Mr. President. Yes, Mr. President. Good-bye, Mr. President." And that's when Don dictated his famous one sentence letter. It read, "I hereby resign as your Chief of Staff."

It was an unhappy episode. The happy end of the story is that thanks to Bob Strauss we got Howard Baker, and Howard was superb, did a great job as Chief of Staff.

Oberdorfer: According to Shultz's book, Weinberger and Shultz met a couple of days before and decided you were the person who should do the job.

Carlucci: I don't remember that.

Oberdorfer: You didn't know it. Regan says in his book that—

Zelikow: Which job are you talking about?

Oberdorfer: National security advisor.

Zelikow: So we're not talking about the Chief of Staff job, we're still on the earlier topic—

Oberdorfer: Yes.

Zelikow: —which puzzled me, given your long relationship with Weinberger, that he wouldn't have given you some clue this was brewing.

Carlucci: It's not in Cap's character to upstage the President. He's intensely loyal to Ronald Reagan. That doesn't surprise me at all. It never occurred to me until you mentioned it now.

Oberdorfer: Edmund Morris in his book, *Dutch*—if you want to call it a book, such a sham—says that you asked Reagan four questions on being hired as national security advisor and he answered them all. But I don't know what the four questions were or if this is anywhere near true.

Carlucci: My recollection of the conversation I've just given you is that I raised two issues with him, Reykjavik and Iran-Contra. I also gave him my personal assessment of my strengths and weaknesses, which I thought was only fair.

Zelikow: How would you describe your strengths and weaknesses? You've alluded briefly to that. Is that essentially what you told the President?

Carlucci: I told him I was a manager, not a visionary. I thought I could put the NSC back into shape, but I was not going to conceptualize a whole new foreign policy for him, if that's what he was looking for. He didn't really respond, in typical Ronald Reagan fashion. He probably told a joke or two. The conversation may have lasted fifteen or twenty minutes.

Oberdorfer: When you say he didn't respond, it brings up the question of what the press called his "management style." I gather that was pretty typical. Colin tells a story in his book about your first briefing with him. You lay out these alternatives and he doesn't say anything. You go out in the hall and say, "Is that a yes, or what?" But after that conversation you apparently took it within your charter to do what you thought you ought to do, and go do it.

Carlucci: After that conversation Colin and I sat down to talk. I said, "Colin, you and I are going to have to figure out what the right thing to do is, what Ronald Reagan would want done. We're going to have to impute the decisions because we're not going to get crystal clear decisions from him. We're not going to usurp authority onto ourselves, that was the failing of our predecessors. But we have to think through very carefully what the Reagan policy should be." I had a somewhat similar conversation with Howard Baker.

We were very conscientious to do what would be the Reagan policy, as opposed to a Carlucci policy, or a Powell policy, or an Ollie North policy. I was very conscious of the failings of the previous system. And, as you know, I reorganized the entire NSC.

Knott: Did you get the sense that the President had slipped, that he wasn't quite as engaged or as sharp as he was when you saw him in '82?

Carlucci: My impression was of a man who was in a daze. He didn't know what had hit him, didn't understand it, and he couldn't get past the Iran-Contra thing for a long time. Shortly after I became national security advisor, the Venice summit took place. I was the last person to brief

him. I said, “Mr. President, you’re at an economic conference. You’ve got the world leaders here. You’re going to go on for a press conference and the first question is going to be Iran-Contra. This is your opportunity to rise above it. Say, ‘We’re here to discuss economics. I’ve answered the Iran-Contra affair. I have no more to say.’ Then put it behind you.”

He went to the press conference. Sure enough, the first question was Helen Thomas, Iran-Contra, and he launched into the explanation again, which drove everybody nuts. He got right back into it. We couldn’t get him past it. Colin did marvelous work on the speech where we got Reagan to admit the mistake. I can’t remember the phraseology, “mistakes had been made,” or something like that. It took draft after draft to keep that in the speech. We had to keep sending it back. It was a very hard thing for him to get over. Once he got over it, he was fine.

Ronald Reagan clearly was not a detail person. He had a couple of issues he was interested in. He had a vision he liked to talk about. He had the jokes that he liked to tell, but he had uncanny instincts. You could never tell how much of an issue he was absorbing. But, by my lights, he’d always come out in the right place.

Knott: Could you give us an example of where you saw these uncanny instincts at work?

Carlucci: The biggest one, of course, is his instinct that we ought to shift from a policy of confrontation with the Soviet Union towards a policy of negotiation. Once he did that, he embraced it. George Shultz described that in his book, he played a major role in that, but it was fundamentally Ronald Reagan’s decision. He decided that he could negotiate with Gorbachev, and he did it.

Howard came to me and said, “Frank, we’re entering these negotiations. You need to prepare the President for his sessions.” That’s when I told Ronald Reagan that I’d like to bring some people in to talk to him. I could never tell how much he’d absorb if you gave him a memo, but I knew he could absorb oral briefings. I said, “I’d like to bring some people in to talk about the upcoming negotiations with the Soviet Union. Let me try some names out on you. Henry Kissinger.” He said, “No.” I said, “Okay. Richard Nixon.” “Oh, yes, bring him in.”

And we smuggled Richard Nixon back into the White House. Just Howard and Nixon and I and Reagan met for a good hour and a half in the study. That never got to the press. [Zbigniew] Brzezinski came in. Richard Perle came in. He had this strange relationship with Suzanne Massie. When I became national security advisor, I found that she was the only person he’d meet with alone. I finally said, “Look. I can’t be your national security advisor if you’re talking about the Soviet Union alone with Suzanne Massie. I want to attend the meetings.” He said that would be okay. So I attended the meetings. They were harmless enough. She would talk about social developments and culture in the Soviet Union, and he was fascinated by that.

His interests—Arms control bored him to tears. Bored me to tears too. I had to go through it, though. But when it came to human rights, religion, and social developments in the Soviet Union, he was absolutely fascinated. And you know he had this thing about nuclear weapons. It’s well established now.

Oberdorfer: You spoke about Reagan being in a daze. There's a doctor, now dead, named Edwin Weinstein. I don't know if he ever wrote his book. He's an NIH [National Institutes of Health] consultant who had written about Woodrow Wilson's incapacity. He's fascinated with the whole question of Presidents' mental capacities. He was in touch with me after my book came out asking me what I know. He sent me a paper, a chapter, in which he talks about Reagan and Iran-Contra.

He says, "It is difficult if not impossible to separate completely the conscious deliberate aspect of the President's behavior"—he is now talking about Iran-Contra particularly—"from the effects of impaired brain function, his cognitive loss, his denial/unawareness of his problems and incapacities. Had he been deliberately lying he would not have admitted approving the arms transfers while failing to remember having done so," and so forth.

To what extent do you think Reagan had really lost it? Do you see what looked, in retrospect, like the signs of Alzheimer's? Was the guy functional as President at that stage?

Carlucci: I'm really not qualified to answer that question. After he was out, in 1991 or 1992, I visited him at his Century Plaza office in Los Angeles. When I got back, I called Ken Duberstein and said, "Ken, I think he recognized me." Ken said, "I had the same experience." That was the first I had the feeling there was a problem.

When Colin succeeded me, and George and I had buried the hatchet, the three of us made a conscious decision. George said, "Ronald Reagan has had the landing lights on and the flaps down for the last year. Now we're going to have to step up to the plate on foreign policy. The only way it's going to work is for the three of us to agree." That's when we had the seven o'clock meetings every day. It was just the three of us, no agenda, no substitutes. We worked through the day's events, trying to forge agreement. George and I changed positions a number of times in those meetings because we decided if the three of us agreed, we knew we had Ronald Reagan. That's the way foreign policy was basically conducted.

Oberdorfer: So you three would make a decision as to what was to be done. And then how would you bring in the President?

Carlucci: Colin would simply brief him. "Sir, this is what we're doing, if you have no objections." Invariably, he wouldn't. The concept was to try and keep the issues off his desk. Not that any of us thought he was incapacitated. It had been the end of a long Presidency, we'd been through a traumatic event, we were doing good things with the Soviet Union. Negotiations were going well, and we thought we could bring the cold war to a successful conclusion, and we wanted to avoid interagency battles. We didn't want to put a lot of things on the President's desk because that would slow the process down. And we thought we could do that consistently with his policies.

Knott: Do you recall any instances where he objected to a proposal that the three of you had worked out?

Carlucci: No.

Zelikow: When you use a word like "dazed" and offer a description of someone who is preoccupied. Then Don has basically offered a medical analysis where the character of the preoccupation is such as to make you worried about someone's declining fitness. But these are different phenomena.

Carlucci: They are.

Zelikow: We've both been, as everyone here has been, in situations where we are highly alert and in full command of our capacities, yet wholly preoccupied with some extremely pressing matter. Yet I am struck, as other people are too, that this matter was extremely pressing. After months pass these matters may still consume a lot of attention and time, but are not all-consuming. Attention can still be paid to other issues, though you may decide to delegate some issues. So I'm trying to penetrate through to the reality you're trying to describe. It must be described with precision, since it's so susceptible to being misunderstood.

Carlucci: It's hard to be precise. You're asking fundamentally if Reagan's manner changed from a dazed state to a medical problem. I have very limited knowledge of the medical parts—

Zelikow: When you say dazed, you don't mean preoccupied?

Carlucci: Preoccupied is probably a better word. Certainly he was preoccupied with Iran-Contra. He didn't fully understand what had happened. He didn't understand why people were down on him, but he grew out of that. It took a long time.

I think the negotiations with the Soviet Union reinvigorated him. It gave him a new lease on life. He enjoyed his meetings with Gorbachev. He used to drive Gorbachev nuts with his jokes—including Russian jokes. He liked Gorbachev. In fact I remember saying to him, "Mr. President, you've got to bear in mind that Gorbachev is not trying to eliminate Communism. He's trying to fix it. He may be the last standing Communist in the Soviet Union, so you need to be very cautious about it."

But now I think Ronald Reagan was more right than I was in wanting to be forward leaning with Gorbachev.

Zelikow: But Gorbachev also changed. The Gorbachev of 1990 is not the Gorbachev of 1986.

Carlucci: That's true. Reagan was very attentive throughout the negotiations. Not on the details, especially the esoteric details of arms control which consumed a lot of the negotiations, but when it came to human rights or religion or things that interested him, he would jump in. I've told you the story of the December summit in Washington. I was the one responsible for getting that meeting postponed by tangling with Gorbachev in Moscow.

Reagan said, "I want to meet alone with Gorbachev." The rest of us couldn't wait to get a hold of the interpreter to find out what happened. It turns out he did something that was not on the agenda. He beat up Gorbachev on freedom of religion in the Soviet Union. As George says in his

book, he'd pull out these lists of people who'd been arrested. Every time George went to Moscow. I don't know where he got them, but he'd keep names. He'd follow human rights activities very closely. When you talked about getting rid of nuclear weapons, you got his attention. I don't want to give the impression that he was not alert. You really have to divide it into three periods.

The first period was '87, when I came in. During that period he was preoccupied—to use your word, which is a better word than dazed. Then there was the period when we were actively developing negotiations. As a negotiator, Reagan would go through the positions very quickly to get to the pleasantries. He'd leave the details to George and me and Colin, which was fine. The third period was the last year of the administration. During that period he would do the things a President needs to do, but he was not as active as he'd been during the second phase.

Oberdorfer: Did you ever have a moment when you wondered if he was capable of doing the job?

Carlucci: I don't know that I ever thought that. At moments I thought it would be nice to have somebody who understood world affairs a little better than he did and pick up on the briefings a little faster. There was a week when he was at the ranch where Nancy Reagan said, "No communications, no telephone calls, no memos, no nothing." Howard and I were in Santa Barbara. I looked at Howard said, "Howard, I guess this week you and I are President." He said, "That's right."

Oberdorfer: This is the summer of '87?

Carlucci: Yes. It would have been August of '87.

Oberdorfer: What about Nancy? The famous stories about her and the soothsayer, Joan Quigley?

Carlucci: I didn't run across that. After I'd gone to Defense, they set the INF treaty signing for two o'clock in the afternoon on a certain day. I said, "Colin, what the hell is this? Why does it have to be set at that particular time?" It conflicted with something, I can't remember what. Colin said, "Frank, you don't want to know." I didn't ask further.

Oberdorfer: What about Nancy's role with her husband? You mentioned that you had a good relationship with Nancy Reynolds, and that she was very helpful to you. Could you see her hand in what Reagan did or didn't do?

Carlucci: Nancy never called me. She would call Duberstein a lot and Howard from time to time. The only time I had any direct dealings with Nancy was once on Air Force One. Who was the member of the kitchen cabinet who'd been ambassador to the Vatican and went off to Libya?

Zelikow: Wilson.

Carlucci: Wilson. Nancy started complaining about Wilson.

Zelikow: There are two Wilsons. I think this is William Wilson. I'm trying to make sure I'm not confusing him with the gunrunner.

Carlucci: No. The gunrunner is CIA.

Zelikow: Also Wilson.

Carlucci: You're right. There are two Wilsons. And she said, "I don't want to have anything to do with him. I don't want our people to have anything to do with him." I said, "Are you serious about that, Nancy? Because I'll write a cable to all our embassies telling them not to have anything to do with Wilson." She said, "Yes." So I wrote the cable and sent it from Air Force One.

Oberdorfer: He was then out of government.

Carlucci: A couple of days later I read in the paper that he'd been invited to their New Year's Eve bash. I thought that was all very strange. But that was really the only time—oh, another time she asked me a question. She liked Frank Shakespeare and wanted to make sure that he went to the Vatican. I said that that had all been arranged. Those were the only times I had substantive discussions with Nancy. I always had a very cordial relationship with her.

Oberdorfer: I got the impression that Shultz was careful to defer and keep his relationship with her solid.

Carlucci: Yes.

Oberdorfer: Instinctively feeling that if he didn't, there would be good trouble.

Carlucci: George was not part of the California Mafia, so he had to keep his oar in that way. The only one I know of that really tangled with her was Don Regan, and he made no bones about it. I think he describes it in his book. He hung up on her one time, which is not a terribly judicious thing to do.

Zelikow: When you described how you and General Powell would impute Reagan's wishes, at least in this first phase when President Reagan was "disengaged" or "preoccupied," it made me as an old lawyer think this is *in loco presidentis*.

Carlucci: [laughing]

Zelikow: This is an extraordinary situation. You say, "Gee, we just didn't get a decision. He's not engaging. Maybe we just need to run back at him again and say, 'Mr. President, I'm sorry. We weren't clear. We need to get—'" But you clearly didn't feel that pressing him in that way was appropriate.

Carlucci: I didn't feel the need to. For example I can remember sitting in a steamy hotel room in Miami during the Pope's visit. Howard was there. I said, "Mr. President, I know this is going to be tortuous, but we're going to have to walk through arms control decisions. There are disagreements between George and Cap on a number of issues. And you're going to have to decide. I have to give each of them the right to appeal to you if they disagree with your decision."

So I walked him through a whole host of fairly esoteric arms control issues and he made decisions. He invariably said, "What do you think?" I'd say, "I'd be inclined to go this way or that way."

Then I'd go back to George and Cap and say, "This is the President's decision." By and large, they would accept it. Once they disagreed with a decision regarding INF reductions and they wanted to talk to the President personally. He didn't decide in their presence, but met with me afterwards and asked me what I thought. I told him and he went along with that. I called George and Cap in and said, "This is the President's decision." And it worked. I don't mean to give the impression that the system broke down in any way, it didn't break down. We just had to adjust to a certain style.

Zelikow: It makes perfect sense to me. Maybe if you were President you'd do the same thing too if they were splitting on what stance to take on ICBM telemetry. The President would say, "Frank, what do you think?" And you probably wish you could say to somebody else, "what do you think?"

Carlucci: Actually, the first day I walked into my office Colin had a huge stack of papers waiting for me. He said, "Frank, I hate to do this to you. These are the backed up arms control decisions." So I said, "Okay, there go my lunches." Every lunch I'd go through this stack and make decisions on arms control, where I thought I could make them. I'd save another pile that had to be taken to the President, where there was sharp disagreement. It was an awful process.

Zelikow: It goes back to Reagan's mental state and mental condition. You describe Reagan as alert and interested in a number of subjects. There are clearly other subjects in which he doesn't want to engage and would rather defer or be passive. Some of those are subjects where you might think he should have engaged more, and then others where he is quite right not to engage and it's a shame that it has to be brought to the level of the President anyway.

But there may also be occasions or a period early on when the problem is deeper than that. I don't want to slide by the fact that it was just hard to get him to engage, period. Not just on minutia but on other subjects as well, which then puts a grave burden on the staff. Didn't you and Baker feel that way, especially in '87, for some period of time?

Carlucci: Yes, but I don't want to give the impression that he was totally disengaged. He wasn't aloof when we started having trouble with Iran. They started interfering with the shipping, Boston whalers and boghammers in the Gulf.

Zelikow: Right.

Carlucci: We'd done the reflagging operation. He was very attentive to that. Even though it was recommended originally by Cap, more and more I became known as the architect of the reflagging operation. The ships were being attacked, and we decided we'd hit an oil platform. When we went in to brief Ronald Reagan, it was late afternoon. Bill Crowe and Cap and George Shultz were there.

Reagan was very alert. He understood what he was doing, he understood the implications of it and possible repercussions, so it's erroneous to think he was an absentee President. When the issue required his attention, you could get his attention. Now if he had a consensus recommendation, I can't imagine him saying, "No, I don't want to do it that way." He would go along with the consensus. I don't know Bill Clinton, but I could imagine him not going along with the consensus.

Oberdorfer: Except on one issue. It was my impression that it was very hard for him to give up the idea of trading for hostages. Colin wrote in his book that as late as the fall of '87, there were nine Americans being held in captivity. More were taken as others were released. Colin writes, "Reagan would have traded for them at the drop of a Hawk missile," or something like that.

Carlucci: He was fascinated by that issue. It's consistent with his attachment to human rights. He felt very keenly the pain of hostages. I didn't have to make the phone calls to the families, he did. You have to sympathize with him. He was always looking for a way to get hostages out. Colin told me I was a bit rough on him. I think this was the issue. I gave him a fairly stern lecture about not talking about terrorism. I gave George Shultz the same lecture. I said, "You're building up the terrorists. If you keep talking about terrorists and how we're going to get them, you're playing into their hands."

George later came over and told me he thought I was right. He said, "I'm going to stop giving these speeches." George used to give speeches about terrorism, but he stopped doing it.

But Reagan kept looking for ways to help out the hostages. I never heard him say we ought to trade something for hostages. He'd receive messages from people. He had sources of information that I never understood. One time somebody suggested that he see Adnan Khashoggi. I came out of my chair and said, "No, no, Mr. President. You give that to me." I buried it in my file. It actually came from a journalist.

Oberdorfer: There was one thing I heard about, I don't know if it's true. They would release the old hostages and take new ones. You all briefed Reagan, and he said, "Can't we get a hold of our friends in Iran?" This was long after the Iran hostage thing hit the fan.

Carlucci: I don't recall him doing that. He would constantly search for ways. He'd say, "Can't we send somebody in to get them?" I'd say, "That's a pretty hard job. We're trying to train people, but it's going to take a lot more sophistication than we have to date."

Oberdorfer: In Powell's book he says that at one point you had to explain to him, "You know, Mr. President, there's X number of people killed every day in Washington in traffic accidents, and this, that, and the other, and these are not the only people—"

Carlucci: I tried to get his focus off hostages. It was hard. He really felt their pain, but he gradually came to understand that too much focus on the hostage issue plays into the hands of the hostage takers. On the other hand he certainly wasn't the captive to it that Jimmy Carter was.

Oberdorfer: You mentioned the reflagging. When you came in, because of Iran-Contra you had a huge problem of credibility in the Middle East. The United States had told the Gulf states and others in the Middle East that America wasn't having any dealings with Iran. Then it came out that the United States had been dealing with Iran. Even through Israel the United States had been dealing with Iran.

Carlucci: I handled that very simply. I told the press and everybody else that I was not talking about the past. I was only there to try to organize things for the future. I refused to be drawn into any discussion of Iran-Contra.

Oberdorfer: But the United States had a big problem in policy terms, of credibility with the Middle Eastern countries—not the press part of it—people who had been our close friends and allies and who had been saying, "We want to help you against Iran." Then it comes out that we've been playing footsie with Iran. I assume, maybe I'm wrong, that the reflagging partly came out of the sense that these people needed to be reassured that the United States was on their side.

Carlucci: They did need to be reassured. I made several trips out to the Middle East for that very purpose. That's when I had my famous meeting with King Fahd, which resulted in Hugh Moran being declared *persona non grata*. Our ships in the Gulf protected the reflagged vessels and I paid a visit to Saudi Arabia. I paid a visit to several countries, Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, and UAE [United Arab Emirates]. In Saudi Arabia I was put up in this very lavish palace—

Oberdorfer: This was when you were national security advisor, right?

Carlucci: No, I was Secretary of Defense. I flew out to one of our ships in the Gulf and went down in the engine room where it was about 120 degrees and watched those kids working down there. I really felt for them.

Then I flew back by helicopter. Coming over the port I looked down and saw Saudi ships tied up alongside the pier. It annoyed me no end. So I had this meeting with King Fahd. Typically, he kept me waiting all day, but the meeting lasted an hour and thirty-five minutes. Rich Armitage was there and he timed it. King Fahd kept [Hosni] Mubarek waiting while he lectured me in a monologue on why we needed his support and why Saudi Arabia was our one true friend. I couldn't get a word in edgewise, and you're not supposed to talk back to the King anyway. At the end of his lecture he stood up and I said, "Keeper of the Two Holy Mosques"—which is what you call him—"I've got a comment to make. If Saudi Arabia is so important to us, it's important

to you too. I've seen your ships tied alongside the pier. The next time I come here, if I don't see your ships out with our ships, I'm going to pull my ships out of the Gulf."

Oberdorfer: You're talking about their naval vessels.

Carlucci: Yes. There was stunned silence. At the beginning of that meeting Hugh Moran had insisted on reading a cable, and that annoyed Fahd because Fahd thought it was my meeting. Fahd later declared Hugh *persona non grata.* Fahd was just generally grumpy the whole meeting. The next time I came back, we'd sunk half the Iranian navy, and Fahd was my great good friend. He gave me a great big embrace. He's a huge man, practically picked me up off my feet. We became good friends.

Most of those countries, particularly the UAE and to a lesser extent Saudi Arabia, because they've been victimized, thought that they had to make some accommodation with Iran. A lot of it was trade driven. As you know, the UAE has a lot of trade with Iran. While Iran-Contra was puzzling for them, I think the reaction was more like, "You Americans are crazy, why do you do this to yourselves?" rather than, "You've undercut our policy in the Middle East."

Oberdorfer: There were several other issues that Reagan was fascinated with, including nuclear weapons and the Contras, which was close to Reagan's heart. Powell in his book says that there was a big division right down the middle of the administration between Shultz and Weinberger. Shultz accepted the Contras, but only as a bargaining lever. Weinberger saw the Contras in much more romantic terms as people who could take over Nicaragua. Reagan never lost interest in this whole question of the Contras—

Carlucci: No, he never lost interest.

Oberdorfer: But you had to get the administration working. You had to continue to get money to support the Contras out of the Congress, which was not an easy thing to do.

Carlucci: They were very reluctant.

Oberdorfer: What about the problem? How did you deal with this issue of the Contras?

Carlucci: When I first became national security advisor, I made a trip down there, just to see first hand, and I became convinced that the Contras were a real indigenous force and that they were worthy of our support. Maybe the politics of it had been mishandled, and certainly nobody can advocate violating the Boland amendment. I didn't like the Boland amendment, but you don't violate it. We had to keep the thing alive.

The biggest problem I faced was Jim Wright, who was in frequent contact with the Sandinistas. They kept trying to block our efforts at every turn.

Oberdorfer: He was Speaker then, right?

Carlucci: Yes, he was Speaker. [David] Bonior was involved in it too. Tony Coelho I could deal with. Tony and I are good friends to this day. But Wright and Bonior were very difficult. I spent a lot of time trying to work with them, to stop them from blocking our activities in that area.

Oscar Arias was not helpful either. I got myself crosswise with Oscar Arias. He criticized me in public. We kept pressing forward, trying to get as many resources as we could. Ronald Reagan met personally with the Contra leaders on at least one occasion in a motel somewhere. I can't remember exactly where. He firmly believed in the cause, just as much as he believed in Afghanistan. He saw parallels between the two.

Oberdorfer: Did you deal much with the Afghan issue? That was a big negotiating issue between the United States and the Soviet Union.

Carlucci: It was mainly George. George had that regional agenda. Didn't he have Mike Armacost dealing with that?

Zelikow: Yes.

Carlucci: I think they did a fine job.

Zelikow: Let me go back what you inherited when you came to the NSC. You discussed your relationship with the President. Let's talk for a moment about how you thought about the NSC. You were well acquainted with the recommendations of the Tower Board.

Carlucci: I anticipated them. In fact the Tower Board picked up some of the things I was already doing.

Zelikow: Then let's talk about that. It's a management problem. It's not just a problem for management of the NSC per se, but also for the NSC's role in the management of the government's interdepartmental processes.

Carlucci: I came in with the firm idea that we shouldn't be involved in operational matters, least of all running covert action programs, that our fundamental mission was policy coordination, policy oversight, and seeing that the President's policies were implemented, not necessarily implementing them ourselves.

Zelikow: Define operational matters. Your point regarding covert operations is clear enough, but when Carlucci as national security advisor meets a foreign ambassador in Washington, is it operational?

Carlucci: I thought it was not.

Zelikow: I'm being provocative now.

Carlucci: George and I had that argument many times. He thought it was operational, I did not. In my mind the kind of thing Ollie North was doing was operational. He was running programs, I

was not. I had no intention of having the NSC run any programs. In fact I backed them out. I abolished Ollie North's unit, I reorganized the whole NSC.

Oberdorfer: You abolished several units, didn't you?

Carlucci: Oh yes, several. I fired 60 % of the NSC. I say I fired them, but they didn't necessarily lose their jobs because a lot of people were on loan from agencies. I sent them back to their agencies. Some were fired, but not in large numbers. At the time I came in there was a dual deputy system, and there was no general counsel. The first thing I did was bring in a general counsel. I said to him, "You have access to all meetings in this organization. You report to me, and only to me."

Oberdorfer: Who was that?

Carlucci: First it was Paul Stevens. Then it was Rostow.

Oberdorfer: Young Rostow.

Zelikow: Nick Rostow took over in the Bush period.

Carlucci: Yes, he's up on the Hill now.

Zelikow: He did not have *carte blanche* access to all meetings.

Carlucci: In the Bush time?

Zelikow: Nick Rostow did not. It was different—

Carlucci: You can ask Paul, I gave him *carte blanche*—

Zelikow: But Paul and Nick are different people.

Carlucci: Paul's more tactful. I guess that's a way of putting it. So I said Ollie North's unit was labeled political military affairs. I said, "That's the function of the entire NSC. No wonder he's running amok." We abolished that whole unit. I tried to put in much more rigid controls. I eliminated the double deputy system. A lot of reorganization was done. But the key was bringing Colin in as my deputy and Grant Green as executive secretary—

Oberdorfer: You changed the attitude. I heard a story—I'd be curious to know if it's true—that your first day on the job there was a staff meeting, and they said, "The first thing we do is take up the press report, what's in the newspapers about the administration." And you said, "Why do we do that?" And the answer was, "Because that's very important." You said, "No, we're not going to do that first. We'll make that last."

Carlucci: True story. Once you start worrying about the press, you'll let it drive you. I wanted us to be driven by the substance of the issues.

Zelikow: One of the issues that current people have is, how much time do you spend on communications? Did you do weekly backgrounders with journalists like Don here?

Carlucci: I did. There were weekly backgrounders. My press person Dan Howard would come in and periodically tell me I should meet with this or that journalist. I did. I very seldom volunteered. I would only go on television when the White House press office said something like, "We need a coordinated effort this Sunday. Everybody should go on television and make these points."

I didn't volunteer a lot for TV. Every now and then I'd go on MacNeil-Lehrer. I'd go on some of the morning shows when my press people asked me. I generally didn't offer a high profile.

Zelikow: You also participated in an oral history session that Brookings organized, focused on the NSC with former national security advisors. I read that when I was helping to work with Condi [Condoleezza Rice] in the NSC transition last year. I tried to profit from some experience. Very specific question: what you thought of as the job of executive secretary. And as a segue into the management of the NSC operation. You have principal and deputy. The deputy you've set up to more or less serve as an alter ego. In fact, he did take your place.

Carlucci: Yes, he did, he chaired the meetings. George didn't want me to chair meetings. I said, "Fine. I'll have Colin chair them." [laughter]

George said, "You can't chair meetings because you're not confirmed." I said, "I'll lower it to the deputy secretary's level. Colin will chair the meetings." George said, "Fine."

Zelikow: This administration has the PC structure now. National security advisor does chair meetings regularly—

Carlucci: It's absurd to say the national security advisor can't chair meetings. In fact, the way I would end up controlling the meetings was when Ronald Reagan attended I would set the agenda. I'd lay out the issues and we'd have a discussion. In effect I was chairing the meeting.

Zelikow: What did you want Grant Green to do as the executive secretary?

Carlucci: I wanted him to coordinate the paper flow, to make sure it was organized.

Zelikow: Did you see it as a substantive job?

Carlucci: I saw it as more substantive than it had been. It was more than just running the operations center. It was seeing that issues were surfaced in a timely way to Colin and me and that the implementation process was satisfactorily done, and that the units were performing as they should be performing.

Zelikow: How did you think about policy planning and relate it to presidential speeches on foreign policy?

Carlucci: I was delighted to leave that to Colin. Colin worked with the speechwriters. He developed an excellent relationship with Baker's people and subsequently Duberstein's. He was very good at negotiating word changes in speeches. I didn't get involved in a lot of the speeches.

Zelikow: Policy planning?

Carlucci: I don't know what you mean by policy planning. As Don points out very well in his book, George laid out a negotiating scenario with the Soviet Union. It was a very good scenario, and that set the agenda for most of our activities. The Iran-Contra issue was already on our plate as well as the reflagging. We dealt with those issues on an *ad hoc* basis. The NSC has no long term planning capability.

In fact the Rand Report—that I co-chaired along with Bob Hunter and Zalmay Khalilzad—recommends that the NSC be given long range planning capability. That drew some objections from the State Department, but it's consistent with what the State Department is doing. There ought to be some planning capability, but there is none now.

Zelikow: Do you remember the speech in which Reagan called for tearing down the Berlin wall?

Carlucci: I was by his side.

Zelikow: There is very little evidence about how that sentence got written and what the policy purpose was behind it. The best I could gather on this is that they weren't trying to make any new policy on Germany. Shultz wasn't trying to reopen the German question or put it back on the international agenda. This phrase had been developed by a White House speechwriter as a rhetorical flourish. It may have been Peter Robinson—the name sticks in my head for some reason—but at the time, no one attached any policy significance to that statement. It was an expression of Reagan's view of the two systems more generally. It was an expression of Reagan's philosophy, but it was not a policy statement.

Carlucci: I don't recall. I don't think I participated in the drafting of the speech, because I generally did not. I'm sure I saw the speech, on the airplane probably, but I didn't attach policy importance to it. Your summary is probably accurate, but I wasn't involved in the formulation of the speech.

Zelikow: While we're on the subject of Reagan's philosophy, I'd like to return to his attitude toward nuclear weapons. You have alluded to Reagan's antipathy toward nuclear weapons. I invite you to elaborate on that a little bit.

Carlucci: Particularly in the early days when I became national security advisor, he'd comment on the need to get rid of nuclear weapons. I'd counter, "You know, Mr. President, they've kept the peace all these years. Sure, we'd like to get rid of them, but you can't get rid of them until the other side gets rid of them."

He would grudgingly accept it. I finally told my people that we had to send him a memo on the subject of nuclear weapons so he understands the issue better. Somebody said, "We can copy Poindexter's memo." They produced a copy of a memo Poindexter had written to him on the same subject.

Zelikow: Was that before or after Reykjavik? It was a memo that Poindexter had written?

Carlucci: It must have been before. I can't recall the date of the memo. So we produced our own memo and sent it to him. Then I'd periodically invoke the name of Margaret Thatcher when Reagan would say he wanted to get rid of nuclear weapons. I'd say, "No, no. You have to deal with Margaret on that." That always had the desired effect. When I wrote the memo, he was always talking about Chernobyl. He would say publicly that the Chernobyl meltdown was the equivalent of three nuclear bombs or something. I could see no grounds for saying that.

I asked the experts, "How do you make this judgment?" They would say, "We don't know." So I developed a memo, which said, "I don't see any relationship between Chernobyl and nuclear weapons." He also found out that Chernobyl means wormwood?

Oberdorfer: Yes.

Carlucci: He came down one day and said "wormwood" and talked about the apocalypse and—

Oberdorfer: Right.

Carlucci: And Chernobyl being part of the apocalypse –

Oberdorfer: Armageddon.

Carlucci: Armageddon.

Knott: What's the wormwood connection?

Oberdorfer: It's some biblical reference.

Carlucci: It's a biblical allusion, it's in the bible.

Oberdorfer: The problem is Reagan had this *vision* or something. Did you ever figure out where he got it?

Carlucci: I couldn't figure out where, but the few meetings I had with him when I was Deputy Secretary I remember him commenting on the need to get rid of nuclear weapons. People accuse him of being against arms control, but he was the biggest arms control advocate you've seen.

Oberdorfer: He was serious about sharing the benefits of SDI. He was going to give that to the Russians.

Carlucci: I'd say to him, "You know, Mr. President, Gorbachev says we won't even sell him the simplest engineering technology and you tell him you're going to give him SDI. Of course he doesn't believe you." But he kept saying it. He wanted to give it to Gorbachev. And Gorbachev would get emotional on SDI. Kenny Adelman tells the story in his book that when I said something about SDI, Gorbachev threw the pencil down. I tried to develop schemes where as we developed the space based vehicles we could take Soviets up to see them, and proposed that to Gorbachev, but he was having none of it. He was absolutely paranoid about SDI.

Oberdorfer: You alluded to this earlier. Cap was always saying, "We're about to deploy…" and Shultz was saying— And you were saying, "It's not realistic."

Carlucci: I recall that in one speech in 1989 Cap wrote, "We're going to deploy." I just crossed it out. He'd turn the speeches over to us for clearance. Every time a procurement issue would come to Cap he'd advance the IOC.

Oberdorfer: IOC?

Zelikow: Initial Operational Capability.

Carlucci: He'd move it forward. He'd say, "Got to go faster, got to go faster." As I got more steeped in the procurement system, I came to realize that that was a disaster. That's the way you get too much concurrency and that's the way the procurement system fails. So I was always much more on the cautious side and would not try to accelerate procurements. SDI was typical of Cap's approach to procurement. He'd say, "Okay. If you can build it, you can build it tomorrow."

Oberdorfer: Other than in Reykjavik and occasional discussions with Gorbachev, did Reagan ever try to do anything about nuclear weapons? The U.S. was producing nuclear weapons, it was deploying nuclear weapons. It had nuclear weapons on alert. It had all kinds of nuclear weapons. Did he ever do anything or suggest to do anything about it?

Carlucci: The INF treaty.

Oberdorfer: Yes.

Carlucci: He loved the INF treaty.

Oberdorfer: That treaty eliminated a certain class of nuclear weapons.

Carlucci: It was a very significant breakthrough.

Oberdorfer: Absolutely.

Carlucci: And he was very supportive of the START negotiations. I don't think you can accuse him of not doing anything.

Knott: You mentioned Speaker Wright and Congressman Bonior, their attempts to stifle the administration's assistance to the Contras. How much of your time was spent dealing with Congress? Did you have somebody on your staff who helped put out these fires?

Carlucci: I spent a fair amount of time dealing with Congress. I spent a lot of time in briefing sessions and one-on-one meetings. On the reflagging issue the Congress was very nervous. They wanted to make sure our allies were in the Gulf as well. So I went to NATO and beat the bejeesus out of our allies until they put some ships in the Gulf. At almost every White House briefing I and subsequently Colin would be asked about the Contra activity, what was going on in Central America. The Congress was decidedly in it.

We also got into a war powers debate. The other big issue was when Richard Perle came up with a broad interpretation of the ABM [Anti-Ballistic Missile] treaty, and it was legally backed by Abe Sofaer. It made sense legally, but politically it was a disaster, and Congress just blew up. Sam Nunn, as you know, was very much wedded to the ABM treaty so we instantly tangled with Sam Nunn, which is not a good thing to do.

Zelikow: Say a little bit about White House relations with the CIA during your period. [William] Casey had died, I believe.

Oberdorfer: When you came in, he hadn't died.

Carlucci: No, he hadn't died. He died while I was there, in fact I went with Ronald Reagan to the funeral. Howard and Reagan and Colin and I sat down and tried to decide who'd be the best person to replace him. We came up with Bill Webster. I give Bill a lot of credit. When Bill was asked, if he wanted the job, he said, "Mr. President, I want the job, but I want it reduced in status. It should not be a Cabinet job." So he took himself off the Cabinet list. Correctly, in my judgment, because it's not a policy position. I don't know if it's back on at the Cabinet level now. The Clinton administration may have moved it back up.

Zelikow: I think not, but I'm not sure. [John] Deutch pushed it back up but I think when they replaced Deutch, it subsided. This administration came in with the same convictions you've expressed.

Carlucci: I think that's right.

Oberdorfer: When you came in, part of the story of Iran-Contra was that there was this back channel, if you want to call it. Casey was going to the President and Ollie North was acting for Casey, and other people either not knowing or not knowing very much about what was going on between these covert operations and—

Carlucci: I had a very good personal relationship with Casey. His wife turned to me when she wanted his chair after his death. I never had a problem with Casey going around me. Most of the time I was national security advisor he was in the hospital anyway. We had a few meetings with him, but he didn't play a significant role.

I can only remember one thing on the CIA that's significant. I was visiting with Bill Webster and asked about [Manuel] Noriega. I was told that they'd had some contact with him, and he'd been given a modest subsidy. Very modest. I said, "I don't care whether it's modest or not. Stop it." I went back and told the President—who was not aware of this—that we had this relationship with Noriega and that I had killed it. It was at one of the briefings the next day. George Bush was present. Reagan and Bush agreed that that should be stopped. That's how the support for Noriega came to an end.

Zelikow: Let me talk a little bit about Noriega, because that issue became a fairly serious one. It got onto the front burner in 1988, after you had gone over to the Defense Department, but I may have misjudged the chronology of it. Were you involved in policy deliberations about whether to take some military action against Panama in 1988?

Carlucci: Yes. In fact I personally wrote the decisive memo, which said, "No." That's when I tangled with Al D'Amato. He called me up and said, "You and the whole JCS are cowards." I slammed the phone down. I can't recall hanging up on anybody other than that one incident. I was very much opposed to invading Panama at the time.

Zelikow: Why?

Carlucci: I thought the problem could be solved politically. I guess I was wrong, but I also didn't think we'd reached the point where we needed to commit troops. I thought it would be an extremely dangerous undertaking and it would blacken our image throughout Latin America. We already had enough problems in Central America. We didn't need to add to those problems.

Zelikow: Who was pressing the idea?

Carlucci: My recollection is that it was the State Department's idea, but I defer to Don.

Oberdorfer: I don't remember. Wasn't paying attention to it. It certainly wasn't the military. To a great extent, it was D'Amato. He was pressing it so hard.

Zelikow: There is some indication that Vice President Bush took a hard line on Noriega in 1988 and he carried that with him when he became President. There was some speculation that that affected his decisions in '89 about replacing CINC [commander in chief] South and so on.

Carlucci: There was a Sunday night meeting at the White House where we discussed a deal where we'd get Noriega out of Panama in return for some commitment on our part. I can't remember what the nature of the commitment was. I can't recall how the meeting came up, but I do recall the position that George Bush took—and this was very unusual—was not supported by the group or by the President. George was opposed to doing any kind of deal with Noriega. George and Jim Baker left the meeting somewhat upset, but I can't recall the specifics of it.

Zelikow: Their views didn't prevail at the meeting?"

Carlucci: That's my recollection, but I have to confess my recollection is a bit fuzzy at this point. I can't remember details.

Zelikow: Tell me about economics when you were national security advisor. It was a period when trade was a big issue. Trade, Japan, 301 sanctions, and so forth were very hot on Capitol Hill. I'm curious about the role of the White House and the NSC on the international economics portfolio, which usually gets overlooked in discussions of U.S.-Soviet relations.

Carlucci: Like most national security advisors I came in thinking I could play in the economic world, but I didn't make a big splash. I'd attend meetings between Jim Baker and George Shultz. I tried to keep up with it. I became involved in the Toshiba export control regulations, those kinds of things I'd get deeply involved in. Where we had issues between Defense and Commerce, I would end up mediating. I was involved in the free trade agreement with Canada. It's a rather amusing story.

Ronald Reagan liked [Brian] Mulroney immensely. One of our early trips was up to Ottawa. It was only a couple of weeks after I'd been appointed national security advisor. There were three issues on the agenda: acid rain, northwest passage and the free trade agreement. Derrick Burney was Mulroney's chief of staff. Burney later became ambassador and is now head of a major Canadian company. Reagan and Mulroney swapped their usual Irish jokes. They had a great time together.

Mulroney said, "Come on over to my house for lunch." An intimate lunch had been set up at his house. As Reagan's limousine came up, he motioned to me to come in and sit down. He said, "I think we ought to do something for Brian." I said, "Mr. President, we're doing well holding our positions on acid raid, the free trade agreement, and the northwest passage." At the time we'd been having intense negotiations. "Oh, no, no, no. We ought to do something," he said.

So at lunch Derrick Burney and I started passing notes. Burney was trying to negotiate over the lunch table by these notes, and I sent notes back saying, "No." Mulroney was a very smooth operator, and he said, "I can see there's some staff discussion going on here. Maybe, Mr. President, you and your staff would like to regroup. Why don't you go in the other room?" We went into the sitting room. I'll never forget it.

George was sitting to Ronald Reagan's left. I was sitting to his right on the couch. There were other people in the room. Howard Baker was there. George said something like, "We need to accommodate Mulroney more." I said, "No, no. We're holding to our positions. These are well established positions." It was the only time I saw Ronald Reagan lose his temper. He turned and said, "You do it."

So I marched out of the room and grabbed Derrick Burney. I said, "Derrick, come out on the porch." He sat down on the porch. I said, "Derrick, would you reiterate your positions? Because they're now our positions." That was one of my exposures to economic activities.

Zelikow: But otherwise the NSC did not engage as deeply into trade issues or international—

Carlucci: We engaged. We had a man assigned to economics and he followed the issues. I went to meetings between George and Jim. When the free trade agreement got into trouble, we decided we'd have to have Jim personally involved in the negotiations, which he did. He's a brilliant negotiator, as you know. He straightened it out. I was involved in that.

Zelikow: In your Miller Center talk you told a story about coming on board at the NSC. Shultz was worried about you and he threatened to resign. You heard about this from Howard Baker. But Shultz didn't resign. You and Shultz met and "worked things out." How did you work things out? What was the agreed division of labor?

Carlucci: This was when August vacation time was coming up. According to Howard, George went in to see Ronald Reagan and told him he was going to resign because he didn't want the NSC to be as active as it was.

Zelikow: What prompted this? What was the NSC doing at the time?

Carlucci: The only thing I did that caused George real problems was to go over and see Helmut Kohl. I told him that we weren't going to undercut Germany. George came back from a negotiating session on INF and overflew Germany. For some reason George didn't have a close relationship with Helmut Kohl. I went to the President and I said, "Look. The relationship with Germany is extremely important. We cannot roll them. You ought to call Helmut Kohl."

Reagan agreed. He called Kohl. Then I said, "Maybe I ought to go over there." So I went over there and spent some time with Kohl. I think that reassured him, but it irritated George. My contact with Kohl may have been the precipitating event. Maybe it was a series of events. Maybe it was because George couldn't control my activities. He decided to go ahead and offer his resignation. George is more temperamental than the public perception. Don knows that.

Oberdorfer: This was about the fourth time he'd offered his resignation.

Carlucci: Yes. He was always resigning. And Ronald Reagan—bless his heart—Reagan didn't even mention it. Howard mentioned it to me on Air Force One. I said, "Yes." I went into the President's compartment and said, "Look: I understand George has done this. What do you want me to do? I work for you. I'm at your orders. I'll stay, leave, do whatever you want." He said, "No, I want you and George to get together." Typical Ronald Reagan.

About that time George had come to the same conclusion. He called me up and said, "Why don't you come to my house in Palo Alto and we'll play a little tennis?" My wife and I drove up there from Santa Barbara and spent a couple of days with him. But one important thing had taken place in the interim: Cap Weinberger had decided to resign. And Ronald Reagan had decided that I would be nominated for Secretary of Defense. The fact that I was going to Defense, particularly replacing Cap, reassured George. He'd much rather deal with me in Defense than the NSC, and he was very comfortable with Colin.

That's when George came up with the idea of the daily seven o'clock meetings. Colin and I were a bit startled at that. It was fine with me. I get up very early. Colin gets up very early too. Those

meetings were the key to the effective functioning of foreign policy in the last year and a half of the administration.

Zelikow: How would you set up the agenda for those meetings?

Carlucci: There was no real agenda. We'd depend on each other to raise issues.

Zelikow: You'd come in with your card of three things that your staff might have brought to you or that had occurred to you?

Carlucci: I don't think I ever staffed them out. I just went. I figured I knew enough about the issues. I don't know if George staffed them out. I don't think Colin did.

Zelikow: I worked on his staff then. He staffed out some of it. Lunches, certain kinds of meetings—

Carlucci: The lunches were different. For lunches we did do staffing.

Zelikow: That's a good point.

Carlucci: Part of the idea was that we wouldn't be captives of our staff.

Knott: Is there anything that you're particularly proud of in your service during the Reagan years? Is there anything that, if you could do it over again, you would do differently, focusing on the Reagan years?

Carlucci: I think we've covered most of them. I'm pleased I was able to be the point man on the defense buildup. I'm pleased with the changes we made to the procurement system. I'm pleased I was able to reorganize the NSC in the wake of the largest scandal of the Reagan administration. We handled the Iranian issue well, although the air bus incident was indeed a tragedy and very unfortunate. I think we did everything we possibly could to handle it properly. I was able to start the process of reducing the logistics tail in DoD [Department of Defense] through the Base Closure Commission. Those are the things I think about.

Knott: Any major disappointments?

Carlucci: I didn't mention the whole series of military-to-military negotiations with the Soviets.

Oberdorfer: Which you started, right?

Carlucci: Yes. I started the negotiations. I probably ought to say a word about that, because it was an extraordinarily important event at that time and place. I don't know if I described this at the Miller Center. It came about at a [Eduard] Shevardnadze luncheon with Ronald Reagan.

Zelikow: No, you didn't describe it.

Carlucci: Cap was still Secretary. I was sitting next to Cap at the luncheon. Shevardnadze threw up his hands during the discussion on Arms Control and said, "I don't understand this stuff about the Krasnoyarsk radar. You're always saying that it's a violation, and my people say it isn't. Why don't we get our defense ministers together?" I gave the elbow to Cap and said, "Cap, you ought to accept." Cap sort of grumbled.

Shevardnadze followed it up with a letter. I called Cap and I said, "Why don't you accept? Why don't you talk to [Dmitri] Yazov?" Cap said, "All right." Then when George wanted to reply to the letter to Shevardnadze, Cap re-worded it so as to make the terms so onerous that there was no way the Soviets would have accepted it. The whole idea came a cropper and George was upset.

So when I replaced Cap, I changed a couple of things right away. Cap wouldn't let George meet with the JCS alone. I said, "I don't care if you meet with the JCS." I said, "I'll negotiate with the Soviets." We settled on Bern as the site for the first meeting. It was neither Washington nor Moscow and I didn't want to go to Geneva. Besides, my grandmother was born near Bern, and I wanted to see her birthplace.

I forgot to mention something very important. Cap had a very good reason for saying no to negotiations. The Soviets had not yet apologized for the brutal murder of Major [Arthur D.] Nicholson.

Oberdorfer: The attaché in Germany.

Carlucci: He wasn't an attaché, he was on the liaison mission, which had a legitimate intelligence mission in East Germany. He was killed in one of those missions in East Germany, brutally left to die. They wouldn't provide aid. I said to the Soviets, "I'll hold one meeting with you. Then I want an apology."

I had my first meeting with Yazov the Soviet Defense Minister. I set a four part agenda: military doctrine, avoiding dangerous incidents, military-to-military relationships and arms control. The Soviets wanted it to be all arms control. They agreed with the agenda. I said, "After the first meeting, I want an apology on Nicholson."

The first meeting came and went. By the second meeting I hadn't had an apology. So I grabbed Yazov by the arm and I said, "I want that apology or we're going to call off the meeting. Let's go into your office." We took the interpreter and we went into Yazov's office—

Zelikow: Was this a second meeting while still in Bern?

Carlucci: The second meeting was in Moscow.

Zelikow: So you'd already gone out to Moscow for the meeting, but it hadn't yet begun. You were waiting for the apology.

Carlucci: We'd had a dinner and maybe one brief meeting. It was in between meetings that I said, "I haven't seen the apology. Let's go into your office. Let me start writing." He took out his

pen and I took out my pen. I came fairly close to dictating the Soviet apology. I had some help from the Soviet interpreter. I think he was sympathetic to what I was doing. We got an apology out of Yazov that was marginally acceptable. The apology gave me enough cover to proceed with the negotiations.

As Don can tell you, the negotiations caught on fire. They cascaded down. The Soviets made some mistakes because they took me out to see exercises and they allowed me to climb through the Blackjack bomber. It was on Soviet television that an American Secretary of Defense climbed through the Blackjack bomber. The Soviet people said, "We can't even see the Blackjack bomber. How come they're showing it to the Americans?" It tended to stir things up a bit.

They allowed me to lecture at the Voroshilov Military Academy on what was wrong with the Soviet military doctrine. I lectured to 200 of their top generals and admirals. It had a decided impact, and helped bring about changed attitudes within the Soviet military.

Bill Crowe struck up a personal relationship with [Sergei] Akhromeyev. He had him over to the United States and then we began to structure military-to-military activities all the way down. Our military people were just fabulous diplomats. They speak a different language, and it had a decided impact on the overall negotiations. But I defer to Don—

Oberdorfer: Would you to tell the story about Yazov and KAL [Korean Airlines] 007?

Carlucci: We were riding through the Ukraine in the back seat of the car. We'd been silent for a long time. All of a sudden Yazov turned to me and said, "Why did you send that Korean airliner to spy on us?"

Zelikow: Huh?

Carlucci: I said, "Jesus, I didn't. We didn't send an airliner to spy on you. Why the hell did you shoot it down? It was a stupid thing to do. You know we don't use airliners to spy. We can get all the spying we need from satellites." He said, "Yes. That's why I don't understand why you sent the airliner to spy on us." It was one of these circular arguments.

Oberdorfer: What about the interface between the Reagan administration and the Bush administration? You worked with George Bush. But in Shultz's case, he wasn't even invited to the inauguration. He was totally shunned by the incoming Bush administration. I don't know if that was your experience. It looked on paper like this was going to be a simple hand-off between a guy who'd been Vice President for eight years becoming President. It turned out there were a lot of different ideas. How did you see that?

Carlucci: George was dealt with better than I was. At least he got a call from the President-elect, saying that—it was well anticipated that he was planning to select Jim Baker. I got no word whatsoever other than one hour prior. Craig Fuller called me and said, "In one hour, the President-elect is going to announce John Tower as your replacement." That was the first I'd heard anything. I said, "That's fine, he's a great guy. I hope you'll give him your full support."

John came over to see me and I said, "John, you're going to have some confirmation problems." "And how," he said. I said, "What do you want me to do?" John said, "You've got the national command authority. Stay in office until I get confirmed." I said, "Fine, either way."

A day or two before the inaugural I got a call from Chase Untermeyer saying, "The President-elect wants all resignations on the 20th." I said, "You have my resignation. Just take it up." But that's the only communication I had. I don't think any other Cabinet members had anything better.

Zelikow: Did you leave on the 20th?

Carlucci: Yes. Did me a favor because I was able to start at Carlyle a little early.

Oberdorfer: Did he thank you or anything?

Zelikow: Any contact other than with Tower?

Carlucci: No. That was the only contact I had.

Zelikow: It's puzzling because your friends are all over the place.

Carlucci: It is puzzling. Bill Crowe comments on it in his book. He says he didn't understand it at all.

Zelikow: I was wondering whether they offered you a job—

Carlucci: David Packard called me—

Zelikow: There weren't many jobs left that you hadn't filled already.

Carlucci: David Packard called me because I had developed a pretty close relationship with him. He said, "Frank, I'd like to talk to the President about keeping you on." I said, "David, I don't want to stay on. Thanks very much." I had no desire to stay, but everybody likes a little thank you note.

Oberdorfer: It's out of character for Bush.

Carlucci: Yes. It's very much out of character. I asked Craig Fuller about a year or two ago if this was intentional. He said, "No, it was just oversight." Maybe it was Chase Untermeyer. I have no idea. Chase Untermeyer actually worked for me in the Pentagon, so it was even stranger. But the Pentagon is different. You have national command authority so you don't treat it like you treat the Department of HHS [Health and Human Services].

Oberdorfer: Bush thought the Reagan administration had gone too far with the Russians, that's what he initially thought. He then went further himself.

Carlucci: Off the record: I'm curious. Is what you've heard from me consistent with what you've heard from others about Ronald Reagan?

Zelikow: I was not at the Meese interviews.

Knott: We just started, and former Attorney General Meese was the first person we interviewed.

Zelikow: In the more formal—We did informal sessions like the one you participated in before. But we've reorganized our oral history work in the last few years. We've begun to do this in a much more formal, systematic way. We really try to debrief people. We've interviewed thirty officials in the Bush administration now, including all the top people, and we're about to start Clinton. Then we realized that no one ever did Reagan properly. So we decided that we should at least go back and interview key people.

It's a long time now but there are large gaps in the record. For the period you're covering there's nothing dramatically inconsistent in your account. But this isn't the picture you get from people who served in the first administration.

Carlucci: The First Reagan administration saw a much more aggressive President.

Zelikow: Very much with his own interests and idiosyncrasies, which you know Jim Baker could tell you about. If you and Jim Baker were to sit down and compare notes, I think you might find that his experience felt different from yours in certain ways.

Carlucci: Mine is quite consistent with Colin's book. I guess there is a difference in the administrations. Iran-Contra was a big shock to him, had a decided effect. Whether there was a health effect or not, I don't think we'll ever know.

Oberdorfer: Once he and [Mike] Deaver left, the place didn't run—

Carlucci: Yes.

Zelikow: Then you develop different work habits and mental habits—

Carlucci: There's an interesting anecdote, which I might mention. When Colin Powell left as my military assistant, I said, "It's the Navy's turn." I asked the Navy to offer up candidates, and it came down to two candidates: Jonathan Howe and John Poindexter. I picked Jonathan Howe because I thought he was a broader gauged person. That's how John Poindexter ended up at the NSC, and I often thought, what would the course of history have been had I picked Poindexter instead of Howe?

Zelikow: Howe did eventually become deputy NSC advisor. It didn't work out that well for him when it happened, I'm afraid.

Carlucci: Jonathan is a brilliant man. Both he and Poindexter are brilliant, but Jonathan tries to do everything himself. I could call my office on a Sunday afternoon and Jonathan would answer

the phone. I don't work weekends. I don't work long hours. You know the story about me leaving the NSC with a tennis racket over my shoulder because I didn't want people to work late. I could call Sunday afternoon and did every now and then and Jonathan would answer. He was there around the clock, prodigious worker. But he wasn't the right guy for Somalia.

Oberdorfer: Absolutely not.

Zelikow: Sometimes very good people think they can solve whatever problem they're assigned.

Carlucci: I knew that Jonathan had that management feeling. Bill Crowe discussed it with me because people didn't like to work for Jonathan, although he certainly is a brilliant guy.