FRED HOLBORN
10 December 1999
Mame Warren, interviewer

Warren: This is Mame Warren. Today is the tenth of December, 1999. I’m in Washington, D.C., and I’m with Fred Holborn. One of the reasons I so wanted to talk with you is that I understand you practically grew up at SAIS. [School of Advanced International Studies].

Holborn: I’m a person still around who most nearly experienced or at least observed SAIS in its infancy, though I was really quite young and much of this was the end, the last years of the war. But my father, who had occasion to be professor at Yale, had, in fact, taught at the Fletcher School for four or five years, in addition to teaching at Yale, and came to know Christian Herter, as well as others, who had intentions of founding a school in Washington, D.C. Indeed, the first dean of Fletcher became the first director of SAIS. There was, in fact, more than we like to admit, a linkage, or not quite a parentage, but still a linkage between the Fletcher School, which was really the first such school in this country, and SAIS, as it came to be.

So though he was not very deeply involved in the actual planning of the school, he was on the original faculty of the school, one of the four core faculty, during its first year in operation. Subsequently, he taught, I believe it was two summers, or possibly three, but I think two summers, when SAIS, in its early years, its first six years or so, would migrate in the summer to Petersborough, New Hampshire, and carry on for nine or ten weeks up there. So he, twice, at least twice, taught there in 1947 and 1948.

Warren: Now, did you and your family go along?
Holborn: I, in fact, I actually did not, but I visited them. In those days I stayed in New Haven, but there were trains in those days, and I did, in fact, over those two summers—no, he actually was there '47 and '49. I did visit them, I think, three occasions. So I was constantly hearing about SAIS.

I was actually in boarding school during that period of time, so my visual perceptions of SAIS were primarily during spring vacation when the school was actually in session, and a little bit at Christmas and one or two other visits. But I heard a great deal about it. I do remember, at least twice, when members of the faculty came to, I guess, it was a supper party, my parents gave.

My father kept up an interest in SAIS. He was actually asked whether he could have stayed at SAIS, and, in fact, it was not an altogether easy decision for him, but he ultimately decided to go back to Yale, probably not the least because, partly I think my mother, but I think the other pedagogic reason was that he saw a harvest of outstanding Ph.D.s coming out of the war, and I think it was as much the Ph.D. program at Yale, relative to the uncertain Ph.D. future at SAIS that was, I think, most important in encouraging him to go back to Yale.

Then—and I don’t remember the year, it was in the early '50s, he did come down during one semester just on a weekly commute, and taught a seminar. So his direct association with SAIS ended in the early '50s. And much of his association was, I think, due to Christian Herter more than with anybody else. Of course, he also went back and became governor of Massachusetts, and there was a period of four years, from '53 to '57, when he was not in Washington either.

That really coincided to a large extent with the terms of the sponsors, curators, supporters of SAIS, in which Paul Nitze became the most important, because he’d left the government, and
during the ’50s he devoted a large amount of his time and energies to SAIS, together with Milton Eisenhower, who did a large amount of fundraising by far up to that period and a good many years thereafter. He kept an office here. He founded the Center for Foreign Policy Research, which was quite an influential institution in that time.

So I believe subsequently, except possibly once for appearing at one of those meetings for the Center for Foreign Policy Research, the family linkages more or less came to an end, although one of his closest colleagues at Yale, Arnold Wolfers, in fact, left Yale prior to his retirement and came here and became the director of the Washington Center for Foreign Policy Research. He became, I guess, in terms of academic stature and recognition throughout the field of international relations, even though he did relatively little teaching, he probably became the most important figure here for a decade.

Warren: Now, is this someone you knew?

Holborn: Yes, and that is a funny association, too, because Arnold Wolfers and my father, Arnold Wolfers was Swiss by origin, but they had, in fact—well, he was somewhat older, he was ten years older than my father, but they both taught at the same institution in Berlin as young men. It was called the [unclear], which though it was not confined to international relations, was to some extent a kind of freestanding school that was trying to liberate the study of government and political history from some of the constraints in which it had operated in Germany.

Then both he and my father, almost simultaneously, though by different routes, came to Yale and the Wolfers—and he became very recognized very quickly at Yale and became master of one of the colleges at Yale. As young children, my sister and I, roughly when we were between six and ten years old, would sometimes, as frequently as every month, but at least six or seven
times during the year, would go to the Wolfers' for a day and free our family. They did not have any children, so we were, each periodically spoiled by the Wolfers. So there was this rather unusual linkage also.

The fact that I came to SAIS, I was originally here on a part-time basis, and Wolfers had died by the time I came here on a full-time or regular basis. Nonetheless, that had something to do with my coming here, too.

Warren: So shall we move on to when you officially came?

Holborn: No, I think you'll probably want to talk a little bit more about early—

Warren: Well, I would like to. I would like to, but I'm trying to understand, am I looking from a child's perspective, and what did it look like to you?

Holborn: Well, I mean, I guess I'd have to say I was a relatively aware child, and I wasn't that young. I mean, I was in boarding school at the time, so I was fifteen, sixteen, by the time the SAIS story begins. But I can't say I necessarily had a nuance for understanding things, nonetheless I did have an awareness of that at that point.

Warren: What was the original building like? Can you describe that for me?

Holborn: Well, the original building up on Florida Avenue, which, of course, was torn down more than twenty years ago now, I guess, had been part of a central building of a girls' school, which moved. The problem with taking possession of that building was no small matter. In fact, SAIS, unlike the rest of the university calendar, could not open in September that year. It didn't open until October, I think even the middle of the October. They did have a little bit of space in the basement of the Covington and Burling law firm where the administrators and registration, I think, and many other things like that, that took place.
The building was actually quite a good-looking building. It was not an aged building, but—and I suppose the war contributed to this—it was not in terribly good shape. If you talk about particularly things like boilers, it was in need of a considerable amount of maintenance. Of course, SAIS in coming there didn’t have any large amount of funds to spend on that type of thing. It also had to serve many purposes all at once, and a good thing was that classes were very small, so you could use many kinds of room for class purposes as needed.

It was also a dormitory, but in accordance with those times, only men could be residents in the building. Therefore, it was very austere. Each year they would sort of decide what to spend a little bit of money on doing, and even students contributed. They set up a kind of rumpus room in the basement, in which they picked—now, the one big exception to what I say, and it was a very large exception at the beginning, was that the founders of the school decided that the school deserved to have a good kitchen and good meals. So here, at the very end of the war, what many people most remembered about the SAIS building was the gentility of the dining, genteel nature of the dining, which included a Hungarian chef, tablecloths. I believe somebody actually brought the meal to the table.

I recently discovered that the amount of money that went into food and kitchen and staff was not all that far short of what the total income was from tuition. However, that became an extravagance very quickly, and, in fact, it went almost from one extreme to the other, and it became a relatively very limited kind of cafeteria arrangement, though the room was not bad. So that was an indulgence, but you would think that after the war that might have occurred, but in effect this was—

Warren: Right during the war.
**Holborn:** This disappeared very quickly. I believe it only existed for two years on that basis. But the chef was highly admired, particularly at a time when there weren’t all that many places to get decent food, except in Washington, other than a couple of very expensive places and so on. But there wasn’t really very much complaining about it, except there were things that would happen. Pipes would burst and all kinds of minor and a few major emergencies that occurred in the first year.

But gradually, and particularly after the school had its juncture with Hopkins, and when it got its first foundation grant from the Carnegie, which gave it an extra $60,000 a year in resources, some of these improvements came and they even improved the residential aspects of the building. But, still, when you see pictures of it, it’s relatively austere.

**Warren:** I’m interested that you’re talking about the dining room, because I think the very earliest photograph I’ve found of SAIS is a meal in, presumably, this dining room, and the caption talks about how many languages were spoken at the tables and how this was a real opportunity to promote the work of the school.

**Holborn:** Now, of course, the school was really based upon subscriptions by friends and some companies, well, you have to figure what’s relative to today, of course it’s much larger, but mostly in $2,500 units, a few with 5,000, one or two, but primarily they were 1,000 and $2,500 gifts. Of course, when it opened after the war, it had such a small number of students.

So SAIS in the early years was dependent, first, on the G.I. Bill of Rights. I mean, that was a very important factor in making it possible, that you therefore didn’t have to offer financial aid. So the G.I. Bill of Rights was very important.

Secondly, they ran a number of training courses. In fact, my father was involved in the first
one, which was training several affairs officers for Germany, primarily, though some of them ended up going to Japan, but which there was, in fact, very little instruction. I think that went on two years, at least, and then a variety of other smaller training courses. In the ’50s, there was quite a large series of training programs, the main one of some considerable length, for foreign aid, particularly after foreign aid began to expand beyond the Marshall Plan and Europe.

**Warren:** That is a question I wanted to find out. Did the people from SAIS play a role in the Marshall Plan and vice versa?

**Holborn:** Well, of course, Christian Herter played a very large role. He was head of a special committee in the Congress that was created, which traveled all through Europe and all the potential recipient countries, and the conclusions of which were really quite important, both politically and substantively, in building up support for the Marshall Plan. The Marshall Plan did not pass Congress quickly or even easily. It took a full year. We imagine in days past everything happened quickly, and nowadays things happen slowly or never at all, but that was actually quite a long process.

There were some interesting outcomes. One of the members of that select committee, freshmen member of Congress, was Richard Nixon. Richard Nixon, in fact, came and spoke at SAIS, and also came even to the summer school once in New Hampshire. Now, he also had a close connection with one of the other founders who was a professor at Harvard, William Yandell Elliott, under whom I later studied.

So it was him, in fact, I also, in particularly graduate school days, had some knowledge of what was going on. So then while at graduate school, and at the end of it, I taught at Harvard, and I can remember at least four students who came to ask me for advice about SAIS. The first
person that I had taught, who did come to SAIS, was Nicholas Platt, who I believe came in 1957, and he, of course, became a very important figure in the foreign service and was one of the first foreign service officers to go to China after the reopening. He was the ambassador in Zambia, I believe. He was the ambassador in the Philippines. He was the ambassador in Pakistan. He’s now head of the Asia Society in New York.

In fact, when I, myself, came to Washington, then I clearly remember having a long discussion with a student who didn’t come, who’s also a student [unclear], quite close student. Then a third student, whom I had not known when he came to see me, who did go to SAIS, but I can’t remember his name.

Then in the 1950s I actually met the son of one of my colleagues at Yale, who was about to leave Yale and became head of the Newberry Library in Chicago. His name’s Stanley Pargellis. He came here and went in the foreign service. He’s retired. He married, I believe, a niece of Paul Nitze. I could have that slightly wrong, but I’m pretty sure that was his sister’s family. So all these little links kept coming up in those years.

Just to go back to the building, of course they outgrew it pretty rapidly, and essentially they took over an increasing share of the next-door building on 19th Street, which is a rather complicated story because it was the headquarters of the Middle East Institute. I don’t think we need to go into this. It’s a rather long and not easy story, and it was one of the reasons which led to the withdrawal of the first director of SAIS, which was that there was a pretty close connection with the Middle East Institute, and the Middle East Institute essentially wanted to merge with SAIS. Ultimately, the powers-that-be decided that was not a good idea, and there were financial complexities built into that.
Also, the school didn’t want to become excessively known as a school for Middle Eastern studies, though it was one of its strengths at the very beginning. In fact, the majority of the distinguished Ph.D.s that SAIS produced in the first decade, or first twelve or fifteen years, were in Middle East studies. Some became very well known in the field. But practically that building on 19th Street became a good deal of the classroom work and some [unclear].

You probably heard, of course, one of the touchier issues at the very beginning of SAIS was how to assemble an adequate library for SAIS. Now, that was not as big a problem then as it would be now, because in those days almost every government library, Department of State, justice department, any of those, were essentially open to anybody. The Library of Congress was more open then than it is now, though you couldn’t take books out at that time. There was greater, somewhat greater access to the library at Brookings [Institute], which, however, was not across the street until 1960 or ’61. They used to be down on Jackson Place.

What happened was that SAIS was created under the sponsorship of two foundations. One, I guess, the umbrella one, was called the Foreign Service Educational Foundation, which, in fact, was not dissolved, I believe, until the late ’60s, maybe even 1970 or so, though it became more or less a paper institution after [unclear]. That was preceded by, and it also died at some point, probably in the ’50s, and maybe after joining Hopkins, which was called the Diplomatic Affairs Foundation.

Now, that had been created by a group of citizens, several—well, not a large number, actually, but a key person, as well as Herter, and Herter worked for Massachusetts, and perhaps the most important family, and that was the Mason family, who I guess came from Worcester. But they took a great interest in this thing. Priscilla Mason who had gone to Fletcher, a Smith
graduate still alive, very much alive. And she in many ways, especially in the first ten years, but to some extent for another ten years, pretty much ran SAIS.

**Warren:** Tell me about her.

**Holborn:** She came from good New England stock, as they say, and at Smith had acquired a strong interest in international affairs and had attended Fletcher. She came to know Herter. The families probably knew each other maybe a hundred years ago, for all I know. The director, [Halford] Hoskins, and Herter, encouraged her to come to Washington, and she became a—she didn’t have any fancy title, I think in the end it wasn’t even administrative assistant. It was some simple one. But she was the only person who knew every student and who knew every faculty member, and was kind of an often interlocutor between them.

She orchestrated school events, she dealt with emergencies, physical, in terms of the building, and individual, as the cases may be. She often had to take the notes of the trustees or other kinds of meetings. She was an indefatigable person. I remember no task was too small, and no task was too large for her, and probably, for many people, the person of that era they best remember about SAIS.

I don’t know her age, but she’s not nearly as closely associated with the school. She’s made some benefactions, one quite recent, which is to give fellowship to a person who pledges him or herself to go into government service. This is, again, very much the ethos of that period, but it’s true of some other schools, too.

So she was really—I talk about her a little bit in this article I’ve just written. If there is a co-founder to this school, it was her. Since Nitze is the only survivor, people identify him and acclaim him as the founder, and though he was among the four, five, six most important people,
he clearly was not the co-founder. Plus he was very busy during the war. He was going abroad during the strategic bombing survey and the like.

Herter attended most faculty meetings, or at least many faculty meetings. He vetted appointments, both adjunct and permanent. He was the key figure in the negotiations with Hopkins. So he, in that period, had a much greater sense not only of importance, but of guardianship. For example, until he became governor of Massachusetts in 1953, even long after my father had left SAIS, Washington, he would call every Christmas all of the permanent members of faculty and the senior staff.

Warren: Christian Herter would?

Holborn: Yes. I can always remember, it usually came about 11:30 in the morning. [Laughter] So, in essence, of course, my father also did retain a—so he was one of the most important figure in that period of time.

Warren: What was he like as a person? I really don’t know much about Christian Herter.

Holborn: Well, you would not, I think, in meeting him, have judged him to be a politician, or particularly of Massachusetts, though there was an era where he had [unclear]. I mean, I suppose on the Republican side it’s not that surprising. He, from an early age—I think he was actually born in Paris, and his father was a painter of reasonable note. It was a moderately well-endowed family, but actually not a truly wealthy family. That came about more by Herter’s marriage, as it did with Nixon.

But he had played—he was very young at the time, but he actually was at Versailles in some junior capacity, so he came to know all these people like the Dulleses and all the people in the field. He always had a rather serious and academic side, and for, I don’t know for how long it
was in the 1930s, probably in the mid-'30s, he actually lectured, or at least gave a course, at Harvard in the government department, which had international affairs. He then went on to become speaker of the Massachusetts legislature. Sort of an odd transition.

When he was elected in a very safe, rather upscale Republican district, and immediately went on the House Foreign Affairs Committee. He knew people on both sides of the aisle. He was quite close to Fulbright, and he actually was, to a limited extent, brought in on the—not the first year planning of the school, and the like. Foreign affairs was always his first love, and, of course, when he left the governorship of Massachusetts, he came back to Washington and was under secretary of state, and then secretary of state. Then he was out of government for a while, but then he was called back by Kennedy and became the first trade representative in the Kennedy and early Johnson administration.

He suffered even already when he was secretary of state and throughout the ’60s from quite serious arthritis, and it put some restraints upon him at the time. He was also a fanatic—you never hear about such people anymore—a fanatic bridge player. [Laughter] So he was very widely respected. He became independently wealthy, so he was able to do what he wanted to do. They had a place in South Carolina and a place in Massachusetts, a very nice house in Georgetown. But he was a person who was pretty much trusted by everybody. As I say, he was quite close to Nixon, but he was also close to Kennedy.

Actually, the funny thing is, I can’t really document this, but I did find in print that it was probably not more than one year that either full-time or part-time, Rosemary Woods, the famous secretary of Nixon, worked here, and my guess is—

Warren: Here?
Holborn: At SAIS, yes. My guess is, but this is only a guess, that Herter recommended her to Nixon. Of course, she wasn’t a local, she came from Chicago, so I don’t really know exactly how this came to be.

Warren: There are lots of interesting stories in Washington, aren’t there. Well, you’ve made several allusions to the affiliation with Johns Hopkins, and, of course, I’d really like to talk about that and hear of how that came to be, what you know about that.

Holborn: Well, it’s hard to get a common version to this story. In the planning period of SAIS, and especially in the first year of planning, these were largely a bunch of Ivy League types, with only one or two exceptions, and their vision was that SAIS would become an outpost. Their first choice was Harvard, their second choice was Princeton. There were a couple of other discussions, but there weren’t any deep discussions with Hopkins at that time, because Hopkins, of course, had also, in some ways I guess you could call it a predecessor to SAIS, but they, of course, in 1930 received what was then considered a very munificent gift of a million dollars to create a school of international studies. I mean, it had, I think, more of an academic objective, as it were.

Its first head was a man named Frederick F. Dunn, who I think probably had done his Ph.D. at Hopkins, who later became chairman of international relations at Yale, and then went on to head the center at Princeton, migrated from Yale to Princeton, which is a forerunner with the Wilson School. So he retired before it had fully matured, but he led the great migration from Yale.

Yale was not very much in the picture, because it was at that moment, in the late ’30s, and [unclear] continued to survive in the [unclear], was, possibly, together with Chicago, was the outstanding center for studies of international relations. That had that become one of Yale’s great strengths, and many of the people who had been important, particularly in the academic field,
including Wolfers, but people like Gabriel Halman [phonetic], Bernard Brody [phonetic] and a whole series, William Foxx [phonetic], Percy Corbett [phonetic], a whole group of people. So Yale was, though it was primarily looking to the training of Ph.D.s and the likes was seen as sort of offbounds. Plus, you had the Dunn situation that left Hopkins and so on, so I don’t think it’s part of the story.

Then there was—because he had some interest in the evolution of SAIS, was Henry Wriston, who was the president of Brown. Now, Brown was not, or even less than today, a graduate institution. They had a few programs, [unclear], but it didn’t have really an international relation, and he was very strongly interested, and he’s a man who lived forever. His son, actually, had gone to Fletcher and became CEO of Citicorp. But Henry Wriston in those days, I guess, you had to retire at sixty-five. He became a very important figure in the Council of Foreign Relations in New York. So he had sort of an interest, but he didn’t really have the base to provide. Plus, Brown was not in the greatest economic health at that time, I guess. I don’t know the details of that.

However, James Bryant Conant, probably the busiest man in American, president of Harvard, who, of course, was here during most of the war, did attend two or three meetings [unclear]. Ultimately, a delegation went to see him, three or four of the founders, to try to establish a connection with Harvard. In any case, Conant was not a person who strongly believed in outposts across the world, even though, of course, he accepted Dunbarton Oaks here in Washington as a present. He was a little bit dubious about international relations, even as an independent field of study.

Because of his long absences from Cambridge, he was not on the best terms with the older
members of the Harvard corporation. I think there was only one member of the corporation who had any [unclear]. But also when this Fletcher School was established, and, of course, only a few miles from Harvard, but they were established in their original trust and their stationery until quite recently in different wording always had the Fletcher School of Law Diplomacy.

Warren: The Fletcher School of Law Diplomacy?

Holborn: Yes, that's what they're called. It says in association or in cooperation with—the wording changed a little bit and got diluted over time—Harvard University. Some very distinguished Harvard professors, like William Langer, who was the most important professor of European diplomatic history, at least in the country, would go and give courses at Fletcher with extra money. It was not a long commute. So they had a pretty strong teaching faculty in its time. So that linkage would also have been affected, even though it was not—Harvard took no financial responsibility, and it didn't—nonetheless, that was very important to Fletcher to have that.

Warren: Now, why did I think there was a connection to Tufts University?

Holborn: Well, it is part of Tufts. It is part of Tufts, but, nonetheless, the Fletcher School was in Tufts [unclear].

Warren: Too complicated to understand.

Holborn: It's rather complicated. The president of Tufts later became head of the Smithsonian, was also [unclear] and head of the National Geographic, I guess, and was a fairly close friend of Conant's, even though Conant was much tougher and more vibrant in decisiveness, but in any case—

Warren: I need to turn the tape over.

[Begin Tape 1, Side 1]
Warren: Okay.

Holborn: Finally, in this first go-round, the only place that came up with a specific proposition was Clark University in Worcester, Massachusetts, which in that period of time and particularly even earlier, in the '20s and '30s, was one of the leading centers of graduate education in America. I mean, even Sigmund Freud came and taught there a year. It was very famous in psychology and in European history and geography. Our founders believed that geography was one of the fundamental fields. But Clark, in the end, came up with a proposition which would have cost SAIS more than it would have cost, and the linkage would have been primarily in geography. In any case, it wasn’t accepted, and it went no further.

So then there was kind of a break in this, and there may have been sub rosa discussions before that, because the president at the time of SAIS’s founding of Hopkins was a person who had a very strong interest in international affairs. There was also Isaiah Bowman, who was as well known a geographer as there was. Of course, he worked also for the state department, he was a geographer. He was at times not much more than a half-time president of Hopkins, but that didn’t matter in those days. He was on the whole a very well-respected president.

But then he retired and we got Detlev Bronk, who was something totally different. He was a distinguished scientist and had become at the same time—all these people were double dippers. I guess he became head of the National Academy of Sciences, which was not a full-time job in those days. So he had an office in Washington, too. I don’t know quite who made the first—the controversial part of all this is that the—I forget the name of the school, but he was Wilson’s ambassador to Great Britain in the First World War, from South Carolina. The school that was set up at Hopkins.
Warren: The Walter Hines Page School?

Holborn: Yes. For all practical purposes, throughout the '30s they could raise no more money, just essentially this million dollars. Not unique to Hopkins; [unclear]. So there were a few bits and pieces, but nothing of any [unclear]. Mr. Dunn left, as I say, to go to Yale, and there was really no natural successor. They had one other professor, a fairly distinguished man named Penrose, who was a kind of political geographer also. I think he was born in England, actually, but in any case he was a well-known figure. And it absorbed and he became the director, or at least—yes, I think he became the director for a period, was Owen Lattimore. And so the argument is whether or not Hopkins really wanted to bail out and whether Owen Lattimore was part of the problem.

Warren: What do you think?

Holborn: I tend to believe so, but you get all kinds of denials and so on. I mean, I do know that there were people associated with SAIS, including I think, Herter, who were very troubled by the coexistence of that school, because it didn't, in fact, disappear immediately, and felt that SAIS would suffer in that people would mistake it for the Walter Hines Page School. That much I'm pretty sure of.

Now, Hopkins behaved from its side, from the academic, behaved reasonably well in all this, but in terms of—well, he was going—of course, his case started in nineteen—the legal proceedings started in 1950. But I think it's pretty hard to separate that out.

On the other hand, I mean, the inability to raise money and so on. So there was, in fact, a midwife in this, which was the interests of the Carnegie Corporation, and they were beginning to move part of their activities into international affairs, international studies. The head of Carnegie, I think really the operating out of Carnegie, was John Gardner. He became kind of the third party in
this, and he gave the bait of a $300,000 grant if the association was successfully negotiated and completed.

**Warren:** The association between SAIS and Johns Hopkins?

**Holborn:** Yes. So that was a good piece of bait in those times, which reduced the pressures to some extent on both sides and allowed them to make the improvements in building and in hiring more full-time faculty. It was very important.

So one never gets the impression that President Bronk, who, of course, didn’t remain president that much longer, because there was an interim before Milton Eisenhower came, it was not something that greatly seemed to move him, as far as I can tell from what I’ve read, and there was a good deal of opposition to it on the Hopkins campus, particularly from economists and from historians.

**Warren:** Really?

**Holborn:** They felt that this would be a trade school and that it would have standards different from those of the university. It wasn’t by any means a uniform judgment, and the president did call on various respected senior figures to give their verdict, people like Carl Swisher, who gave, on the whole, a favorable verdict. But the economists were very upset by it and felt it was—particularly they felt it would be economics on the cheap. Hopkins had a fairly distinguished—became even more distinguished in the years immediately after that, but there was some tension on the Homewood side in the ranks.

**Warren:** So I’m really trying to understand. I mean, this is a genuine question, because I came across and became aware of the Walter Hines Page School, and I said, “Oh, this must have been the predecessor to SAIS.” But then when I delved into the records of it, it didn’t seem to have
anything in the world to do with the SAIS, and yet it seemed to die about the same time SAIS came in, but nobody says that. And that’s what I’m trying to understand from somebody who was pretty much around and knows what was going on.

**Holborn:** I believe that—I mean, I think part of the objection of faculty, too, was that this was a fairly close held set of negotiations, and there was some suspicion from there about what the motives might be. But, yes, I think it’s clear that some of the senior administrators and trustees felt that this would provide a glide path for the elimination of and the closing of the Walter Hines School. They didn’t want to fire anybody, but they didn’t want—but obviously couldn’t exist on that narrow a base and compete.

**Warren:** So the affiliation took place. How did it work?

**Holborn:** Well, I think in terms of making it possible, certainly the most immediate result which was exemplified by this John Gardner role, it certainly greatly strengthened SAIS, or SAIS/Hopkins, in getting money from foundations. I think foundations are not generally inclined to give grants, and some of the grants were for buildings as well as for programs, to an institution whose long-term survival isn’t pretty much assured. Since SAIS had no endowment to speak of, and since its budget had to be cobbled together every year from short-term contributions, annual contributions or short-term contracts, this was not appealing to foundations. So the effects were almost immediately favorable.

Now, a lot of people gave different explanations, of course. In terms of reciprocity between Homewood and Washington, I mean, we talk about that until this day. I mean, there has always been talk that more SAIS students should take courses in Baltimore, and to some extent vice versa, and that this would have a reinforcing effect and all these kinds of things. But it’s
never really—we did make two joint appointments, important ones, in late '59 or '60, when Robert Tucker and George Liska were simultaneously professors at Homewood and SAIS, and they at that time spent roughly half their time in each place.

Warren: Robert Tucker and?

Holborn: And George Liska, L-I-S-K-A. Liska just retired three years ago, and Tucker retired a little earlier, in 1990 or '91. And they were big people in international relations, both here and there. They produced Ph.D.s in both places. I think in Tucker’s case, he produced more up there. So that was actually a juncture point.

At least in my experience here, I don’t think in any year there’s been more than two or three individual courses taught by professors from Baltimore, usually one from the School of Public Health, though there’s been slightly more use of SAIS professors for undergraduate teaching in Baltimore in recent years, Professor Doran and Lyman Miller [phonetic], until he left this year, and Wayne Smith. So at any moment there are probably two or three that are teaching an individual course up there.

But the distance is just—and of course, the fact that we can direct interlibrary loan, get books from the Eisenhower Library, that’s important to the school, particularly for the professors. But to be frank about it, and actually I’m always rather critical of this, but I would say of our graduates nearly a half in any year have never seen the Homewood campus. And of that group, and the main way I encourage students to go there is—it sounds silly—but is to go and see a lacrosse game and then spend a few hours in Baltimore.

There are a few who go up doing research papers in their second year, who go and use the library. And occasionally there have been functions. I guess this year there was a talk given there
by former Prime Minister Peres, and fourteen or fifteen SAIS students went up, I know. A few events. But it’s still the forty miles or forty-one miles or whatever is still a considerable chasm, though we have a few students who live in Baltimore, we have a couple of professors who live in Baltimore. I have a student who goes to concerts in Baltimore, which is very unusual. So I don’t know, I really don’t know how high anticipations were on each side of more melding taking place. There isn’t much in the record to give you much guidance.

Now, every president of Hopkins, when they’ve come in has set this as, if not a primary objective, at least as a secondary objective of their administration. Particularly Milton Eisenhower, who probably went further than any. He spent more time on SAIS matters than any president. He did a great deal of the fundraising directly, or sometimes in association with Nitze, but he did a great deal of it. He spent time here. He brought his brother Ike here. For him and Francis Wilcox, who was appointed as dean in 1961, was his choice, alone, really, and they became very close, and I think had known each other before, but I don’t know of any intimacy between deans of SAIS and presidents of the [unclear].

Warren: I wondered about that. It seemed to me, just pure conjecture, that Milton Eisenhower would have taken an unusual interest in SAIS just because of his connections. But I don’t know that that’s true. What did he bring to SAIS? What did Milton Eisenhower bring?

Holborn: Well, a much more frequent presence. But as I say, he actively worked raising money to make it possible to leave Florida Avenue, to build this building.

Warren: I wondered whether he was instrumental in bringing big names, bringing speakers in, or anything like that.

Holborn: Well, it’s possible, but actually SAIS has never really, that’s not been a big problem
getting—that’s one thing, being in Washington, I think they have more trouble getting people to come to Baltimore to speak than they do—that’s, I think, not one of our big problems. Though undoubtedly it must have been, but I can’t cite specific occasions and names. But he would occasionally come. When there was an important lecture here, he would come. I mean, every president—I mean, Muller had an interest in SAIS. It wasn’t because—I mean, as president, he was the president who most nearly acted like or wanted to be secretary of state.

Warren: Steven Muller?

Holborn: Nanjing, even though that’s become largely associated with SAIS, was his idea of SAIS out there. He met a lot of opposition to that in Baltimore. In that case it was more or less devolved to SAIS. That was an issue that President Brody’s been managing this very week. On that, a president has to have, because you’re dealing with the president of Nanjing University, and no dean or high diplomacy, so each president has been to Nanjing more than once. Of course, there’s a little bit of subsidiary from the university, but it’s greatly diminished.

Now, that’s a funny thing, because early in SAIS, in the ’50s particularly, and to some extent into the very early ’60s, but particularly in the ’50s, ’55 on, the then-dean and several of the professors here wanted to establish a SAIS/Hopkins presence in many places, but particularly in Asia, and particularly in Southeast Asia, in addition to Middle East interests here, special interests, and very early on an interest from Southeast Asia.

Now, Dean [Philip] Thayer had been a sort of—he had worked in Malaysia as a commercial lawyer and had had considerable exposure to the region. But there were, of course, established, and neither lasted more than four years, maybe five years in one instance, there were Hopkins centers established in Rangoon, Burma, of all places, which Dean Thayer was going to
be the—Burma was going to be the pivot of the Asian drama, as you might say. [Laughter] Then second one was in Indonesia and Java, not in Jakarta, but another city.

I guess it’s no secret any longer, those were heavily funded. In fact, it involved very few SAIS students, three or four, that would go to either place, usually beyond their two years, but it was heavily subsidized by the CIA, and both were thrown out by the government of Burma and the government of Indonesia ultimately.

Dean Thayer had also hopes of creating one in India and possibly Pakistan, although Pakistan was a little more uncertain in those days. I guess if they’d had their way, they would—then, of course, there was the creation in ’55, though the negotiations on that began in ’53, of Bologna, which is the enduring part of this whole enterprise.

Warren: Now, the Bologna Center opened, that was almost coincident with the affiliation of Hopkins, wasn’t it?

Holborn: No. ’55.

Warren: It was very close.

Holborn: Well, but the [unclear]. Now, again, I guess my colleagues don’t like me saying this too much, but it did have some independent support in Grove Haines, who was a full-time professor at SAIS, had played a very active role. It took up seed money from CIA and there was, in fact—I mean, that link was completely broken before the ’50s had ended, or at least by the end of the ’50s. There was a member of the—[unclear] member of the staff, who was in fact an CIA officer.

Warren: In Bologna?

Holborn: In Bologna, for the first three or four years. In terms of actually the building, that came
out of normal funds, counterpart funds from the Marshall Plan, PL-480. So I don’t, in fact, believe it was a huge sum, but there was certainly an interest. In that time, William Colby, who later was head of the CIA, was then the CIA station chief in Rome, and Luce was ambassador.

On the other hand, I cannot, after having said all that, I can’t really, in the case of Bologna, unlike the case of—I really, in terms of academic program activity, faculty appointments, so far as I can tell, I don’t see any outside hand.

**Warren:** What do you think the Bologna center brought to SAIS? What is its role in the mission of SAIS?

**Holborn:** Well, I don’t know. I mean, it was to some extent in the case of the creation, but I mean, it did become integral to SAIS, but it was really a period of where foundations picked it up.

I was involved as an undergraduate and in variety of ways afterwards with the Salzburg seminar. It was the first American institution created after the war for American studies in Europe. It was not a degree-granting institution, but it brought outstanding people to teach for six weeks. They were usually between four- and six-week session. That was the favorite outpost for foundations, though it took the energy of a lot of individuals and professors did not get paid for what they did, and they inherited this castle, and so on.

But in those days there were very few foreign students in this country. It was just beginning, that has to be said, at that time, and there were very few foreign students from Europe. So it was sort of a sense of mission of the university and others that there ought to be more access in Europe, for which there was practically none on the continent. It was a little different in England in American studies. It did fill a need. You couldn’t bring students over here at that time or pay for it. It was a little more common at the Ph.D. level, you know, here and there, but unless
you had some money, [unclear]. So I don’t think there was—it had some political overlay to it, but it was primarily a sense of educational mission.

**Warren:** How do they conduct things at the Bologna center? What goes on there? Goodness knows, I’m not there, and I don’t have the opportunity to see it.

**Holborn:** It, of course, was set up, it had—it’s different than the Salzburg Seminar, because it was aimed, first of all, of [unclear] university as a center for the study of Europe, European exposure for SAIS students. SAIS students, now and then, when they go there, go there usually for their first year and then come back to Washington for their second year. The idea was it would be primarily for students whose field of concentration was European studies, which was always one—that has remained a fact, but nowadays there are also a fair number of students in international relations, and a moderate number in American foreign policy.

People in other regional fields are not highly encouraged to go there, but a few do, and a few go for only one semester after they’ve been here for a semester or two. Then it was to be half Americans and half Europeans. For the Europeans, it was to get exposure as much to American studies and American foreign policy and fields of that sort, with the expectation that for most of them it would be a single year without Washington. Between 1955 and almost to 1990, there were rarely more than six or seven non-American Bologna students who would come back. Then the policy was changed and the doors were opened, and now probably close to two-thirds of the European students do come here.

**Warren:** Who’s the faculty there? Do faculty from here go over there and vice versa?

**Holborn:** No, episodically a member of faculty here will spend a year there, or a semester there, and I think seven or eight members of faculty have done that. But it has a core faculty, which is
actually not a tenured faculty, but called resident faculty, who has been more or less tenure. But it is heavily based dependent upon getting professors from other institutions. A lot of the most notable faculty there, in fact, comes from Paris or Munich, and, of course, some from Bologna, University of Bologna itself. It usually changes deans every five years. The present one will stay seven or eight and the first one stayed fifteen.

Warren: Is the dean there usually European, or is it somewhat from here?

Holborn: No, it’s American. Nowadays, every dean here goes there—well, I think the academic dean goes twice, the dean of students goes at least twice. Dean Wolfowitz goes at least once, but often twice, and some of the professors go and spend a week there. I think they also provide a link for students who will be coming here in whatever field of study they come to do.

Warren: Have you been?

Holborn: I’ve been once. Actually, once I visited Bologna before I anything to do with SAIS.

Warren: So is the feel of the place different, or is it parallel to what goes on here?

Holborn: Well, because the large majority of students do come back here now, there has to be some parallelism curriculum in meeting requirements, language requirements, core requirements, and the core basic courses. Obviously, an overlap of the Europeans. I mean, they give courses—many courses are not given here, but there has to be a body of courses which closely parallel, especially economics, of course, basic economics and [unclear]. So it’s about a half-and-half proposition.

It’s hard to separate myth from reality here, and it varies a great deal, to my surprise, from year to year. I mean, everybody speaks of the Bolognese, and some years they come in like a seeming herd, and remain very close primarily to each other. Other years they meld fairly quickly.
But their involvement in SAIS varies from year to year. Sometimes, I mean, there are students here who feel Bolognese are cocky in the sense they’ve been through experientially through something you haven’t been through.

SAIS Washington students and occasionally a Bologna student will argue that Bologna is a little bit easier. Some years I think there has been evidence, especially in economics, people have gotten a little further here than they have, but I wouldn’t say that. SAIS students have this image of Bolognese which is sort of half the day is a happy hour and traveling on weekends and so on. So some of it gets a little bit exaggerated.

I mean, Bologna has its problems. First of all, nowadays American students, such a high proportion of students who apply to schools of this sort, or indeed to any school, have had a junior year of law or have taught in Japan. The sense of having foreign exposure, which was one of the attractions of it, is not quite as important to people. Also, for parents, they find it hard to justify sort of a second junior year abroad.

Also, with Bologna, of course, as you know until this year they had a communist mayor who was [unclear], but a very enlightened mayor, Italy was considered very volatile politically and important. Well, Bologna is not the center of Europe anymore, and if you had to refound a school, the chances are you probably wouldn’t select Bologna.

There are some people who now feel we should now be in Berlin. As you know, Hopkins is opening up a university-wide office and venture in Berlin or in Munich. [unclear]. So Bologna as a site does not seem quite as integral to appreciation of European politics.

Warren: Why do you think Bologna was selected?

Holborn: It was largely to do with Grove Haines, who was the founder, whose specialty was in
European history was Italy, and he had a passion for Italy, and made that and it wasn’t selected by looking over world geography.

Warren: It was one man’s desire? Well, he got it. The pictures look like it’s very attractive to me, but then I’m very fond of Italy, too. Well, we’re getting towards the end of this tape. I want to save a big question for later. Who do you think SAIS students are?

Holborn: Well, it’s become extraordinarily eclectic. First of all, this year for the first time we’ve hit forty percent of our students are foreign students, here in Washington, apart from Nanjing and Bologna. The school has grown in scale, and individual fields of concentration are much more important to people in terms of students they associate with and classes they take are much more important than they were twenty or twenty-five years ago. So people almost, you know, particularly in larger fields like Latin American studies and European studies and the like.

Then the students at Bologna are not quite the same as the students at SAIS, because they tend to be younger. Indeed, there are some Hopkins undergraduate students, a few, that are there, as well. It tends to attract more students who are coming directly out of college, whereas the large majority of students in Washington have had an interval between college of working. So these are students unlike most graduate students, who for the most part are not coming out of college. For example, the percentage that are married has probably dropped some from when I was an instructor.

Of course, the center of gravity within the school has changed in terms of career objectives and in terms of what they study and what they’re required to study. So we have actually a near reversal in the ratio of people going into government work as against private sector work from what it was in the 1950s.
Warren: Meaning that—

Holborn: Smaller number going into government.

Warren: Smaller numbers going into government service, more going into industry.

Holborn: The one other thing that has risen so much that offsets this a little bit is that there’s a modest rise in the number that go into NGOs, non-profit organizations. To some extent didn’t exist in the ’40s and ’50s. I mean, it wasn’t nonexistent, but it wasn’t as important, or certainly not as important as international affairs.

And, of course, the costs have risen so much, and therefore the overhang of loans and the need to repay loans, or to make money, or desire to get a rapid increase in income is much stronger now than it was earlier. Sometimes I think that’s reality, but sometimes I think it becomes almost an excuse.

And, you know, there’s a change in American education generally. I mean, there’s no question, I think it’s universal or nearly universal for students say compared to even as recently as fifteen years ago, certainly anything beyond that, know much less history. Cultural interests have changed as they have in the population as a whole greatly. There is much less desire to read whole books. That’s not just Internet, but that’s part of [unclear].

This is partly financial and partly for career motives, we have, and I think it’s become a problem for SAIS, recognized by the faculty, and in fact we’re making some [unclear] changes next year, which is in part too many students are spending far too much time doing things other than school. In a two-year program, that matters. Sometimes out of the best of motives, internships, sometimes out of absolute financial necessity, that’s always been true for some people, but people are spending—it’s not that they’re not as bright and in some ways are brighter,
but they just don’t spend as much time.

**Warren:** We’re at the end of this tape.

[Begin Tape 2, Side 1]

**Warren:** This is Mame Warren. Today is the 10th of December, 1999. I’m in Washington, D.C. Tape two with Fred Holborn.

All right. I think we ought to talk about Fred Holborn the teacher, don’t you? What brought you here?

**Holborn:** Well, I came to Washington in 1959 and I worked in government for ten years, so I was in Washington. I taught here first. When I left the government, at one interval I spent a semester here in the then-Foreign Policy Center and then subsequently I taught a course one spring, and that, I guess, happened because I knew Wolfers and I did know the then-dean, Francis Wilcox, a bit, mainly because of our mutual interest in Congress. He’d been head of the staff of the Foreign Relations Committee for a number of years.

Actually, it just sort of gradually evolved, actually, because I continued to work—well, after I left the executive side of government and the White House and state department, primarily, I worked on the Hill, primarily on the House Foreign Affairs Committee. When I originally came on a full-time, more regular basis at SAIS, I was half in the Congress for five years and half here. Then in 1976, this evolved into full time.

**Warren:** So not until ’76 were you full time.

**Holborn:** Yes.

**Warren:** But you came part time in ’67?

**Holborn:** Well, I taught in ’67 and ’68. ’71, I began actually teaching half time. It actually turned
a little more than half time.

Warren: So why do you like SAIS? What is it about SAIS that interested you, besides living in Washington?

Holborn: Yes, that was a consideration, but I’m not sure that I would necessarily have resisted, strongly resisted going elsewhere. Well, partly, my subject interests coincided quite well with SAIS, and I felt I had a little bit of understanding of the place, and I think a byproduct of teaching here, though I think it’s overdone by some professors, it does permit you to do other things, keep a hand to some extent, sometimes [unclear], sometimes directly.

On and off I’ve done a few things in Congress. I helped out one presidential commission a bit. So it gives some leeway, which is harder to do in other places, even though nowadays in the age of airplanes it’s a little different. And I’d always known a few people here even when I had no association with it. On the whole, I felt I had good students and that, on the whole, persisted. I mean, there were some periods better than others, but it doesn’t go sequentially.

Warren: Well, take me into the classroom with you. What is it you want your students to learn?

Holborn: Well, it’s an odd thing to say. What you most want students to learn are things that probably you wanted them to learn earlier, or at least in some cases earlier, which is really essential skills as to how to read, not only in breadth, but in some depth. I really like working with students on papers, even though some of them have terrible beginnings. That’s why I have to leave shortly after 4:15. A paper that looked rather unpromising eight or ten weeks ago has actually turned out extremely well—I actually like working with students on some of the simplest things, as presentation, try to force them to read whole books, encouraging them to read whole books. Write at least one decent paper while they’re here that they’re fairly proud of, possibly can
use in other ways, in terms of employment, possible publication. In a few instances that happened.

The school's not driven by some overriding methodological imperative, and it's not excessively sectarian in terms of political standpoint, ideology or the like. It's become a slightly more conservative school since I've been here. It's political. The politics of the professors who write the most for a wider public, at least, [unclear] I think the school is somewhat more conservative, even though the students themselves haven't become that much more conservative. Even though if you take the faculty as a whole, it's reasonably diverse, but still in terms of if you open up a newspaper, and I guess that's been particularly true during the Clinton years, it is somewhat more conservative. At times I worry a little bit about that.

**Warren:** Are there any of your colleagues who you think ought to be included in this book that we ought to be talking about, or anybody on the faculty who particularly stands out, or any students who particularly stand out?

**Holborn:** There's one member of the faculty who's still here who goes back quite a long distance, and he came full time to SAIS in 1961 or '62, but he had taught here part time before, Isaiah Frank in the economics department.

**Warren:** Tell me about him.

**Holborn:** Whose retirement we celebrated twelve years ago, but he's never retired. [Laughter] He's an international economist. I wouldn't say he's one of the most notable scholars in the field, but of some note. He was a very important figure going back to the Marshall Plan period and the state department, but particularly in the trade field. He was not at the very center of the Marshall Plan, but he knew all the people. He's a very benign character, and I think he's reluctant to say anything critical about much of anything. He's very much old school, fairly liberal economist, and
he’s seen a lot. That might be a possibility. I mean, are you talking about current students or recent alumni?

Warren: Anybody.

Holborn: Well, why don’t you give me over the weekend and call me and I’ll [unclear].

Warren: One of the things I want to hear about is something that when I said I was coming to SAIS everybody started talking about something called crisis simulation.

Holborn: Oh, yes.

Warren: All I’ve seen is a couple of pictures, but I don’t really know what that means. Are you responsible for that?

Holborn: [unclear].

Warren: Tell me how you got the idea and what it is.

Holborn: Well, it started as a fairly spontaneous activity among a small number of students back in 1984, and I was not the inspirer of that [unclear] and the fact there were two professors, myself and another professor involved that first year because they need some help and guidance. So on a fairly primitive basis we had it, though we didn’t really have the—we were only in this building then. We didn’t really have the best physical setting for it, and with a relatively short period of preparation for what we were doing.

But out of that there were four students who suggested that we make this, first of all, make this into a small seminar which would have an academic content, too, in terms of crisis management, and somewhat more theoretical, [unclear] crisis simulation. But then this relatively small group, and it’s usually never been more than eight, at most nine, would become the control group for crisis designing scenarios, giving the world as it would be in whatever date the crisis
would be envisaged. The one we’re doing this year 2004. And select players and then for a month we essentially play history from now, or in any case, from some period between now and when the actual crisis is, and then we have a two-and-a-half-day fairly intensive crisis. It’s not war games, though there is usually some military ingredient or aspect to it most inevitably. It’s a schoolwide activity and isn’t based in any one field of study, which is, I think, one of its virtues today, because I could bring some people from different and some common schoolwide endeavor.

I think it’s probably the school activity that had led to the most, ultimately to the most, the largest number of marriages. [Laughter] [unclear]. We particularly try to insert domestic political pressures, particularly press, and these are very agile and usually quite imaginative press corps, and most of the time a Congress, as well as an international component, whether it be the security council or a looser international.

Warren: Well, give me an idea of what you mean. What kind of crisis? What’s happened? Give me an example of some year. What took place?

Holborn: Well, you usually have actually a multiple crisis, one is usually a sort of spot event. We had the kidnaping of former President Carter in Latin America. We had a couple of—a computer breakdown of the stock exchanges, financial [unclear]. We’ve had assassination at one time, not of our president. So we have [unclear]. We have all the usual kinds of crises. We’ve had several dealing with the Gulf and Iran in the early days. Russian involvement in Iran. We’ve had several India/Pakistan crises for all the things that one would guess in terms of potential.

Warren: So do students play all the roles?

Holborn: Yes, it’s very much a role-playing activity. They actually, the first thing they have to do, the first week after we’ve selected the players, depending on what the components of the
program they’re in, administration or press, they have to write their CVs as players, which are
totally separate from their real life. They have to then live with this. All of us then have to live
with this new character and role-playing for the following month.

Warren: For a month?

Holborn: Yes.

Warren: Are they supposed to stay in character twenty-four hours a day?

Holborn: No. No, it’s not like Middlebury language immersion, no. But when we’re in the game
phase. I mean, to a limited extent, players, more in fun deal with each other at least by those
names or whatever it is, but, no, it’s not a full-time immersion. Usually or quite often we have
people who really completely have to change their political beliefs and play. Several years ago, we
used to have down the street here, we had the National Rifle Association, and by far the most
liberal members of all the players became the Senate Minority Leader, and his CV, he’d gotten his
M.A. from Oral Roberts College and his undergraduate from some small college in Kansas. He
used to give press conferences in front of the National Rifle Association building. [Laughter]
Played it very well. Though usually the president does have a pretty large say in the nature of the
administration, because usually the president is inclined to try to develop a lie to which he or she
is comfortable. Sometimes we have to support that, because there’s a slight tendency for people
either to want to be liberal Republicans or moderate Democrats, which makes it sometimes a little
too narrow. We’ve had already had three Gore administrations. [Laughter]

Warren: How widespread is it? Does the whole school get involved?

Holborn: No, no. No, essentially we have about forty people directly involved, plus a few others
that we use for minor roles, walk-on roles, or they’ll come and help us on the weekends.
Warren: Is there an audience, or are they doing it for themselves to feel it through? What’s the purpose?

Holborn: We don’t have a large audience. It’s mostly experiential. We’ll ask a few people to come and observe it, but we do film all of it, and quite often we, not every year, but we then have a compressed film and we show that to succeeding years. So we have pretty good records of it in that respect of each one. Then anybody who wants to make tapes and so on, or participate can do so. And occasionally we’ve had a couple of press people. The Hopkins magazine had quite a long article on it about, let’s see, it was the Upton [phonetic] administration, which would have been—well, it’s not that recent. 1992, I guess.

Warren: What do you think the students gain from this? What do you hope that they take away from this experience?

Holborn: Well, first of all, to get out of their normal groove, to have to think about, to deal with the unexpected, to work against a time table, to feel a sense of pressure. You know, you can’t exactly parallel what crisis management is in government, but some people have felt that it’s done even that. But that’s not our primary purpose. At the very beginning, as I say, we had another professor, he dropped out after three years, and actually he left SAIS. Since then, as far as the professorial side of it is concerned, I’ve been in charge myself.

Warren: So is this something that will survive you, do you think?

Holborn: I don’t know the answer to that. There is quite a lot of interest in crisis simulation as a technique of teaching now, and there are in the school two or three other less ambitious and short-term crises a day, rather than [unclear]. African studies has one and Southeast Asia studies had one, or I guess Asian studies, about a month ago, and one or two other classes have this type
of thing. So crisis simulation will certainly outlast me, whether as an enterprise of this scale, I don’t know.

**Warren:** I think it sounds fascinating. I’d love to sit in sometime. It sounds very interesting.

So I understand that at some point in your career you were given an award in excellence, for excellence in teaching.

**Holborn:** Quite a lot of professors have gotten that. Yes.

**Warren:** It’s given by the students. I would think that would feel very special.

**Holborn:** By the students, yes. That was several years ago.

**Warren:** A while ago we were talking about the fact that there isn’t a lot of interplay between the SAIS students going to Homewood, and vice versa. Yet isn’t there a huge graduation at the end?

**Holborn:** Well, until 1979, except for the first five years before it became part of Hopkins, all SAIS students when they graduated went to the graduation in Homewood, and then subsequently there was a luncheon and degree-awarding ceremony up there, only preceded by some sort of reception here the night before. But when Dean [George] Packard came in in 1979, he decreed that there would be commencements here in the afternoon, except one exception, it’s always been in the mid afternoon of the same day as the Baltimore commencement, so people therefore can go to both. Particularly Ph.D.s are strongly encouraged, because they actually get their Ph.D. from the president, but on the whole, not a huge number go.

There’s always, apart from the deans, there’s always one professor who goes every year. I guess I’ve done it three times. On one case we arrived late because the bus got lost. [Laughter] Buses. But it’s usually one or two busloads, and for some of them it’s the first time. I like
commencement in Baltimore because they do it rather well.

Warren: Well, I arrived just after commencement, so I haven’t seen one yet, but I understand it’s a monstrous affair.

Holborn: Yes. A huge tent, yes. So now they have a commencement speaker here, and there’s a tremendous amount of fuss about who. You know, the students want to make it their choice. Sometimes the dean or deans have some other notions. Once or twice there’s been pressure from Baltimore to have a particular speaker. Once that turned out well. Once it was a disaster of the first order. In addition, that particular individual is now in prison. [Laughter] But, of course, the students always tend to want somebody who’s unobtainable, and you get every year the people want, well, it finally stopped in the case of George Kennan, he just doesn’t give commencement. Then we have Margaret Thatcher sort of things, and so on and so forth, but students like to have public figures, on the whole.

Warren: Who’s the most memorable person to you?

Holborn: Commencement speakers?

Warren: Yes. Or any kind of speaker. Who has come and given a talk here and it’s made a difference?

Holborn: Actually, very early on when I was first here, there was a two-day conference, which I thought was the best conference we ever had in my time here at SAIS. We had George Kennan and Raymond Aron from Paris.

Warren: I don’t know who that—

Holborn: He was probably the leading intellectual. He was sort of the, I guess, a premier intellectual, non-literary intellectual figure in France [unclear] international. He was, by training, a
sociologist. He died about ten years ago. Of course, Kennan, and the other was [Zbigniew] Brzezinski, though I've heard Brzezinski many times, and that wasn't necessarily—but the memory of that, particularly of Kennan and Aron were probably the ones I remember best of all.

Warren: So what does it mean to the students to be exposed to people like that? What is the advantage to the students?

Holborn: Well, I mean, it's hard to give any measurable answer, but I think any student anywhere, in high school, I mean, some of the memories I have of speakers I heard when I was in grade school, boarding school. So I mean, it's exposure to outside [unclear] measure. I mean, I think probably from the standpoint of intentions of—I mean, Dean Packard always saw this as exhibits of leadership. We feel students ought to have exposure to the best people in a particular field of study or specialty. Some are not necessarily brought here for eminence reasons, most are not, but we're a small school and not all points of view or all subject matters or all intellectual traditions are represented within that, so it has a broadening effect.

Part of it is just curiosity. I mean, I don't think schools—and some things that you expect to be well attended are not, and some things the opposite is true. I mean, there's a certain unpredictability, except for the very famous. We had Robert Rubin here a few months ago. Of course, that grew in absolute capacity or something like that.

I mean, the funniest experience I ever had here of that kind would have been in the late '70s, I guess, and they announced one day the leader of the Spanish communist party was coming here to speak, [unclear], who spoke no English. I mean, it was a period after people had worried about Euro communism, and he'd been cited as a great menace by Henry Kissinger and so on. Well, he came here and they couldn't accommodate all the people. There were over 400 people
there for him.

Three weeks later it was announced that there was going to be an appearance by Patrick Gonzalez, who was the leader of the socialist party in Spain. He didn’t speak too much English, but he understood it a bit. He arrived here, and, of course, two years later he was prime minister of Spain for fifteen years. He arrived here in his denims, and we had not more than thirty-five people. And Mr. Corrello [phonetic] hasn’t been heard of for twenty years. So you have those kinds of situations. Some of it is—you know, the dean had Gingrich here two years ago, a little over two years ago.

Warren: Who’s that?

Holborn: Newt Gingrich.

Warren: Oh, Gingrich.

Holborn: Of course, that drew a huge capacity. I mean, these things are, that’s predictable, but there’s a sort of middle range where, besides having a problem here at SAIS because of the different fields, they have brown bag lunches and such, they have too many speakers on one day and somebody gets hurt. That’s sometimes a real problem.

Warren: For me up in Baltimore, it’s just awful when I look at the newspaper and see that there was somebody terrific here yesterday. [Laughter]

Holborn: Yes.

Warren: We don’t know who you’re having.

Holborn: Well, when you look at the Hopkins bulletin, when it’s all said and done, more than half of it is medical school. [Laughter]

Warren: It’s true. Most of it, I don’t have the faintest idea what they’re talking about.
Holborn: If you strip that, it looks more manageable. [Laughter]

Warren: But you do have some good ones over here. I usually find out too late.

Holborn: But there are a lot more speakers. Before Dean Packard came, particularly in the early years, but all the way through the '60s and early '70s, most of the '70s, there was much less of that, of the brown bag lunch thing, and there used to be at least one speaker a month who seemed to be a sort of premier schoolwide, it was in the evening usually, and it wasn't like compulsory chapel, but still a notion. The majority of the people would be there. They had the Herter lectures, which some were very distinguished, some turned into books, Senator Fulbright's *Arrogance of Power* and Gunnar Myrdahl and [unclear] that actually became quite notable as books in their own rights. So they were more like command occasions, not tightly disciplined, but still highly encouraged.

Nowadays, everything happens at all times of the day. The notion of an evening lecture, with a few exceptions, is not considered necessarily a good thing, except for a specialized audience.

Warren: Switching subjects, who was Benjamin Rome?

Holborn: Well, Benjamin Rome was a very nice man. His association with SAIS primarily came later in his life, because he had an aunt named Sadie Hyman, of the Hyman Construction Company, who got interested in China. Dean Wilcox, who was the dean in the '60s, came to know her, I don't know how the original encounter came, and cultivated her. She gave money to SAIS, primarily to try to get China studies more securely embedded in the curriculum. Ultimately there is a Sadie Hyman professorship, which I think part of that money was, in fact, given by Rome, but some of it was willed by her.
She lived to be quite an old lady. Well, Benjamin Rome, I think, was then cultivated, or even while she was still alive. Benjamin Rome is a Hopkins engineering graduate in the construction business, Hyman Construction, very successful. He was, at least all the time I was aware, was a bachelor who lived in the Watergate, a rather quiet man. But earlier in his career he formed a very—he was of Jewish background—a very close association with Catholic University, and he gave a considerably sum of money on at least three occasions. There’s a Benjamin Rome Theater. He was a man who liked to have his name on buildings. The main administration building at George Washington [University] is a Benjamin Rome building.

But in any case, when the second building was built, he—I don’t know the sum, but it was three or four million dollars, I guess, towards its acquisition and refurbishment. He was on the board of advisors, but he wouldn’t say very much. He was a very quiet man.

He ultimately had a nephew here, grand-nephew, who had actually gone to the University of Chicago and had lived in Baltimore. So he was reasonably generous, but he was generous—I don’t think he gave to Georgetown, but I think all the other institutions in the city, and Catholic University ranked number one in his affection. There was, I think, the expectation that on his death, and particularly since he had no children or wife, that more money would be left to SAIS, but that did not turn out to be, except for one relatively small thing.

Warren: So the fact that SAIS just keeps growing is a—did it double in size in order to have this second building the same size?

Holborn: Not immediately. In fact, they didn’t occupy all of it right away. We now, as of now, this year, we actually do occupy all of that, but that National Language Institute was there. So the fourth and fifth floors, fifth floor we took over three years ago. [unclear] took over this year. But
it did have various effects. It gave us a chance to add another floor to the library here. It eliminated some classrooms in this building, but well over half of the instruction is in the new building, plus the whole language program and other things of that nature.

Now, it did have the effect of increasing the size of the school despite general denial that that was not the primary intention, but it allowed—at a minimum we can say it allowed more creep. It probably stimulated the creation of a couple of new programs and it has on the whole made life much better in the school, breathing space, but even though the distance is small. I rather like having to walk back and forth to go to class.

It does, some people would say to a large extent, break the faculty into two. I mean, there are members in this building who don’t see faculty in the other building, other than specified meetings or things of that sort. I used to feel rather close to the language program, but I haven’t a clue what’s going on in there anymore.

Warren: A while ago you made a reference to the marriages that have come from crisis simulation, which I think is very funny. I mean, what better preparation could they have? But what’s the social life like here?

Holborn: Well, that’s actually not an easy question. First of all, in the earlier days, pretty much through the ’70s, a very large majority of students lived in the relatively near neighborhood, and though there are still quite a number who live in the—there’s a lot more dispersion, partly because the Du Pont Circle area has become more expensive, partly married students who prefer to live elsewhere. So there’s a bigger dispersion.

On the whole, at this present group, I mean, for the last few years, they like to entertain each other. Somebody cooks and they’ll have eight people over, or seven. There’s a good deal
of—it’s rather self—they aren’t the sort of people who sort of go out on the town very much. There are indeed some students who barely see Washington unless they have visitors, and suddenly if they have visitors—so there’s a lot of sort of spaghetti and red wine or potluck kind of suppers.

Again, it’s a little different here between the Bologna—and they do tend to stay close, particularly socially stay closer than other components of the school. The thing is that they work pretty hard, by and large, but, for example, we have this intersession and this is the last week of exams for most students, but there are a lot of students that are away for a whole month or more, and there’s a lot of travel. Travel is really the big thing, to go somewhere else, Europe. So this place empties out. You sort of a lose a whole month a year, except for a small group who still have papers to write, edit the SAIS Review or a few things like that.

I actually personally find all the problems—a bit of the problem at SAIS, in many respects the school year is too short, and when I came it was fourteen weeks. It’s now nominally thirteen weeks, but for many professors the first week is sort of a quick run-through of the reading lists and see you next time. Most of our courses, though economics has begun to change, meet only two hours a week. So two years is a pretty short time. You come in September, then you’re gone.

Most students use the summer between their first and second year quite profitably. They are pretty good at getting interesting summer jobs, though we are in an age where a lot of internships are unpaid, if you even could intern. But there isn’t any real—as recently eight years ago, there used to be more hangouts where you would find students, particularly one down here on Connecticut. There are a couple up 17th Street where if you were to walk in you’d probably find several, but less than it used to be.
Warren: I'm at the end of this side.

[Begin Tape 2, Side 2]

Warren: You have given me a wonderful interview, but I haven’t given you much of a chance to talk about what you want to. Is there anything that we haven’t touched on that you think we ought to?

Holborn: Let’s see, we touched on most—yes, I guess for a person of my age—we’ve talked about this before, but there is clearly less interest even absent the economic aspects. I mean, I think if everybody had their choice to do what they wanted to do, a larger number of people would go into government service than in fact do. I think that’s true. Sometimes there aren’t that many jobs in government. But, nonetheless, even if that were—if you could do what you wanted to do, the motivation to go into public service is certainly considerably diminished.

I mean, there are some—at the moment we have more people for some years going into intelligence, perhaps a little surprising, but there are quite a lot of jobs there right now. So there are market factors that—in the last two years particularly we’ve done quite well in foreign service. But this year there was a marked drop in the number of people taking the foreign service exam. That doesn’t necessarily mean in that in the end that much less people will go into the foreign service, but it was—I don’t know the exact number, but it was certainly less than even last year or three years ago or five years. I mean, the building was practically abandoned the Saturday when the foreign service exam was given at one time.

I don’t know that that should necessarily be a worrisome factor, but when I was—or among my contemporaries it has to be said that the people that went into banking or similar ventures tended to be intellectually at the lower end of the scale. Now the people tend to be at the
highest. I have to say that of my best students that I’ve had over the last decade, a high proportion of the really good ones have in fact gone on into investment banking and banking. I’m not really critical of that in particular cases, but in the aggregate it’s a little bit worrisome.

The other problem that we have with SAIS now which it was less true either in the early period, is that there’s somewhat greater doubt among more students as to whether or not SAIS is the end of the road. That is to say, there are more people who at least think about going on from here to yet another graduate school, not usually for a Ph.D., that sometimes quite all right, but to business school or to law school. And there’s been excessive consciousness, I think, among students that we are competing primarily with business school. That has caused shifts in the curriculum, and students are doing more economics, particularly more applied economics, accounting, than used to be. That, I think, could have the effect, it’s a little too early to tell, of somewhat harming other smaller fields, because if they are encouraged as strongly as they are both by the school and perhaps also the career office and placement office to do more and more economics, it means that people have no really elective courses to take outside of their field of concentration. And I think that could somewhat change the character of the school.

Warren: Well, it’s sign of the times, isn’t it?

Holborn: There’s division among the students on this. There’s certainly not a minority, not a small minority, who constantly decry the "Whartonization" of SAIS. And there’s division in the faculty on this point. It’s entirely generational. I say my generation, but it isn’t. The division in the faculty is not split by generation.

Warren: Well, I want to thank you. This has been a great interview.

Holborn: Well, if you have any questions you can—
Warren: I will. I will get back to you.

[End of interview]