The Association for Diplomatic Studies and Training
Foreign Affairs Oral History Project

AMBASSADOR HOLSEY G. HANDYSIDE

Interviewed by: Charles Stuart Kennedy
Initial interview date: April 19, 1993
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INTERVIEW

Q: Today is April 19, 1993 and this is an interview with Ambassador Holsey G. Handyside which is being done on behalf of the Association for Diplomatic Studies. I am Charles Stuart Kennedy. I might note that Handy and I came into the Foreign Service together. Handy, I wonder if you could give me something about your background - where you were born, grew up, educated, etc.?

HANDYSIDE: I was born in Cleveland, Ohio in 1927. I grew up in the part of northern Ohio which is called the Connecticut Western Reserve and went to school there until I finished high school and then went off to Amherst College in Massachusetts where I got my B.A.

Q: Had you had any connection with foreign affairs?

HANDYSIDE: No, nothing particular other than coming from a family of regular, indeed even avid, newspaper readers so that we were very much interested in what was going on around the world. I can remember as one of my junior high school projects assembling a scrapbook of the newspaper headlines of the German invasion of Poland in 1939.

Q: I think too that those of us who came out of this era followed World War II as the greatest soap opera...a horrible thing to say but I mean it was a day-by-day story that dragged one to follow all the battles and developments.

HANDYSIDE: I think it was the thing that caused an awful lot of us after having lived through World War II and to a degree having participated in it to one extent or another, to recognize that keeping a peace was not a project that was going to happen all by itself. That it was going to require a great deal of help from a lot of interested and knowledgeable people, and people who in effect would make that their life's work.

Q: Then when you went to Amherst, you had a little Army experience?

HANDYSIDE: In the middle. I had a bit of college before I went off into the Army Air Corps. Then after a couple of years in uniform, I went back to Western Massachusetts and finished the rest of my B.A. in one continuous effort..

Q: What were you taking at Amherst?

HANDYSIDE: I majored in French and had a secondary major in political science. It was at Amherst that I actually made the decision to go into the public service. I had one of the

political science professors, a professor by the name of Earl Latham, who had had a fair amount of experience in the Washington of World War II and thereafter. He was a very stimulating guy and talked a great deal about the responsibility of a community to organize and govern itself.

Q: You graduated from Amherst when?

HANDYSIDE: In 1950. And from there I went off on a Fulbright Fellowship to the University of Grenoble where I spent a year in law school learning about...my project was to learn as much as I could about how French diplomats are formed from an educational point of view. Since virtually 100 percent of the diplomats in the French professional corps come out of a French law school I felt that was one of the quickest ways I could pursue this idea of trying to find out intellectually what kinds of people I would be dealing with. It was also secondarily to immerse myself in a foreign language and a foreign culture for the purpose of turning my school book French into a useful diplomatic tool.

Q: This is going ahead in time, but I think this might be a good point to ask with both from what you got out of the University of Grenoble and your experience later on could you give any characterization of the difference between the American diplomat and the French diplomat?

HANDYSIDE: Well, I think in a sense it is both a matter of training and a matter of what you start with. The American is much more practical, pragmatic. He is more inclined to look at problems with the view of how they can be managed and how can they be resolved, as opposed to a rigorously intellectual kind of analysis. Obviously those are stark generalizations that don't apply at every instance. But I think clearly there is a tendency in that direction. The French diplomat, I think, is much more inclined to be cerebral about any problem that comes up as opposed to an American who says, "Well, how can we fix this?"

Q: After Grenoble where did you go?

HANDYSIDE: Then I went to a graduate program at Princeton and spent two years on the Princeton campus in an interdisciplinary program, which at that stage was relatively new. It integrated economics, political science and sociology into an amalgam of analytical tools. It had been an undergraduate school, the Woodrow Wilson School of International Affairs; a graduate program had been developed and began in 1949. When I arrived there in the fall of 1951, it was still a fairly experimental kind of thing. Since that time, in the 40 some years that have passed since I graduated with a Masters in Public Affairs, the School has certainly gone right to the top of the professional schools and is one of the places, for example, that the State Department and a whole raft of other federal government agencies send mid-career people to. A very large number of career Foreign Service Officers, who are now chiefs of mission, have spent an eight or nine month sojourn in Princeton pursuing the highly specialized, quite pinpointed, educational

instruction designed by the Woodrow Wilson School. The program is for people who need an opportunity sometime soon after they have gotten close to the top, to sit back and think about what they have been doing and what the future ought to bring.

Q: You left there when?

HANDYSIDE: 1953.

Q: And then what did you do?

HANDYSIDE: At that stage of the game, as you will well recall, Stu, the Foreign Service was not taking any new classes. By 1954-55, it was taking, I think, one a year. So it was necessary to do something else waiting for the Foreign Service to open up. And at that stage of the game I came to Washington and poked around and found a very interesting job in the Office of the Military Advisor of the Mutual Security Agency, which eventually evolved into the Foreign Operations Administration and is now called AID. The Office of the Military Advisor was a misnomer in a sense because what this office did was advise the director of the Foreign Operations Administration, who at that point was Harold Stassen, on the kinds of topics, the wide range of topics, that came before the National Security Council. This was at the beginning of the Eisenhower Administration and one of the things that President Eisenhower had quickly discovered was that there was no institutional management of the implementation of National Security Council decisions. So the Eisenhower Administration fairly quickly set up an organization called the Operations Coordinating Board, which was a group of sub-cabinet level people. That is the deputy secretary level people, who presided over the implementation of the decisions that had been reached by the President after being advised by the National Security Council. Issues that were ready for National Security Council consideration were staffed out by the Planning Board of the National Security Council on the way up for decision. After decisions had been made, the responsibility for implementation was transferred over to the Operations Coordinating Board.

Harold Stassen decided that since he was virtually the only person who was on both the National Security Council and the Operations Coordinating Board, that he wanted an integrated staff office. So the way the work was organized in this particular office, was that people were assigned topics and they would staff the topic as it proceeded through the National Security Council apparatus up to the decision point, and then they would continue to work with that topic as it was put into implementation through the OCB. This was in contrast to what other departments and agencies were doing because they had a planning board staff that worried about the development of the policy and they had a completely different set of individuals who worried about carrying out the policy. We thought we had a much smarter, and certainly better integrated effort.

Q: What did you do as the new boy in the organization?

HANDYSIDE: Well, as the new boy in the organization I did whatever there was to do. After I had been there about a year or so, I was given a pretty full range of topics to worry about. And certainly operating that close to the front office of the Foreign Operations Administration, there were all kinds of interesting opportunities that came along. I saw Mr. Stassen from time to time as his bag carrier, the person who accompanied him to OCB meetings. I had frequent business with the deputy director of the agency who had come to Washington from having been president of the Monsanto Chemical Corporation. One of the most memorable people that I ran into was a grandmotherly-type lady who had been the president of the General Federation of Women's Clubs. That was a particularly revealing experience because here was a lady who would go home to Iowa over the weekends and come back with batches of homemade cookies which she would hand out to her staffers. At the same time most of the staffers who had gotten to know this lady knew perfectly well that they never turned their backs on her because she was absolutely ruthless.

Q: Speaking of being ruthless, Harold Stassen was given instructions to cut down on things and there was this term "Stassenated". Were you there doing the period when he was going through this process?

HANDYSIDE: Yes, that happened very soon after I arrived on the payroll. I think this was the kind of thing that happens at the beginning of every new administration and which is going on in Washington right now with a 25 percent cut.

Q: You are talking about the new Clinton Administration.

HANDYSIDE: Yes, the new Clinton Administration, a 25 percent cut of White House staff and already some of the senior members of the staff level of the White House have already discovered that they have cut themselves so badly that they can't carry out the jobs they are supposed to be doing. But that is a public relations kind of gimmick and so it was with the Eisenhower Administration, and specifically with the Foreign Operations Administration. In part this was also, I think, a reflection of the fact that Americans are really pretty anti-foreign aid. And they were anti-foreign aid even at the very beginning of the process. By this time the foreign aid program had been in operation for about five years, having begun in 1947 and 1948 with the Mutual Security program. So already there were lots of people who said that this was throwing money down a rat hole, etc. So, I think the dynamics of the new administration and promises of more efficient management, etc., brought about this business of reducing the staff. Where Stassen differed from others, was that he decided that he wanted to see apparently if there weren't some more rational way of firing people than simply going over the personnel logs and deciding that job we don't need and that job we don't need, regardless of who the actual individuals were, who occupied those slots.

So, as I recall the effort, it was a matter of attempting, at least, to sort through the numbers of people who were at least on the margin and make sure that the ones who in fact were dismissed, were those who were the least competent, the least efficient, the least

imaginative, so that the remaining staff would be notched upwards in a quality sense as a result of the process. Stassen got an awful lot of bad publicity as a result of this; I think he didn't deserve it all. Moreover, he subsequently made it quite clear by his actions that he had a sense of responsibility to the professional bureaucracy that very few cabinet officers have.

That is the thing that struck me about Harold Stassen. At one stage of the game there was a great todo, and I am not certain exactly when this was, about the East-West trade legislation. One of the senior economists in this segment of the Foreign Operations Administration was slated to go up on the Hill and testify. He did in fact, do that, and presented the Administration's position on this particular issue. He took a terrible beating from members of the Congressional committee. When Stassen found out about this...as soon as this man came back he went to the director and reported the experience he had...Stassen said, "You are not to go back to testify again. This has obviously become a political problem and that is my business." The next morning, I assume having informed the committee staff that he was going to appear in place of this civil servant, he went up to the Hill and for a couple of hours had a verbal dueling match with the members of the Congressional committee. During that time he made it very clear to them that they had no business berating a civil servant the way they had this particular economist the day before. The only other time that I can ever recall this ever happening was with Harold L. Ickes, who did precisely the same kind of thing during the mid-part of the Roosevelt Administration, some thirty or thirty-five years earlier. Most cabinet officers don't realize that this is part of their responsibility.

Q: Now what was your impression of what our aid program was doing at that period of time? Were you getting any feel as to what we were into and any effectiveness or not?

HANDYSIDE: Well, I actually had less to do with the aid program per se than with a much broader range of issues. But at that stage of the game we were still very much at the beginnings of this thing. An awful lot of it was still military aid. A lot of it was economic support, certainly in terms of Western Europe. As far as other areas of the world were concerned, it was a combination, as it always was thereafter, of the economic people arguing in favor of long range fundamental kinds of economic expansion projects and the political science types arguing that that was all well and good, but the American taxpayer ought to spend his money in a way that would bring immediate political benefit. So there was at that early stage of the game this tension within the program.

One of the things of that period that I think is interesting from the point of view of the archives, Stu, is that there were times when I was exposed directly to this wonderful American institution of bringing in outsiders to occupy senior positions in the federal government administrations. I was particularly exposed to this because this was the Eisenhower Administration and the first time the Republican Party had been in office for some twenty-two or so years. There were an awful lot of loyal party Republicans who expected that they would come to Washington. The thing that I found absolutely fascinating was that with George Humphrey, whose views on this subject were probably

on the front pages of the newspapers of the period, represented an awful lot of other businessmen who were absolutely convinced that any man who was a successful businessman could come down to Washington and handle superbly any job in Washington with one eye closed and with one hand tied behind his back.

Q: George Humphrey was Secretary of the Treasury wasn't he?

HANDYSIDE: Yes. Secretary of the Treasury, at that point having been a very distinguished and very successful Cleveland businessman. The lore was that anyone who had ever met a payroll could obviously handle a government job. Two recollections specifically in this area: One of the gentlemen who was brought in as a stalwart Republican Party working member, had been a businessman in Minnesota, where he not only met one payroll, but he had been meeting three because he presided as president over three small companies. He was made the assistant director of the Foreign Operations Administration for the European area. When the gentleman arrived in Washington, he was unfamiliar with the term "balance of payments" and had no grasp whatsoever of the intricacies of international finance or the fact that one of the reasons the United States government was in the aid business was because of the foreign exchange problems that the Europeans were experiencing at that time. The senior career staff of the European part of FOA tried, I think, in all sincerity to educate this gentleman for the first several months that he was in office. After about two and a half or three months they found that this was a hopeless task. Why it was hopeless I am not quite clear at this point, maybe I knew once. It was either because he really couldn't grasp these tricky international finance concepts or perhaps he didn't feel it was important enough and he didn't care enough to worry about it and put an amount of effort in. But whatever the reason, what I watched develop...and as a person who had been an academic political scientist, I found absolutely fascinating, was the way the career professional bureaucracy organized itself to handle this problem.

The senior division chiefs, what we would now call at the deputy assistant secretary level, operating under this guy, would through their informal contacts amongst this group of five or six, task off the one who was to keep what's-his-name occupied for the next business day. Thereby making sure that he didn't put any telephone calls in and he didn't call anybody else into the office, allowing the other five of the group of six to get on with doing their job and running that part of the agency in some reasonably imaginative and efficient fashion. So each one of these persons at the DAS level would sacrifice one day of every six, to keep the gentleman occupied and out of their backyards so that they in effect, could run the agency. I cannot help but believe that Mr. Stassen and the other people in the front office were aware of this. It became patently obvious to everybody else in the agency after about six months, and the fact that it continued for the better part of 15 or 18 months, suggests to me that Mr. Stassen not only knew, but approved this as the only working arrangement that satisfied all the demands on him.

The second recollection that I would add to this, is that I can recall at one point having gone off to a meeting at Langley with this distinguished, silver haired gentleman...

Q: Langley being...?

HANDYSIDE: CIA. ...with this distinguished silver haired gentleman who had previously been the president of the Monsanto Chemical Corporation. For some reason or other we had been given the wrong time for the meeting and arrived about 30 minutes early. But the fact that the drive required the better part of 20 minutes, it was quite clear that there was no way of going back into town and then coming back out, so we just sat there. This provided me a perfectly gorgeous opportunity to have a long conversation with this gentleman. We sat in an outer waiting room type place at CIA and had a fascinating conversation ranging over a wide variety of subjects. But the one thing that I particularly recall, was his categorical statement to me that he wasn't at all sure that he wanted to come to Washington when they first asked him to take the deputy directorship. But since he had been there, he had discovered that this job was without any question the most technically complex--overall the most complicated--and by any matter of measurement, the most satisfying he had ever had. I found that observation absolutely fascinating as the personal testimony of a man who obviously had made his way up through the ranks to the top of one of the major corporations in the United States. And I think he, in reporting this to me, reported it with a sense of wonderment and disbelief that he would make this kind of a judgment.

Q: Did you keep this job until you ended up in the Foreign Service?

HANDYSIDE: Yes, since the Foreign Service was my long range objective and my long range objective was repeatedly reconfirmed by experiences that I had in early Washington. In particular, as I sat in one of the other foreign affairs agencies it became increasingly more obvious that it was the State Department that ultimately made the foreign affairs decisions within the immediate foreign affairs diplomatic community. And while it might be possible to get to the top of one of the other agencies like the public information group or the AID group somewhat more quickly, nevertheless, the shot at the most senior jobs in the foreign affairs community was open only to the people in the State Department. So, my decision being reinforced, I made the arrangements to take the Foreign Service exam. At that stage of the game, again as I am sure you remember, Stu, taking the exam was a three and a half day process. I can still recall very vividly getting myself over to Coolidge High School in the far reaches of the northeast quadrant of Washington at an ungodly hour in the morning in order to start the day-long process on four successive mornings.

Q: You came in, I know because we came in together, on July 5, 1955. Because we are doing this for a record, could you describe the class we were in--the type of people and what their attitudes were?

HANDYSIDE: I have certain recollections of some of the key people in the class, but out of the group of 20 or 22, whatever it was, I must say I have forgotten some as the years have gone by. In general, however, it was a very broad mixture of people and

backgrounds. My recollection is that it was all male. That there were people who had come out of Ivy League schools, people who had come out of smaller colleges scattered around the country and there were a few state university types, with a variety of previous experience. Some of us had been in the government, some had been still in academic pursuits. There was one, it seems to me, that had something to do with the FBI, but I am not absolutely clear about that at this stage of the game. But all with a very real interest in foreign affairs.

The other part of the recollection that I think might be of interest, is that it soon became clearer to me, and I suspect to all the other members of the class after we had been together five or six weeks, that the class sorted itself out not only in terms of interest, but also in terms of overall competence and quality. I think it became quite clear very soon that out of the 20 there were maybe six or seven that were, at least for this occupation, clearly a notch above their fellows. And the thing that I find fascinating about this, and subsequently Nat Davis, who was the Director General of the Foreign Service, and I were talking about this at one stage of the game, pointedly asked me, "Is there any major discrepancy between that initial judgment and 20 years later what these people have demonstrated on the basis of career and what the evaluation process and selection board process has produced?" I said, "No, as a matter of fact, all of those that I had personally identified as having something special have all made it to the top of a Foreign Service career. None of the others have, indeed, a number of the other members of the class have dropped out along the way. But amongst this group there were, I think, maybe a half a dozen who became chiefs of mission; there was one who became an assistant secretary, there was another who became the deputy permanent representative to the United Nations, etc.

Q: I must say that I kept a diary for that period and I went through my personal evaluation of people and am right with you. It didn't vary. And I am talking as one who wasn't in, you might say, the top group. But you could see who was really going to move. There is a certain percolation up or down or something like that and it works.

HANDYSIDE: It is not only competence, it is also a matter of determination and ambition, etc. There has to be this very strong internal motivation, but the first thing obviously is...I think it is possible to say almost categorically about the State Department and the Foreign Service, that while not everybody who is competent gets to the top, everybody who gets to the top is competent.

Q: Did you have any idea where you wanted to go?

HANDYSIDE: Well, as a result of a couple of years of wrestling with the kinds of issues that grabbed the attention of the National Security Council, I had done a bit of analysis in terms of geographical areas of where I thought the action was going to be for the balance of my career. By this time, the division of Europe into East and West was solidified, so it seemed to me that as far as diplomacy was concerned, there wasn't a great future for people who were interested in Soviet Affairs other than two superpowers at logger heads

with one another. That the people who had specialized in Western Europe were very well ensconced in their orbits and therefore displacing any of them was going to be exceedingly difficult and at any event it would take a fairly substantial period of time. Looking around at Africa at that early stage of the game, that didn't seem to be a place that was going to be a focus of any kind of special...

Q: There wasn't even an African Bureau at the time.

HANDYSIDE: It didn't seem to be the area where the action was going to be. The same comment could be made, not quite so vehemently, about Latin and South America. As far as the Pacific was concerned, the kinds of things that we have seen over the last 10 or 15 years in the Pacific Rim area were hardly even glimmers at that point. So it seemed to me that the next area of confrontation between the United States and the West more generally, and the Soviet bloc was going to be in the area of the Middle East. Partly because it was contiguous to the Soviet bloc and therefore it was physically and administratively easier to get to, but also because the stakes were terribly high. The same stakes that are important now were important then: the largest known oil fields of anywhere in the world. So it seemed to me that it would be shrewd to get involved in the Middle East and in that set of problems because of the fact that this was almost certainly going to become the arena of superpower competition if not conflict. I started out...I don't recall specifically at this point whether we were given an opportunity to make our area choices or preferences known, or if we were, when that happened, but I am sure that if having been given such an opportunity I certainly would have said at that stage of the game that I would like to go to some place in the Middle East. So, sure enough at one point when the assignments came out at the end of the A-100 course, I had been assigned tentatively, it seems to me, to the Belgian Congo. Dick Murphy had been tentatively assigned to Cairo. For some reason or other that I don't remember at this point, Murphy was moved some place else, another one of our class was sent off to the Belgian Congo and I ended up with the Cairo job, which was where I wanted to go.

Q: You got to Cairo in the fall of 1955. What was the situation at that time?

HANDYSIDE: The situation was that Mr. Nasser had just signed off on the Czech arms deal, which was what we all called it at the beginning, because we thought it had indeed been negotiated only with the Czechs. It was only subsequently that we became aware and eventually the public became aware, that the deal was actually with Moscow and the Soviet Union. There were lots of very unhappy people, particularly one by the name of John Foster Dulles, who took a particularly dim view of this kind of thing. So I can recall that when I first arrived in Cairo in early September 1955, that I kind of rattled around by myself for a while because the front office of the Embassy was busy taking care of people like Loy Henderson and George Allen, who were running around out to Cairo to see Mr. Nasser and other people in the area trying to figure out whether this arms deal meant, I guess, a total sell-out to the Soviets, and whether this was going to be a real problem for the United States or what.

Unhappily, from my view at that point, and this was a judgment that was reinforced subsequently, was that decision making in Washington had not taken into consideration some of the fundamental dynamics of the political situation. Certainly in Egypt and in the relationship with the other countries of that area, particularly with Israel. The result was that they completely missed the driving motivation that sent Mr. Nasser into an agreement with the Soviet Union. He had come to Ambassador Byroade on at least two previous occasions. The second one after the Egyptian army had its pants whipped off it by the Israelis in a two-day engagement. The senior members of the Egyptian forces had taken a terrible beating and their troops had taken a terrible beating. They all attributed it to the fact that they did not have the same level of quality and the same level of modernity in their military supplies and equipment. Nasser was determined to correct this deficiency. He had come to Byroade after this cross-border raid by the Israeli forces and in effect had told him that he was really up against it. He had to get some kind of an arms deal in order to placate his senior generals and colonels. He didn't have to spell it out for Mr. Byroade because the Ambassador certainly appreciated the fact that Nasser's position as the leader of Egypt was directly dependent on the continued support and willingness of the senior command of the military forces to have Mr. Nasser in that position. Nasser had come out of the military, had been one of the military coup leaders that had taken over Egypt and had thrown Farouk out in the process. And quite clearly he was not going to be able to remain astride the Egyptian government without being able to satisfy the senior Egyptian military commanders. They simply were not prepared to sit by and take another shellacking from the Israel Defense Force. The response that Mr. Byroade received from Washington in March or April, 1955...my recollection is that this raid took place in February 1955...was that the United States government was not interested in doing anything, and QED, therefore the United States government, was not going to do anything as far as the Egyptians were concerned and as far as some kind of military aid package was concerned.

The result was inevitable, but Washington apparently never really understood the dynamics of the situation. They never really understood the fundamental premise which was that Nasser was dependent upon the military, the military was unhappy and unless the military were at least assuaged partially, not necessarily totally but at least partially, his days as the president of Egypt were numbered. He knew that and Byroade knew that and so did everybody else in the Embassy in Cairo know that. But somehow, apparently that fact either did not percolate back to Washington or it was not considered significant.

So, during the course of the summer, June and July apparently, the initial contacts were made with the Soviets. The negotiations were held in Moscow, and by the first part of August, the agreement was signed and then the announcement, as I recall, was made sometime during the first week of September. By this time they had ginned up this business of throwing dust in our eyes, and the agreement was actually signed in Prague to bolster the idea that it wasn't really Moscow but one of the Eastern Bloc Soviet dependencies that had made this deal with the Egyptians.

Q: What were you doing when you first arrived there?

HANDYSIDE: I was the most junior of junior political officers. It was not only an introduction to political work in terms of US government vis-a-vis the host government, but it was also an introduction to a certain amount of internal political dynamics of the Foreign Service and of a Foreign Service post.

Q: What were you observing in the political section, internally first?

HANDYSIDE: Internally it was a very interesting combination. Here was an ambassador, Henry Byroade, who had come up through a career service but not the career diplomatic service; he had come up through the military. He had been the youngest Brigadier General in the United States Army during the Second World War. A very competent, very able guy. He had married his West Point sweetheart who by this time was a kind of aging blonde. But also, more importantly as I look back on it, Henry Byroade had kind of checked out of being the Ambassador to Egypt after the announcement of the arms deal because it was quite clear that Washington had not read his reports or followed his advice and therefore there wasn't any point in his hanging around a great deal longer.

The second observation was that the DCM was an exceedingly competent Foreign Service Officer...this was Parker T. Hart...who really knew what was going on in that country and in that Embassy. But Pete Hart was not the kind of person who was completely comfortable working with other people and was much more intellectual about the profession of diplomacy than of the school of winning friends and influencing people. He was in a terrible position because he had a wild card as an Ambassador and as the Deputy Chief of Mission, he had a certain responsibility to keep him somewhere at least in the pasture if not on the straight and narrow.

My boss, the head of the political section, was precisely the opposite kind of person as Pete Hart. He was hail-fellow-well-met. He was a back slapper. He had intellectual competence, but he didn't really use it very much. He had a very good relationship, a friendly, warm, old school tie kind of relationship, with Ambassador Byroade. Also he had a very attractive blonde wife. It was quite clear that the Ambassador very much enjoyed looking at and being with, Mrs. Chief-of-the-Political-Section. So it was an interesting kind of thing.

The economic section chief, was for the first little bit that I was there, a highly professional, well trained economist, who was the epitome of the Foreign Service in terms of knowing where to go for information, how to get it, how to organize social functions so that they became most productive from a representational and information gathering way, etc. And because most of the political people were not in the slightest bit interested in economics, there was very little traffic between the two sections. So the chief of the economic section pretty well ran his part of the Embassy by himself.

The other observation was that Embassy Cairo at this point presented a special case. Partly as a result of the circumstances of the coup d'etat against King Farouk, and

therefore the personalities who were involved and the members of the Embassy who were amongst the first who happened to fall into interviews with Nasser and members of the Revolutionary Command Council, a great deal of the political reporting and political representation job, was not handled by the State Department, but was handled by the Central Intelligence Agency stationed in the Embassy in Cairo. In part also, this was because the poor old budget-strapped-State Department and the management shortsightedness of the State Department taken together, made the Department unable to respond to the increased requirement for people in the State Department's political section in Cairo. The job had to be done. It seems to me as I look back on it, although I don't know about this specifically, that the Ambassador must have realized the problem and therefore must have made his case to Allen Dulles at Langley. The upshot of it was that the station just burgeoned almost immediately after the Nasser coup and had a whole host of people who have now become publicly known members of the cast of characters. The political people in the station outnumbered the State Department by about four to one. They had a whole lot of very high powered people out there. People whose names are now common knowledge to anybody who has done any reading in recently published stuff on the Middle East. So all the interesting things were done by the senior members of the station. My boss, the chief of the political section, I don't think ever saw Nasser or any of the people around Nasser except in some kind of a social function because that work was all being done by our counterparts in the other agency.

As far as I was concerned, as the lowliest of the low third secretaries, it really didn't make any difference because I wouldn't have been permitted to do anything like that anyhow. I was allowed to get on with the business of getting to know my diplomatic opposite numbers in a variety of embassies around the town and cultivating a lot of the more junior people, particularly in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and other interesting parts of the Egyptian government.

Out of that grew a kind of periodic supper club bringing together all the third secretaries from various embassies around town. There were about eight or nine of us who were in the same position. We found that it was enormously useful to compare notes. Not only in terms of what we all thought was going on in Egypt, but what we thought was going on in other parts of the world, what the practice of diplomacy was all about, etc. So at least once every month, one of us would host a dinner party for the other seven or eight.

This was another one of these interesting groups of people because amongst those who were there, one of them, the Iraqi, became a very senior official in the United Nations, was chef de cabinet of the Secretary General for a period of time and most recently has had a special assistant kind of assignment to the present Secretary General. The Australian who was there is now the Australian Ambassador to Washington. Two of the British types who were there, both “Arabists”, have become Her Majesty's Ambassadors in the Middle East. The Canadian who was there eventually went back to Canada and became a special assistant to Pierre Trudeau, the Prime Minister; he eventually resigned from the Canadian diplomatic service and became the Minister of Foreign Affairs for the Province of Quebec. This was at the time, about ten years ago when there seemed to be

every indication that Quebec was going to secede from Canada and indeed have its own government. He has sort of disappeared since then. And so on. It was a very interesting group of people and it was fascinating to see...there was also a young fellow from the French Embassy...and it was fascinating to see their personal and kind of institutional reactions to the kinds of things that happened.

Q: What was the impression that you were getting...this is the first time in a Foreign Service context and you weren't an "Arabist" at the time...what was your impression of how those people from your vantage point in the Foreign Service who dealt with the problem of Israel, which we are still dealing with, how did they view Israel?

HANDYSIDE: Well, I think it was at least as far as we were concerned and I saw this because the next person up in both the State Department political section and the economic section, were career officers, both were "Arabists". Observing them in action, I think it is quite fair to say that their reaction to this particular knotty foreign policy problem was objective analysis of what was going on, objective analysis of both the strengths and weaknesses of the Arabs and the strengths and weaknesses of Israel. I think their objectivity became obvious over a period of months in the sense that one recommendation back to Washington was that we ought to do so and so which would reinforce the Arab side of the story and then the next recommendation would be that we ought to do such and such which said in this instance the Israelis were right and we have to support the Israelis. That kind of thing.

I think there was also a kind of reluctant acceptance of the reality of the situation, which was that with a disturbing frequency, decisions on the Middle East were not made on the basis of the geopolitical realities of the Middle East, but were made on the basis of the domestic political realities of a half dozen large cities in the United States. It was a rare occasion when these two things coincided. So there was a certain kind of built-in frustration, seeing problems arise and not be resolved, in fact not even being managed very well, because the decision makers in Washington were making decisions on the basis of a completely different set of givens. The two gentlemen involved were reluctantly accepting of this fact. They recognized that it was the reality in which they were functioning and that there wasn't any point getting terribly worried about it or emotionally involved in it because there wasn't a bloody thing they could do about it.

Q: Do you think they were trying to impart the dynamics...we really are talking about, particularly at that time, pretty much the Jewish pressure within the United States, later this moved into other areas...Christian fundamentalism and other dynamics...but at that time it was pretty much plain Jewish influence as far as Israel was concerned within domestic politics. Were they making an effort in trying to explain how the United States works and that this was a factor?

HANDYSIDE: This was something that we did about every other day to whatever foreign diplomat or whichever Egyptian official we were talking to. They would keep complaining to us that their side of things was not understood or accepted in Washington,

and I would come back and say that was partly because they didn't know how to articulate it. I was shocked, for example, when I met the first couple of young Egyptians in the Foreign Office, two of whom had been previously stationed in New York and Washington. What had made the greatest impression on these two young, obviously upper, upper class (in society) Egyptian males, was not the political dynamics of the United States, nor even the political dynamics of Washington, but the wonderful opportunities for personal recreation. Specifically, one of the things one of them always wanted to talk to me about, was the wonderful night clubs in New York. As far as I was concerned as a young American, these were night clubs known to me only by name; I hadn't been in any one of them. Not only had I not been in any one of them, but I didn't really care about it. I wasn't even interested. But the only thing that was important to him, this was the fellow who had been stationed in Washington, were the weekends that he had been able to get up to New York and go to the Latin Quarter or whichever one he decided to go to. This was also at a time when there was a sense within the Arab community that the thing they really had to shout the loudest about were the considerations of justice, historical justice. They somehow decided kind of unanimously, that the most effective way to do that was to send a guy to Washington or to New York who had a very loud voice and would shout the loudest and longest about historical fairness and historical equity, much of which was either irrelevant or of the lowest priority interest, insofar as solving particular problems was concerned.

But the Syrians were particularly adept at sending people to Washington as the Ambassador or to New York as the Ambassador to the United Nations, who made wonderful stem winding speeches that got printed in their entirety on the front pages back in the Arab world. But they were speeches that the United States government in its wisdom disregarded and paid very little attention to. The specialists would read these things just to discover if there was something new. And since there very rarely was anything new, they probably never even got translated in their entirety and got filed in some filing cabinet in the State Department and nobody really paid much attention to them.

It was another 12 years at least before the Arabs as a group began to discover to a sufficient amount how Washington worked and how the United States worked, so that they began to function as typical diplomatic personnel in Washington and New York. And for a period of time there were people who came to the United States, came to Washington, who did function in this fashion. They recognized that Washington was different from Cairo. While all decisions were made in Cairo and anyone who was important in Egypt was in Cairo, and therefore the whole country was run out of this central hub, that Washington was not the equivalent of Cairo. They recognized that what went on in other major cities in the United States was frequently, in political terms, as important as what went on in Washington. Therefore, one had to be, as a diplomat representing a foreign country in the United States, at least as aware of and to a large extent, almost as active in New York, Chicago, San Francisco and maybe St. Louis, as in Washington. While the other diplomatic embassies in Washington were doing this as a matter of course, either directly or through their constituent posts in these other cities, the

Arabs as a group hadn't tumbled to this idea that this was important. It wasn't until pretty close to 1970 before some of the Arab embassies in Washington began to recognize that this was the reality of the American political system and begin to operate on this basis. I had become aware of this when Ashraf Ghorbal was the First Secretary in the Egyptian Embassy. He was the gentleman who subsequently became the Egyptian Ambassador to the United States.

Q: The first really effective one.

HANDYSIDE: Absolutely a terrific person. He became one of the very, very key players in the events leading up to the Camp David Accords.

The other person that I remember particularly was my Mauritanian counterpart in Washington. He, like most Mauritanians, had been educated in Arabic and in French and had, I guess, some textbook English. So when he came to Washington his English was really almost non-existent. He sat himself down and began studying English a couple of hours a day and then got to the point where he was really quite effective at it. He began frequenting the halls of Congress, getting to know various members of the House and of the Senate. And then he began moving outward from there. He, in effect, practically sent out a broadside to anybody who had ever written to the Mauritanian Embassy in Washington, "If you want me, I will come talk." He was traveling all over the country. Whenever he had an opportunity to talk to a Rotary Club or a Council on Foreign Relations, etc., my opposite number was on an airplane and on his way out into the Middle West or the West Coast. The fascinating thing was that it wasn't very long before he was recalled because of charges that were made to the President of the Republic. Charges that he was frivolously wasting his time and wasting the embassy's money by running all over the United States instead of staying at his job in Washington where he belonged.

Q: Sounds like the United States. What were you getting, Handy, from this group of eight or so, the young diplomats, how were they viewing the situation both in Egypt and relations with Israel at that time?

HANDYSIDE: I think there was a kind of common understanding that, and part of it I suppose could be attributed, if you will, to the unusual curse of “localites”. But there seemed to be a kind of general consensus that somehow or other, none of us and none of our colleagues in our embassies, had been able to communicate the realities and also the nuances of the situation in Egypt and in the Middle East, more generally, back to our respective foreign offices and capitals. That somehow or other, none of the seven or eight capital cities involved was behaving in any way that suggested that they had a real understanding of what was going on in Nasser's Egypt. This was poignantly revealed in a number of ways. One of the first groups that the Americans had to cope with..(in the following year Mr. Nasser nationalized the Suez Canal).

Q: We are talking about the period before.

HANDYSIDE: Well, it wasn't quite obvious in the period before, but there was a consistent thread of people kind of wringing their hands and saying, "Somehow or other we are not communicating with our home office." Not that this made us individually feel any better, but at least when we were confronted with a particularly egregious example within our own diplomatic service we recognized that we were not alone.

Well, we are talking about communication, of understanding a situation, which of course, is what the Foreign Service tries to do.

Q: How was the communist menace viewed? There was the Czech arms deal and all that. How were we viewing that both with this group and also from the Embassy, was seeing this as far as whither Egypt and all that kind of stuff?

HANDYSIDE: Well, this was something that became increasingly more important after the so-called Czech arms deal. This became the basis for a reappraisal of our relationship with Israel and with the rest of the area more generally. It wasn't very much longer afterwards that Washington began to look at the Middle East as a cockpit of struggle between the East and the West. And certainly there were those in the United States who were grasping at every possible argument to bolster US support of Israel, to make the argument that this was the outpost of the West in the Middle East against the Communist hordes. To make the argument that Israel was the only democracy in the Middle East and therefore we had this special philosophical relationship. You were mentioning earlier on, Stu, that it was the pressures of the American Jewish community that had kind of shaped foreign policy. "Yes and no" was my kind of quiet reaction. Yes in that they were the people who were most interested, but no, in that their argument in the support of Israel was rarely presented or argued in the form of our responsibility to this particular religious and political group. We have heard certainly much more in the last ten years and certainly much more in the last two or three weeks about the nonfeasance of the West and of the various religious groupings within the West to prevent or at least move effectively against the awful Nazi atrocities that were carried out systematically over the period of four or five years during the Second World War against the Jewish community of Western Europe. The holocaust was something that people in the United States in 1950, 1952, 1955, were not conscious of to any great extent. They certainly weren't conscious of the fact that they had had in any way, either direct or indirect, responsibility for decisions that were attributed to this mad man Hitler. It wasn't until a number of years after the Second World War that some of the internal workings of the United States government became public in terms of the decision making process in the War Department, the State Department and other parts of the United States government. Including the Oval Office, where for reasons that seemed adequate at the time, the United States government chose not to get involved. In this early era of the US relationship with Israel, I think there was much less resort to bringing up those kinds of things than there was to some of these more immediate and more practical kinds of assertions that Israel was the outpost of democracy or our bastion, that it was our landlocked aircraft carrier in the Middle East.

It took quite some time, but this process over the sweep of the years became increasingly more solidified to the point that I can recall when Alexander Haig was made Secretary of State in the first Reagan Administration in 1981. He saw the entire problem in the Middle East strictly and solely, in terms of the US and Soviet competitive situation. The first few months that Haig was Secretary of State, the people in the Near East and South Asian part of the Department had a terrible time trying to get his attention and to get him to look at, think about and consider, the internal dynamics of the Middle East.

Q: But going back to 1955 and early 1956, was the feeling that the communists might be taking over Egypt, that it would at least move into the Soviet camp?

HANDYSIDE: Well, that certainly was part of it. And I think, although I haven't made it my business to read the memoirs and other basic documents of that period of people like John Foster Dulles, certainly my recollection is that these were the kinds of things that were of the highest consideration. These were the persuasive factors. What I think was the mitigating circumstance, perhaps, was that after the arms deal was made between Egypt and the Soviet Union and after the first wave of Soviet military arrived in Egypt to teach the Egyptian military how to maintain and use all of this fancy equipment, that seemed to be where it peaked out.

Nasser continued to be as anti-foreign, if you will, after the agreement as he had been in a sense before the agreement. He reasserted his independence and periodically said, or other members of the Egyptian government said, that they hadn't got rid of the British just to become the servants of the Soviets or anybody else. By golly they were going to run their own show. They had been trying for years and years to get their independence and they were not about to sign it away. And over a period of time I think that kind of set of extenuating propositions finally found their way across the Atlantic.

People began to realize that this was a situation we didn't like very much. It gave the Soviets an opportunity to get to know an awful lot of bright young Egyptian males, who presumably over a period of time, were going to become increasingly more prominent in Egyptian affairs. This meant that in ten or fifteen years down the track, we were going to be dealing with senior people, certainly in the Egyptian military, who would have had their primary intellectual formation in military schools in the Soviet Union or in military classes in Egypt. In opposition to having had them in England, which was true before or to a certain extent, in the United States.

So anybody who thought about this recognized that this was going to pose a long range problem. But I think there was a kind of relaxation on this issue. Besides, it wasn't very long before another couple of kinds of things became involved. So it was necessary to get on with the business of thinking about what the current problems were. One of the major current problems was that as part of Nasser's declaration of independence, if you will, he chose the occasion of the anniversary of the military coup in July 1956 to declare the nationalization of the Suez Canal. This shocked everybody. I think it particularly shocked John Foster Dulles. This was obviously, as far as Washington was concerned, totally

unacceptable. The insistence that Nasser had kicked over the traces and that what he had done was totally illegal was at least questionable. It could be argued that this was a manifestation of national sovereignty, that it was the cancellation of a concession that had been let by an occupying colonial power some 95-100 years earlier. And that any self-respecting modern independent state had a right to reorganize the exploitation of one of its few income producing assets.

There was another area of unhappiness about this. That was that the Suez Canal was a terribly important maritime waterway and, "as everybody knows," the Egyptians will bugger it up. So one of the reactions in the United States was to conjure up the idea, and to try to sell around the world something called the Suez Canal Users Association. This really never got off the ground because there were an awful lot of people who were a little bit closer to the operation of the Suez Canal who came to recognize very quickly that the Egyptians were very serious about operating their canal effectively and efficiently. That Nasser had personally handpicked the army officer that he put in charge, and that he was one of the brightest and one of the most sensible guys in Egypt. He obviously was given carte blanche to do whatever he thought was necessary. One of the first things the new top manager of the Canal did was to set off to recruit a whole host of foreign technicians to help him operate the Canal. The new foreign experts were certainly every bit as qualified as the technicians who had previously been employed by the Suez Canal Company. So in a matter of about six months, there was a whole new roster of pilots, a whole new roster of technical experts in all of the necessary disciplines. Eighteen months after the nationalization of the Suez Canal, there were people in the maritime business, who while they clearly didn't want to be quoted for attribution, were quite prepared to say that the Suez Canal was being operated more efficiently, more imaginatively, more effectively under the new regime than it had been operated by the Suez Canal Company for two or three decades.

Q: How did the Embassy react to the nationalization and the events leading up to Suez War?

HANDYSIDE: I'm a little vague as to how the Embassy as a whole reacted. As far as we were concerned we were all busy trying to keep up with all the new developments. Every day that went by there was something new going on or something that needed to be reported. So the amount of telegram writing or what we used to call airgram writing was just enormous. The amount of paper that went back to Washington out of that Embassy was really very impressive. Everybody was doing his own thing. There were highly complicated, highly technical economic assessments coming out of the economic section. The political section was trying its best to second guess what the Egyptians were up to and what the next step was going to be. Our counterparts across the back alley were very busy trying to milk their intimate contacts in the Egyptian government, and particularly those that were close to Nasser, trying to get some clues of what he was up to next, and so on.

Then there came a time when it became more and more obvious that the Western colonial powers, in particular, were not going to take this sitting down. We began to try to figure out what was the intent of Paris and London. We were astounded, in comparing notes with some of our French and British Embassy colleagues, to discover that there was in effect a bifurcation, certainly in the British Embassy and to a lesser extent in the French Embassy. What the people in and around the military attaché's office in the British Embassy (who continued to refer to the Egyptians as "wogs") were reporting back to London was obviously very different from what Sir Humphrey Trevelyan, the British Ambassador, and his civilian diplomats were reporting back to London. The same distinction seemed to be apparent in the French Embassy, although from my own personal view I couldn't establish that fact quite as readily.

As we got closer and closer to the time of reckoning, there were two stories that refer back to the little group of junior diplomats. As the drums kept beating louder and louder and it sounded more and more as if the French and the British were going to resort to the use of military force, we kept trying, at all levels in the American Embassy, to find out from our British and French colleagues what the hell was going on. I have two very vivid recollections.

The first one was about the third week of October and I was the host that night of our monthly supper club. One of the two British fellows who was a regular and who had previously told me he was coming didn't show and didn't show after everyone else had arrived. Then the phone rang and he said, "I'm tied up at the Embassy and I will be there as quickly as I can, but don't wait for me. Go ahead and have supper." So the rest of us started our dinner. The only topic of the day was what was going on in Paris and London that would impact as far as Egypt was concerned. When this third secretary from the British Embassy finally kind of staggered in, I had rarely seen anybody and certainly not this particular fellow appear physically so dejected. His physical appearance matched his mental state. As we all waited for him to tell us why he had been 45 minutes late, what was going on at his Embassy that was so important, he proceeded to relate the following: That Sir Humphrey Trevelyan and the other members of the staff had been listening to the radio coverage of that day's session of Parliament. At this late date I can only think back that it must have been a question period. Sir Anthony Eden, the Prime Minister, had answered a series of questions I guess about the situation in the Middle East and what the intentions were of the British government. This British diplomat announced that as a result of listening to the Prime Minister's discussion of this issue in Parliament that the embassy as a whole, all these assembled people, had reached an inescapable conclusion that the Prime Minister had made a decision to use military force. And they found this profoundly depressing because they were convinced that the decision had been made for all the wrong reasons, and that the result of the decision was going to be an absolute debacle as far as British interests were concerned, not only in Egypt but throughout the Middle East. I can still visualize this young man with his terribly long face and terribly just crumpled kind of appearance, who obviously in his own mind was looking back over really a lot of hard work for the period of the preceding two or two and a half years where they had been trying creatively and desperately to communicate the realities of the

Egyptian situation and the realities of Nasser's government back to London, only to discover that in the clinch they had had no impact.

A second observation was that a few more days down the track I had run into my French counterpart at some social occasion and had been told by him that for the first time in x number of years, he was without his wife and children. The story came out that he had sent them back to Paris. As I questioned him gently I learned that he was not alone, that there had been a kind of quiet evacuation of dependents from the French Embassy that morning. This was an evening social affair, and as much as I realized that this was a significant fact, it wasn't going to do any good to try to find somebody at the American Embassy at 11:00 that night. So the first thing the next morning I immediately went to my boss in the political section. I reported what I had been told and then added, "As I have reflected upon this overnight what this says to me (having known this young man quite well...and recalling that he had started out as a graduate of St. Cyr and had been a professional military officer for the first eight or nine years of his career before switching over to the diplomatic service...and so I had not only the reaction of a person who was a civilian diplomat but also a previous military guy), is that I think this means that the time of French, or perhaps some kind of French and Allied attack on Egypt is only a matter of days, if not hours away. When it gets to the point where the French Embassy evacuates its dependents very quietly, almost secretly, then something is going on."

I was a little surprised to discover that my boss, the chief of the political section, immediately latched on to this and said in effect, "I think you have stumbled onto something that is terribly significant. Get it into a telegram. While you start writing the telegram I am going to go in and tell the Ambassador." Well, we got that telegram out as quickly as we could. This was one of the first indications apparently that official Washington had that indeed the French were serious about being stupid.

Q: Were you at all getting any emanations from our military attaché section or from the CIA station there about this and were all of us looking at it the same way that this wouldn't make sense?

HANDYSIDE: I don't have any real recollections about that. But more generally my recollection of this particular American Embassy was that there were no great chasms. Certainly what the economic section and the political section thought was pretty close together. My recollection of my conversations with the members of the station that I knew and knew well, was only a difference of degree. We were both, I think, in the camp of saying this was entirely acceptable behavior on the Egyptian side in terms of an emerging, newly independent national state and that we discounted fairly thoroughly that this was being orchestrated, as some were charging, by Moscow. And also we all seemed to sense that just as Mr. Eden had some preconceptions about what ought to be going on in the Middle East, there were people in Washington who were in the same intellectual situation. Therefore some of the noises that were coming out of Washington, such as the Suez Canal Users Association (which as far as the staff of Embassy Cairo was concerned quickly became an absolute joke), nobody paid any attention to.

The Australians, during this period, sent one of their distinguished political gentleman as an emissary to the French, the British and the Americans, to Cairo, with an enormous retinue. They were immediately put into a completely separate building near the Australian Embassy. I remember that particularly because Washington had sent out a very special security team to help the Australian Embassy beef up the security on this building. This was not only top secret but plus, plus, plus and nobody was supposed to know. This was the first time that I as a civilian diplomat had ever been exposed to the technology that made it possible to discover what was going on in a room by focusing sensors on a pane of glass from the outside. This was one of the things that we had to deal with. They put new windows in, or something, because this was one of the worries. I also remember this particular period of time because in one of my conversations with my Australian counterpart, I had been indiscreet enough to say that I thought this was a rather foolish expenditure of resources because it obviously wasn't going to make any impact on the Egyptians and it wasn't going to be persuasive as far as Nasser was concerned because the whole concept of the Suez Canal Users Association was so frivolous and so totally out of place in this particular situation that no one in his right mind could expect the Egyptians to pay any attention to it.

My comment was duly reported up the chain of command to the Australian DCM who in a fit of rage, I gather, called Pete Hart, our DCM. That was the one time in my Foreign Service career I was called to front and center in the DCM's office and got a tongue lashing. The tongue lashing was not only that I had to confess that I had been wrong, but then I had to go over and tell the Australians that I had been wrong. So I had to go over and apologize for my indiscretion to the Australian Deputy Chief of Mission, whose name I have forgotten after 35 or 40 years. But in any event I said that I was wrong because that was what I was instructed to say. But at that time and now 40 years later, I still think I was right.

Q: Of course the thing was the Suez Canal Users Association was a pet of John Foster Dulles who was our Secretary of State. It was a lawyer's solution, I think, to a political problem and that doesn't always work. Well, what were your experiences with the attack on the Suez with the French, British and the Israelis?

HANDYSIDE: Well, my experiences fell into two categories. One was by this time I had been pressed into service as a part of the Embassy's evacuation machine. We organized and executed one of the first evacuations of an American community, not only out of Cairo but out of Alexandria, that I think any American Embassy had been called upon to perform. This took a fair amount of preparation and a fair amount of doing. I still have a vivid recollection of coming into the Embassy one morning and finding this enormous crowd of Embassy wives and children camped all over this carefully manicured Embassy front lawn that no one was ever allowed to walk on, waiting for the convoy to assemble, load up and move north to Alexandria to board the American Sixth Fleet ships that were coming into the Alexandria harbor.

Another one of my recollections was being on the roof of the Embassy or on the roof of my apartment watching the British bomb the airfields both on the east of Cairo and on the west of Cairo and watching the bright, white flashes of high explosives as they tried to put these airfields out of business. I have very real recollections of walking around my neighborhood and one night I stumbled into an Egyptian army machine gun nest. Needless to say, I was terrified at the prospect. But by this time I had learned a little bit of Arabic and I managed to identify myself and tell them that I was terribly sorry but I was on my way home from work at the American Embassy. The soldier in charge came out and examined me very closely and told me to get myself home and stay there.

Another thing you will be particularly interested in. One of the family groups that I encountered that morning as I came in and discovered all the evacuees stretched out on the front lawn was the wife of one of our classmates, Owen Roberts' wife and their three boys. The thing that impressed me particularly was that most of the time previously whenever I had encountered the Roberts family these three active little boys age about 4, 6, and 8, were in a state of constant activity. They consistently gave the impression of things going on. One or the other of them was always into something. This morning when I encountered the Roberts family, each of these three little boys was seated on his suitcase and he was not moving a muscle. Jan Roberts, Mama, was very much in charge. There was no fooling around by those three youngsters.

The other thing that impressed me in a sense was the skill with which the Embassy was managing its part of this crisis. Even though we really hadn't done very much of this kind of thing before, and the requirement came very late, we managed to organize this thing and were ready to go at a time when certainly none of the other embassies in Cairo was. We had sorted out who the people were that we would send out and who the people were who would be kept because we were going to need them. We had done this in sufficient time so that there was time to reflect on it and time to implement the decisions in a systematic and sensible way. So I was introduced, if you will, for the first time to a theme that became prevalent throughout the rest of my Foreign Service career...the whole business of crisis management.

One of the things that I remember particularly, that struck me then...sometime after the attack was over but we were still in the middle of the mess, I had occasion to go see my Canadian counterpart and to discover that they were having a terrible time because the officers in the embassy were not only having to do their own typing, they were having to do their own cryptography. They had made the awful mistake of sending not only their secretaries but their code clerks out of the country. This boggled my mind. How any sensible set of officers projecting forward what the institution, i.e. the Canadian Embassy, was going to be called upon to do over the following two, four, six, eight, weeks, would have made that kind of empty headed decision. We kept four Foreign Service secretaries and virtually the entire communications and records crew, recognizing that we couldn't run an embassy without them. We sent lots of other people out. Most all of, with maybe one exception, the economic section had been sent away. But we certainly had our infrastructure people that were required to enable the embassy to function.

The other thing that I think was apparent throughout this whole business was that we couldn't figure out at that time (and I don't think anybody has really figured it out since then, although again I have to footnote that by saying that I have not read all of the stuff that has been published about this crisis over the years, but we certainly were not aware at that stage of the game) the extent of the interaction between the French and the Israelis or between the British and the Israelis. It was obvious from what they had done together that they had been planning this for some period of time, that the political decision must have been made very early on. The political decision had obviously been made by London and Paris to involve the Israelis in the first place in spite of the downside of that in terms of their relationships with the rest of the Middle East. This certainly became apparent because one of the first things that happened after the attack was that all the British were kicked out and a special train was laid on and Sir Humphrey Trevelyan took not only all the staff of the British Embassy but whatever Brits were left in Cairo across the border into Libya. They were all put on that special train which was in effect sealed and despatched from Cairo main station up to Alexandria and westward to the Libyan border. It was at that point I learned later via reports from the British Embassy staff, that Sir Humphrey had, as he properly should have, been the last British subject to cross the border into Libya. This really impressed on me one of the responsibilities of command in a situation that really one would hardly ever expect to find an ambassador in. And I marveled, and still do, at the fact that somewhere along the line Sir Humphrey had either been apprised of this sort of thing or had figured it out for himself, that he indeed was the primary hostage and that he had to see to it, therefore, that everybody else was across the border into freedom while he still had some leverage left. I suppose he learned it the same way I did having watched somebody else do it.

Q: Now what were you doing? Were contacts still going with the Egyptians?

HANDYSIDE: At this point, Stu, I can't really be certain because I had been in effect taken away and put into the evacuation mechanism and even though I had never had anything to do with communications type radio equipment I certainly learned an awful lot in a very short time. I was one of the people who within a matter of...I was called in by the DCM and was told that I was tasked to do this. I wasn't to do anything else. The DCM reminded me that we had the typical kind of evacuation communications systems in the Embassy, that we had never been able to make them work, and that clearly there was a possibility that we were going to need an emergency communications capability and need it desperately. The DCM made it very clear that my task for the foreseeable future was to work with one of the communications technicians and get that damn radio station so that it would work and work consistently. So I learned an awful lot about communications equipment at that stage of the game. In order to get the equipment properly operational and tuned up and in order to make sure that it was in working order, meant a fairly substantial test program, etc. So I got to know intimately the tiny little room up in the attic of the Embassy where this equipment was located.

This was one of the fascinating things because we as an embassy had a public posture of not getting terribly excited about the crisis. Partly this was because we each saw it this way and partly because this had been the gist of the instructions from, by this time, a new ambassador, Raymond Hare. All the resident Americans and most of the foreigners (diplomats, businessmen, academics, etc.) were watching the American Embassy, and at the American Embassy it was obviously business as usual. They saw what was going on at the British Embassy where people were increasingly revolving in ever smaller circles and they were watching what was going on at the French Embassy, particularly as word of the evacuation of the French dependents had spread through the community, and they saw a fair amount of near frenetic activity there. Yet the Americans were sort of sitting over there fat, dumb and stupid and not doing anything.

But what really shook up the Cairo population, those who were kibitzers of the diplomatic corps, was that within less then 24 hours after the attack began we had five ships in the Alexandria harbor, we had a convoy of people on the way to Alexandria from Cairo evacuating some 300-350 Americans, we had a radio station on the air where we were communicating not only with the other two American posts in Egypt, that is Port Said and Alexandria, but we were communicating directly with the Sixth Fleet and with other Foreign Service posts in the area. This was non-scrambled communication so the word spread around that if you tune your dial to whatever the correct frequency was you can hear the American Embassy. Within less than 24 hours after the attack, our business as usual had disappeared totally and we were obviously up to our ears in all kinds of activity designed to take care of the American community and at the same time to keep abreast of what was going on politically and militarily.

Q: Were we saying that we were not part of this?

HANDYSIDE: Not that I recall, but as I say my recollection of the political evolution of this problem after a certain point is zero because I didn't have anything to do with it.

Q: Then what happened? We announced our displeasure after the attack and the Soviets weighed in at the very end. What was the Embassy doing after the attack fizzled out?

HANDYSIDE: Then the job became one of picking up the pieces afterwards. This was one of the times when our faith in Washington was restored, if you will, in the sense that as the Israelis dragged their feet about evacuating Sinai and back into the Negev (they obviously wanted to profit from their military adventure by occupying a good part of the Sinai Peninsula), President Eisenhower said in effect, "Over my dead body." And for the first time those people who had been convinced that Washington was going to cave in whenever Israeli interests were at stake were surprised and in a sense delighted to discover that the President meant business. And he meant business sufficiently so that the instructions that were given to the Secretary of the Treasury were to start using some of the financial tools that we had available at that stage of the game to precipitate the bankruptcy of the state of Israel unless and until they pulled their forces out. It was finally the financial pressure after some six or eight weeks that finally forced the Israeli

government to throw its cards in and pull its forces out of the Sinai Peninsula. So it took a fair amount of time and it took a determined President using the financial pressure tools that he had available to him. It was clear that Eisenhower was absolutely adamant on this and in spite of all the pressure that he must have been under to the contrary, he stuck to his last and did what was required which was to restore the status quo ante insofar as military deployments were concerned.

Q: Well, you left there when?

HANDYSIDE: About a year later. It was something like August or September 1957. There was no time for home leave but I went off for a three week vacation in the green of southern Germany. It was interesting. I hadn't been aware of how acutely I had missed fresh green color in the monochromatic landscape of Egypt until I got to the mountains of southern Germany and suddenly discovered "Hey, I remember this. This is the kind of place I grew up in."

Q: I had the same feeling when I flew in a couple of years later from Dhahran, Saudi Arabia, to Germany. I think we will end this session in a minute. But what about the time after the Suez War, did you find a change in the Egyptian attitude towards the United States, were all Westerners sort of condemned or did you find the fact that we played a pretty honorable role in this thing a benefit?

HANDYSIDE: Sort of yes and no. I think that amongst the Egyptians who had some sense of what in fact had gone on, amongst the Egyptians, for example, who were aware of the pressure that Eisenhower was putting on the Israelis, there was indeed a sense that the Americans had done something really quite unusual. But insofar as broader understanding or even the next step of appreciation, I think that was limited. I think there was an appreciation generally amongst people in Cairo that the business as usual American Embassy had suddenly been galvanized into a hot bed of systematic and effective management and that this kind of refurbished the impression they had of the United States of a doer and a problem solver more generally. We were the people who built effective automobiles and air planes, etc. and this was just one more local manifestation of our technical capability to make things happen.

But I think as far as the typical reader of an ordinary Cairo newspaper and the listener to that wonderful Egyptian radio station called The Voice of the Arabs were concerned, they didn't see it terms of American credit at all. What they saw was that their chief, Gamal Abdel Nasser, had really dealt a blow to those Western imperialists, colonialists, the French and the British. And that all by himself, singlehandedly, or with some help of the Egyptian military, Nasser had thrown back not only their colonial overlords but also their arch enemy, Israel. And I think as far as most people in Egypt were and are concerned, if you talk about the masses of people, the Canal nationalization was a problem that the Egyptians solved by themselves.

Q: Okay, then why don't we cut it off here and the next time around we will pick up your going to Arab training and going to Beirut, etc.

HANDYSIDE: Sounds good.

Q: Today is April 28, 1993 and Handy, before we get out of Cairo you told a couple of stories off tape that I would like you to repeat. Let's talk a little bit about Ray Hare. He had definite ideas of what young a Foreign Service Officer should and should not wear. How did he impart that?

HANDYSIDE: Well, this was all part of the larger problem that the Ambassador faced when he arrived in either late 1956 or early 1957. He found an embassy that had eroded insofar as his understanding of its primary objective and really what it was all about. This came as a result of the sharp setback to the United States when the Egyptians decided that having been turned down by the Americans in their request for arms assistance they shifted at least ostensibly to Czechoslovakia, although it was in effect to the Soviets in Moscow. For a whole series of these reasons, the people in the embassy were at a lost to figure out whether we were going to pick up the stitches and start again given the fact that the thing that had been the most important as far as the Egyptian government was concerned was something that the United States government had been unwilling to participate in or cooperate with. So that when the Ambassador came in he found that he had a whole lot of sort of tightening up, pulling up of the collective socks of the people in the Embassy. He went about this in a series of ways. One of the things that he did was to make sure that the tried and true traditions and operational standards of the Foreign Service were once again reapplied in Cairo after having been absent for some period of time.

One of the things that I have particular recollection of was his methodical, very systematic and very detailed approach to one of his first sort of introductory receptions to the economic and business community in Cairo. He turned this responsibility over to the chief of the economic section, Bob Carr, and in effect said, "I want this to be run as a Foreign Service reception is supposed to be run to guarantee that we get the maximum amount of profit out of the taxpayer's dollars." So Bob began to have a series of planning sessions with all of the key people in the Embassy who were going to participate in the reception. My recollection is that there were some four or five of these before the reception actually took place. The gist of them was the setting up of defined areas of responsibility and defined rosters of people who were to be there to carry out these responsibilities.

For example, there was a list of some 20 Egyptians drawn up who were to be given very special treatment. They were not to be without an American in the conversation group at any time that they were in the Ambassador's garden. In order to organize this they had to be specifically identified and then groups of people had to be tagged to take that responsibility and there had to be a kind of cascade arrangement so that as soon as one person was relieved he went to find the person who was the next on the list after the

person who was actually on the duty station at that moment. So the kinds of behaviors that we had learned under the previous ambassador were erased and were replaced by the proposition that young Foreign Service officers had the responsibility to share the hospitality, the host responsibilities, with the ambassador and the ambassador's wife. Such things as being around to introduce the newcomers, the guests to the ambassador in the receiving line or being around at the end of the receiving line to take people off and get them started into the party. We came very quickly to realize that that was only 10 percent of what the responsibility was.

The final bit of planning for this...one of the things that the new ambassador had heard via the grapevine was that previous ambassadorial parties, particularly receptions in the garden, had just gone on for hours and hours and hours and people sat around slopping up the ambassador's booze until 11:30 or 12 o'clock for a 6:30-8:30 cocktail party. Ray Hare said that he was just not going to have that. How do we plan to take care of that? Well, as the most junior officer in the embassy, I had the unenviable responsibility of being the protocol officer, and so I got particularly involved in this. We finally figured out that the way to do it was to organize the extinguishing of the lights in the garden. So there was a plan arrived at, and when the time came at the witching hour, I think he said at a 6:30-8:30 reception we will really start moving them out at 9:00. So just a few minutes before 9:00, I busied myself and got the lights in the farthest, deepest part of the garden turned off. And then roughly every four or five minutes after that I would turn off another section of the lights plunging the garden into absolute darkness and very quickly getting the point to the hard core that was still around that they had better, like good and faithful moths, follow the lights to the front of the garden. Finally by about 9:20, the only lights that were left in the garden were at the very front of the garden where the entrance/exit was. The Ambassador and Mrs. Hare had long since gone into the Residence so these people really did understand that they were the hard core and they were being signaled to go.

So, there were certain formal ways that he did this. He did it through staff meetings. He did it through these special planning meetings for the Foreign Service representation functions, etc.

Subsequently, we discovered that he also carried out this process of imposing this new discipline on Embassy staff in a series of very informal ways as well. One of the ones that I was the direct recipient of...during Ambassador Byroade's tenure in Cairo, it had become common practice for people who went back into the Embassy over the weekend to work to dress quite casually, not in grubbies, but certainly in sports clothes and in the heat of a Cairo summer, sports clothes meant shorts as well as an open neck shirt. Late one Saturday afternoon after I had finished the task that I had gone back into the Embassy for, this was probably around 5:30 or 6 o'clock, I was on my way out of the main building. I had reached the Marine Guard desk and had started to sign out when the door to the Ambassadorial suite opened and out came Ambassador Hare. He took one look at me in my open neck shirt and my walking shorts and said, "And whose little boy are you?" Well, precisely as he anticipated, it wasn't very long before I had spread the word to all

the people in the Embassy that I knew that the era of coming to the Embassy even in off-duty hours in sports attire was a no-no.

And there were a whole series of things of this nature that Ambassador Hare got started or initiated so that word began to spread quite quickly throughout the Embassy staff that the new ambassador had a different set of standards, and he was going to make sure that they were adhered to.

Q: You also mentioned one other thing which I thought would be very useful to pass on and that was he took some time to sort of instruct you on telegram writing.

HANDYSIDE: Let me interject one other thing because it is sort of a measure of what we have just been talking about in terms of getting the maximum benefit out of taxpayers' dollars spent on representation. Soon after this initial process of pulling up the institution's socks was well underway, the Ambassador and Mrs. Hare started down the track of making sure that the people who were called upon to be co-hosts at their various representational functions had a real understanding of what they were up to. This began in the planning of a particular ambassadorial dinner, for example, when the Ambassador would gather the members of the Embassy staff in his office, those who had been invited to participate in this upcoming representational function, and he would lead a general discussion of why he was having this reception or dinner, what the informational targets were that he was hoping to reach by having this dinner. Then starting down the guest list, he explained that this person had been invited and that person had been invited because they had access to such and such information or they had opinions that were of interest to the Embassy. Then there was an assigning of responsibility for those officers or staff who would pursue specific topics with specific guests. So prior to the arrival at the Residence for this reception or this dinner party, all of the Foreign Service people who had been assigned a responsibility as co-hosts, would have a very precise idea of what it was the expenditure of money was supposed to achieve. Then we would all gather at the Residence, for example, perhaps 30 minutes before the first guests were supposed to arrive for a quick review of that first session just to make sure that everybody remembered it and to ensure that if anything had happened between the planning session and the actual dinner date, any new developments or nuances of bits of information, that these new considerations were brought to the attention of the people who were helping out. Then we would go through the business of being as personable and scintillating dinner companions as possible.

After the last of the guests had departed, all of the Foreign Service crew would gather together in the Ambassador's study. We would have a drink and put our feet up on the nearest couch, or whatever, and then we would say, "Okay, what of our objectives did we achieve?" The Ambassador would then go around the circle and say, "Did you get to talk to the Minister of such and such and if you did, did you find out so and so?" And so we would all sort of report. He also used that session as the tasking session for people to produce the follow up telegram or airgram that was to report and explain this piece of information or the subject about which the inquiries had been made. It was a real working

session. This came, for me, having spent some eight or nine months in the previous ambassador's regime where there was absolutely none of this at all, as a revelation in terms of learning my profession as a Foreign Service Officer.

Then to the query you had made earlier. Ray Hare had a sense of his responsibility as a senior officer in the Foreign Service to the continuation of the institution. In his estimation one of the most important things that he was required to do was to make sure that the youngsters coming into the Foreign Service and to his organization were properly and thoroughly trained. And so, during the course of the following year or so, since I was the newest arrival and the youngest officer in the Mission, the Ambassador took it upon himself to make sure that I was properly trained from a professional point of view. He did this first of all to get better service out of me during the course of day-to-day work. But he also thought he had a responsibility to make sure that when I moved on to a follow-on assignment, that I really had learned what I was supposed to learn during my first tour of duty abroad.

Ray Hare's mentoring consisted of sort of seminar type instruction in what kinds of things ought to be in the drafting officer's mind as he sat down to compose a telegram or airgram to report a particular development or to interpret a particular development to Washington. One of the things the Ambassador was particularly insistent upon was that before putting pen to paper one had to have a very exact and fairly detailed understanding of what the reporting officer as the author wanted to accomplish with this particular piece of paper when it got back to the Washington community. At whom was it directed, loosely at what floor of the State Department was it directed or at what other government agency in the Washington community? And most importantly, what do you as the drafting officer want that group of people to do about it after they have read it? Is it simply that you want to make sure that they are aware of this particular development or this interpretation or analysis of three or four events? Or do you have something further in mind that, for example, you are recommending in effect that they get started on planning and beginning to execute a specific course of action? His message to me was you have to get this kind of matrix lined up before you start writing even the first sentence because everything that you write has to fit this pattern and further the basic objective of providing this piece of paper. We finally worked that through and I began to get that idea a little bit.

Then he went on to the next step which was to make sure that this piece of paper is cast in such a way that indeed it is going to achieve the objective that you have for it in terms of the Washington community and not perhaps inadvertently distract the Washington recipient from that basic purpose because you have inadvertently or emotionally kind of stuck your finger in Washington's eye. So one of the things he taught me how to do was to after finishing a complete draft was sort of figuratively getting up from my desk chair and walking around to the other side of the desk, picking up the document that I had placed in the middle of the desk and rereading it from the point of view of the Washington recipient. Trying to put myself in the mindset of the Washington recipient and trying to figure out how what I had written as an embassy officer would be perceived and would be apprehended by the person at the other end of the telegram chain. Difficult

tasks, perhaps impossible, really to carry out in any complete fashion, certainly for a very junior officer who at that point had never had a Washington assignment, but nevertheless a very useful intellectual discipline and certainly most useful in terms of professional development.

Q: Okay. Why don't we now go on to Beirut. You went to Beirut in 1957. This was Arabic training.

HANDYSIDE: The Foreign Service Institute's Arabic school at that point was in the Embassy building on the seashore in Beirut at the foot of the hill on which the American University was located. Language training was provided by Foreign Service Institute personnel, a couple of professional linguists who were Americans, leading a staff of Palestinian, Jordanian, Lebanese native speakers. The area studies part of the training was accomplished at that early stage by enrolling students in various courses at the American University of Beirut and requiring a fair amount of professional reading in terms of published materials about the Middle East.

Q: I think it is important to get a feel for this. In the first place how did you, looking back on it but even at the time, how did you react to the way the language was taught?

HANDYSIDE: I think that most of us had the sense that the approach was far too academic. The professional linguistic staffers who had been sent out there by the Foreign Service Institute had for all practical purposes only a very limited understanding of what the Foreign Service was all about and they were not very interested in that. They were interested in an analysis of the language, and the analysis of the process of teaching a foreign language to a group of Americans. Their emphasis was almost entirely on language learning as an end in itself, rather than as a tool to enhance the pursuit of the diplomatic profession. So there was a problem of philosophical approach. There was also a problem in that...this was at the very beginning of this school... the professional staff was really swamped with producing pioneering type of teaching materials at the same time as it was trying to teach classes.

And so with these two sets of responsibilities in a fairly small restricted staff, I always had the feeling that the actual teaching process was sort of pushed off to the background, that the current crop of students somehow wasn't quite as important as the overall mission of preparing the intellectual foundations for this kind of school for the decades of the future.

And then finally the problem at the school was that we were existing in a bubbling, pulsating Middle East where our acquaintances on the Embassy staff were up to their ears in fighting the particular crisis that was going on. So it was awfully difficult to concentrate on learning a very difficult language when all of these other things of enormous professional interest and stimulation were going on all around us. And indeed it wasn't very long before the new Ambassador, Mr. McClintock, found it absolutely essential, given the numbers of people assigned to his mission and the kinds of people

and the competence of the people assigned to the Embassy Beirut staff at that point, that he could no longer afford the luxury of having some 18 or 20 highly competent, middle and junior grade Foreign Service officers sitting around tables in part of his Embassy trying to concentrate on learning Arabic when the political situation in Lebanon was going to pot. So at about the time of the coup in Iraq, in July 1958, the Ambassador closed the school down and put us all to work doing other kinds of things.

Q: Well before we move to that, could you give an idea...the Foreign Service Arabist has been pegged, rightly or wrongly, a breed apart and all that. There has been either information or disinformation campaign to characterize the Arabist as being someone who is too prone to be in favor of Arab rights as opposed to Israeli rights, etc. Could you talk a bit about your students who went in there and what you were absorbing and where they were coming from?

HANDYSIDE: It is so long ago, Stu, I can't really remember where the student body had been before they came. I think it is possible, however, to comment on the sort of approach to the problem. Just as I described the academic bent of some of the management, there was in my group of perhaps ten or eleven an interesting spectrum of interests and motivation for learning. At one end were those students who were looking strictly for another tool that would enhance their professional capability as Foreign Service Officers. There were two or three people who really weren't very interested in language learning in terms of the language but were interested only in learning how to communicate with people in that part of the world in a way that was sufficiently effective so that it would enhance their professional qualifications as a reporting officer or an action officer. At the other end of the spectrum there were a couple of students who were clearly there because they were fascinated by language, delighted with the prospect of being paid to learn a difficult and very different language. There are very few links between Arabic and any of the modern European languages really. They saw this in very much the same way as a couple of the staff members did who saw teaching Americans to read and write and speak Arabic as an interesting intellectual challenge rather than part of the Foreign Service Institute's training program. Then there was the great bunch in the middle of which I was one. I was interested in language and in the intricacies of language but I had agreed to spend two years learning this very difficult language primarily because I thought this was a leg up in terms of professional competence, professional development and competition in the Foreign Service. So there were a variety of kinds of people at the school.

Q: What were you getting from your teachers about .the overriding problems at that time, Nasserism, which you were going to get very involved with when you were let out of school, and also Israel?

HANDYSIDE: I think as far as the professional Arabists in the US government more broadly but certainly those in the State Department are concerned, that over the years they have been the subject of a bad rap. Certainly that is true as far as the people I know in this particular group of Foreign Service officers. The very strong stance these people take is, in effect, "a plague on both your houses." Intellectually, they were unhappy about perhaps

some of the things that were going on in Israel or had gone on in Israel, but on a day-to-day basis they were having to deal with and exist with a group of usually inept, sometimes intellectually dishonest and almost always difficult people, that is, the typical Arab. My sense that the charge for any sort of personal preference or personal objective, that any of the Arabists had become pro-Arab or actively pro-Arab, I think is just the figment of the outsider's imagination. I suspect that this kind of attitude began or got started as a result of one of the characteristics of the supporters of Israel: that is if you are not 100 percent for us you are against us.

It has been very difficult, as far as I am concerned, over the years that I have been dealing with the Middle East, until very recently, to talk about Middle Eastern problems or issues in any kind of intellectually honest and objective fashion. Neither side wants to hear an intellectually accurate and objective analysis of a particular Middle Eastern conflict because it doesn't serve the interests of either the Arabs or the Israelis to have people thinking entirely objectively and systematically about the problems of the region. Both sides are much more interested in advocacy analysis that produces a product that says "See we told you that it was the Israelis," or "See we told you it was the Arabs" who were right. So my sense is that people from at least my experience, the people I have worked with in the Foreign Service who were Arabic language and area specialists, were all professionally objective. There were times when they would become exasperated by either the exponents of one side or the other, but in general, and certainly day in and day out they viewed the problems in terms of the United States. They viewed these problems in terms of Americans trying to intervene or trying to manage problems in a way that was going to uphold at least and to pursue the achievement of US national interests in the area.

I think that a number of these officers after retirement from the Foreign Service became outspoken partisans of one side or another. I have a number of my colleagues in mind when I make that statement, the people who have become articulate spokesmen of the Arab position. Intellectually, I think some of them at least have said, "Look, this is a body of information that has been inadequately articulated in the American press or in the American political arena and as ex-professionals in the State Department we really have a responsibility as well as a personal desire to go public and let people benefit from our years of experience in wrestling with these problems." There are some of my retired colleagues, I think, who have emotionally felt that the Arab side was disadvantaged for x number of years...

When he closed the Language School, Ambassador McClintock put the students to work monitoring the growing crisis posed by the first phase of the Lebanese civil war. We were tasked with gathering information in Beirut and with extending the Embassy's reach out into the Lebanese countryside under the guise of a series of consular trips aimed at assuring the welfare and safety of the large number of American citizens who were residents the length and breadth of Lebanon. Robert Chase and I made at least two such trips across the mountains into the Bekaa Valley. The following paragraph sets forth some of the political intelligence we gathered in between consular visitations. It addresses the

question of the source of the arms and equipment being used by the rebels against the Lebanese Government.

...that we were rubbing shoulders with people who spoke Arabic with a Syrian accent.. The United Nations never perceived this because they didn't have language officers. But it was immediately apparent to Chase and me that we were dealing with Damascus Arabs. The more we poked around and we found people we had some affinity with and could ask some questions of, we had a pretty good idea by the time we got back to Beirut of where the mule pack trains were coming across the mountains, what their frequency was and how much they could carry in a typical pack train. We had a pretty good idea of what the infiltration of small arms, mostly, into Lebanon from Syria was and when this was reported by the Embassy and it got read back to the UN staff in New York there was all sorts of brouhaha about this because the Norwegian general (in command of the UN observers) had categorically, both privately and publicly, said that it was not going on.

Q: When did McClintock close the school down and absorb you all?

HANDYSIDE: Some time very soon after the outbreak of armed conflict in Beirut on the 8th of May.

Q: This was before the blow up in Iraq?

HANDYSIDE: Oh, yes.

Q: In the first place could you talk a little about how McClintock operated? He was one of our professional ambassadors but he is sort of a character in a way.

HANDYSIDE: Well this is another one of these occasions when one ambassador is measured by his predecessor. His predecessor was Ambassador Heath. And Ambassador Heath was primarily a Europeanist. My conclusion was that as far as Ambassador Heath was concerned, the only people in Lebanon who were important spoke either French or English. If they didn't speak French or English they weren't worth talking to because they couldn't possibly be doing anything important in terms of what was important to a foreign diplomat.

When McClintock arrived, he very astutely, quietly but very systematically began putting his antenna out to the entire Lebanese community. He did this in a very shrewd way. He recognized that after several years of American Embassy involvement only with the Christian community in Lebanon, other than the sprinkling of officials at the head of the Lebanese government who were "the duty Sunni" or “duty Shiite," that he couldn't do this and have it be seen as entirely coming as an initiative of the US Ambassador.. So he made common cause with the gentleman who was then president of the American University of Beirut and with the man who was the president of the Trans-Arabian Pipe Line. These two gentleman began a systematic series of dinner parties to which they invited people who were within their ambit. And then by happenstance, the American Ambassador

would also be invited. So McClintock was systematically able to meet and talk to at length all of the leaders of the entire spectrum--political and economic--of Lebanon, thanks to the intervention of these two key figures in the American community.

Over time, what the Ambassador was doing became known within the journalist community. At one stage of the game, I don't remember what the occasion was, but it was probably around March or maybe April 1958, McClintock had a press conference. I guess it was perhaps his first official press conference after his arrival. The Lebanese press corps, which was predominantly Christian, went after him tooth and nail about the fact that the previous American Ambassador never had gone beneath him to talk to these awful people on the other side of the fence, "What do you think you are doing, Mr. Ambassador?" etc. This was the only time I saw McClintock get a little exasperated in a public fashion. He almost blew up at the press corps. What he said to them was, "I am not the Ambassador to the Christian community of Lebanon. I am the American Ambassador to Lebanon and it is my intention and my mission to talk to everybody in Lebanon regardless of their theological affiliation or any other group identification." And oh my, there was a brouhaha in the Beirut press that wouldn't go away for a better part of a week because the American Ambassador had made it very clear that he had changed the rules of the game. Clear that the American Ambassador was no longer in the pocket of the president of the republic and all of his fellow Christians.

McClintock, as far as I can recall, didn't know more than a half a dozen words of Arabic, but he very quickly got into the business of having an interpreter and talking to people who could communicate only in that language. He really, in a very professional way, reached out to the entire community. I am personally convinced that if the Ambassador had not done this, the Embassy would not have survived more than that first burst of internecine warfare within the city limits of Beirut, that is in early May. And the Embassy certainly would not have survived the second onslaught which came in July. I am firmly of the opinion--I was then and still am now--that if Donald Heath had still been the American Ambassador in Lebanon, the American government would have had no alternative but to evacuate the Embassy and close it down.

Q: You are talking about May, what were you doing? Where did they put you in the Embassy?

HANDYSIDE: Well, we continued to operate out of the physical premises of the school. The curriculum development activity that had been going on in the director's office continued to go on, but what had been going on in the language classrooms stopped being a language lesson and started being the planning of a series of consular trips or whatever it was we were working on after the landing of the Marines and the 82nd Airborne (or the 101st, whichever it was).

Q: Which was late July...

HANDYSIDE: Well, no it was very soon after the 14th, I don't remember exactly. It was within three or four days.

Prior to that, I think I may have mentioned to you during our discussion of my extracurricular activities in Cairo, that as a result of the Suez Canal crisis, I had to learn something about radios. So we suddenly arrived on the verge of this major problem in Beirut and discovered that not very much had been done in terms of evacuation planning or emergency contingency planning, etc. One of the things that hadn't been done was that none of the mobile radios which had been sent in by Washington, had ever been installed in any of the Embassy vehicles and the mobile central had never been installed in the communications section, and the antenna wasn't up on the roof, etc. So, once again, I guess because of my reputation of having done this once before, I got tagged by Ambassador McClintock. I still recall with a certain wry amusement that the afternoon that the Marines came across the beach and the 82nd Airborne came into the international airport of Beirut, I was down in the basement garage of the Embassy installing radios in Embassy automobiles.

Q: How was the Marine landing looked upon by the Embassy? I have a feeling that McClintock was not wild about this.

HANDYSIDE: McClintock was unhappy because he thought that this was recognition and admission of failure, certainly failure by the diplomats. But also because he had been told by the Christian head of the Lebanese military forces that if these foreign troops were introduced into the country the Lebanese armed forces would have no choice but to oppose them in military fashion. So one of the things that the Ambassador did in order to make sure that this didn't happen, he somehow got General Shihab, who was chief of the armed forces, into the American Ambassador's limousine and together they drove out along the airport where the Marines were coming in across the beach and where the Airborne troopers were landing. (The Airborne troops were all disappointed they couldn't drop in; they landed on the runways and off-loaded the airplanes with their parachutes still on their backs.) As the American military forces got enough equipment ashore and were ready to start moving in from the airport area north along the coastline to the city of Beirut, the military column was led into the city by the American Ambassador in his limousine accompanied by the chief of staff of the Lebanese military.

Q: And two poodles?

HANDYSIDE: One poodle. This was the way McClintock maneuvered this potentially explosive situation to make sure there wouldn't in fact be any shooting. Whatever the attitude of the men in the Lebanese military might have been about the arrival of these foreign military personnel, at least it wasn't going to disintegrate into a kind of foolish competition.

Subsequently, Stu, I think it became...one of the things that happened at the time...as the Marines came across the beach there was a whole bunch of little Lebanese kids who had

Coca Colas to sell. They greeted the Marines as they waded ashore with, "Hey Jack, you want a coke?" And that was the spirit that sort of characterized the rest of it for the rest of the summer. The troops arrived around the 15th or 16th of July and stayed until the first week of October. There were some problems, but the populace understood that the American soldiers and marines didn't really want to be there, and they sure as hell were going to go back home. The Beirutis seem to have concluded that the U.S. troops were there to help them keep order in their house after they had demonstrated, left by themselves, they couldn't do that.

I have some very vivid recollections of incidents that occurred during that period.

The one that I remember particularly, and I am not sure why there was a kind of movement of military into a downtown area in Beirut, but I have a very, very vivid recollection of columns of soldiers marching down through these twisting narrow streets. The impact was made, not so much by the marching men, but the fact that two of the company commanders (mind you this was 1958) were black Americans. This really had a tremendous impact on the Lebanese. They had been subjected to all the propaganda that came out of the Voice of the Arabs from Cairo and had been coming at them from Moscow over Radio Moscow, that US society was disintegrating over the racial problem, etc. When these two bright, very professional looking young Army captains started stepping off down the middle of Beirut as the obvious commanding officers of these two Airborne companies, there was just no question of the impact that that kind of thing made on the Lebanese population.

Q: Again we are trying to recreate the events of the time, what was the rationale and what was the purpose of our moving into Lebanon?

HANDYSIDE: Primarily, I think, just to put a cork in the bottle. Just put a lid on to make sure that changes that were going to take place would take place in some reasoned, systematic way after everybody who had an interest had been consulted and had an opportunity to express his or her point of view. To make sure that the Syrians, in particular, were not able simply by force of arms to extend the writ of the Syrian government through the Bekaa Valley to the Mediterranean shoreline.

After the arrival of the American military forces, the Embassy acquired an enormous additional set of responsibilities. It had to become the buffer between American military requirements, American military personnel and the government and people of Lebanon. So the former students in the FSI Arabic Language School, who had been co-opted earlier as the Ambassador's eyes and ears, were pressed into service as political-military people. I think almost all of us ended up with some assignment that had something to do with coping with this enormous set of problems which had been introduced by the arrival of several thousand military troops.

Two of us were tagged, Charles Ferguson and I, as the real estate team. Whenever the military would signify to the Embassy that they needed additional land area or facilities or

buildings, Chuck Ferguson and I were the guys who would go out and help them find it and then negotiate our way through the miasma of private ownership and government permitting, etc. to make it possible for the military to have the facilities they said they needed in order to make their presence effective. This was a fascinating period. Ferguson and I were very much involved with dealing with all kinds of Lebanese property owners and landlords. One day we would be tasked to find an apartment building that we could rent so that the commanders could move the guys in out of tents. Or we would be looking for open fields so that they could have a place to park trucks, etc. By this time we knew enough about Middle Easterners generally and knew enough about Lebanese in particular and enough about Lebanese businessmen that we knew where most of the soft spots were. So we were able to insist upon deals on behalf of the military where Uncle Sam got, if not his full money's worth, at least 90 percent of his money's worth. I will never forget at the end of this episode, sometime in the middle of October--we spent from the end of July to the middle of October as the real estate procurers for the Embassy and the troops--we were visited by one of the Lebanese landlords with whom we had been dealing off and on during the course of the summer. I don't remember now what prompted his arrival, whether we sent out notices that they should come in and get their last rental payment or whatever, but in any event he came in. We did the immediate business at hand and then we sat back and generally chit chatted. Finally I realized that this guy had something else he wanted to say. At last, he looked at the two of us and said, "This has been a very instructive experience dealing with the two of you for the last six months. I just want you to know that I would rather deal with one of my fellow Lebanese property owners any day than deal with either one of the two of you."

Q: A great compliment.

HANDYSIDE: We saved the United States government an enormous amount of money simply by insisting that the military not pay five or six times what the property was worth or whatever. In one instance we had negotiations going on with one of the very large property owners in the area and he just figured that we were so desperate (this was to get an apartment building so that we could move the guys in off the beach), believing that Americans were such creature comfort specialists, that he could just keep demanding four or five times what the apartment building was worth and eventually we would cave in and pay it. We gave him a couple of final deadlines and said, "You got to come down to the ballpark that we are prepared to pay or we are just going to break off negotiations." The final deadline passed and he was continuing to ask an outlandish price for his property. So we informed the Embassy and the Embassy informed the Marine Corps that they would have to figure out some other say to solve the problem because we weren't going to permit the US government to spend that kind of money for this highway robbery. So the Marine Corps dutifully went about their business and started to build a tent city. The fascinating thing was that the building they wanted was an eight or nine story building up on the top of the cliff and it looked down over this slope of sand that led down to the seashore. Within about eight hours after the construction of the tent city had begun down on the lower level, this guy was back in our backyard saying, "Oh, but what are you doing?" Well, we said, "We would rather have these guys in places where they can have a

proper shower, etc. but we are not going to pay through the nose for it and school is over." "Well, my price is down." "It is too late." His building sat there for the rest of the time empty. So instead of getting ten times what it was worth from the Americans he got zero.

Q: Just prior to the landing what was the conventional wisdom within the Embassy what this landing would do? The reason I ask this is there had been rumors of a landing and I had been told about the landing when I was in Dhahran about a day before and the feeling there was that we didn't know but there might be a general uprising of Arabs against the Americans or something like that. There was real concern that this might kick over the beehive. This was a considerable distance from Beirut. What was the general feeling there?

HANDYSIDE: I am embarrassed to tell you Stu that I can't remember. My guess is that there was probably a bifurcation of opinion within the Embassy. There were probably those who said yes this is a good idea and others who said no this is going to bring the roof down. Both sides, obviously, over a period of time were demonstrated to be wrong in their predictions. But I think in part the reason that it didn't cause an enormous upset was because of the way the United States government handled it. We made it very clear that we were there to stabilize. We made it very clear that we were going to continue to go along with the Lebanese government. We didn't start promptly across the mountains headed for Iraq to overthrow the Qasim coup government in Baghdad (which was one of the things that at least the journalists had predicted the United States was going to do). And also, by an enormous amount of talking and a certain amount of application of US pressure, some of the senior officials in the Republic of Lebanon didn't do some of the dumb things that they were planning to do. The President of Lebanon, Camille Chamoun, who was a very outspoken guy and was by this time really at cross purposes with all his co-religionists who were members of the Lebanese government an enormous amount of work went into grabbing his coattails and pulling him back to make sure that he didn't do things or say things that were really going to cause the pot to boil over. So it didn't "just happen." There was an enormous amount of work that went into it.

Q: The Marines left in October 1958. What were you doing then?

HANDYSIDE: We had been off until early May until the end of October, and finally after we wrapped up the business of making sure that all the rest of this stuff was taken care of...one of the things that I can recall that we had to do was to go around and make the final settlements on the various properties the U.S. military had used and either restore them to condition precedent or agree upon final damages. This process was exacerbated by the fact that while the airborne troops had cleaned up their area--it was Spic-and-span by the time they were ready to move out. They had been camped in an enormous olive grove south of the city. Apart from some olive trees which had either been cut down because they were going to build some kind of facility right where the tree was or in a couple of instances there were some trees that had been hit by big vehicles and were

severely damaged. But apart from a few olive trees that we had to pay for, there were no sort of closing costs that I could recall.

In sharp contrast, the area that the Marines had ultimately occupied north of the city was left in a fashion that can only be described as disreputable. The garbage hadn't been cleaned up, the trash had been spread all over the landscape, etc. Our responsibility, therefore, was to assemble some people to clean up the mess. I came to the conclusion that the airborne troops as a matter of course cleaned up their area because they had to live in it. But the Marines were much of the time on board ship. Anything they didn't want they threw over the side, and never had to worry about cleaning it up. Whether that is the explanation or not I don't know. But there certainly were those kinds of differences. And for the real estate twins it meant there were a lot of loose ends that had to be tied up. The process went on for some three or four weeks after the last of the troops had actually departed.

Then we simply went back to school. We sort of picked up where we left off eight months before.

Q: When did you finish?

HANDYSIDE: I finished the late summer, early fall of 1959. I went back to the States on home leave for November and December and then by early January I was on my way out to my next post which was Baghdad.

Q: How did you feel about Baghdad?

HANDYSIDE: I was really looking forward to it with a great deal of anticipation. Because for the first and damn near the last time, at least in my immediate ken, somebody in the personnel part of the United States government had made a very creative decision. Someone had decided that given the kinds of constraints that were imposed on the American Embassy in Baghdad first by the situation and second by the Iraqi government, it made no sense to send a traditional Department of Commerce type out to be the commercial attaché in Iraq. Somebody had the creative spark of imagination to consider the possibility of sending an Arabic language political officer out as the commercial attaché and teaching him enough commercial attaché-ing before he went to enable him to perform as a commercial attaché. Such an officer could perform in a situation which was hyper-political where his skills as a political officer were in many ways more important than his knowledge of commercial work.

So, indeed, I was schooled to do this during my home leave and consultations during the last two months of 1959. By the time I arrived in Baghdad in the latter part of January 1960, I had learned a fair amount of what commercial attachés were supposed to do. I'd had a series of conversations with people in the Department of Commerce section who were responsible for the Middle East, etc. So by the time I got out to Iraq I was in reasonably good shape. Coupled with that fact, I came from a family that was business

oriented, so I had some sense of what American businessmen were interested in and why they were interested in it. The result was that I had a ball as the commercial attaché in Iraq. I think as a result of a number of things that we were able to do ("we" meaning the whole Embassy because there was an economic section and a very supportive ambassador, etc.), after I had been in Baghdad a year and half, I was told by one of the American business people representing one of the big firms as a regional representative, that the word was out in the American community that if you don't go talk to any other commercial attaché anywhere in the Middle East, don't fail to go and talk to the commercial attaché in Iraq because you will profit enormously from doing that. We had a very solid, imaginative, exciting, systematic program of commercial support for the efforts of Americans who were trying to sell airplanes, railroad locomotives and all kinds of other things in Iraq.

Q: What was the situation in Iraq, you were there from 1960-62? Two years before they had had this horrible revolt in which a couple of American business people were killed. I wouldn't have thought it was a very promising area for anything.

HANDYSIDE: At the beginning it wasn't. At the beginning it was still very much a whacked-up kind of place. But time passes, life goes on and there was a very significant upper level of professional Iraqis who had been by this time trained in the United States. The airline and the railroad were operated by the same administration within the Department of Transportation (or whatever the exact name was), and the man who was the chief engineer for this part of the Iraqi Government was a graduate of MIT. He understood what the United States could do, what the producers of technical equipment in the United States could do in terms of designing and building equipment which would be appropriate for a dry, dusty, desert area that gets exceedingly hot in the summertime. So there were lots of possibilities. Not that American companies necessarily got the sales, but one of the things we were able to do was to intensify the level of competition in such a way that the Iraqis were able to insist that their Soviet suppliers provide them equipment that would work instead of a lot of used junk. In other areas--in terms of selling automobiles and trucks, communications equipment, and less spectacular things like that, which perhaps had less public relations impact, but were very important in terms of earnings--we were quite successful.

The atmosphere in Iraq at that stage of the game was very much the atmosphere of a police state. We were not able to go outside the city limits of Baghdad without a permit from the military governor general. It would take four or five weeks to get such a permit and you would have to say not only where you wanted to go but when, why and what you were up to. One of the advantages that I had as a commercial officer was that the military governor general was relaxed about what the commercial attaché was going to be doing. I made it my business each time I went outside Baghdad to see all the American businessmen or all the Iraqi businessmen in the area who had anything to do with the United States. I would spend time with the local chamber of commerce people; I almost invariably ended up by making a speech at the local chamber of commerce, telling the assembled business people what prospects there were for doing business with American

companies, etc. I saw an awful lot of the industrial base, such as it was, of Iraq at that point, because one of my typical activities was to go visit every factory that I could make arrangements to visit. Typically what I would discover was that I was the first Westerner who was permitted to go into many of these places not only since the July 14 coup, but since the March 1959 counter coup.

When I finally got permission to go to Mosul, I drove north in an Embassy car and spent four or five days as the commercial attaché making my typical speech at the meeting of the chamber of commerce and visiting all the factories, etc. There was only one hotel in that town at that point and that was the one at the railroad station. Late in the afternoon, as the temperature began to cool off toward evening, it was the practice of virtually everybody in town to go up to the terrace of the Station Hotel and have a cup of coffee in the restaurant. The first afternoon, after I had gone through my schedule for that day, I ended up having a coffee on the terrace. In minutes after I sat down and the coffee was served, a person came up, introduced himself, and asked if he could sit down with me. That started a procession of interviews that lasted for the next three for four days I was there. I learned in excruciating detail some of the awful things that the people had done to each other not during the initial coup d'etat, but during the counter-coup in...

Q: What happened in the counter coup?

HANDYSIDE: This was where part of the army under one of the group of army officers who did not agree with what Abd al-Karim Qasim was up to, tried to pull off a second coup and take over the government apparatus so that they could run things their way. There was a fellow by the name of Salem Aref who was the Lt. Colonel or Colonel who was the leader of this group. The first city that they tried to take over was Mosul. The Qasim forces suppressed this military counter coup ruthlessly. There were American girls who had married Iraqi students in the United States and had come back to Iraq. There were Iraqis who had been trained in the United States. There was a sugar factory whose chief engineer had been trained in the United States. These people would come up to me at the table and blurt out, "You are the first American I have seen for 11 or 12 months and the first one I have talked to." My presence and my identity as the U.S. commercial attaché had been reported in the local newspaper so everybody knew who I was. The fact that these interviews were taking place in a public place and they looked as if they involved only social chit chat, kept both the Iraqis and me out of trouble. None of them was interrupted by the ever present secret police. I heard just an incredible succession of almost unbelievable stories of what had happened in March. By the time I got back to Baghdad after my five or six-day safari as commercial attaché, I spent the whole first day back in the Embassy doing commercial work. The next five days I spent doing political work. The creativity of the decision that had been made by that unknown person in the personnel office to send an Arabic speaking political officer to be the commercial attaché...the success of that decision was the Mosul payoff, the stuff that went back to Washington as a result of it. I filled in an awful lot of gaps in our understanding of what had happened in Mosul during the time of the counter-coup. While that may have been of interest only for historical purposes, I think the interest was probably broader than that

because certainly I had never understood how nasty Iraqis could be. Certainly I had never understood before how nasty Iraqis could be to one another.

Q: One always talks about the Arab mob but it never is that bad even in Egypt, except in Iraq. Iraq is the one place where there seems to be something within the Iraqi psyche that is nasty.

HANDYSIDE: And it also is determined. There is an absence of a compromise gene or something. I was introduced to this by one of the young diplomats that I was telling you about in an earlier session that I knew in Cairo. He was the Second Secretary in the Iraqi Embassy. (He is still very much in the public eye as a practitioner of diplomacy, having just been the representative of the Secretary General in Somalia for the last four or five months.) He and I were on a bus riding along in Cairo one afternoon; I have no idea where we were going. There was some kind of an altercation on the bus. The driver stopped the bus and forced the person who was causing the ruckus off the bus. The door was still open and this guy was down on the pavement shouting vigorous epithets back at the bus driver. The windows of the bus were open so everybody heard the dialogue. My kitchen Arabic at that point was...I could communicate with the man who cleaned up my house, but that was about it...so I didn't really understand what was going on. After it was all over, the door was closed, and the bus began to pull away, the Iraqi diplomat turned to me and said, "Did you understand any of that?" I replied, " Very little." He explained what happened and then said, "If what the guy on the ground said to the bus driver had been said under parallel circumstances in Iraq, there would have been mayhem. It might well have ended up in one of them killing the other. There were some words said to that bus driver that were absolutely unacceptable in anybody's definition of social intercourse." And what happened in Cairo? Nothing. The bus driver, instead of getting involved and really taking it as a personal issue, simply closed the door and started the bus.

Q: Handy, being commercial officer would have been an interesting position. One idea that was going around at the time we were in the Arab world prior to the 1958 revolution was that the one country in the Middle East, outside of Israel, that is going to make it is going to be Iraq. They have the literacy, a relatively small population, they are hard working and certainly have the natural resources and plenty of water. It hasn't. Something has gone wrong. Were you seeing any sign of something going wrong or was this feeling justified? This is a critical time.

HANDYSIDE: I can speak to that in the sense that there were two things that happened in my view that led to this present situation. One was the displacement of the civilian government by a group of Iraqi nationalists/Arab nationalists military. A military who got themselves for international political reasons associated with the Soviet Union and who knew very little about a whole host of highly technical kinds of things. They were persuaded that the Soviets had the Iraqis' best interests at heart, and consequently they virtually turned over decision making to the Soviets in certain areas. For example, in the area of the railroad locomotives where the MIT graduate knew that what he wanted to buy

were diesel electrics made in the United States because he knew that the American engineers would re-engineer a basically sound product and adapt it for use in Iraq and the dust and the heat of an Iraqi summer. He had total confidence that when the engineers from General Motors and the engineers from the other manufacturers arrived in Iraq and said they could do this and take care of that problem, etc. He knew this would happen.

Ultimately the decision on the purchase of replacement locomotives was made by Abd al-Karim Qasim himself on the basis of an assurance from the Soviet Ambassador that of course the Soviet technicians could handle any of these kinds of problems and would. The upshot of it was that the Iraqis bought a whole bunch of locomotives from Hungary that had been built in Hungarian shops and designed to be used in Eastern Europe and in Russia. None of them had the kind of heat dissipating equipment that was necessary in a place where the summertime ambient temperature reaches 150 degrees Fahrenheit. The upshot of it was that these locomotives began to fail very soon after they arrived. It was an enormous investment in hardware that within a matter of two or three years was totally wasted because it had crashed.

So, as a result of the military regime misspending the Iraqi oil income, the kind of impact that the economists you mentioned and others around the world were expecting--their projections were based on the assumption that the oil income would be spent efficaciously--instead of being spent for equipment for civilian purposes that wouldn't function after three or four years or being spent for totally useless military hardware. So one of the major issues in my view was that the military skewed the governance of the country in such a fashion that the enormous income-generating capabilities of the Iraqi economy were dissipated rather than capitalized on.

I think that we can see that that process is still going on. Iraq has a leader who committed himself to an eight-year war against his next door neighbor that not only dissipated money and hardware but thousands and thousands of young Iraqi lives. He then behaved himself in such a way that he got himself crosswise with the entire Western community and ended up with a second destruction of his country. That is a set of circumstances that an economist operating in his ivory tower probably never would have imagined.

The other problem is much more interesting and much more subtle. During the time of the of the Nuri-el-Said regime, during the time of the monarchy, the British were still very much the influential outside power in Iraq. The Iraq Development Board was predominantly British, although there was one American who sat on it. The Board and its staff was made up almost exclusively of people who, if not actually economists were people who thought like economists. That is, they thought only in terms of economic factors and had little understanding, or at least demonstrated little understanding, of political factors. This became of crucial importance immediately after the coup d'etat in 1958 because the Development Board, understandably wanting to conserve oil income, had made the decision that they would take Iraq from where it was immediately into the kind of high tech solution of 40 years ago. The Board decided, for example, to build three or four or five enormous power plants to generate electricity and spot them in key

positions all over the country. They made this decision even though they knew that what this meant was that it was going to take ten or twelve years to build all these power plants and get electricity out to the villages. They were convinced as economists and engineers that that was the way to do it. The idea that for political reasons the government needed to bring the fruits of the oil income to the ordinary Joe in the street right now, not twelve years from now, never occurred to anybody apparently. So the economic planning, the developmental planning of the Iraq Development Board was, as far as I could determine, rarely, if ever, enlightened with political considerations.

The upshot of it was that at the time of the coup, there was an enormous outpouring against the people who had run Iraq before. Under the development plan that had been in place, they had spent millions and millions of pounds and had nothing to show for it. A few paved highways and that was it. There was no electricity in the villages; there were no schools or health clinics in the villages and so on. And this was true because the Development Board was building major hospitals instead of neighborhood health clinics. They weren't building any schools because they said they didn't have anybody to teach in them so why build schools, etc.

Well, the upshot of it was that it wasn't until two years into the Qasim regime, the spring of 1962, that there was a pay-off. There had been lots and lots of snow up in the mountains in Turkey and in northern Iraq and then lots of rain in the spring. There was a very real threat of a major flood. This was the first time that one of the major projects of the Iraq Development Board was put to use. This was the Wadi Tharthar flood control project north of the city of Baghdad. At some point as the water started to rise (and every time we would go across one of the bridges we could see that it was getting higher and higher), the technicians who were responsible for the Wadi Tharthar opened the gates and the water started pouring out down this canal in to the middle of the desert. The flood level at Baghdad never got above the prescribed level. I can still remember riding across one of the bridges in the middle of this period in a taxi cab and talking to the taxi driver who just couldn't...because the day before, the river had risen some 20 feet in 24 hours and then stopped. The taxi driver said, "You know I never believed this was possible. We were all absolutely convinced that this thing was going to wipe us out again. It hasn't happened for a long time but my father remembers when it happened the last time. This is the first time that we realized what those crazies in the Development Board were doing made sense. We finally understand what they spent the money on." But it was too late. The king had been killed and the government had been out of office for two and a half years by then.

Q: One last question on this. I wonder if you could tell me a little about the Embassy. It was difficult obviously as you couldn't get out and around very much. John Jernegan was the Ambassador. How was the Embassy run?

HANDYSIDE: As one would expect, living in a police state where the presence of the secret police was noticeable at virtually all times and the requirement to get permits to get out of the city limits, etc., all this had a very real inhibiting impact. But on the other hand

there is sort of self selection process that goes on in the Foreign Service. People gravitate towards difficult posts largely because they are interested in them for some reason or other and they have some desire to be there. As I look back on that period of time, my recollections are not one of hardship but one of a very pleasant, very productive post. Part of this was because we had a lot of interesting people, people who were involved in all kinds of extra curricular activities ranging from putting on plays to reading poetry to putting on concerts. Lots of people became intensely interested in one of the challenging things that did exist in Iraq and that was Iraqi archeology. In spite of the problem of getting permits from the governor general, it was still possible to plan weekend outings into the parts of the country that had previously been occupied centuries before. It was well before the Iraqi authorities had caught up with the idea that they really ought to organize the archeology in some systematic way themselves. So there are, for example, in the homes of various Foreign Service people here in Washington extensive collections of little bits and pieces of cylinder seals and other kinds of pottery shards or glass beads, etc. that they lovingly found by poking through sand dunes, packed up and brought back to the United States and now display in very attractive fashion.

There was a play reading group for example, Stu, where once a week we would get together and parcel out the parts and we would read the play. People didn't move around or have props. But we read the parts and made the play come to life.

Q: We were doing that sort of thing in Belgrade about the same time. It was a delightful way to...

HANDYSIDE: Sure it is lots of fun. You learn an awful lot because we quickly exhausted the supply of American plays that were in the library at USIS and any time anybody went back home and found another collection of plays, he would buy up 12 or 15 copies in paperback and bring them back into Iraq. So we always had a fresh supply of things to work on. Every once in a while for some special occasion, we would put on something in public. There we tried to put costumes on and introduce some action. But most of the time it was just sit around in a circle to read and spend an evening.

Another thing that we had was a choral group, a very small choral group, made up of 12 or 14 people. We got together to sing largely for our own benefit. But one of the members was the director of music at the local English-speaking church. So every once in a while the group would be invited to do something special at the church, like once every five or six months. So that was another kind of thing that was going on.

As far as the internal operation of the Embassy was concerned, we had some very good people there, people who were very bright and perceptive about what was going on in the Arab world and specifically what was going on in Iraq. There were a few highly competent Arabic language officers who were able to get out and really interact with the community. However, at that stage of the game, there were still a very substantial number of Iraqis who had been trained in England or the United States and they were accessible.

Not indiscriminately so, but reasonably so. The result was that there was lots and lots going on.

As far as I was concerned, I couldn't have had a better ambassador. He started off on the right foot at the very beginning. He said, "I don't know anything about commercial work, I have never had to do it before. But I understand in this environment that this is important, and I also understand it is one of the things that we can do. Your job is simply to go do what you think needs to be done. When you need me just tell me. If you need me to put on a reception for a visiting American businessman, or if you want me to have a lunch for him, or whatever, just give me advance notice so that I can work it out. Whatever you need me for, you will get."

One of the things I very quickly realized I needed was an office for commercial purposes which was away from the Embassy proper. Business people were afraid to come into the commercial section of the Embassy. So I worked very hard for a period of time on a separate location. Eventually, I got permission for and then organized the selection of an office on the third floor of one of the rare office buildings in the new commercial center of the city. We opened that office with great fanfare. There was a big commercial library and rooms that could be used by visiting American businessmen to have meetings with Iraqi counterparts, etc. I had a staff of three FSL commercial people who kept busy doing WTDRs, etc. It was a very thriving place. The office was open every day of the week for certain hours. It took a little while for it to catch hold, but within a couple of months virtually every morning there was a small stream of Iraqi businessmen coming in to look up possibilities in the Thomas Register, or whatever. They recognized that there wasn't any surveillance at this place. The kind of dispensation for commercial work that applied to my traveling around the country also applied to this office. And as far as I am aware, there was never any secret police surveillance of our operation at Southgate.

So certainly as far as I was concerned, Embassy Baghdad was one of the most bureaucratically friendly environments I ever worked in. Whenever I had an idea that made sense, and after working it out and talking to various people about it, I would go to the DCM or the Ambassador for approval. And approval was a virtual certainty.

Q: Did the CIA intrude on you at all?

HANDYSIDE: They attempted to intrude on my little office down town. At one stage of the game they came to me in advance and said they were bringing in another guy and they wanted to assign him to the commercial section as cover. I said I would not have it. I said, "Hey, look. We are great friends and I recognize what you are doing and how important it is, but for reasons that have to do with the mission of the commercial office, I can't take the risk of having even anything that smells in the faintest way of any connection with the intelligence community. That would be the kiss of death for this office. It has taken me a year or a year and a half to get this office to the point where Iraqi businessmen feel safe coming into the American Embassy. I am simply not going to risk that by exposing it to connection with the intelligence apparatus." "Well, what would you do if we decided we

wanted to do it anyway?" I said, "It would be very simple. I will go to the Ambassador and I will do my very best to explain why I think this is an unwise thing. And then if push comes to shove and if you all win, then I will resign as commercial attaché because I am not going to be associated with what I think is the most effective way of wrecking this program."

The upshot of it was that that was the last I heard of it, until months and months later when I was at a party of American Embassy people, I met once again the intelligence guy the Agency had wanted to place in my office.

*Q: Was this still in Baghda*d?

HANDYSIDE: Oh, still in Baghdad, yes. This was five or six months later. After most of the party had kind of wound down and there was only the hard core left, this guy accosted me on this subject. He said, "I understand you are the guy that put the kibosh on my coming in here as a commercial secretary. " I said, "Yes, I was." And he said, "Well, why?" I went through the same story and said, "I was absolutely convinced then, as I still am, that that was a sure fire formula for undercutting the accomplishment and the purpose of the office. There was just no way that we could accommodate you." I went on, "You all know from everything I have done since I've been here, that I am perfectly prepared and have on a consistent and continuing basis immediately shared with you any information that I picked up that I thought was important for you to have. This has happened enough so that even in your own evaluation you ought to know that this is simply not a fluke. It is something that I believe in, that we are all part of the same government and if there is something that I happen to stumble across that I think is important, I will share it with you or share it with one of the military attachés so that the United States government as a whole benefits from it. That is a quite different question than the operational question of whether or not I am prepared to have one of your group in my office." At the end of the conversation he said, "Well, you have made the case. I understand now."

Q: Just as a practical thing all of us know that the CIA cover is such that everybody from the outside looks upon everybody in the Embassy as a potential CIA agent until proven otherwise. As soon as they start doing other type work all the local employees immediately know. I have run across this. The local employees know before anybody else.

HANDYSIDE: What it comes down to in my view as a result of the things I have seen in my experience in the Foreign Service, is that living a cover is a very difficult, demanding task. Most of our colleagues in the intelligence community are not sufficiently convinced that cover is necessary for them to do it. I have stumbled across people in one place or another, in one way or another, for whom maintaining their cover was vital not only to the operation but to their continued existence. Under those circumstances, they really lived their cover. But for the most part, the people who were assigned to an American Embassy simply to be able to get a diplomatic passport so that if push came to shove the U.S. Government could get them out of the country reasonably easily and quickly, they always

wanted people to know that while they were part of the Embassy they were a little different.

If I could follow up on one other thing, on my comment that I shared information with other parts of the Embassy. I did this on a consistent basis. One of the times that I remember as a result of having gotten to know the fellows in the Air Attaché's Office and the fellows in the Military Attaché's Office, I became aware at one stage of the game that they had a terrible puzzlement. They couldn't figure out why some radar equipment that was installed in a particular military installation not far out of the city never seemed to be functioning properly. It functioned, but it didn't have the capabilities that it should have had in terms of what we knew from other intelligence sources about this particular piece or this set of pieces of Russian equipment. They had mentioned this to me one time. At that point, I didn't know anything about it. But some time thereafter, one of the American businessmen who came in was the representative of Rustoleum. This is a special coating that is different from typical lead based paint. It is designed and formulated in a different way and specifically, has the property of binding with the molecules of the surface of the metal that is being protected in a way that it literally prevents rust. Because it is lead free, it has quite different characteristics of electrical or electronic response.

The Rustoleum technical representative came in one day, and we had a long discussion about what he was going to do, who he was going to see, etc. He had been invited to Baghdad by the Ministry of Defense. At the end of our session, I said, "I have given you everything that I can think of that might be of some help to you. I would be grateful if you would keep in touch with me and each day you are here stop by so we can have a brief chat about what you have accomplished and what you are up to. This is partly because it is also my responsibility to keep track of you and to know whether you are alright and that the Iraqis haven't for some reason or other decided to lock you up." He got that point and agreed.

One of the times he came back from one of the military installations he visited, he said, "You won't believe what I have discovered." I said, "I probably won't. What is it?" He said, "They took me out to see a radar site and told me that they had been having problems with it and it wasn't doing what it was supposed to do. They asked if it was just the lousy Russian equipment or whether there was something wrong, When he climbed up on the radar site, he discovered that the last time the Iraqi military had painted the radar dishes, they had used lead-based paint. The wheels immediately began going around in my head, but I didn't mention it to the American businessman. Then, at the earliest opportunity, I went over to the Embassy to see the Assistant Air Attaché and said, "I think I found the answer to your radar mystery." I told him the story. The USAF officer replied, "My god, they wouldn't be dumb enough to do that." I said, "Well, apparently somebody did. Just to check it out, send the report back to your technical people at Wright Patterson and see whether or not they can model the propagation and reception characteristics that would result from a couple of coats of lead-based paint." In the fullness of time the explanation came back from the Air Force technical people that the lead paint fully explained the discrepancy between the prescribed operation of this equipment and the

observed operation of this equipment. This is the sort of thing that if the attaché and I hadn't discussed the problem, they might never have learned the reason for the discrepancy.

Q: You were just about ready to leave then weren't you? Is there anything else there we should cover or not?

HANDYSIDE: One final thing because it has an impact on what has been going on in Iraq in the last three or four years. At one stage of the game Mr. Qasim had decided that Kuwait really belonged to Iraq and that he was going to take advantage of the disappearance of the British colonial forces, who for budgetary reasons, had decided they were going to pull out the military forces that had been guarding the Emirate of Kuwait for years and years. Qasim began a series of PR moves to get everybody used to the idea that Kuwait really belonged to Iraq, and that as soon as the European colonial power finally pulled out Iraq was going to bring the lost province back to Iraq. As the date of the departure of the British military came closer and closer, the tension began to grow. No one by this time was quite sure what this very unpredictable "maximum leader" was going to do. All the Military Attachés stationed in Iraq were having a field day. They all pooled their information. The British and the French were one thing, but some of the others representing some of the other NATO countries were really less competent militarily. There was a Turkish officer, for example, who really was off the wall.

In any event, as we were running down the home stretch of this developing crisis, Ambassador Jernegan decided that it would be very useful if we had an all-embassy meeting so the Military Attachés could present their best estimates of the situation to the rest of us. This would serve to alert us and sensitize us to observe and report any movement of military forces or anything else. The attaché briefing was to construct a matrix in which to put any observations, so that all the information collection activity of the Embassy would be directed in some systematic and organized fashion to a single end.

So late one afternoon we had this briefing. It went on and on and on. The Assistant Military Attaché babbled on for an inordinate length of time about where all the tank units were; it turned out that they were all stationed in the immediate Baghdad vicinity. After this long presentation with maps and stories about how difficult it had been to get all the unit designations and come to this analysis, etc., came to an end, the Ambassador asked for questions. I raised my hand and said, "Mr. Ambassador, I got lost on one of the curves apparently because I thought we were here to learn about the threat that Qasim poses to Kuwait. All I have learned this afternoon is where all the military forces are deployed around Baghdad. The last I knew Baghdad was still separated from the Sheikdom of Kuwait by some 300 miles. The question that I have for Major Hall is how are the Iraqi military commanders planning to move their armor from where it now sits in these camps ringing the city of Baghdad, down to the Kuwaiti border so that they can march across the border and liberate Kuwait?" I said, "I am not a military guy and I don't really understand very much about how you move tanks around. But I do know something about the railroad and know something about the highways from personal reconnaissance

because I have been up and down the road to Basra, the road north of the river. South of the river there is no road, it is a track in the desert. The idea of driving the tanks there under their own steam is a non-starter. It would only be a matter of a few days before they were all hung up at various distances away from Baghdad, broken down and unable to move any further. There aren't sufficient tank carriers apparently, according to Major Hall, and even if they did have transporters, in my estimation they couldn't possibly navigate these non-existent roads between here and Basra."

"There is no way they can get tanks on board a river boat, even if the river ran all the way to Baghdad with sufficient depth in the middle of the summer to float a raft or a barge." "Finally," I said, "the railroad simply can't carry the tanks. At this stage of the game, it is so decrepit as to be non-operational. Furthermore, the railroad has so few flatbed cars there is no way that they could move any appreciable number of tanks from here to Basra in anything less than about three months. So my question to the Military Attachés is, 'Why are we all so excited about Qasim marching into Kuwait when in my view there is simply no way that he can get his army from here to there?'"

Dead silence in the room. Finally the discussion began. I said, "Look, I learned this from trying to sell locomotives to the railroad. I have gotten to know those railroad people very well including the guy who is the chief engineer. Another youngster who works for him is a great friend of mine. I have a pretty good comprehension of what the railroad is capable of doing. And it is not capable of moving any appreciable number of tanks in any brief period. As far as the highway is concerned, I know that highway and it is my judgment as a guy who knows something about heavy vehicles, that there is no way that those tank transporters could possibly make it all the way to Basra. By themselves, maybe, but with a 50 ton tank on board, no. Concerning the river transport possibility, maybe in the wintertime; but certainly not at this season of the year. So what are we all excited about?"

The upshot of it was that the great day came and went and Qasim decided that he really wasn't going to try to march across the border in any force. All the buzzing around that the Military Attachés had done was forgotten about. But I decided that there was no point in going through this drill again. Since there were a couple of points about each of these transportation modes that I had been a little uncertain of, I checked them out and then sat down after the crisis was over and wrote a very long airgram, some 25 pages, describing the transportation system and describing how it could not possibly have been used to do what the military thought the Iraqi military was going to do with it. I sent this into Washington and recall no reaction.

But I just decided that as the person in the Embassy who had this information, I had the responsibility to get it back to Washington so that the next time, if there were a next time, at least somebody would recognize that moving heavy military equipment around Iraq posed a problem and, recognizing the problem, would make the effort to update the information I had provided. Then, unless there were some significant differences, unless the railroad had in fact been rebuilt and new flat cars purchased, then we wouldn't get ourselves sucked into the same misprediction of what was going to happen militarily.

Q: Well, next time we will pick this up when you go off to International Organizations from 1962-64.

HANDYSIDE: Okay.

Q: Today is May 6, 1993. Handy, why don't we go back to 1962. We took you out of Baghdad, that is where we finished our last tape. You went to IO, International Organizations. How did you get the job, what were you doing?

HANDYSIDE: I don't remember how the assignment came about. There may be some interesting story to tell there, but it escapes me at the moment. At any event, I was assigned as the senior staff assistant to the Assistant Secretary for International Organization Affairs, who at that point was Mr. Harlan Cleveland. Probably the most interesting thing that I learned during that period in terms of the Foreign Service as a profession, was how the State Department functioned. I got to know my counterparts on the "line" up in the Secretariat because the IO line officer was the one who had to check all of the documents we produced. He had to make sure they were absolutely in accordance with the rules and responsive to requirements, that in fact the IO "paper" said the things that they needed to say and that they didn't raise more questions than they answered. This screening by the S/S line covered pieces of paper, either as information memoranda or action memoranda, that were on their way to the Secretary or one of the other principals. My exposure to this process was a liberal education on how one managed to thread one's way through the bureaucracy of the State Department at the sixth and seventh floor levels in order to get things done.

One of the other things that I learned in IO for the first time was how to cope with a political appointee. While the principal Deputy Assistant Secretary was a very senior Foreign Service Officer, a Career Minister...

Q: Who was that?

HANDYSIDE: Woodruff Wallner. The second Deputy Assistant Secretary was a youngish kind of academic star who was a professor of law on leave from the law school at Columbia University. He was out of the very liberal wing of the Democratic Party and perhaps, although I am not quite sure about this, may have been appointed because of some previous connection with Adlai Stevenson. It was an interesting trio with a political appointee as the Assistant Secretary, but one who had some very real professional qualifications; the second being a very competent, absolutely first rate career Foreign Service Officer; and third this very bright but totally inexperienced political appointee who was totally unaware of the techniques of diplomacy and the intricacies of the inner workings of diplomacy in the State Department and the Foreign Service. Each one of these principals therefore had to be supported in a different way.

The landscape was also peopled by another couple of very interesting and well known people, the most important one of whom was Joe Sisco. When I first went to the Bureau, Joe Sisco was the Director of United Nations Political Affairs, which was without any question the powerhouse office in IO. There were four or five other offices that dealt with other parts of the UN structure and agenda, but it was quite clearly UNP, particularly UNP headed by Joe Sisco, that was the real mover and shaker of the Bureau.

Some of the other interesting things in terms of the Foreign Service...it was at that stage of the game that I first met Bob Oakley, who has just added further burnish to his career reputation in Somalia, and Michael Newlin. Both were staff officers working for Joe Sisco in UNP.

So the second thing I learned, perhaps, was how to deal with some people with very different backgrounds who held position of considerable influence or authority within the bureaucracy.

The other thing was that I as the sort of low man on the front office totem pole, was assigned to Adlai Stevenson, the permanent representative in New York, whenever he came down to Washington to attend a cabinet meeting or was in Washington on consultations on some particular problem. I was his " go-fer" and bag carrier. I found that absolutely fascinating. I had never had any previous association with a man who had been a presidential candidate before and I found this a fascinating experience. One of the things that I have just never gotten over is the way that Adlai Stevenson managed to communicate his very real interest in people. Whether this was planned and mechanical or not I never knew, but certainly it came across as totally genuine. For the thirty seconds that Stevenson would be talking to some total stranger on the sidewalk or in the lobby of some building, he communicated the impression that for that 30 seconds there was no one else in the world. I can still recall that whenever we came back by car from having been some place (we always came in through the diplomatic lobby;. we didn't use any other door of the State Department building), Adlai Stevenson's walk from the main door over to the elevator bank which serviced the end of the building where IO and his temporary Washington office were located could only be described as a royal progress. It was absolutely fascinating to watch this man come into the State Department and see people, State Department employees or casual visitors, immediately congregate around him. He would shake hands and have a bright word for whoever happened to get closest to him. For that moment that person believed that there was no one else in the world for Adlai Stevenson except him or her. It was absolutely fascinating to watch Stevenson in action. And it was particularly striking to me because Harlan Cleveland was one of the coldest fishes that I have ever known.

Q: Tell us something about Harlan Cleveland.

HANDYSIDE: Harlan Cleveland was a cerebral guy who was very skilled as an analytical and policy making official. He had top-notch qualifications as a manipulator of the English language, having done an enormous amount of writing and speaking himself

and having been the editor of The Reporter Magazine for some six or seven years prior to his being appointed Assistant Secretary. But Harlan Cleveland when he was by himself was a very distant and almost cold person. My typical day in Cleveland's office began about 7:00 in the morning when I arrived to start the sort of the telegraph traffic that had come in overnight and to arrange on his desk the dozen, perhaps, messages that I thought he ought to read before he went to the Secretary's staff meeting. It was my call to sort out what I thought was of sufficient interest and which had some specifically IO relationship so that if the subject came up or if the Secretary asked a question about what does this mean, Cleveland wouldn't be caught blind sided. He would have at least had the opportunity to read the incoming telegram, make a telephone to call somebody in the Bureau to find out what it meant or whatever else he needed to do to get himself ready to respond to a Secretary question. Cleveland would come in usually about 8:00 or 8:15 and there were questions of why I had picked this one as he read through them. Frequently, we wouldn't leave the Bureau until 7:00, 7:30, 8:00 at night. So I was with him for the better part of eleven or twelve hours a day. Yet when we would happen to encounter each other in the halls of the State Department, as he was going somewhere or coming back from some place and I was en route somewhere, he would approach me in the hall, look at me as if he had never in his life seen me before and would walk right on by without so much as a smile. It was just as if the corridor were empty or just as if the person approaching him in the corridor had been somebody who had just stepped off the moon that he had never seen before.

But he was transformed whenever his wife was present. I have never seen this happen quite so dramatically before. When Mrs. Cleveland would come into the office or when there would be some kind of awards ceremony or an office party of some kind, and Mrs. Cleveland was there and somewhere sort of in reach of Harlan, this shell of disinterest and apparent coldness just cracked and disappeared. And Cleveland became a terribly nice, interesting and interested person. I have never quite understood this. It happened every time. He became a human being as soon as his wife was in the room. At other times I had questions.

Q: How well do you think he operated within the State Department, with Stevenson, the White House and the Secretary?

HANDYSIDE: Exceedingly well. He, like General Bedford Forest, always believed in the firstest with the mostest. There were just repeated examples where Cleveland would drive his IO staff and in particular drive Joe Sisco and Sisco in turn would drive the guys in UNP to produce an action memo. The person who would show up at the first meeting convened to consider a new crisis with a solid piece of paper that had an analysis of what had happened, an analysis of the available options, and a recommendation on what ought to be done, was Harlan Cleveland. He would go to a meeting in the Secretary's office or in the Secretary's conference room, and at some point would surface this piece of paper. Invariably it was Harlan Cleveland's piece of paper that garnered the group's approval. In essence it was Harlan Cleveland who proposed the State Department solution to the ...

Q: He controlled the agenda in a way.

HANDYSIDE: He didn't set the agenda, but he sure set the framework in which the problem was addressed.

Q: Was this a result of his cerebral thinking? He would see how to do it, or did he go to his staff?

HANDYSIDE: It was that but it was also a sufficient, in-depth knowledge of the range of problems. He could anticipate these things. He would see something coming and he would sit down with Woody Wallner and Joe Sisco and talk about it in brainstorming sessions. Then as it got closer to hitting the boiling point, I guess Cleveland must have issued the orders to either Wallner or Sisco to get the guys cracking on putting some of these thoughts down on paper. That was where Mike Newlin and Bob Oakley and that very terrific staff of IO/UNP would get on the ball and start to produce these basic documents. I wasn't directly involved, but UNP gave the impression almost that they had a stockpile of these think piece papers, that they wrote from time to time or refurbished from time to time so that when the pot did start to boil over they had something to start with. I am not sure about that, but it gave that impression.

The other thing was that Cleveland was a policy thinker, and he had such an enormous amount of experience in this field. He had done so much writing and so much speaking himself (and as you know, the prerequisite for that is doing the analysis and doing the thinking that is necessary; you can't write a speech unless you have already decided what it is that you are going to say). So he had enormous amounts of that sort of thing under his belt. He was awfully good at it. The problem with Harlan Cleveland, however, was that he saw himself only as a policy maker and as a policy operator in the State Department and in the Washington and New York arenas. He did not see himself as a bureau chief or a manager. Indeed, he articulated this at various stages of the game. I have vague recollections of his saying when the subject came up that his view of his job was that 90 percent of his time should be spent on policy and only 10 percent should be spent on the internal running of the bureau. At one point when Joe Sisco was principal deputy assistant secretary, a promotion list came out. There wasn't a single solitary name from IO on the promotion list.

Q: I might point out for the record that this is often viewed by those who are working for somebody as their ineffectiveness. If they don't get their people promoted there is a real problem. If you are a professional you get your people promoted.

HANDYSIDE: That's right. Joe Sisco was awfully good at this. Joe Sisco would without blushing appropriate ideas that his people came up with without any attribution. No footnotes in Joe Sisco's stuff. If one of the highly competent young officers in UNP came up with an interesting new twist or set of ideas, Joe would immediately come up to Harlan Cleveland's office and present them as Joe Sisco's ideas. But the return was there as well. There was a kind of unwritten deal that you don't complain when I do this and I

claim your ideas as mine, says Joe Sisco to his troops because I will take care of you come efficiency report writing time. And he did. He had a phenomenal record of getting UNP people promoted.

The problem was that by the time Sisco had moved up to the principal deputy assistant secretary slot, for the last promotion go-around, he had only written a couple of efficiency reports and then reviewed a few. So when it was established that IO had lost out, the person who was the executive director of the bureau came to Cleveland and said, "You really have to go find out about this because what this means, Mr. Cleveland, is that for the next year we are not going to be able to get out of the personnel system the kinds of people we not only want but absolutely must have in order for you to run this bureau the way you have been running it. There are a whole bunch of these people who are going to be moving on in the fullness of time, with the State Department and Foreign Service rotation systems being what they are, and it means that as a result of this promotion list fiasco the good officers who will be coming up for reassignment are simply not going to be interested in IO because the reputation is that the bureau does not take care of its people." The result of this was that Sisco was instructed to talk to the Under Secretary for Management (who at that time was one of the career Foreign Service administrative types). An appointment was set up; Sisco and Cleveland went over to talk to the Under Secretary. The word that came back from the Under Secretary's staff was that the Under Secretary had told them, after he had looked through some of the IO fitness reports...he apparently was really not only firm but devastating as far as Harlan Cleveland was concerned. The message he delivered to Harlan Cleveland was, "How could you expect the promotion boards to pay very much attention to people in your bureau when neither you nor your deputy involved yourselves directly in the efficiency report writing process. I went through all the efficiency reports which under normal circumstances the assistant secretary and the principal deputy assistant secretary would have been involved in. You two were not involved in any of them. So your senior people who should have been rated by you Mr. Sisco and reviewed by you Mr. Cleveland, and thereby should have attracted the attention of the Selection Boards were written by office directors and deputy office directors. The Boards would have given weight to your opinions, but you didn't express them. So you can hardly be surprised that your people were not perceived by the Selections Boards as outstanding, upper middle management people."

In addition, by that stage of the game, Cleveland had gotten crosswise with some of the new political people on the seventh floor. As a result, it was only a matter of a few more months (and this was after I had left the bureau) before he was sent off to NATO as the US representative to. I think Cleveland lost his effectiveness in large part because he could not keep up his consistent record of being the firstest with the mostest. He hadn't paid attention to the infrastructure that brought in, trained and developed people at the staff level who were necessary to permit that kind of approach to policymaking to be successful.

Q: Handy, you are talking about IO being on the leading edge of policy matters and all that, but to an uninformed observer you can say this is just the UN and a few other

things. So, what were the issues during this time, the early sixties during Kennedy and a bit of Johnson, and why was IO running with the ball?

HANDYSIDE: The quick answer to that is that while many of these problems were United Nations problems, inevitably every one of them had a geographic referent. One of the problems that loomed very large during this period was the disintegration of the Congo. While the problem was essentially a problem of the Bureau of African Affairs, the locus of the international community's consideration of this problem was New York and the United Nations. So at a minimum, the Bureau of International Organizations was directly involved in this problem because of the professional expertise that they brought to it. IO knew the mechanics of the parliamentary, diplomatic process in New York. But in addition, IO could analyze what other governments could be expected to do in terms of a particular action or proposal by judging what the thought process was in the mind of the permanent representative of this other country or the staff of that permanent representative's mission at the United Nations, etc.

So at a minimum all of these problems were shared problems. In some instances, such as an African decolonization problem (remember this was only eight or nine years after the decolonization process had begun in Africa), it was not only an IO responsibility and AF responsibility, but it was also an EUR responsibility because they were the people who dealt with the exmetropols. The EUR staffers were the ones who were dealing with the French, the British, or the Belgians, or whoever else was involved. So this sort of problem was an interplay of bureau interests that frequently had to be adjudicated on the seventh floor, at a minimum by the Under Secretary for Political Affairs but most frequently by the Secretary of State himself. The reason was that by the time an issue became an issue at the UN in New York, it was also on the front pages of all the newspapers and consequently there was general American political interest in the issue and in what the United States was going to do about it. Therefore these judgments were ultimately made by the Secretary of State or, because Adlai Stevenson during most of this period was the Permanent Representative in New York, by the President. Whenever Adlai didn't get what he wanted from Washington from the State Department, he would raise the issue with the President.

The interplay of all these considerations produced an enormous arena within the Washington bureaucracy in which these things were considered. This was one of the reasons why Cleveland's capability as being the firstest with the mostest was so terribly important. At each of the decision points in a crisis, it was almost inevitable the IO/UNP, or IO/Harlan Cleveland position, that formed the basis for the subsequent analysis and decision making process.

Q: I heard again and again that Stevenson was a man who had difficulty making up his mind. Was there a sense of frustration? How did you all feel about his running the show out there?

HANDYSIDE: The kind of indecisiveness that had characterized Stevenson's political career was hardly in evidence during his period of time as the permanent representative in New York. Whether this was because more of the decision making process was behind closed doors and we saw in Washington only the stuff that was put down on paper and sent off in the form of reporting telegrams or recommendation telegrams or in official-informal letters, etc., I don't know. Perhaps the issue had already gone through some kind of decision making process by virtue of the fact that it had been written down on a piece of paper. Or it may have been the matter of a different environment in which he was acting where Stevenson was clearly not the official ultimately responsible. He shared responsibility with his fellow cabinet officer, the Secretary of State. In the final analysis, it was the president who was going to call the shots on any policy of special importance or on any policy in which the members of the staff were at odds. It is probably some kind of combination of these two factors that Stevenson no longer saw himself on the front line in quite the same way as he had been while he was running for president, or while he was governor considering running for president. On the other hand, Stevenson may have been exhibiting some of his usual indecision in telephone calls with the Secretary of State, with the National Security Adviser, or with the President of the United States. That is something that, at least at my level in the State Department, we were not aware of.

Q: One other personality to talk about is Joe Sisco, again a well known figure in the State Department, particularly the Department of State corridors, as far as his operating style, etc. Could you talk about your impressions at this particular time?

HANDYSIDE: Yes. Joe Sisco was the closest thing within the State Department to a road builder's steamroller. Joe was a very able person. He did his homework so that he always was a source of information and analysis and bright ideas on any problem. And that fed his self-confidence and produced a personality that wanted to be out ahead of the troops. He wanted to be the leader of the pack. I had a confrontation with Sisco at one point that explains, I think, this personality relationship. At one stage of the game, I had a deputy staff assistant and two other people who helped process documents that were to go into Harlan Cleveland. We were particularly concerned about documents that Cleveland was to sign that were to go up to the Secretary and we were really and very especially concerned about documents that Cleveland was to initial and send to the Secretary and the Secretary was to sign and send on to the White House to the President. The S/S rules were absolutely...

Q: S/S being the Staff Secretariat.

HANDYSIDE: ...absolutely rigid on this. They permitted typing mistakes that had been corrected on documents for the Secretary but documents that the Secretary was to sign to go over to the President had to be absolutely letter perfect. Let me put a footnote in here. This was long before the era of the electronic word processor and this meant that these documents had to be produced by faithful IO secretaries using electric typewriters. This posed another management problem that I will tell you about later.

That was one thing. The second thing was that Cleveland, as an old magazine editor, had an absolutely gimlet eye for typographical errors. At one stage of the game, and I don't remember now what the circumstances were, I had slipped and had allowed a couple of typos to get into documents that I put on Cleveland's desk for his signature. He called me into his office and in very stern fashion informed me that he expected a better job from me as a proofreader. He then declared that if I was unable to deliver, he would get somebody who could. So it became quite clear to me that I had to reorganize my own little office to make sure that this sort of thing didn't happen. His final comment to me during that interview was, "I think you had better be very certain that you don't let anything be put on my desk that you personally have not read and approved of." I said, "Okay, sir. We will solve the problem." So I did a little bit of reorganizing amongst my two junior staff people and my Foreign Service officer deputy staff assistant.

There were times when this dictum from Harlan Cleveland about sending in paper to him that was error free ran into the problem of timely production of pieces of paper for him to sign and send on. This didn't happen very frequently, but it did happen in a sufficient number of cases that the hard-charging office directors were very unhappy about it. At one stage of the game (I have no recollection whatsoever now what the problem was), there was such a piece of paper that had been produced by Mr. Sisco's UNP's staff, had been signed by Mr. Sisco and come up the chain of command to my office to be vetted and put on to Mr. Cleveland's desk. There were a whole series of other things that in my judgment took priority on the basis of what other things that I knew Cleveland was up to and other things that Cleveland had told me that he wanted to see. So I put Mr. Sisco's very hot piece of paper down about the third or fourth in the pile. At one stage of the game, it couldn't have been more than ten minutes after I had gotten this Sisco piece of paper, Mr. Sisco appears at my office door demanding to know why his piece of paper wasn't on Mr. Cleveland's desk. He had just been in and looked at Mr. Cleveland's desk and his paper wasn't there. Trying hard to find the calm voice that turneth away wrath, I explained that the paper had been delivered to me only ten or twelve minutes earlier, that it had taken its place in the production line, and would be on Cleveland's desk very shortly. In the next 20 minutes or so, Sisco was in and out of my office at least twice more. At one point I said something to him about what with all the interruptions I had had the production line wasn't moving as quickly as it would otherwise have moved. Finally I got Sisco's paper proofed. It had been looked at by all my people and I had done the final reading myself and I knew it was okay. So at that point I picked it up and started for Cleveland's office. In order to get from where I was located to Cleveland's office, I had to go through his outer office where his three secretaries sat. This office was also the place where the senior staff gathered in times of tension. At this moment most of the senior people in UNP were congregated in the outer office. As I started through, Sisco looked up and saw that I had a piece of paper in my hand. He demanded to know whether or not this was his piece of paper. I said yes that it was. Then he made some very caustic remark about staff assistants who couldn't do their jobs.

I stopped directly in front of Joe Sisco and I said, "Mr. Sisco, I don't work for you. I work for the Assistant Secretary. The Assistant Secretary has told me that I am not to put

anything on his desk that I haven't personally vetted and am entirely satisfied with and entirely comfortable with. Those are my orders from the Assistant Secretary, and I intend to follow them unless and until he changes them." I then walked on into the Assistant Secretary's office. I was torn whether or not I should have confronted Sisco in this fashion. I am a firm believer that confrontations, just like personnel discussions, should be held in private, involving only the two people most directly concerned. But I couldn't let this one pass, particularly with the audience. Without waiting for an answer from Sisco, I went on into Cleveland's office and put the paper on his desk. I made some comment that Mr. Sisco was a little hot under the collar because this paper of his hasn't come in here before this. But I added that I had been assuring myself and you, sir, that it was okay. When I passed back through the outer office, I chose not to say anything to Sisco or anybody else. I went back into my office and resumed my staff assistant tasks.

The fascinating thing, Stu, is that that was the last time that I ever had any trouble with Joe Sisco. I had proved to be a big enough rock in the road that he recognized that if he tried to drive his steamroller over me, he risked the possibility of tipping over his steamroller. Unlike the previous staff assistant who virtually worked for Joe Sisco and did anything Joe Sisco told him to do, I had made it very clear that I worked for the Assistant Secretary. Sisco was a smart enough bureaucrat and a good enough judge of people that he knew that if he tangled with me again he would get more of the same. He just figured that that wasn't smart for him to do, so we never had any more problem. This relationship continued for all the rest of the time that either he or I was in the State Department.

I remember much later when Mr. Sisco was the Assistant Secretary for Near Eastern Affairs, I came back from Libya where I had headed the Political Section and had occasion to call on him. We got involved in a discussion which was a very unsatisfactory one from my point of view because Joe was simply dismissing some factors that I considered to be terribly important. So I sought and had a follow-on policy discussion with him three or four days later. We had a vigorous exchange. We finally hassled out the difference of view and came to a meeting of the minds on whatever the policy problem was. Joe had at last started to listen and became convinced.

Q: Obviously you were in this facilitating position rather than policy one, how did the Cuban missile crisis hit you?

HANDYSIDE: This was obviously the biggest thing that happened during the year and a half that I worked for Cleveland. At the outset, when the thing first began to heat up, I was aware as a good newspaper reader that things were dicey in this general problem area, both in terms of what was going on in Cuba and the various charges that had been flying back and forth between a Democratic President and some self-appointed Republican foreign policy experts. I was aware of at least some of the stuff that was going on back and forth on US government wires, intelligence reports of one kind or another. But I was not aware of the severity of the crisis, nor of the imminence of the crisis. So I had planned a long weekend back home in Ohio and set out early Friday morning to drive to Ohio.

Q: This would be October, 1962.

HANDYSIDE: Yes. I had gotten certainly no more than twenty five or thirty miles north and east of Washington, when I heard an announcement on a local radio station about the President of the United States doing such and such. I immediately said to myself, "Hey. that's not what was on President Kennedy's schedule late yesterday afternoon." He was supposed to go somewhere and make a speech or attend a cornerstone laying, or something outside the White House. But without any explanation (and that was understandable because the public didn't know what the previous commitment was), this outside the White House event had been canceled. Then there were two or three more things on that news broadcast that I found puzzling. I kept on driving. In the next hour I heard another news broadcast; by this time I had gone another fifty miles.

After the second newscast, I debated whether or not I should turn around and go back to Washington. Quite clearly all the pieces of some major crisis had fitted into place in my mind in terms of what had publicly been announced over these broadcasts and what I knew from being the staff assistant of the UN Assistant Secretary. I finally said, "Well, there is not much I can do about it Saturday or Sunday anyhow. I will keep on. If it really looks bad Sunday morning, I can always call Mr. Cleveland from Ohio and find out whether he wants me back and we will see, but for the moment I will keep on going." I wasn't more than 75 miles north of Washington before I was conscious that something very serious was out of joint.

There was no more on the radio and no more in the public prints, so I never bothered to call Harlan Cleveland Sunday morning. So I drove back to Washington Sunday afternoon and showed up at the office at my usual 7:00 a.m. Monday morning. I was somewhat surprised to see Harlan Cleveland march into the office at about 7:15. He immediately said, "The first thing you have to do is go up to Mr. so-and-so in the Secretariat and get yourself read into the group." And I said, "What group?" He said, "They will tell you when you go upstairs."

So I went up to the appointed office and identified myself as Harlan Cleveland's staff assistant and reported that he had instructed me to come up and get read in. "Oh, yes." And then somebody who was responsible for this business practically made me take an oath of secrecy and sign it in my own bright red blood. I then became a member of the Cuban missile crisis action group. This was because there was going to be an awful lot of paper that was going to flow and given Harlan Cleveland's policy leadership within the Department of State, IO would be generating much of it. But more important, as I look back on it, I had realized by this time that the ExCom, the Executive Committee, which was chaired by Bobby Kennedy, had already decided that the venue for the international confrontation was going to be the Security Council. So this meant that USUN in New York and IO in Washington were going to be major players in working out the resolution of this crisis.

We had an absolutely incredible week. After rushing around, my previous 11 or 12 hour days became as of nothing because I was in the office by 7:00 in the morning and never left before 11:30 or 11:45 at night. We finally got down to the point where indeed the Security Council meeting was to take place Friday afternoon at 2:30 or 3:00. As the time drew near all of the senior staff of IO congregated in Cleveland's office because Assistant Secretaries had television sets. One of the stations was broadcasting the Security Council meeting live. There must have been 30-35 people huddled together either sitting on the floor or standing watching the TV screen. Finally the time arrived when Adlai Stevenson was supposed to start making the speech that everybody in IO had had something to do with putting together, laying out the charge, documenting the charge, etc., supported by all the fancy charts that we had gotten the intelligence community to provide for him, etc. As he launched into the speech and he went down the track of laying out the arguments, all of a sudden the phone rang. Harlan Cleveland picked up the phone on his desk. We all sort of turned to watch him. There was silence at our end. Cleveland finally broke it and said, "But Mr. President if you wait just a few more seconds, Adlai will get to that point." And sure enough almost at the very instant Cleveland made that comment, Stevenson got to the point in the text where he was to make the charge or he was to point to the evidence, or whatever it was that the President was particularly exercised about. Then Cleveland hung up the phone and turned to the rest of us and said something to the effect that the President's comment was "Oh, yes, there it is, it is coming up right now."

But that was how close and how focused the entire bureaucracy of Washington was on the Cuban missile crisis and on the methodologies that had been selected for addressing the crisis and hopefully resolving it.

Q: When did you leave IO?

HANDYSIDE: Well, in terms of date I can't be sure but in terms of time frames I can tell you, Stu. After I had been working for Cleveland for about 18 months, I came to realize that I had lost my edge. I no longer could do the kinds of things consistently and systematically for Cleveland that I had done before. The business of being able to keep all of these policies that were in various stages of evolution in my head and being able to keep track of what Cleveland was doing simply by keeping my ears open when I walked into his office to put papers on his desk. I would hear him on the telephone or I would hear him in a meeting with somebody or other, and that would give me enough of a clue so that I would know what he was thinking about or what his priorities were or what the next subjects on his griddle were going to be. I discovered that after I had been doing this and really living and performing on the edge of this kind of situation for the better part of 15 months, that I no longer had the perceptivity and I no longer had the sharpness to be able to continue functioning that way.

So I approached Cleveland at one point in his office and I said, "Sir, I think that you had better start thinking about getting yourself another senior staff assistant. The reason I say this is that I can sense within myself that I am no longer able to provide you with the level of service and support that I have provided in the past and which your responsibilities

require of your senior staff assistant. I can't be as quick off the mark. I can't be as quick on the uptake as I was even six months ago. I am afraid that at some point I am going to miss some clue or some message or some raised eyebrow and I will do something either wrong or fail to do something that is terribly important and will not only embarrass myself, but will embarrass you. So I strongly suggest that you start the recruiting process. I really have some very serious questions about whether in another three months, after I have been here for a year and a half, I will be able to continue at this pace." Then I added, "By the by, this is why staff assistants in other Assistant Secretary offices are only kept on line for 12 months. The usual pattern in NEA and EUR is 12 months and I suspect it is for this reason."

Mr. Cleveland apparently accepted my evaluation during this conversation. Although he never mentioned the subject again, I became aware that the executive director of the Bureau had been instructed to find a replacement for me. So the process started and somebody was found, and after 18 or 19 months I was relieved and went on to another assignment in ARA.

But as I looked back on it then and certainly as I look back on it now, it was an incredibly exciting kind of assignment. But it was so demanding, both physically and mentally, that it was impossible to keep up the pace. After the Cuban missile crisis was over, I had continued to come in on Saturday and Sunday. Four weeks after the crisis was over, I finally went to Woody Wallner and said, "Mr. Wallner, I think the time has come that I have to get off this treadmill. I have been working seven days a week for the last seven or eight weeks now and I just can't cope with it. I am afraid that my inability and my lack of stamina, more importantly my lack of mental acuity is going to cause other troubles. So I want to propose to you that I follow a particular course of action this coming weekend. We have a duty officer in IO, and I think it is time that we get back to the standard system of duty officer. Ever since the Cuban missile crisis people who had something that they had to get done have not been calling the duty officer, they have been calling me. They have searched me out whether I was in the office or at home. That was fine because we had a crisis on. But things have settled down now and the grist is back to normal grist for early November in the General Assembly and the Security Council. So what I would propose to do is this: I will alert the regular duty officer for this coming weekend that he or she is really going to have the duty. Then I will just disappear out of circulation. If they call me at home either I won't be there or I won't answer the telephone." Woody thought about this for a minute without making any comment and finally said, "Okay, I agree, go ahead."

So for the next two weekends I simply got up early in the morning on both Saturday and Sunday and jumped into my automobile and drove out to the country. I went to the Shenandoah Valley or Skyline Drive or down to the James River plantations, or some other place that quite literally was not reachable (this being the days before cellular phones in automobiles). The first Monday morning after this first weekend, I had several people come storming into my office saying, "Where the hell were you yesterday? I tried

to get a hold of you to do so-and-so?" I very sweetly said, "That is what we have the duty officer for, why didn't you call the duty officer?"

After having been physically out of the house for two weekends, I decided to chance it on the third weekend and I didn't plan some sightseeing trip. I stayed home fully prepared not to answer the telephone. But surprise, surprise, all day Saturday went by and the telephone didn't ring. It was then I realized that I had finally solved the problem.

Q: You moved over from IO to where in 1964?

HANDYSIDE: I decided that I had never had an assignment in a part of the State Department that had anything to do with administration or operations management and that I really ought to spend some time learning how the State Department managed itself and kept house for itself. So in the last couple of months of my assignment in IO, I started shopping around. I discovered that there was a post management slot open in ARA, American Republic Affairs. This seemed to fit particularly well because this was an area of the world that I knew nothing about, that I thought I should know something about, but I really didn't want to know too much about. Being a post management officer for a half a dozen posts some place in South America for 12 or 14 months would give me the background that I needed in this part of the world in terms of any future responsibilities either in other non-geographical assignments or further up the line.

So I took the initial steps to start down the track of investigating this possibility. I went to see Rodger Abraham, the ARA Executive Director. He sent me off to see a gentleman by the name of Jules Sugarman, the director of the segment of the Executive Office responsible for all budget and finance problems as well as the post management problems for ARA. I talked to Mr. Sugarman and told him why I was interested in this, what I hoped to gain from it. I then added, "While it is quite true that I know nothing about this Bureau at this point and I am rather vague about some of the geography of Central and South America, I think you can be sure that I learn quickly and that I will very rapidly pick up whatever factual baggage I need in order to perform the function." He said, "Well, let me think about this for a while. I will be back in touch." He called me back a couple of days later and said, "I have decided to take a chance on you. I have looked up your record and read the stuff that people have said about you and I am convinced that you can do what we have to do. Under normal circumstances I would expect that it would take about five or six months for a newcomer to get on to what we are doing here and then I would have a minimum of 12 months of service out of such a person. So out of a period of 18 months, I would get 12 months of service. I expect you to be up and running in two or three months at the very most and if you stay around for 15 months I will still get 12 months of service out of you simply on the basis that you will catch on faster than lots of other people. So it is a deal." So when my replacement arrived in the IO front office, I shifted over to ARA.

It was as I had anticipated, a very rewarding learning experience. I learned an awful lot about how the State Department functions on the support side, the administrative side, the

finance side. I learned the post management agenda thoroughly and a great deal about budget presentation, budget reviews, etc. The thing that I found most fascinating about this assignment was the reaction of the people in ARA. The staff in the ARA front office presumably had been briefed either by Jules Sugarman or Rodger Abraham about why they picked me. So there were never any questions there. But there were lots and lots of questions by the office director level people throughout the Bureau and by their staff officers, the desk officers, etc. They couldn't figure out why any guy who had been a political reporting officer would take an assignment in the post management section of any bureau in the State Department. The only explanation as far as they were concerned was that I must have screwed up very badly some place.

Q: Were you getting the sense of inferiority from ARA, because I have always had that feeling in my time in the Foreign Service, that it just wasn't quite as competitive as some other places and so by going there was also accumulative or not?

HANDYSIDE: Well, that perhaps added to this impression, but it was fascinating because one by one as I began to interact directly with the various office directors, they would come to realize that whatever their imagined explanation was, they were dealing with a post management officer who knew what he was doing and who had some bright and creative ideas about how to solve some of the problems that affected their posts. They also discovered he had a good enough sense of what goes on in an embassy that he could propose solutions that made sense in embassy management terms, etc. Thus my relationship with the collection of five or six officer directors very quickly became quite good. I remember only one of them, however, who ever raised the general topic with me...After we had finished whatever our business was, he said, "You know Handy, from the time you arrived here, I was very puzzled why you would take this assignment. I came to the conclusion that I am sure you were aware many other people in this Bureau did, that you had somehow strayed seriously from the accepted path and that you were being punished by this assignment in ARA as a post management officer. Do me a favor and tell me why." So I went through the explanation. He sort of sat there and shook his head up and down and agreed it made sense. Finally he concluded by saying, "I figured as much. You are crazy as a fox."

Anyhow, I achieved what I was after; I learned an enormous amount about how parts of the State Department function; about why people buy new automobiles and how they decided to send them to what embassy; how people do all kinds of other things about making decisions as to whether or not there should be construction money available to this post for a refurbishing of the roof, for the construction of a swimming pool, or whatever. I learned enough about who the people were and what the management problems were so that as I went back out into the field in NEA & AF and got involved in various management problems, I was able to push things in directions that I would never have been able to before, if I hadn't spent 14 months as a post management officer in a geographical bureau in the State Department. At the same time I learned a great deal about the geography of South America and about various endemic kinds of political and economic problems that I certainly wouldn't have picked up otherwise.

Q: Here is a question I ask of people who move from bureau to bureau, sort of outsiders, because often they have a more objective view. Did you get any feel for the organization and the type of personnel in ARA as compared to other geographical bureaus?

HANDYSIDE: Yes, there was a greater gap, if you will, between the very good people who were the office directors, and the very so-so people, who were the desk officers and the other Indians. The people who were at the top of the Bureau were as good as the people who were at the top of any other bureau of the State Department. But for whatever the reasons were, ARA did not have the level of attraction in terms of the personnel pool as a whole so the kinds of officers that the Bureau was able to attract at least to Washington assignments (I couldn't really get a feel for the overseas posts because I never got to go overseas) were simply not up to the kinds of people that I had come to take for granted in NEA and that I had worked happily with for a year and a half in IO. (However, I found the same kinds of differences in IO. The real stars were in UNP. The other parts of IO that dealt with the Economic and Social Council or with the administrative backstopping of either our mission in New York or our participation in those phases of UN affairs generally had less able, less creative people. There was a significant difference in the level of capability between the people in UNP and the people in the rest of the Bureau. What I found in ARA was that most of those people were not UNP people, they were the other kind.)

Q: Okay, so now we move back into your own world again from 1965-70.

HANDYSIDE: Yes that is right. From 1965-70 I was stationed in Libya. It was a most interesting assignment. I saw a range of problems. As the chief of the political section we not only had to be directly aware of and worried about the extensive kinds of political problems that continued to agitate the Middle East, but I also had the responsibility of the primary troubleshooter for the Embassy on the problems that were caused in the bilateral relationship as a result of having an enormous air base seven miles down the road, Wheelus Field, with all the problems that went along with a major military installation, with a whole lot of high performance aircraft and two thousand Air Force personnel. (Wheelus Field was the primary training and gunnery qualification center for all of the US Air Force in Europe. Every plane and every pilot assigned to one of the US Air Force units came to Wheelus twice a year to practice and then to fly judged test runs on the range. The permanent personnel at the base had to put the pilots and the aircraft through all their paces. The flight crews who didn't rack up appropriate test scores were either docked their flyboy pay or were in some instances grounded and taken off combat ready assignments. The functioning at Wheelus was terribly important to the combat readiness of the U.S. Air Force in Europe.)

The problem was that whenever this kind of high performance equipment is involved, there are inevitably mechanical problems of one kind or another. One of the things that was almost always happening was some piece of the airplane would drop off, either an empty gas tank or some other piece of apparatus, particularly in landing and takeoffs. So

all the farmers who lived in the immediate area extending out five or six miles from the walls of Wheelus Field, were continually subjected to these mechanical indiscretions of Air Force fighter planes. That meant that not only somebody from the Air Base had to go out on a damage control mission, but there almost always had to be someone from the Embassy involved as well, because almost automatically and immediately these things became political problems between the US Embassy and the host government.

Or there would be automobile accidents caused by untethered animals suddenly dashing across the road, or an Air Force vehicle would strike a camel. I learned immediately that every camel that got hit by an American Air Force vehicle was always pregnant because the US government then had to pay not only for the death of the mother, but for the death of the incipient camel that otherwise would have produced such and such an amount of income during its natural life, etc.

A fascinating period for a number of reasons. We were dealing with a government that was only at the very beginning of its self-discovery of its governmental competence. There were first class people in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, but...

Q: Could you describe what the government was like at that time?

HANDYSIDE: It was a government that consisted of a king who was remote, both physically and intellectually, from the rest of the government. He was both a temporal and a religious leader.

Q: This was King Idriss.

HANDYSIDE: Yes. His family was one of the theologically important families in the spread of Islam westward across north Africa. The family had been centered primarily in the desert areas that ultimately became southern Libya and southern Algeria. He was revered not simply as a temporal ruler, but also as a religious leader. By the time I arrived on the scene he was well over 75; had a long white beard and moved with a certain amount of frail stolidity. He had a very attractive and quite modern wife, as the queen. They had never had any offspring so he had no heir. There was a crown prince who was from another branch of the family who wasn't terribly bright and had no real competence in terms of government. The King also had a nephew from another part of the family who had just graduated from one of the British private schools in Jerusalem. He went off, midway through my five years in Libya, to his first year at either Oxford or Cambridge in England. He was the real saving grace of the family. He had the smarts, the personal attractiveness, the political sensitivities, that had he been made the heir apparent, might have enabled the royal family to survive. It is not clear whether the young man was interested in taking on this burden or not. What was clear was that the king was not interested in placing the leadership burden on his favorite nephew, so he remained locked into this very stolid, unimaginative family member who was already the crown prince.

There was a parliamentary form of government. Libya had started out as a federal state, each of the three provinces being represented equally in various parts of the government. It had subsequently become a unitary state. But the people who ran the government were people who were the tribal movers and shakers. This meant that while there were a certain number of very bright and quite competent tribal types, their management style was very old fashioned. It also meant that there were some of the sons of tribal types who were not very bright and didn't have very much ambition or much acuity, but who turned out to be terribly important people in the society and the economy because of who their fathers and grandfathers were. The corollary of that proposition was that there was a fairly substantial number of young men in the community plus a handful of young women who were very bright and very competent and who had enormous career aspirations, but who because their families were run-of-the-mill and their parents were nobodies would never in traditional Libyan society ever amount to anything. We keep referring to this in the United States as the glass ceiling. Women, in particular, come up against the glass ceiling, especially in the private sector, and discover they can't go any further. The equivalent was true in Libya for men and women. There were numbers of people who had very real skills and significant intelligence who were relegated to unimportant jobs in the society because of family background. This became enormously important after the 1967 war...

Q: This is the Six-Day War in which Israel really clobbered the Egyptians.

HANDYSIDE: ...because the Libyan government found itself under enormous pressure and it became necessary for the king to consciously make some changes of regime. There was a period of time in either late 1967 or early 1968 that the king appointed a very bright young lawyer whose father had been a bottom level religious figure of some kind as the Prime Minister, Abd al-Hamid al-Bakkush. This was a sop to the youth of the country who had reacted adversely to the previous way of doing things. At the outset the king did not permit the new prime minister to name the rest of his cabinet. So for the first three or four months, the prime minister had to try and make do with the old tribal sticks-in-the-mud who were the primary cause of the political unrest. Finally the king came under sufficient pressure that he finally permitted the new prime minister to appoint his own choices to his cabinet. So sometime in the spring or summer of 1968, there was a new cabinet full of these bright new technocrats, all of whom had been educated abroad, some in the United States.

There suddenly developed in Libya the same kind of excitement about the government that existed in Washington during the administration of President Kennedy. All kinds of fascinating new things were going on. One of the results was that the academic year that began in the fall of 1968 was the first academic year in a decade where there were no strikes or political upsets at the couple of universities or of the secondary schools. The reason for it was very clearly articulated. The student leaders at both high school and university level said very publicly on their campuses that our guy is the prime minister; he is going in the direction that we want to go; he is going as fast as he can; and the last thing he needs is problems on the campuses of this country. And the students of Libya

during that exciting period of Camelot in Libya, kept order on their own campuses. The student radicals continued to agitate, but the problems were handled, and the situations were defused by the student leadership. The potential crises were defused on the basis of the insistence of the leaders that we cannot afford to be the prime minister's next problem.

Q: Now, you were the chief of the political section there. How did you operate as far as making contacts? What were American interests?

HANDYSIDE: Well, the air base was a major interest, obviously, but we also had some sense of what was going on generally. The number two slot in the political section explicitly went to a language officer and during the time I was there I had two absolutely first class Foreign Service language officers assigned to that job. Both have now gone on and have been chiefs of mission and principal deputy assistant secretaries, and have continued to work in the Near East Bureau. Very able young guys.

They and I also had the responsibility of getting out into the community. One of the things that we were lucky to have...some of the young men in this society, young fellows who had had some foreign education and some real aspiration about evolving Libya from an authoritarian government that had the trappings of a constitutional monarchy into a real constitutional monarchy where the royal family was a figurehead and the prime minister was really the head of government...

At some point in the early 60's these young fellows in the western end of the country, in the province that had previously been called Tripolitania, had organized a group called the Intellectual Society. The meetings of the Intellectual Society were open to the general public and they took place usually every three or four weeks. They typically involved a speaker and then a discussion. I made it my business to call on all the guys who were leaders of this group to obtain their permission to start coming to their meetings as an observer. I would go not religiously and faithfully to every meeting, but I got to as many of the meetings that I possibly could. I got involved in as many discussions and problems as I could usefully and with some sense of diplomatic dignity. Over a period of time I became known as somebody that was interested in what they thought, and was a reasonably friendly and warm, interlocutor.

I hadn't realized the impact of this. I thought this was benefitting me because it certainly helped me understand what was going on in society. But at a subsequent time, and I don't remember exactly when this happened, but somewhere prior to the 1967 War, in late 1966 or early 1967. My counterpart in the British Embassy was a young British Arabist by the name of Goulding, whose name you may recognize as the current Under Secretary for Parliamentary Affairs at the United Nations and who has been involved in troubleshooting all kinds of crises around the world for the UN Secretary General of late. Mig Goulding said to me at one point, "You know, I had the most interesting comment from one of these young fellows about you and the American Embassy that I think you ought to hear. One of them volunteered the following to me a couple of days ago. He said, 'You know, we always used to consider the American Embassy as a very unfriendly place

insofar as the younger generation in Libya is concerned. We viewed the American Embassy has being slavish supporters of the royal family and of the status quo. It is fascinating and wonderfully satisfying now that there is one guy in the American Embassy who listens to what we say. He makes it his business to understand what we say and while we recognize that the attitude of the American Embassy hasn't really changed in any significant way, at least we now have somebody in the American Embassy that we can go talk to and who will talk to us in a way that indicates he understands what we are doing.'" I must say that was one of the best fitness reports I ever got during my time in the Foreign Service.

Q: Well why don't we call it off at this point. Next time I will pick up some things about what happened up through 1970...your impression of our ambassadors there, more dealing with the Wheelus Air Base and dealing with the US military, the Libyan military, etc.

HANDYSIDE: One of the things you may want to cover was the political crisis in Libya that accompanied the 1967 war.

Q: Starting all over again. Today is May 20, 1993. Handy, do you want to start. We are talking about the 1967 war. This would be the June 1967 war in which Israel beat the hell out of the Egyptians after an initial scare.

HANDYSIDE: It might be useful to record a couple of general observations about what was going on in Libya at that stage of the game, particularly in terms of the US relationship and then begin to point to some of the precursors of the coup d'etat against the King that occurred a little over two years later.

By way of background on the '67 war: You recall that the Israeli Air Force cleaned up on the Egyptian Air Force in literally a matter of hours in the first day of hostilities. At the same time the authorities of the US Air Force made a decision (I assume at 16th Air Force Headquarters in Europe) to get the collection of fighter planes and crews which had been at Wheelus Air Force Base on one of their periodic cycles through the gunnery range, out of the Libyan area and in effect the Middle Eastern war theater as quickly as possible. So early on the morning of the Israeli attack on Egypt, emergency orders were issued and the two fighter squadrons temporarily at Wheelus were instructed to take off just as quickly as they could and return to their bases in Europe. The result: (1) there were two hundred aircraft taking off in typical combat takeoff formation (where pairs of airplanes go charging down the runway simultaneously) in a period of a couple of hours, and (2) all the Libyans who lived around the Air Base were very soon aware of the fact that tens of American fighter planes were leaving Wheelus.

A few hours later, after the reports began to come in that the Israeli Air Force had literally destroyed the Egyptian Air Force by attacking all the air bases in Egypt and knocking out the Air Force while it was still on the ground, the typical Libyan military and civilian observer, led by one of the U.S.-trained Libyan Air Force pilots, immediately put these

two things together and came to the conclusion that the U.S. fighters had taken off from Wheelus and flown to Egypt to hit the Egyptian Air Force. It was patently obvious to Libyans that the Israeli Air Force couldn't beat the Egyptian Air Force by itself. Therefore this astounding victory of the Israeli Air Force over the Egyptian Air Force had been made possible only because American pilots and American planes had been involved.. This interpretation of events, originally a supposition, later became rumor, and still later became absolute fact. I dare say there are people in Libya and indeed throughout the Arab world, who 25-30 years later, are still absolutely convinced that it was American air power which wiped out the Egyptian Air Force.

A few days later, the Libyan Government halted the loading of Libyan oil in tankers bound for American ports. The Government took this action to reestablish its control over its own people and to strengthen its shaky position vis a vis its Arab neighbors. This Libyan action was the first Arab oil embargo imposed against the U.S.. The Embassy was faced with an enormous problem of trying to rebuild its position in the community and trying to get people to be willing to talk to official Americans again. There were times, for example, when I--and other Embassy officers, including Ambassador and Mrs. Newsom--found that Libyans we had known quite well in the preceding couple of years would go so far as to cross over onto the other side of the street in order to avoid meeting us and having to speak to us. These kinds of reactions posed some very serious, very difficult problems as far as the Embassy was concerned. It took perhaps five or six months before we were back somewhere to some semblance of where we had been before the war.

But more important were some of the things which did not involve us but involved the internal politics of Libya. Almost immediately after the total defeat of Egypt and the other Arab states by Israeli forces, there was an immediate reaction on the part of the younger generation in the western part of Libya, Tripolitania. Very quickly, literally within four or five days after the hostilities were over, a group of some 28 young Libyan males, all of whom had been trained in the west, most of them in the United States, many of whom were working for American oil companies, simply displaced the Libyan government. They took over and began to run the western part of the country. It was a kind of committee of young professionals. There was not very much publicity about this. They didn't go on the radio and try to make the point that they had taken over the government. They just did in fact. There were enough of them who were key people in government agencies and coupled with those who were fairly senior in the various oil companies that they occupied a sufficient number of political pressure points to enable them, in effect, to do this. For the next six or eight weeks Tripolitania was run by this rump group of mostly US trained technicians.

This situation caused the king to face up to the fact that he would have to make some changes in the way that he and others had been governing Libya. One of the first things that the King did to reestablish the power of the Libyan government in Tripolitania, was to appoint one of the previous Ministers of Interior, who was a tough old tribal leader, as Prime Minister. Moreover, the King gave him the responsibility of reestablishing law and

order and more importantly reestablishing the run of the writ of the Libyan government throughout the country as well as in Tripolitania. The upshot of this Royal decision was a lot of knocking together during July and August of the heads of the young men who had previously stepped out of line from the point of view of the royal family. The couple of dozen people who had been running the government in the western part of the country were systematically shuffled off. As far as I know they were never overtly punished in any way, but their authority over the operation of the port and the government agencies, etc. in Tripoli and the surrounding area was very quietly and systematically turned off.

By the end of the summer with the tough guy Prime Minister having reestablished law and order, the King apparently came to realize that he had to do more to be responsive to the desires of the young intellectual generation to make Libya a more responsive society and polity; that he at least had to pay lip service to their intense desire to modernize the state and modernize the society. The result was that towards the end of August or early in September, the King appointed Abd al-Hamid al-Bakkush, a young Libyan lawyer as Prime Minister. He kept him on a very tight rein at first; he forced Bakkush to accept all of the old timers who had been members of the tribal leader's cabinet. For the first couple of months the new Prime Minister was in fact little more than a younger generation front man.

Nevertheless this was terribly important because Bakkush was the first Prime Minister of Libya who had not come out of the ancient tribal structure and whose family was a nothing family in terms of Libyan politics and Libyan society. Bakkush's father had been a religious figure of some very low importance on the Mediterranean coast about half way between Tripoli and Benghazi. While the Prime Minister was a bright, well-educated young lawyer, he certainly had no claim on any position of power or responsibility in Libya since those positions were granted only by birth.

Part of the problem that the King was responding to was the inability of able young men to rise to the top of either the government or the private sector. The glass ceiling was becoming remarked upon increasingly and as a result was becoming a very serious problem. Government agencies and private businesses were run by the sons of the powerful whether they had enough brains to come in out of the rain or not. Other men, perhaps, in effect ran the government agency or ran the private business, but they did so as the assistant to the president or the third assistant vice president or something like that. The titular responsibility was accorded only to the sons of the traditionally powerful. So the appointment of Bakkush was an enormously significant departure from standard Libyan tradition and practice.

After a period of two or three more months the King finally relented and permitted Bakkush to select the other members of his cabinet. While Bakkush was sensible enough to retain two or three of the typical old-timers, he loaded up his cabinet with a group of very bright, very competent, reasonably well-experienced, young technical and intellectual types. I am not sure that any of them had been individually involved in the rump government of the early summer. I can't recall that right off hand. But there were

some very, very important young fellows with enormous competence, including Ali Atiga, the former Under Secretary of Planning . All of a sudden, Atiga, who had been beating his head against the glass ceiling, broke through and became the Minister of Planning. There were similar kinds of people scattered throughout the government. Very quickly there developed in Libya a sense of real change, of excitement, of fundamental revisions going on in the society and the polity. It was very, very much akin to the kind of excitement that existed in Washington at the beginning of the Kennedy administration. All sorts of things began to happen and changes were being made. Whenever one looked around there was something going on that hadn't been going on before.

As all of these changes were taking place, those of us who had had some previous association with one or more of the new cabinet members had an occasional opportunity to discuss what was going on with them. I had a fascinating experience of spending the better part of a day in the country with the Minister of Planning. During the course of our conversation I asked Dr. Atiga whether or not he had done any thinking about political development. I knew he had done a great deal of thinking about economic development, since he had had his economic training in the U.S. at about the time the Rostows were talking and writing about the concept of economic takeoff. I was sure Atiga was familiar with that literature.

To follow up on my original query, I asked Mr. Atiga during the course of this very informal conversation whether he was aware of the fact that there were scholars in the United States who were beginning to think about political development in the same way the economic fraternity had been thinking about economic development for the preceding decade or so. He replied he was unaware of any of this and began to question me about it. I was able to tell him at least a little bit about the literature. More important, I was able to suggest to him that there were certain kinds of things that had to be done in any society before the society and its members were prepared to take on the responsibility of running their affairs in some more or less democratic fashion. I told him about the fact that in elementary, junior and senior high schools in the United States each home room class is organized in democratic fashion. I also noted that very early on, usually about the third or fourth grade, the youngsters are given instruction in the democratic process by virtue of the fact that they are called upon to organize nominations and elections for class officers. Then, as part of the process, the youngsters are called upon to recognize that for a period of time this group of four or five kids had been elected to president, vice president, treasurer, secretary, etc. of the class, that they were in office and everybody had to do what they decided was to be done. At the same time, the youngsters came to recognize that at the end of the particular time period for which they had been elected, they could elect different officers if they didn't like the way things had been run. Moreover, each youngster learns he or she has the opportunity to campaign against the incumbents at the next scheduled election and to throw them out. It was this kind of slow, careful, learn by making the democratic process work, which prepared people in the United States for the ultimate democratic government which is the way we govern ourselves at the local, state and national levels.

As a result, I observed to Atiga, it seems to me that a country such as Libya is going to have to devise and put in place an equivalent educational program of instruction in the process and procedures of democracy. Only by doing this can a developing nation make sure that its people began to accept and internalize decision making by majority vote. I declared that I didn't know enough about Libyan society to suggest specifics as to how this might be done. But I was able to identify for the Minister a series of places such as the educational system where these kinds of things could be undertaken, and probably should be undertaken by way of preparation for where clearly this group of young cabinet ministers seemed to be headed in their attempts to modernize Libyan society and the Libyan political system.

I was enormously gratified about three or four months later during the opening reception of the American Pavilion at the Tripoli Trade Fair. As the Ministers began to drift in to look at our Pavilion, one of the earlier arrivals was the Minister of Planning. After talking to the Ambassador and the Economic Counselor for a little bit, Atiga spotted me and came over. He said, "I am sorry I don't have very much time to talk to you because I really have to get on to the next exhibit, but I wanted you to know that the long conversation we had out in the country back in early September has had some very specific results. We have had several cabinet meetings in which we have talked about organizing some systematic program of political development. We haven't make any final decisions yet, but we are beginning to think very seriously about it and we are beginning to address at least some of the areas you suggested as possible places to begin the process."

The next stage in this political evolution was somewhat less happy. As the young men began to bring to fruition some of their plans for changing the Libyan political system and for changing Libyan society, as they pushed along down this track, they inevitably began stepping on toes. While they attempted to be as gentle as possible and attempted to take care of at least the most obvious wheel horses who were going to be either inconvenienced or maybe economically and certainly politically injured by some of the changes that were made, they were unable to prepare the way sufficiently. So by late spring, early summer of 1968, car loads of unhappy old-timers were beginning to make the trek eastward across the country to Tobruk to call upon the King and to complain about these young whippersnappers that were ruining the country. And since the King had responded to the political realities against his better judgment, clearly he was very receptive and responsive to the complaints of the old-timers whose interests at least were being displaced and, in addition, they themselves had been displaced by the nomination of the young technicians to the cabinet.

By the end of the summer, the King had apparently decided that he simply was unwilling and unable to continue the reformist experiment any further. Partly, I suspect, in response to all of his old cronies who had been the backbone of his support over the years and partly because I think he personally probably felt that indeed these young whippersnappers were ruining the country. They were making it unrecognizable to what his Libya had been. So sometime in early September the entire country, including the people in the American Embassy suddenly woke up to the fact that without any

forewarning the King had sacked Abd al-Hamid al-Bakkush and his cabinet of young intellectual technocrats, and had replaced the Prime Minister and the other members of the cabinet with a prime minister and other cabinet members chosen from the old guard of the tribal hierarchy.

One of the fascinating things that resulted from the King's action was that it became quite clear that as far as the young men in Libya were concerned, his action constituted their final argument: they were never going to be able to modernize their society by means of the democratic process and by means of evolution. As a result of this episode, I concluded that indeed by his actions the King had brought the specter of extra- constitutional change much closer to reality than it had been certainly in my time in Libya and for, I suspect, any time during the preceding two decades.

In preparation for a country team meeting that was held probably in the first half of October...I'm a little fuzzy after these many years about the precise date...various members of the staff were forewarned that they were to be ready to give an appreciation of what the most recent prime minister and cabinet reshuffle was going to mean so far as Libya was concerned and so far as the US-Libyan relationship was concerned. So I began to reflect on this shift in a more systematic way. At the country team meeting, I was called upon by Ambassador Newsom for my contribution to the discussion. I outlined in a presentation that lasted perhaps ten minutes the steps that had led up to the recent shift and the kinds of conclusions that I had drawn from it. In part these were my own conclusions independently arrived at, in part they were the views of the younger generation of Libyans because I had in the meantime had an opportunity to probe certain of the young fellows that had been involved both in the Intellectual Society and in the rump government that ran Tripolitania during the early part of the post-war period. I found out that what I had assumed they must be thinking, at least a half a dozen of them were indeed thinking moreover, it was the manner of the firing of the Prime Minister that really was the clincher in their conclusion. If there had been an altercation between the King and the Prime Minister that had become public or if there had been a specific issue where clearly the Prime Minister had disagreed with the King and there had been some public reflection of this disagreement, and the King had then sacked the Prime Minister, I think these young men probably would have taken that in stride. They would have said, "Well, okay, this was not a crisis of the regime, it was merely a butting of heads on a particular issue." But it was the very fact that from one day to the next Bakkush was the Prime Minister and then he was out. Not only was he out, he had been replaced by one of the old-timers, one of the not very bright, rigid-minded tribal leaders. This reversion to the old politics forced them to the conclusion that their long range objective of reforming Libyan society and of rearranging the Libyan economy and polity had been absolutely stopped. Therefore any attempt at reform, any attempt at evolution had been stopped in its tracks. As a result, it was clear that any kind of change, such as the kind of change that they were determined to produce, had been stopped at least for the foreseeable future.

I set forth this conclusion in my presentation to the country team. Then I added that while I couldn't predict the future, it did seem to me that the scene was now set for some kind of

an extra-constitutional change of the government. The members of the country team were fascinated by this analysis; a consensus was reached that I should elaborate on my analysis, put it all down on paper, and send it off to Washington because these events possibly constituted an important turning point, not only for Libya, but for the US-Libyan relationship. So over the next three or four days I spent a fair amount of time and effort writing and ended up with an airgram of some 12 or 15 pages in which I laid out my thesis, leading up to the conclusion that by his actions the King had lowered the threshold to extra-constitutional change. In the fullness of time the airgram was typed up properly and sent in to the front office for approval. Within a week or so I got the airgram back from the Deputy Chief of Mission, Mr. James Blake, with a note saying that the Ambassador was somewhat troubled by my analysis and that he wanted me to make a whole series of changes. As I looked through the changes, it became quickly apparent that the changes that Ambassador Newsom wanted me to make would fundamentally alter the analysis and the conclusion. I saw no way that I could square the circle. I could not make the changes that the Ambassador wanted made and still uphold the professional analysis and professional expression of opinion that I had committed to paper. Not knowing quite how to square that circle, I temporized. I simply took the whole package and slid it into the bottom of the in-box to sit.

About six weeks later, Jim Blake called me in to ask what we were going to do about the airgram that I had written on the impact of the King's redesignation of the cabinet. And I said, "Well, Jim, I really don't know because what the Ambassador apparently believes and what he wants me to write, I don't believe and I will not write. If the Ambassador wants me to write an airgram that articulates his view of the situation and his analysis of this set of problems, I would be delighted to be his amanuensis with one proviso, that my name does not appear on the bottom of the airgram. If on the other hand he wants my analysis to go in, then I cannot accept the kinds of changes which I think are fundamental and fundamentally erosive of the thrust of my argument. Therefore we are at loggerheads as far as I am concerned. Since I am at loggerheads with the Ambassador, and since I am not in the habit of fighting with ambassadors, why don't we just finesse it." Jim said, "No, no. We have to get this in. It is an important set of concepts."

The upshot of it was that Ambassador Newsom wrote a couple of paragraphs by way of introduction and a couple of paragraphs by way of conclusion and we tinkered a little bit in ways that didn't do violence to my thought process with some of the stuff in the middle. We had it typed up and sent it in. The crux of the introductory paragraphs was, in effect, "What follows is the view of some of the members of his staff. They are important, intellectually defensible views and Washington should have the advantage of them." But the Ambassador made it quite clear that he didn't share the analysis. The final concluding paragraphs which he added said, in effect, "I don't believe this; this is what I think are the results of what happened....."

Although these introductory and concluding paragraphs were not identified as having been written by the Ambassador, his writing style was so different from mine that anybody that picked up the airgram and started to read it would immediately see that there

had been two authors: that the center section had been written by one person and that the lead-in and the concluding paragraphs had been written by another.

Soon after the airgram went back to Washington, I was quickly apprised via an official-informal from the Libyan Desk Officer that my analysis had stirred up an enormous amount of interest and thought. He reported that it had required people to start thinking seriously about the whole problem of political development and what the recent political actions of the King had brought about.

The airgram was sent to Washington somewhere around September 10, 1968. I had very carefully said that there was no way to predict how soon something might happen. But on the night of August 31--the morning of the first of September 1969--the military Revolutionary Command Council, lead by Captain Muammar al-Qadhafi, threw out the King, took over the government and began a process of modernization of the society and economy. My analysis of the lowered threshold of extra-constitutional change in effect was borne out by a coup d'etat overthrowing the King in less than 365 days.

The final word arrived a couple of weeks after the military coup when I received another official-informal letter from the Libyan Desk Officer. It was about a four-liner that said, "Dear Handy, I just wanted to let you know that there are some of us back here in Washington who remember that you called this about 12 months ago."

Q: You know, Handy, before we move on, what I am getting from you is an impression...I have never dealt in Libyan affairs, but just from the outside...King Idriss has always been played up as a fumbling old-timer who was kind of out of it, yet what you are saying really is that he was wrong but he was much more of an active player rather than just a tribal chief whose time had gone.

HANDYSIDE: He was an active player but only on the largest, broadest kind of spectrum. He wasn't the slightest bit interested in the day-to-day running of the government. What particular ministers did or didn't decide to do, I don't think really concerned him the slightest. He obviously kept tabs on his prime minister, but for the most part his prime ministers were mirror images of his intellect and his political approach so he really didn't have to worry about them too terribly much. There was a limited number of topics that the King was interested in. The two foremost were his absolute conviction that there was no future for Libya except in association with the British and American governments. The base agreement that the British had for the army installations they had around Tobruk and the base agreement the United States had for Wheelus Air Force base were absolute essentials as far as he was concerned. The occasional times Idriss would become very active and directly and personally involved in what was going on and in the running of the government came at times when these basic associations with these two foreign governments were called into question, or worse, were threatened. The rest of the time, from my vantage point, and I must hastily add that I rarely saw the King...the Ambassador saw him very frequently and he usually took one of the five Arabists in the political section off to Tobruk to be his interpreter...so my

experience with being in the room when the American Ambassador was dealing with the King was very limited. Certainly much more limited than a couple of young Arabists who successively worked for me in the political section. But certainly judging from everything that was going on, Idriss was not interested in these kinds of things.

In contrast, his wife was. One of the incredible bits of social engineering that I have come across anywhere and certainly one of the rare occasions in Libya was obviously engineered and organized by the Queen. She apparently decided that the time had come to eliminate some of the dead hand of Libyan society generally and of certain specific traditions on young women in Libya. I am not quite sure how this started, but at one stage of the game, this I think was probably the summer of 1966, the Queen decided that she wanted to open up the society a little bit and make it possible for young female teenagers in Libya to follow a path that was somewhat more open and somewhat more free than the traditional path that was prescribed for Libyan girls. At the age of about 12 Libyan girls were bundled into an abaya, their movements outside the house were sharply curtailed. If they walked through the streets on their way to school, they had to have the abaya across their faces so that they couldn't be seen. They became subject at this point to all the actions and regulations that relegated half the population to second class citizenship. The Queen designated herself the primary hostess for the Arab Girl Scout Jamboree that was held in roughly June 1966 at Sabratha. Girl scouts and their leaders from all over the Arab world poured into Libya for this period of four or five days. The Queen traveled to Sabratha two or three days running, and took with her a series of her ladies in waiting. She surprised everybody by appearing at the Jamboree without a veil on. She also saw to it that all her ladies in waiting were willing to take the veil off or were invited.

Perhaps the most important aspect of this blow for female liberation was that it was obviously laid on in advance. The photographers and writers of a magazine that was published monthly by the Libyan Ministry of Information, called the "Libyan Woman" were cranked up to cover the Sabratha event and prepare an article for publication. The August issue of "Libyan Woman" was a cover story on the Queen's presiding over the Girl Scout Jamboree. There was a picture of her Majesty without a veil on the cover of the magazine. And then there was a five or six page photo article showing the Queen moving around the Jamboree and talking to groups of girl scouts from various Arab countries, participating in the kind of mass activities, etc. It was a very good pictorial job of the Queen's patronage and her participation in this five day jamboree.

The impact on Libyan society was almost immediate and it was palpable. Suddenly young girls, eleven, twelve, thirteen, fourteen, were able to say to their fathers and grandfathers, "No, I will not wear the veil." I know from one of my counterparts in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs that the cover story had an impact on his family. His daughter, who had lived the first five or six years of her life in Italy where he was posted at the Libyan Embassy in Rome, and had been brought back to Tripoli at that prepubescent age. She and her father and her mother had decided that she would not be forced to wear the veil. They left the choice up to her. She decided she would not. As a result, every time she went to visit either one of her sets of grandparents, her grandfather, first on one side and

then on the other side, began harassing this youngster, complaining that she was now thirteen years old and should be wearing an abaya. Finally she said to her parents, "Look, I simply am not going to go through this hassle anymore. To the extent that Libyan tradition requires us to pay all these calls on our relatives and grandparents, I will not subject myself to the constant nagging by my two grandfathers. Therefore I am not going to go with you anymore." The parents agreed to this. The grandfathers began to get very agitated after the first couple of months and began asking questions. They were told that as long as they were going to harass the oldest granddaughter about wearing an abaya, she was not going to visit them.

After the cover story on the Queen came out, the daughter confronted one of her grandfathers. He had always advanced the traditional male argument in Libya, that any woman who appeared in public without a veil was a prostitute. Clutching the August issue of the "Libyan Woman" in her hand, the daughter went off to beard her grandfather in his den. He gave her the standard prostitute argument. She flourished the magazine and demanded, "Are you then grandfather calling our Queen a whore?". Grandfather very quickly backpedaled..

This sequence of argumentation and confrontation apparently went on in household after household. Within a matter of two or three months the streets, at least in Tripoli, appeared very different. The number of school girls who on their way back and forth to their girls school in the morning and at noon time who had always before been wrapped in abayas gradually grew smaller and smaller. Within another three or four months, virtually none of the girls were wearing abayas.

This was obviously a very self-conscious, very carefully planned out, very carefully executed instance of social engineering. The King had nothing to do with it at all, apparently. It had been entirely designed and engineered by the Queen. I gathered that at one stage of the game that she had consulted with him about doing her plan, and he in effect had washed his hands of it. "If you think this would be a useful thing to do you go right ahead and do it." I suspect that neither the King nor the Queen anticipated the amazing impact her actions would have on what had been a very separated society up to that point.

Q: Well, Handy, in the period particularly before the September, 1969 takeover by Qadhafi, were there any warning bells or were we doing anything? Was it pretty much business as usual?

HANDYSIDE: Well as far as we were concerned we had a range of interactions going on with the Libyans. In addition to our political and military presence, we had lots going on in the economic area. A couple of the producing oil companies were American corporations. So there were periodically questions or problems the Embassy needed to know about, and on some occasions there were things that we needed to intervene on. We had a continuing relationship with the political part of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs simply in order to manage the myriad kinds of problems that were generated by the very

presence of American airplanes and American Air Force personnel in what was one of the largest air bases in the whole Western European area. So the Embassy and the Libyan government were constantly doing business with one another.

On the military side we had a kind of three way agreement between the British, the Libyans and the Americans, that the Americans would have the responsibility for developing the Libyan Air Force, for providing the equipment, and for training the Libyan flight personnel and maintenance personnel. The British military would continue their role of supplying and training the navy forces and the land forces. The British had supplied some four torpedo boats to the Libyan navy and had a very substantial training program. Officers were taken to England and trained at Dartmouth and other places and then brought back. There was a British naval mission and a British army mission. The only place where the neat dividing line between British and Americans was breached was in the area of communications. In this area there was a combination of joint responsibility and an informal “you do this and we will do that”. So part of the US Military Advisory Assistance group agenda in Libya prior to the coup dealt with the communications area, the signal corps people. We had in country perhaps five, maybe six, young company grade officers, first lieutenants and captains, who were communications technicians out of the US Signal Corps. They were detailed to the Libyan army for the purpose of training officers and men in the esoterics of modern day electronic communication.

There was no indication of anything building up other than the analysis that I have already outlined. Indeed the night of August 31, I drove out to Sabratha, a Roman ruin, for a theatrical performance, and saw nothing out of the ordinary.

During the course of the summer, there was a series of cultural presentations at the Sabratha Roman theater. I don't remember what the August 31st show was, but it was something musical. I had driven out early with two or three friends so we would have a chance to look around the Roman ruins before the concert started. After the concert we got into my car and started back to Tripoli. We were totally oblivious of anything going on. We later learned that the movement of the troops had already begun while we were on the road. But the coup leaders had been very careful in their planning. They recognized that there was going to be this crowd of about 800 people at Sabratha, and so very carefully postponed any military movements in that area until after the theater crowd had gone home.

I got back to my apartment in Tripoli sometime after midnight. For some reason or other, I happened to wake up at the usual time despite the fact that the first of September was a holiday and I strolled out on my balcony which overlooked the Corniche port. I looked down at the Corniche drive along the port and suddenly realized that coming up perhaps 500 yards from me, there was a squad of soldiers obviously being marched along by some NCO. He had a detachment of maybe ten or twelve troopers. I watched as they moved down into the port area and he dropped them off at various places where they were taking up guard posts. I said, "This is very strange, What is going on?" And then I also realized that there was no traffic on the Corniche in front of my apartment building. Even though

this was a holiday, normally on a holiday there would be an occasional car or truck, but there was nothing.

Having finally realized that something strange was going on, I tried to make some telephone calls and discovered that my telephone didn't work. That was the clue that finally penetrated my early morning fog. I quickly got dressed, got into my car and started down to the Embassy. In a distance of maybe seven or eight blocks, I had to talk my way through three or four military road blocks. I was able to do so only because I had diplomatic license plates on the car and a Ministry of Foreign Affairs ID card. Fortunately for me the corporal or the sergeant in charge of each one of these roadblocks was literate so he could read the ID card. I made it to the Embassy by a little after eight in the morning, one of the first members of the staff to get there. I literally didn't leave the Embassy for another six weeks. I simply lived there, going home to take a shower once in a while and get a clean set of clothes.

But we had no indication. Most importantly, neither did Gamal Abdel Nasser, the leader of Egypt. Although Nasser was viewed as the leader of the entire Arab world, he was suddenly shocked, according to later reports to discover there had been a coup d'etat in his next door neighbor with whom he shared a frontier, by a group of unknown military officers. Nasser was very disturbed we subsequently discovered, to discover that he not only didn't know that there was a coup being planned or that the coup was underway, but that he didn't know any of the people who were involved. He immediately dispatched Muhammad Hassanein Heikal, the editor of one of the big newspapers in Cairo, who very frequently was called upon by Nasser to undertake personal missions of this kind. He put Heikal on one of the presidential airplanes and sent him to Benghazi to find out what the hell had happened and who was in charge.

So it was hardly a surprise that the American Embassy was unaware of this coup. Yet there was a part of the United States government that was very unhappy with this fact, and over the next ten days or so sent a series of nasty-grams...

Q: You are talking about CIA?

HANDYSIDE: ...yes, to the chief of the station, the tenor of which (although I never saw them I was briefed on them by the chief of station) was so demanding and so critical of him for not having known about this coup that it was only a matter of time before we invalided the chief of station out of the country back to Washington with a heart attack. He fortunately recovered, but he was so beaten around the ears by the Washington bureaucrats who were furious they had not been forewarned of the coup, that they took it out on the station chief.

But I subsequently discovered, Stu, that if the various parts of the American Embassy had been pulling together in some reasonable fashion, we almost certainly would have known that something was about to happen, and we might even have had a pretty good idea of when it was going to happen. Early on, as we got farther and farther into the period

following the sacking of the young prime minister, I had once again gone to the Army Colonel who was commander of the MAAG mission and had asked for arrangements to be made for me, as the chief of the political section, to interview some of the young communications officers who were stationed in Benghazi whenever they were in the Embassy building in Tripoli on MAAG business. I was able to talk to the fellows who were out at the air base with or without the MAAG chief's permission. I would simply go out to the airbase and engage these guys in conversation. They apparently never told they were talking to me, and I never told the Colonel that they were talking. But I couldn't do this with the MAAG officers who were in Benghazi because I didn't go back and forth to Benghazi that frequently. I couldn't see them when they occasionally came into Tripoli without his knowledge. So I asked his permission to talk to these guys and was summarily refused. I was refused on the grounds that their role was to be helpful trainers and mentors of their counterparts in the Libyan signal corps and that if the Libyans ever found out that they were coming back to Tripoli and talking to political officers in the American Embassy, it would really screw up the wonderful relationship of older brother/younger brother," we are all in this thing together" kind of thing. To no avail I argued with the Colonel that the Libyans had concluded that this was going on anyhow, this was the way they would automatically interpret the process whether it was British, American, or Italian. Therefore since they had already concluded that we were doing this, why the hell didn't we. No, no, it was absolutely out of the question.

After the military coup I went back to the Colonel again and said, "Now that school is out and you all have been instructed to shut down your MAAG program, and that over the next three or four weeks, everyone of these officers who has been stationed in Benghazi is going to be coming back to Tripoli to process out and return to the United States, I want an opportunity to talk to each one of these young officers for at least an hour. I want to find out what they knew and when they knew it". He said, "Absolutely no, you can't do that."

So I went to the Ambassador and said, "I objected to this decision prior to the coup. I think we unnecessarily tied one of our hands behind our back. But at that time I didn't make a fuss about it because I couldn't argue that a military coup was in the planning stage. Now that our Military Assistance Advisory Group is being kicked out of the country anyhow, I simply can't understand that there would be any objection to our interviewing these people in a post mortem attempt to find out why we missed this." The upshot of it was the Ambassador intervened with the MAAG Colonel and I was given permission to talk to these fellows.

There were some four or five of these young officers. It became very clear after I had talked to about the third one, and it was absolutely confirmed by the time I had talked to all of them, that had either I or the station chief or members of our staffs been permitted to talk to this group of young American Army officers prior to the 31st of August, we could have called the coup. Two of these fellows were directly involved with Muammar al-Qadhafi, who was after all a signal corps officer. They knew him exceedingly well. They knew his people exceedingly well. One of the keys was on about the 29th of

August, maybe it was the 30th of August, two of these young American Army boys had been invited to a stag party given by their Libyan communications counterparts. During the course of the evening three or four of their counterparts had been called out of the party and disappeared. There were various other signs the officers were aware of. They didn't know what the signs meant because they only saw one little piece of the elephant. But if we had had an opportunity to debrief them in advance, when these things started to happen, they would have known to report them to the Embassy in Tripoli. Then a combination of the station chief and the political, economic and MAAG sections could have put the pieces together fitting them with some of the pieces we had, but which didn't mean anything because we didn't have the key pieces. I am personally convinced intellectually that had we had access to this group of young American captains we would have been able to call the coup in advance. We certainly would have been able to identify the people who were involved. Actually on the morning of the coup we had no idea.

I was the first American and one of the first foreign diplomats who went over to the radio station, where the coup headquarters had been set up. The reason I as chief of the political section sought out the new military rulers of Libya was a consular protection and welfare problem. We had some Americans who were out somewhere between Sabratha and the Tunisian border who had been caught up in the coup. We didn't know where they were; we had completely lost track of them. I was sent over to talk to whoever I could talk to in the Revolutionary Command Council at the radio station to make a pitch for welfare and whereabouts information about this group of Americans and to say, "Hey, we don't want to interfere with your revolution, but we have a responsibility to these American citizens." As it turned out, the person that I ended up talking to was Abd al-Moneim al-Honi. I didn't learn that for another week because he had no insignia on and he was referred to by everybody in the room only as “Abd al-Moneim”, which is like calling somebody "Walter" or "Joe." The name meant absolutely nothing to anybody. So it was with a certain amount of fascination that I discovered subsequently who this guy was. He was in effect one of the brain trusters of Qadhafi. There were two, and interestingly enough both al-Honi and Abd as-Salaam Jaluud, who still is Qadhafi's number two these many years later, were trained at Fort Belvoir. I came to the conclusion, I don't have any real proof for this, that a certain amount of the planning of the military coup in Libya was in fact done in a barracks in Fort Belvoir, Virginia.

A final comment about RCC connections. During the two or three years of my presence in Libya leading up to this time (I had arrived in 1965), I had stumbled on a Libyan in his mid-twenties who was a boat builder. I discovered that his boat yard was in the harbor directly in front of my apartment house terrace. I could look down over the edge of the Corniche and see his traditional boat building operation. I wandered down there one day and struck up an acquaintance with this fellow who looked as if he were about 25 years old. Periodically I would go down and shoot the breeze, learn a little about boat building, and just practice Arabic. At one stage of the game I met his younger brother, a youngster about sixteen at that point, who was struggling to get through secondary school. At one point he was very unhappy about having to take his final examinations at secondary school because all he really wanted to do was go off to the military academy that was in

Benghazi. He was unloading on me one morning about how he didn't like school and wasn't going to take the final exams. I said, "Hey, wait a minute. You know you have done all the work. You have been going to school faithfully every day this year. Even though you say it is all set for you to go to the military academy this fall, I think it would be the height of foolishness if you would intentionally fail to take the examinations after you have done all the work. That is just dumb. Why don't you go ahead and take the examinations and pass them. Then you have the ticket in your pocket. If something should happen later on that you should decide you don't like the military academy or something happens and they close the military academy down, or whatever, if you want to continue your education by going on to university you have your basic ticket. You can do it. If you cut the exam, you go to the military school and something happens and you are dumped and want to go to the university, you won't be able to because you will not have completed your secondary school. And that is dumb." We argued about this for a better part of the morning. I learned a few months later that this youngster had indeed gone off and taken the exams and managed to pass, not very well, but he passed.

Fast forward to about three weeks after the coup. Again I was at home, this being a Sunday morning. I happened to wander out onto my terrace overlooking the Corniche and I saw a couple of guys walking towards my apartment house. One of them was in uniform. I didn't recognize them at first but as they got closer and closer I realized that the one in civilian clothes was the boat builder. When they got a little bit closer, I finally realized that the one in uniform was the younger brother whom I hadn't seen since he had gone off to Benghazi two years earlier to go to military school. I was fascinated because I hadn't seen either of these guys for quite some time, certainly not for the last six weeks, or whatever it had been since the coup. My interest peaked when they came to the main drive of my apartment building, turned in, and started to come towards my building. It was then that I realized they were coming to see me. I lived on the top floor. They climbed up the three flights of stairs and the doorbell rang. I went to the door and greeted them warmly. They came in and sat down. I got the maid organized and she quickly had some coffee for us and we started to talk. I said how delighted I was to see this youngster in his uniform, etc. Finally he turned to me and said, "I am sorry I really can't stay here much longer." I said, "Oh?" He kind of looked at me and said, "You still don't know who I am do you?" And I said, "No. I know your name, your brother, but I don't know who you are." He said, "I am one of the members of the Revolutionary Command Council and the reason I am here is to make sure that you are okay. I have been hearing tales that some of the diplomats here in Tripoli have run into difficulty, I am on a mission for the boss. I came down here by special plane from Benghazi. He agreed to let me stay a couple of extra hours to see my family. I stole 30 minutes from the time he allotted me so that I could come by to see you. I just want you to know that you are very special as far as I am concerned and I want you to know that if anything should happen that involves you personally that all you have to do is tell them to come find me and I will get it fixed. And now I have to go." So off he went.

I must say that this came as a total surprise. I had no idea that this youngster was involved in the military takeover. If somebody had suggested this to me a week before I would

have said, "You don't know what you are talking about. He had nothing to do with the coup." I still don't know quite what the connection was or how he had come into the circle around Muammar al-Qadhafi. There were two circles within the RCC. There was a small group that had about 15 or 20 officers in it and then there was a larger group of which there were all together some 65, including the 15 or 20. My young friend was part of the 15 or 20. I was absolutely nonplused. The more I thought about it after they left, the more I could hardly believe that this had happened.

Q: The coup was at the end of September?

HANDYSIDE: No, September 1.

Q: September 1969. When did you leave?

HANDYSIDE: I finally left in June, 1970.

Q: Well now, had Ambassador Palmer arrived by then?

HANDYSIDE: Ambassador Newsom had left in late July or early August. Jim Blake was the Chargé. Joe Palmer was supposed to come out the first week of September. As it turned out, the decision was apparently made that the Ambassador should stay in Washington at least until things began to settle out a little bit. My recollection is that Ambassador Palmer finally arrived the third week of September. The first time he came out without Mrs. Palmer and went back to Washington a couple of times on consultation between then and the middle of November.

We Americans finally managed to recognize that there was no way that the United States government was going to be able to hang on to Wheelus Air Base without the consent and approval of the military government. I have always believed that if we, as the official American presence in Libya, at that stage of the game had behaved ourselves properly , the Libyan military group was prepared to allow us to live out the remaining 12 months of the base agreement. They didn't like the idea, but they were afraid of the United States and felt that if they stuck their thumb in our eye we would react in some vigorous way which would really complicate their lives. I am not sure that they really figured out what they thought we were going to do, but I think they really feared that somehow or other we would use military force to hang on to the Air Base. I have no documented proof of this, but my impression from various conversations tells me that they had arrived at this decision. They were not going to poke the animals as far as the Americans were concerned. They were, however, going to hold us to the fact that the Air Base agreement was scheduled to run out in either August or September of the following year. They were just going to say that we could continue there for the length of the agreement but there would be no renewal.

Q: Here we have officers who have been trained in England and the United States in the military. Did they come with such an ideological set that there was no way that we could maintain close relationships or did we screw up?

HANDYSIDE: We screwed up.

Q: What happened?

HANDYSIDE: Well, a couple of things happened. The first thing that happened was that the person who was the superintendent of the dependents school at the Air Base had come to know a person who was the representative in Libya of one of the foreign automobile manufacturers, who was interested in horseback riding. This American school principal had gotten to know this particular Libyan very well. Soon after the coup the Libyan somehow encountered the school superintendent and gave him a long song and dance about how his life was in danger, that given what had happened there was no question that it was just a matter of time before the new military began to purge people and that he was sure that he was going to be at the top of the list. When the American asked him why he thought he might be at the top of the list, the man said, "Well, it is because I am a member of the Jewish community." Arrangements were made by the school superintendent and the man was smuggled on to the Air Base and into the unused bedroom of the Air Force house occupied by the superintendent of schools. The auto dealer lived in the spare bedroom for perhaps three weeks.

Sometime in October the Libyans permitted us to resume our C-54 transport flights to Malta and to Italy. These were flights for procurement, to get various pieces of equipment repaired, etc. One of the flights was getting ready to go out to Malta. The school superintendent said that in anticipation of the reopening of school, which had been delayed by the coup, the band instruments needed repair and he would like to take them to Valletta to be worked on. This seemed to be a perfectly logical operation as far as the Air Force was concerned. They let the superintendent pack up all the instruments, including some big ones. All the boxes were duly loaded on the C-54 and flown off to Malta. The superintendent had arranged in advance for a truck to pick up the crates of instruments. The crates were loaded aboard and the driver and the superintendent started down into Valletta. Once in town they discovered that both the instrument repair shops he thought he was going to patronize were closed, perhaps it was a holiday or perhaps it was just the middle of the day. The superintendent realized he was going to have to go kill some time, so he had the Maltese truck driver drive him out a country road. Once out in the country, the superintendent told the driver to walk down the road for half a mile and then walk back and then they would start on again.

The upshot of it was the truck driver, being no fool, went a few steps down the road and then stood there transfixed while the school superintendent climbed up into the body of the truck and opened up one of the large crates. Out came the auto dealer who jumped down and hot footed it down the road in the other direction. The truck driver came charging up shouting what are you doing, who is this guy you let out of the crate? He

forced the school superintendent back into the truck and then drove immediately to the nearest downtown police station.

In the fullness of time, the newspapers picked up this story. The Embassy was informed that the "Washington Post" had the story and that the Post was going to run it in the Sunday paper. This high powered Top Secret, NODIS telegram came in to Joe Palmer, he immediately called me down to his office and said, "What do we do about this?" I responded, " The first thing we do is try to get the "Washington Post" to hold the story." He said, "The Department has already tried that and they are unwilling to do it." (I think they may have held it for a week to give us some time.) I said, "Well, if that is the case, if you are convinced that any further approach to the editor of the "Washington Post" is going to be of no avail, then I think it is patently obvious that we have to go tell the Libyans. It is going to be bad enough when the Libyans find this out. If they find it out from the Associated Press it is going to be three times worse for the American Embassy than if we go down and tell them." He agreed and he did whatever negotiating with Washington was required.

Either the next day or maybe two days later...this was like a Tuesday and the story was to appear the following Sunday...we had the go ahead, and Ambassador Palmer and I called on the Foreign Minister. We told him our incredible story. (The reason this particular gentleman was Foreign Minister was because he was vigorously anti-British and anti-American and had a long record of having been so. Indeed he had been informally at least exiled by the King on a couple of occasions. So as soon as the coup had taken place, this guy came back to Libya. And because he had previously been both a politician and a senior person in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, he was designated by these not very sophisticated military officers as their foreign affairs advisor and Minister of Foreign Affairs. So our interlocutor was predisposed to be unhappy about the story.) The minister was indeed unhappy about this story. He immediately said that this was terribly serious and very upsetting. He announced, "I will have to report this to Colonel Qadhafi and to the other members of the RCC. I have no way of knowing how they will react to this, but you can be sure that the response is going to be very negative. I will be back in touch with you as soon as I find out what it is."

It wasn't until the following morning, but the response was as expected: Immediately all flying training was to be permanently stopped; never again would a combat airplane take off to go shoot at the gunnery range. We were told that the logistics transport flights to places like Malta and Rome, would not take place unless the airplane was inspected by a representative of the RCC. We were told that the gates to the air base would be manned by a detachment of Libyan soldiers and that while we could have our own MPs on the gate if we wanted to, the people in command were going to be the Libyans. They would judge who would be permitted to enter the air base and those who would be permitted to leave the air base. The decision that I believe the RCC had made earlier to allow us to operate the Air Base for the remaining eleven or twelve months of the Agreement had obviously been superseded as a result of this new affair.

As if we hadn't learned our lesson, we subsequently discovered much to our consternation that a couple of Air Force officers had dirtied the water even further by issuing Air Force identification and Air Force travel orders to two Libyans. One was a former police officer and the other was the brother of the former military chief of staff. During the eight months immediately prior to the coup Libya as a society and a government had degenerated into almost a caricature of a third world country. The younger brother of the military chief of staff, who with his brother were the King's "adopted sons" (these two boys were the sons of one of the King's old friends, and with the death of their father, had become in effect the King's wards) had become the bagman for the corrupt politicians. In the last eight months of the Idriss regime, anybody who wanted to get anything from the government could get whatever it was that he wanted if he paid enough. I have never seen a society disintegrate as rapidly as Libya disintegrated in those last nine or ten months. The bagman was one of the Libyans that the Air Force officers decided they were going to smuggle out of the country.

Q: Were they paid?

HANDYSIDE: No, I don't think so. They were just good friends. There may have been some other arrangement, but I don't know. Just like the naivete of the school superintendent, I think there was a level of naivete on the part of the two colonels about these two guys, so they proceeded to help them escape. The Libyans were absolutely furious that the King's bagman had been ex-filtrated from Libya by the United States Air Force. Any further clamping down that they hadn't yet done, they did after that.

I must say at this point the United States Air Force made every effort to discipline the two officers involved. General McConnell, who was the Chief of Staff of the Air Force at the time, literally turned the Judge Advocates Office upside down. The upshot was that he was finally forced to conclude, albeit very reluctantly, there wasn't a damn thing he could do to prosecute these two officers; he could only retire them. If they are still alive they are still drawing their Air Force retirement from the United States government. So in a sense we polluted the well. It is hardly surprising things got a little rough after we did.

Q: But the Qadhafi government was predisposed to get rid of us. Was it an ideological dislike, or anti-colonial, or what?

HANDYSIDE: All of the above. These young fellows had been intellectually weaned on the broadcasts of the Voice of the Arabs from Cairo. They all fancied themselves as protégés of Nasser. They had accepted wholeheartedly all of his rhetoric about the need for independence, the need for dignity, the need for getting rid of the colonial overlords, etc. Quite clearly as far as these young fellows were concerned the worst kind of colonialism was military colonialism. The British were unceremoniously kicked out of Tobruk. The British military were sent packing out of the military installation at Tobruk. They got dumped out just about the time our MAAG was ordered out.

But the fact that we had been enormously helpful to the Libyan Air Force, and I think also, one can't measure the impact of this, there can be no question that the senior Air Force officer at Wheelus Air Base, one Colonel Daniel ("Chappy") James (who stood 6' 6" and was black), was one of the reasons that we were able to stay as long as we were permitted to stay. Chappy was just an enormously wonderful guy. They were fascinated by him and by the fact...they had all heard the terrible stories about what was going on between blacks and whites in the United States...and they were fascinated by the fact that the United States Air Force reposed enough confidence in this enormous hulking black man that they would pin colonel's eagles on his shoulders and then make him the senior officer at the Air Base. The Libyans concluded they could do business with him. Chappy was just a perfectly wonderful guy. He was awfully good at this kind of human interchange with all kinds of foreigners, but particularly with the Libyans.

I remember the day after Ambassador Palmer and I had our interview with the Minister of Foreign Affairs, one of the young black Libyan Air Force officers, who had been trained in the US and who had been designated as the personal representative of the Revolutionary Command Council on the Air Base and therefore had had constant involvement with Colonel James, came into Chappy's office. Chappy told me later that this young officer was weeping, with tears running down his face. He had been instructed at... (RCC meetings were always at midnight and always lasted five or six hours) so this guy had been instructed at about 6:00 in the morning to go to the Air Base and immediately get in to see Colonel James to enumerate the kinds of restrictions that were going to be placed on the Air Base. The young officer told Colonel James the steps had been taken because of that awful story your Ambassador and Mr. Handyside told the Foreign Minister yesterday. The payoff was the young Libyan Air Force officer then said, "Colonel, my orders yesterday, before the conversation between the Ambassador and the Foreign Minister, were to come tell you today that you were going to be permitted to resume flying training next week. We were going to let you start the Air Base up again. But as a result of what your Ambassador told the Foreign Minister yesterday morning, that decision was immediately rescinded. And these are the kinds of things that you are now going to have to agree to."

Q: At that time were we talking about Soviet influence there or not?

HANDYSIDE: No. Mr. Nasser provided the biggest and darkest bogeyman that anybody needed.

Q: How were you able to operate? You were there six, nine months afterwards. As a political officer you are supposed to go out and talk to people.

HANDYSIDE: I had a particularly difficult time because within three or four weeks after the coup, some of the senior people in charge responded to the Egyptian importunings about helping to organize various things. So it was only a matter of five or six weeks before the Egyptians and some of their East German friends were in Libya training the Libyans to be somewhat better on intelligence collection and on secret police operations.

Toward the end of October, the secret police in almost a kind of Keystone Cops fashion, began moving against foreigners. The first people they targeted were the foreign Arabic speakers who were employed by the oil companies. Their residence permits were revoked. Very quickly after this process started, all of the Arabic speaking Americans, who were employees of Mobil, Esso, etc., were forced to leave the country. They and their families were put through the hurry up business of packing their household belongings and getting the hell out.

Those of us who were Arabic speaking on the staffs of embassies could not be thrown out, at least they decided they didn't want to take that risk, but they immediately started to keep very close track of us. Because my Arabic at that point was reasonably good and because I had been in Libya for four and a half years and had gotten to know an awful lot of people around Libya as a result of my Arabic, they were very suspicious of me. Then the station chief was invalided out on his back. Sometime later, we concluded on the basis of some information that we had, that the Libyans with the help of their Egyptian advisors had decided that I was both the chief of the political section and the station chief. And so, beginning seven or eight weeks after the coup until I left the country nine months later, I was never by myself. I always had a couple of "secret" police in a little blue Volkswagen wherever I went and that followed me home at night. I never was certain whether they parked outside all night or just returned when they thought I would be getting up in the morning and be on my way back to the Embassy. But during the day time, whenever I moved around the city, I had my friends with me. My constant tail meant I had to be very careful about what I did, what people I saw, etc.

So for all practical purposes the kind of political reporting that would have ordinarily been done by me had to be done by one of the fellows who worked for me in the section. I obviously could go talk to people in the government, that was no problem. They expected that, figuring probably they would get debriefed by the guy I talked to anyway. Whenever I would be invited to an American community home, I would always caution them and say, "Are you sure you want me, because once I arrive my acolytes will be only a few steps behind. If you have any problem with that, disinvite me."

This became a crucial issue at one point. I was driving by myself down the main drag along the seafront and on towards the famous Tripoli castle. All of a sudden I became aware there was a car behind me that seemed to be full of a bunch of young men, and the driver was honking his horn at me. I couldn't figure out why. I looked in the mirror and didn't recognize the car at all. So I kept going, but very carefully and very slowly and as far over to the right curb as possible so if the car was honking because he wanted to pass me could do so. At one point the traffic opened up a little bit and the car came abreast of me, cut in front of me and stopped at the curb. Obviously I had to stop. Then it finally dawned on me; they were honking because they wanted me to stop. The left rear door of this sedan with the four young male passengers opened up and a fellow got out. He sprinted the 20 yards to my car. It was the older boat builder. (This was after the interview at my house.) I rolled down the window and called him by name and begged him to go away. I said, "Please, I am being followed, look back there and you will see a little

Volkswagen that has two flat feet in it. Please don't expose yourself to any problem. I am like the plague." He said, "Oh, no. Our new government wouldn't do anything like that." I said, "Hey look Muhammad, I really fear for you. I am delighted to see you but please go away." He finally did. The car started up and I started along. By this time we were approaching the Tripoli castle where one branch of the road goes left and the other branch goes through a tunnel through the castle and continues along the harbor on the other side. I wanted to throw my police tails off, so I waited until the car with the four men aboard turned to the left; I speeded up through the tunnel to the other side hoping to draw my cops with me. It didn't work. They immediately followed the other car. So I went a little bit further and aimlessly drove around a little bit. I finally returned to the Embassy with a very large measure of fear and trepidation.

Another three or four weeks went by before I found out what had happened. I learned what had transpired not from the boat builder, I never saw him again, but from another, younger brother who was perhaps fifteen years old. I ran into him in the street one day down around the Castle; the family lived somewhere in that neighborhood. I had not known the third brother as well as the other two, but I knew him well enough. So I stopped him on the street. For some reason or other my “friends” were not there so I could engage this kid in conversation. I asked him how his older brother was. The response I got was, "Fine, no thanks to you." And I said, "What does that mean?" He proceeded to tell me that his brother and the other three young men had been picked up by the local police and taken off to military intelligence headquarters where they had been grilled. The three unknown young men had been able to convince their interrogators that they didn't know me and didn't know why the boat builder had insisted that they stop the car so he could talk to a foreigner. It was all his doing. We were out joy riding together; he asked us to stop, so we stopped. So the three were released.

During the course of the next 12 hours or so, the secret police periodically beat the stuffing out of Muhammad. The thing that intrigued me as I reflected on this narrative, was that only at the very end did Muhammad finally evoke the name of his next younger brother, at which point the beating stopped. But apparently the arrangement between the brothers was, "You only use my name in extreme situations." I never saw the older fellow again, so I was never able to verify the story the third brother told me.

The final paragraph of this saga involves the day I finally left in June 1970. Mrs. Palmer, the Ambassador's wife, and Mrs. Joseph, the DCM's wife, insisted on taking me to the airport. I protested that this was all very nice and much appreciated, but there was really no need for it. They said, "No, we really wanted to do this because neither the Ambassador nor the DCM can come down with you, but we think we should." Well, the Volkswagen beetle with the two flat feet in it followed the Ambassador's limousine the twenty miles to the airport. We went into the transit lounge and for some reason or other we had to wait several hours before the aircraft showed up...I think there was a sand storm and the aircraft was stuck in Benghazi; the scheduled route was Benghazi, Tripoli, and then Rome. I had been aware as Mrs. Palmer and Mrs. Joseph and I were seated in the transit lounge having endless cups of coffee and trying to find new things to talk

about, that one or another of my flat foot friends would walk by the window checking from the outside to make sure I was still there.

Finally the airplane arrived and was called. We all streamed out the door. It was parked quite a ways out on the tarmac so it took quite a while to get out to it. I was in no hurry because I knew they wouldn't leave until I got on the airplane, they wouldn't leave me behind. I let everyone else go first to be able to watch what was happening. Sure enough as I got to the ramp that let down from the tail and started to climb up, I saw the two guys who had been on foot outside the transit lounge walk over and get into the Volkswagen. They drove part way out onto the tarmac and waited until they saw me climb up the last of the steps into the cabin of the airplane.

Q: Okay, why don't we call it off for now. We will pick it up again when you go back to Political/Military from 1970-74 back in Washington.

HANDYSIDE: Sounds like a good idea.

Q: Today is May 21, 1993. Handy, we got you on the plane and off from Libya I take it with a certain amount of pleasure in leaving at last.

HANDYSIDE: Absolutely. That's one of the places if I never go back it will be too soon.

Q: Okay. You went to Pol-Mil where you served from 1970-74 in the Department. Could you talk about what it was that you went to...how the Bureau was shaped up and what you were doing?

HANDYSIDE: At this particular period the Bureau of Political-Military Affairs was on the verge of coming into its own. The senior people in the Department had recognized that the kinds of things that people who were pol-mil officers worried about, that is, the integration of diplomatic and military concerns and the interests of the United States had grown around the world to a point that some more systematic approach to these problems was necessary. The pol-mil function had started out years before as an adjunct to the Under Secretary's Office and then subsequently the Under Secretary for Political Affairs' Office. The 1970s was the first time that the function had been given the equivalent of Bureau status. This was the result of the similar conclusions reached by both Secretary Rogers and Senator Fulbright. Having accorded formal Bureau status to the political-military function, it was then possible for the Seventh Floor to go out and recruit some very high power Foreign Service seniors to take over and run the Bureau. They sought out and convinced Ronald Spiers to be the Director of the Bureau, and Spiers was able to attract Thomas Pickering as his number one deputy. In addition, there was a series of office directors such as Leslie Brown and Leon Sloss, who were well known within the US government for their knowledge and competence in this complex interface of military and diplomatic activities.

I was recruited out of Libya to stand in behind the soon to depart Director of the Office of Nuclear and Space Affairs. I arrived in the middle of the summer of 1970 and had a week to ten days to make the transition from being surveilled by the Libyan secret police to being a deputy office director in Washington. It was very fortunate, indeed, that it had been set up this way because I hadn't been in the job for more than three or four days when it became painfully apparent to me that I had an enormous amount of studying and learning to do before I could begin to handle the subject matter of the office. The office was the focal point within the Department of State for the interface with the Defense Department and the other parts of the US government that worried about the production, deployment and ultimate use of nuclear weapons and of nuclear technology in other military applications, the most obvious one of which was to power warships. The space responsibility was a kind of catch-all. Although generally related to the nuclear area in the sense that it was a high tech kind of activity and involved people who were technically inclined, the direct connections to the nuclear portfolio were limited to some of the kinds of things that were involved in ballistic missile technology.

I spent that first five to six months literally taking one cram course after another. Arrangements were made for me to take a series of courses offered by various parts of the military about nuclear weapons, their design, their protection, their use, and so on. So I spent some time in Albuquerque where the Air Force's nuclear weapons training program is located (at Kirkland Air Force Base) and where the Sandia National Laboratory is just down the street from the Air Force Base, and the Los Alamos National Laboratory is just a couple of hours drive up into the mountains. (Los Alamos was where the basic work was done decades earlier on the Manhattan Project.) By the time fall arrived and the preceding office director moved on to his next assignment...

Q: Who was that?

HANDYSIDE: A fellow by the name of Kendrick. By the time Mr. Kendrick moved on to his follow on assignment and I was moved up to be the director of this particular office in PM, I had had an opportunity to get my feet on the ground and learn my way around.

One of the operational concepts I learned very quickly was that I had to be the honest broker between the single-minded political officer zealots in the State Department and the single minded military zealots in the Defense Department. Neither could understand and didn't really want to try to understand, why their opposite numbers in either Defense or State were being so stubborn about this issue or that issue.

This resistance was particularly at work in the business of nuclear powered warships, especially in so far as it was necessary to organize visits of these warships to various foreign ports from time to time. One of the things that the State Department geographical desk officers either didn't know or were unwilling to accept was that there were certain tasks that had to be performed by the crew of a nuclear powered warship that could only be performed while the ship was tied up at a dock. Highly technical, highly classified kinds of things that simply couldn't be done while the ship was at sea. Therefore there

was an operational requirement to get these ships into a dock for some period of time every three or four months. Most of the State Department desk officers looked at this problem only from the point of view of the hullabaloo that the proposal of a nuclear powered warship visit always raised in the host government Foreign Ministry and the rest of the perspective host community and worried about what awful political problems there were when every once in a while something went wrong. There were particular problems in a place like Japan where for obvious and understandable reasons the entire population was especially sensitive about anything to do with nuclear technology. The popular impression, obviously aided and abetted by the opposition press, made every effort to cover up the clear cut technical distinctions between a nuclear power plant and the kind of technology that went into the design and construction of a nuclear weapon. There is no way technically that a nuclear reactor that is used to power a warship can explode as if it were a nuclear bomb. Most people have no occasion to learn enough about this technology to perceive that there is a difference and to understand the difference if they do perceive it. Clearly there were political groupings in a place like Japan, such as the Japanese Communist Party, who found it very much to their advantage to muddy the waters and fudge over those kinds of distinctions.

On the other side there were people in the United States Navy who simply were unable to understand why any civilian ever had any questions about these wonderful nuclear powered ships and why the State Department was constantly, continuously finding all kinds of opposition in countries where "we know the other guys in the navy and they like us." And why there were people who were at the senior echelons of foreign governments that stubbornly refused to learn anything about nuclear technology and to make the distinction between weapons and power plants.

So I found very quickly that I had to establish some credentials as someone who knew enough about the technology that I could understand what the real concerns of the Navy were, peal down the layers of the onion to get down to what their real difficulties were, what their real operational requirements were. Then I would have to march my self around and talk to the political officers who were the desk officers of countries X, Y, Z, and citing my own experience, particularly in Libya where we had had one ship visit every year to convince them such visits are necessary and can be run off without political casualties. (The visits alternated between Tripoli and Benghazi, but during the time I was in Libya as chief of the political section, I had supervised the preparation and the execution of five such visits.) So I was able to say to the desk officer for country X, "Hey, I know what your problems are. I have been through it, but there are ways to solve the problem. What we have to recognize and you simply have to tell your people in your embassy out there, is that there is an operational requirement for this. This is not simply to let the sailors go running off on shore and take their pants off and enjoy themselves. There is an operational requirement that is imposed on the United States government by the technology and the way of utilizing this technology in a particular Navy ship. My friend, you really don't have any choice about this. It is the United States government's general broad interest to have these ships come in for a period of four or five days so that they can do the kinds of things they have to do and then they disappear. Hopefully what

we do is organize the visit in such a way so that we put the emphasis on the kinds of civic action programs that the crew is always interested in doing...visiting orphanages, having visits to the ship, etc....and down play the operational requirement and the technical kind of problems.

Well, it took some time, but I was finally able to establish first of all my credentials and second of all my bona fides with both sets of people. After about two years at this function, I was able to talk turkey very quietly to the senior people in the nuclear power branch of the Navy and the operational part of the Navy that scheduled nuclear powered warship operations. Similarly I was able to talk quietly to the office directors and deputy assistant secretaries in various geographic bureaus because they came to recognize that they could count on me to understand their political sensitivity and to press the Navy hard into working out an arrangement that minimized the incipient political problems. On the other side the Navy came to realize that I was an articulate and determined spokesman of their operational requirements and while I would give them a very bad time to make sure that the kind of visit they needed to have was indeed a visit for the benefit of the equipment as opposed to the benefit of the individual sex-starved sailors. They came to realize after a period of time that I understood why they had to bring these ships into port and the kinds of limitations and the kinds of constraints that had to be established to surround not only the crew but the ship. And therefore if they would work along with me, they would get the best possible deal that was within the realm of reality.

So it was great fun. In the process I had the rare privilege of getting to know and work with the father of the nuclear powered Navy, Admiral Hyman Rickover. He was a prickly old son-of-a-gun, and was one of the most anti-State Department people in the whole Navy. As far as he was concerned, until I got to know him by working with him and his deputy, the only person in the State Department he ever deigned to talk to was Alex Johnson. He was willing to talk to Alex Johnson because Ambassador Johnson had taken the time and made the effort during one of the nuclear powered warship crises in Japan to learn enough about the technology and Navy operational requirements that he understood and accepted the position taken by Rickover and the rest of the Navy. Then he saw to it that the embassy behaved itself in a sensible and realistic fashion. Finally, Ambassador Johnson had put enormous pressure on the Japanese government after one of these nuclear powered warship incidents to quit fooling around and caving in to (a) the technical crazies and (b) the rabble rousers led by representatives of the Japanese Communist Party.

We were just incredibly careful from a technical point of view and the Navy operated this equipment in a way that is just simply unbelievable. With all the nuclear powered ships that were afloat, both surface and submarine, over a period of some 20 years or so by the time I was involved, the US Navy had never had a nuclear power plant accident. They had a couple of nuclear submarines go to the bottom because of other mechanical failures, but never once had they had a reactor accident, never once had they had any significant discharge of any radioactive material. There is no other nuclear management organization in the world that has a record that comes anywhere close to the record of the US Navy.

But, that having been said, it is also necessary to recognize that the inherent characteristics of nuclear technology, particularly the fact that radiation can not be seen, or smelled, or felt, or heard, or in any way sensed by a typical average human being, there is therefore an insidious kind of terror that is associated with nuclear technology which has political dimensions. There is no way you can get around it.

My PM assignment was a fascinating one. It was equally fascinating from the point of view of the other set of nuclear associated problems, the weapons. I can't even now say very much more about it other than to say that as a result of a lot of pressure from key members of the Congress, and the professional activities of people like Alex Johnson and some of the political appointees who had been previous secretaries or deputy secretaries in the US State Department, the State Department had finally elbowed its way into the bureaucratic arena. This is where the decision making of the US government in terms of the deployment and care and feeding, if you will, of these incredible bits of advanced technology takes place. When the question first arose in 1948 or 1949, President Truman was confronted with the question as to whether or not the subject of the deployment abroad of nuclear weapons was something that should involve the State Department, President Truman without much hesitation issued the order from the Oval Office that the State Department was not, repeat not, to be involved. This subject was considered a question of national security, a question of military technology that had implications only for the Defense Department and what was then the Atomic Energy Commission, who were the designers and manufacturers of this equipment.

The first time that the State Department became involved in weapons deployments was when General Curtis Le May, the commanding general of the Strategic Air Command, found it necessary to erect some forward bases, the first one of which was to be in Spain. When it became necessary to store nuclear weapons on somebody else's territory, the US government came to the recognition that we couldn't without consulting with the senior authorities of that projected host government. So when the question of developing SAC airfields in Spain and storing nuclear weapons at the air base in Spain arose as an operating requirement for SAC, the State Department was for the first time officially brought in to the question of the deployment of US nuclear weapons abroad. There were two people in the State Department who were informed: the Secretary of State and the Deputy Under Secretary for Political Affairs. The third person in the diplomatic hierarchy who was informed was the ambassador to Madrid. For the following three, four or five years, those were the only people in the State Department who knew anything about this topic.

By the time I came along in the summer and fall of 1970, the State Department, for very understandable reasons had elbowed its way into this bureaucratic equation. The annual plan that was put together by the Atomic Energy Commission and the Defense Department governing the deployment of nuclear weapons for the following year, was signed off on each year by the President as Commander in Chief. The State Department had managed some years earlier to insert itself into this process, and by the 1970s the

State Department was involved in staffing out, analyzing the political and diplomatic implications of the decisions that were being proposed by the Defense Department. State had the opportunity as well as the responsibility of making its views on this nuclear weapons deployment plan known to the White House and specifically to the President. So that was the kind of thing that I was involved in.

Q: This was the Nixon era and Kissinger was the National Security Advisor during most of this time. Kissinger was seeing everything in terms of an East-West game. Was Kissinger and his staff particularly interested in the nuclear side? Was it intrusive or not?

HANDYSIDE: There was a whole roster on the National Security Council staff who dealt with these strategic nuclear issues. Amongst them were people who understood the technology, who understood the design parameters, who understood the operating requirements, so there was no question about the fact that this was a very important chunk of the National Security Council staff. There was also no question about the fact that all other things being equal, the druthers of the Defense Department were the ones that were waved ahead. This was one of the reasons why when the State Department had any objections they really had to be very sound and very cogently argued and very vigorously presented because the tendency was to give the Defense Department what it asserted it needed for the strategic forces of the United States.

The rationale for State Department involvement was really demonstrated and validated two or three years later in the context of the Okinawa Reversion Treaty. Prior to the negotiations with the Japanese on Okinawa, the United States never admitted to the Japanese government in a formal way, that we had nuclear weapons in Japan or that US Naval ships visiting Japan had nuclear weapons on board. We always took the stance, "Neither confirm nor deny". We simply refused to talk about it, especially in terms of a specific US Navy ship. Nor did we publicly admit that various of the units, both ground forces and naval forces that were based on Okinawa had had their ration of nuclear weapons and that these weapons were stored in special ammunition storage sites on the island.

But quite clearly when we started to negotiate with the Japanese government on the return of the island to Japan years after the end of the Second World War, one of the things that was never said publicly or even formally in the negotiations, but which was communicated loud and clear, was that while the Japanese were going to be prepared to allow Americans to continue to base military forces on Okinawa, under no circumstances would the Japanese government agree to our having any kind of nuclear equipment on Okinawa. Moreover, we were prepared to do that. Mr. Nixon and his foreign policy and national security advisors had decided that this was no longer a requirement, that there were other ways that we could solve the problem in the Western Pacific. Therefore, we were prepared to go along with this. The Defense Department was dragged along kicking and screaming into this position, but they finally in their proper bureaucratic way had decided that they had to acquiesce to the President's analysis.

In any event, the sirens really started to blow when Senator Symington, the senior Senator from Missouri (who was a member of three key committees: the Joint Committee on Atomic Energy, the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, and the Senate Armed Services Committee), addressed the Okinawa weapons problem on the floor of the Senate. Earlier in classified consultations with the Senate involving, Senator Fulbright, Senator Symington and others, Executive Branch representatives had made it clear that if we were going to remove our weapons stockpile from Okinawa , while there would undoubtedly be a certain amount of reduction, that we were going to have to find other places throughout the Western Pacific for the storage of this equipment.

Senator Symington one afternoon got up on the floor of the Senate and made a brief speech in which he said something to the effect that it was inconceivable that the United States Senate would advise and consent to the ratification of the Okinawa Reversion Treaty until it had been briefed in detail and with full and complete information on the projected nuclear basing posture for the Western Pacific that was to take the place of the weapons stockpiles on Okinawa.

Symington had very publicly thrown down the gauntlet in front of the Executive Branch. Senator Fulbright had been telling Secretary Rogers quietly for months that the Senate was going to take this position. Rogers and the rest of us had tried to push the National Security Council staff and the Defense Department staff along to the point where they would recognize Senate realities and begin to operate realistically and pragmatically within the confines of these political parameters. But we hadn't been able to budge the problem. Obviously Senator Symington knew that and in his own inimitable fashion as a former Secretary of the Air Force and the incumbent of other responsible positions within the Department of Defense recognized that the only way the Senate was going to be able to impose its will in this matter was to make it a public issue. He very carefully did it in a way that he didn't give any secrets away, although certainly the nervous Nellies around Washington thought that he had.

In any event it finally came down to the point where State was beginning to prepare for the Secretary's appearance before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee to kick off the Okinawa Reversion Treaty advise and consent process. We were participating in the preparation of his written testimony and his opening speech because he was to be the lead off witness in this series of hearings. We still didn't have any agreement of how we were going to go about meeting the requirement that Senator Symington had put down. I talked the problem over with Ron Spiers and said, "It seems to me that we are never going to make any progress in this very difficult area unless somebody simply sits down, makes some decisions as to what kinds of information the Senate ought to legitimately have and begins to write a paper that sets forth this kind of information in as sanitized a fashion as possible. This would provide the underpinnings for the Secretary's testimony. We would then provide this information to the Senate in a highly classified document so that the Senate of the United States would have the information that Senator Symington has publicly announced is an absolute prerequisite to affirmative Senate action on the Treaty."

So I took two or three days away from the usual grist, sat down and wrote a paper. I showed it around to people in the Bureau of Political-Military Affairs, including, I think, Tom Pickering, the Deputy. They all said it was fine and to go see if I could peddle it to the Defense Department. I went over to my counterparts in the Defense Department and ran into a terrible buzz saw. They said, "We are never going to do this. We are never going to agree to this so there is no point in looking at your paper." And I said, "Look, let's start it from the presumption that somebody is going to make a decision sometime that we are going to have to do this. Rather than having to do a crash job at the very last minute, let's assume that somebody has already made the decision that the Executive Branch is going to provide this information to the US Senate in a highly classified paper. And let's put any discussion of that decision to one side and not argue about that. Let's assume that decision has been made. And now please look at my paper."

The upshot of it was that I finally had a reasonable response from two or three of the key players in the Defense Department and they started looking at the paper. They found some things that they were sensitive about or things that I had made slight errors of interpretation on, etc. My pitch at that point was, "Look, I will agree to anything that they will agree to, even if it is just nitpicking, because the thrust is there." The upshot of it was that about six weeks away from the Secretary's appearance I finally had a 15 page document that set forth the information the Senate was demanding in a way that made sense. Since it was to go primarily to the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, I had arbitrarily decided that there were certain bits of knowledge about our nuclear deployments that were relevant for foreign policy decision making, just as there were certain other kinds of somewhat more technical information about our nuclear deployments that were relevant for military planning and military operational planning but which diplomats did not need to know. I very carefully sorted it out in this fashion and included in this paper only those kinds of information that a well-intentioned and knowledgeable diplomat would require to make sensible, political/diplomatic decisions about this complex subject. This meant that I very carefully put off to one side the specifics of the kind of equipment and precisely where it was, etc. because that was information which I asserted in my scheme of things diplomats didn't need to know. Moreover, those were precisely the kinds of things the military was most sensitive about and the most nervous about.

At one stage of the game in the course of these preparations, we found it useful to go up to Alex Johnson, the Under Secretary for Political Affairs, and tell him what we were up to. Since it was my tactics and my paper, I was the principal spokesperson. I will never forget the session with Alex Johnson. After going through the whole drill he turned to me and asked the question, "What do I tell the people on the Senate Foreign Relations Committee after we have given them this paper, that in effect we have rationed out the information and not going to give them any more? How will I explain that?" And I said, "Sir, you tell them that that is all the information they need to make sensible political and diplomatic decisions and that in fact this is all the information you have had in the last 15 years and you have been making some very sound political and diplomatic decisions on

the basis of this kind of information." Alex stopped dead in his tracks, almost as if I had shouted at him. He leaned back in his chair and after a moment said, "Handyside, you are right. You are exactly right. That is the way we will do it. Okay."

Four days before the Secretary was to appear before the Senate, we still had no decision. There was still a standoff between the State Department and the Defense Department. So General Al Haig, who was the Deputy National Security Advisor under Kissinger, called a meeting of the State Department, Defense Department, and White House staff to address this problem. In the meantime, because we were really getting down to the deadline, I had written the transmittal letter we were going to have Secretary Rogers send my paper up to the Hill with. So it was all set to go. All we had to do was send it to S/S and get them to send it into the Secretary for his signature.

On Monday morning, around 9:30...the Secretary was to appear before the Committee at 10:00 Wednesday morning...we all assembled in the Situation Room in the White House. The State Department delegation consisted of Alex Johnson, as the chief, Harry Symmes, who at that point was principal Deputy Assistant Secretary in Congressional Relations, and me. We walked into the room and discovered the whole other side of the table was filled with the Defense Department. All the guys in uniform had lots of brass on their shoulders and fruit salad that went from shoulder to waist. The fellows from the Office of the Secretary of Defense were there with their best lawyerly manners and their legal briefcases, etc. There was a handful of people from the White House, most of whom I did not recognize. And Al Haig was at the end of the table.

At the appointed hour General Haig opened the meeting with a very quiet but very firm statement. He said, "Before we begin our deliberations today, I think it would be useful for me to remind all of us why we are here. The President of the United States has decided in the fullness of his wisdom that the time has come to return the island of Okinawa to the Japanese government, and he put in train a series of actions that have now produced a negotiated treaty that has been signed by both governments and which is about to be sent up to the Senate for its Constitutional advice and consent. We are not assembled here today to argue whether the President has made a wise and useful decision. We are assembled here today to determine how to get the President's treaty for him. He has publicly put his position and his name and his reputation on the line. It is the responsibility of his staff to pull this chestnut out of the fire for the President." And with that he said, "Now it is my understanding that the State Department has now come to us and says that as a result of consultations with the members of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee and as the result of some floor speeches that have been made by Senator Symington and others, that there is no way that the Senate of the United States is going to provide its advice and give its consent to the Okinawa Reversion Treaty unless and until we inform the United States Senate about the weapons deployments we are planning to establish in the Western Pacific to replace the Okinawan stockpiles and to house the weapons we have been storing on the island. Further the State Department has come to us with the considered judgment that the most prudent way to provide this information to the Senate Foreign Relations committee is in a highly classified, very

restricted, formal document which would then be subjected to the kinds of security constraints and oversight that would be accorded appropriately to a Top Secret, Limited Distribution document, as opposed to giving to the members of the Senate Committee an oral briefing on this topic. The State Department says that if we provide the information in an informal briefing, we run the risk of having bits and pieces of highly restricted, Top Secret information scribbled down on the backs of envelopes and stuffed into Senatorial jacket pockets. It seems to me that in this instance the State Department is probably right. So now we get to the point where we have to decide whether or not we are in fact going to give the Senate a paper and if we decide that we are, what paper are we going to give the Senate."

With this lead in, Al Haig had effectively chopped off the legs of all the members of this panoply of Defense Department officials. So we quickly got on to the business of saying, "Yes, indeed, we all agreed that it made more sense to give them a paper than it does to run the risk having top secret information written on the back of an old envelope. And obviously at this stage of the game if we have to give them a paper, the only paper we have even halfway ready to go is the one that Handyside wrote so we better propose some specific additional changes to that and then okay it."

The upshot of it was that after about a 45 minute meeting we finally left with approval of the State/PM paper, slightly revised and tinkered with a bit, and with approval of its dispatch post haste under a covering transmittal letter from the Secretary of State. It was further understood that the State Congressional Relations staff would do the necessary groundwork with the staff of the Foreign Relations Committee so that there would be no slipup on the handling of the State/PM paper. They are going to treat this paper as a very sensitive, highly classified document and they are going to require individual senators to sign a sign-in sheet, and read the paper only in the Committee rooms, etc.

So we finally got the paper to the Committee. Later, during the opening testimony of Secretary Rogers, Senator Symington found a way to make some allusion to the fact that this State Department paper had in fact been delivered to the Senate Foreign Relations Committee and he, with a certain amount of effusiveness, expressed his appreciation and thanks to the Secretary of State for having responded so completely and fulsomely to the Senate's requirement for information.

After the Senate Foreign Relations Committee hearings on the Okinawa Reversion Treaty had been completed, quite unexpectedly, as least as far as I was concerned, I discovered that the Senate Armed Services Committee decided that it too was going to hold hearings on the Treaty. I suspect, although I never was sure about this, that Senator Symington put the Committee up to this. In any event, the hearings were scheduled and the great day came. The Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff was out of the country and so the Acting Chairman, General Westmoreland, was the lead off witness for the Defense Department. Westmoreland never really understood the intricacies of nuclear policy and certainly was not very well prepared to address this subject. So when Senator Symington started questioning General Westmoreland, poor old Westy just began falling all over himself.

There were some very caustic comments made by Symington and one or two other members of the committee who also happened to be on the Foreign Relations Committee. They didn't understand why the Defense Department wasn't prepared to talk about these issues because, after all, during the course of the Foreign Relations hearings, the State Department had very effectively and in apple pie order had spoken about the political and diplomatic implications of this weapons redeployment.

At this point the Chairman of the Armed Services Committee, whose name I forget at the moment, immediately got all agitated about the fact that a couple of the members of his committee were beginning to kick over the traces. He made a very impassioned statement for the record saying that the information that Senator Symington and the others were talking about and insisting on having, was information that the Senate Armed Services Committee had never been given in the past. They not only did not need it in the past, but they did not want it now.

The upshot of it was there was a big hurrah among the members of the Armed Services Committee. It finally ended up with the Committee instructing the lead-off witness, General Westmoreland, to go back to the Pentagon and do whatever was necessary to produce a written exposition of the problem and submit it to the Committee.

Three or four days later I got a hurry up telephone call from one of my nuclear policy counterparts in the Defense Department saying, "Handyside, get over here quick, we need you." So I practically ran across the river to the Pentagon where I discovered that the Defense Department had wrestled itself into a series of contortions trying to figure out how they were going to respond to this Senate Committee requirement. Finally someone had the brilliant idea of saying, "Listen, let’s send up Handyside's paper on the subject."

So the paper I had written within the narrow confines of my office in the State Department, went to the United States Congress first as a State Department paper and then as a Defense Department paper. The final chapter of this sequence was when both committees recommended to the full Senate that it consent to the ratification of the Okinawa Reversion Treaty. In due time this is exactly what the United States Senate did.

Q: Did you get involved with the problem of Israel, Pakistan, India, South Africa and their nuclear programs, or was that somebody else's bailiwick?

HANDYSIDE: We were very much involved in that although we were more of a coordinating office as opposed to an operational office. The people in the Arms Control and Disarmament Agency, the people in the OES, Oceans, Environment and Scientific Affairs, were the ones who had the lead in this. We had to be involved in all of the deliberations. We had to give our consent to various courses of action, but the lead role was played by the people in OES. We got involved only if it was a matter of US military equipment. Nonproliferation as an action was assigned to other parts of the Department.

Nevertheless that having been said, my little group of guys was very, very much involved in this field because we had to make sure that the United States government did not make any commitments that the US military was going to find difficult to live with. We were the primary channel of communication to the Defense Department in terms of operational requirements. So we were very much involved in this, but at that early stage of the game, most of it was a matter of digesting the intelligence that was picked up and occasionally getting involved in an argument that was going on most typically between the Defense Department and the Commerce Department about whether an export license ought to be issued by the US government for some particular piece of equipment that somebody wanted to sell to Pakistan, Taiwan, or wherever. For those kinds of things a representative from the Office of Munitions Control, which was also part of the Political-Military Bureau, was always involved.

Q: Handy you were doing this from 1970-75. During most of this period I was Consul General in Athens having nothing to do with nuclear matters, but it was no secret that we had essentially atomic artillery, or the equivalent thereof, in Greece, which was under a very unpopular dictatorship. I would think from a political-military matter this must have caused quite a bit of debate. We were kind of supporting the government but rather unhappily.

HANDYSIDE: I don't remember any specifics of the problem. I do remember that there were NATO forces that were deployed at a couple of airfields in Greece and that these combat air force units were continuously on nuclear alert. That meant that the half a dozen or so airplanes that were on alert at a particular time had nuclear weapons uploaded into the bomb bays. So not only did we have the problem of insuring the security of the ammunition dump, but we had the problem of securing the integrity of this equipment after it had been in fact mounted in a particular airplane and the American crew of the aircraft, or in some instances, the other NATO crews, were in the ready room and set to sprint to the airplane, get in, start the engine and take off. These kinds of alert squadrons existed throughout the NATO area. We had them in Holland, Belgium, etc. So this was a general problem. We handled it in pretty much the same way. It simply meant that during this period of time in Greece, the kinds of dispositions that had been made to insure the security of this equipment were somewhat more rigid and somewhat more all encompassing than they had to be in the same kind of situation on a NATO airfield in say, Holland.

Q: Shall we leave this now?

HANDYSIDE: Unless you have some more questions about the nuclear side...

Q: No, no.

HANDYSIDE: ...I have one story to tell about the space side which I think also gives an insight into the kinds of things that the State Department from time to time is involved in.

At one point, and Stu, I really don't remember when during the 1970-75 period that this happened, the Space Committee of the United Nations had been pushed by various and sundry small countries in the direction of planning and then negotiating the details of a space treaty. The United States had taken a very dim view of this because we were very sensitive at that stage of the game, recognizing that this is now 20 years ago. We were very sensitive about the kinds of things that subsequently came to be referred to as national technical means. In other words, overhead spy satellites. We were very disturbed by some of the idealistic representatives that looked at the writing and negotiating of this treaty as a priceless and magnificent vehicle for the elaboration of more meaningful international law. We were a little taken back at the time to discover that the international lawyers who were sent to these various negotiating sessions by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Canada were frequently to be found among the most outspoken and the most idealistic of the small countries who were trying to use this opportunity to expand the writ of international law. We were constantly battling with the Canadians saying that those kinds of provisions make us nervous and we can't tell you exactly why but we just can't do it that way. And they would say that we must do it that way in order to build the corpus of international law.

The upshot was that as we got farther and farther down the negotiating track, we could no longer have these sorts of casual, intellectual discussions about this issue. We were getting close to a definitive text; this text was going to be passed around to everybody and all the countries had to agree or disagree. We recognized that we were in a position where we were going to have to blow the whistle and call the whole thing off. So my staff and I produced a series of telegraphic instructions to the embassy in Ottawa to raise this with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and to express in very firm and very candid terms that this was something that the US simply could not live with. About the third one of these telegrams instructed the Embassy to tell the Canadians not only that we couldn't live with the proposed treaty as drafted, but that we were beginning to wonder why our Canadian friends kept pushing us in this direction after we had previously told them on many occasions that we simply could not live with this. I couldn't figure out why, because the reports that would come back from the embassy were very good and said they had really done it and really laid it on, and yet somehow the legal division of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs kept pushing down the same path.

So I went back through the collection of telegrams reporting the demarches made by the embassy. It finally dawned on me that every time we instructed the embassy in Ottawa to go in to the Foreign Ministry and talk to somebody in the Foreign Ministry about this subject, the Embassy officers were automatically and without question diverted to the legal advisor's office and talked only to lawyers. The political people, those involved in the relationship between Canada and the United States and other people who had more general responsibilities in the Canadian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, simply never got involved with this. They had all long months before said, "Space Treaty, Oh, that's the legal guys. We know nothing about it." So I realized that some how or other I was going to have to wire around this division of labor within the Canadian government. It finally occurred to me that the way to do this was to set it up so that the next major presentation

of the US government's point of view to the Canadian government would take place in Washington rather than Ottawa. This was the only way I could figure that we could break out of the narrow confines of these idealistic young international lawyers.

I talked to Ron Spiers about the problem and told him what my suggested solution to the problem was. I said, "The way I would like to set this up is to have you call in either the Canadian Ambassador or at a minimum the Canadian Deputy Chief of Mission and read the riot act to him in a very nice way. We are all friends. But make it very clear that this really is getting down to the nitty-gritty as far as the United States government is concerned, and we simply can't go down this track any further. We don't want to have to be put into a position where we publicly repudiate our Canadian friends and maybe even have to repudiate the whole exercise of a space treaty." And Spiers said, "Okay. But, I don't know anything about this, you will have to write me a script." I said that I would.

My staff and I prepared a four or five page paper in which we laid this all out, complete with actual language that he could read. Then we started about the business of convoking the senior Canadian official. For reasons that I don't recollect at this point, we settled on the Canadian Minister rather than the Ambassador, a fellow by the name of Kenneth Williamson. He was a very personable guy and a first class professional diplomat. At the appointed hour Ken Williamson arrived and he had a couple of people with him. One was the officer who usually dealt with the problems of political relationships between the United States and Canada, and partly because I had gotten on the phone on the q.t. and let one of the other guys in the Canadian Embassy know what this was all about, Williamson brought with him one of his people from his sort of technical cum intelligence side. And there were a couple of other people from other parts of the Department...appropriate representative from the EUR Bureau, from the Canadian Office, etc.

We sat around the table and Ron Spiers did a splendid job of reading and elucidating on the text that had been prepared for him. Ken Williamson and his people were scribbling notes just furiously. Williamson's concluding comment was, "You know, I don't understand all the technical problems that you all have laid before us, but amongst the three of us we think we have gotten most of it. We will get it down on paper and we will get it back to Ottawa so that even though I personally don't understand the complexity, I know that some of my people do and you can be assured that we will faithfully and accurately report to Ottawa what you have just told us." And sure enough, when the telegram got to Ottawa the next morning apparently all kinds of things broke loose because as I had anticipated, the Canadian government internally must operate in a fashion somewhat similar to the US government. It became quite clear that when this telegram came in from the Canadian Embassy in Washington it was distributed throughout the Canadian government. This meant it went to the intelligence community, the Defense Department, to other parts of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, etc. Apparently, as I learned later from my Canadian counterparts, the phone started ringing off the desk in the office of the legal advisor of the Canadian Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The man who was the deputy chief of that division of the Foreign Office and who had been the primary lawyer involved was apparently in no uncertain terms and very

unceremonious fashion told by some very senior Canadian military people that he had just about screwed it and that they were amazed that the Americans had been as patient as they had been for so long with people who simply didn't understand the problem. They made it very clear to this lawyer type that our reservations, our concerns, were completely shared by the Canadian military and by the Canadian intelligence communities because the Canadian intelligence community and the Canadian military knew that they shared the product of our fancy equipment. Apparently the people in the Foreign Office did not.

The upshot of it was that through lots of phone calls back and forth to the Canadian Embassy we finally set up an emergency briefing for the Canadian legal staff in Washington. I made certain that we would have counterparts we could level with, I said, "Don't bring anybody down here who hasn't been given the proper clearances because we can't talk to them and tell them what our problem is until they have been vetted and adjudicated, signed the book as people that can have access to this kind of information, have been given all the briefings, etc." A group of about four people came down from Ottawa and we had a full dress briefing that lasted the better part of six hours where we really laid out the whole problem. What we were concerned about. Why we were so sensitive about this. Why the text they were talking about was making us very nervous, etc. We did it all in a very friendly way and with some help from some guys in the embassy because there were some people in the Canadian Embassy, both on the military side and the intelligence side, who had not been brought into this thing earlier either and were appalled to discover that their government had been handling it the way it was.

The moral of the story is that when you are in an office director or desk officer position in Washington you are required to think about diplomatic tactics in order to get your point across just as frequently as you are required to think about the most rigorous analysis and the best and most persuasive sale pitch. Sometimes your most persuasive sales pitch doesn't carry your point because you are not getting it to the person in the foreign government who can make the right decision.

As a footnote, another trick we learned from our counterparts in the Spanish Embassy. From time to time because of our nuclear posture in Spain we had to have conversations with the Spanish government about our operational requirements. We had found over the years that it was necessary to make the approach both in Madrid and in Washington to ensure our demarche was understood accurately. At one stage of the game when George Landau was the office director of Iberian Affairs in EUR, he and I worked very closely together on some of these things. There were occasions when we would have to have Marty Hillenbrand, the EUR Assistant Secretary, call in the Spanish Ambassador to make one of these pitches. The Spanish Ambassador, a very distinguished senior diplomat, very savvy, would always bring in his number two, who was a titled gentleman from Spain. After the presentation the Ambassador would make some excuse to stay and talk to Mr. Hillenbrand about something else. Then he would say to his number two, "Why don't you go with George Landau and Mr. Handyside and clear up any questions that you may have about this." The three of us would go down to George's office and we would then sit down and write the telegram that the Spanish Embassy was going to send back to the

Foreign Office in Madrid. That is how we guaranteed that the pitch that was coming out of Washington was the pitch that we wanted and which presented the problems in the most persuasive and technically most correct fashion. It was one of the interesting instances of very close cooperation between the State Department and the senior staff of a foreign diplomatic mission.

Q: You have to do this because when you are getting on to technical subjects...when you call in somebody from an embassy they don't really know an awful lot about that. And fair enough, there is no reason why they should. But these things are very important and you really have to cooperate. Otherwise you call in somebody and they nod and go back and put down what they think they heard and it gets all screwed up. It can be worse than having said nothing.

HANDYSIDE: This is one of the things that one learns by experience in the State Department perhaps. But I must confess that in my education as a Washington official, I had never come across this particular technique and certainly had never come across it with any foreign country representatives who recognized they were uncertain about the technical niceties of the problem, and therefore really welcomed our doing this. We didn't actually hand them a piece of paper but we practically parsed out the sentences while the counterpart sat on the other side of the table and scribbled them down. He then folded it all up and put it in his pocket. We knew by the time he got back to the embassy he would sort all the rest of his report out and put it down, and that the technical portions of the telegram would be virtually the way we dictated them to him.

Q: Well, your next assignment was for not quite a year, you went to the Senior Seminar. We both went to that together in 1975. Then you were appointed as Ambassador to Mauritania. How did that come about? You served there from 1975-78.

HANDYSIDE: I don't know how that came about. All I know is that at one point I got a telephone call from the Director General, Ambassador Nathaniel Davis. He said that my name had been put forward and had been accepted and then asked if I accepted the nomination. I subsequently ran into Dean Brown who in the course of the conversation said, "You know what is going to happen to you don't you?"

Q: Who is Dean Brown?

HANDYSIDE: Dean Brown, an old Middle East hand, was then the Under Secretary for Management. I rightly interpreted that what he had in mind was not that I was going to be run over by a truck or something like that, but that in effect I was to go on to Mauritania as my next assignment. Not that I ever had any question about the fact that Nat Davis gave me the correct information, but I certainly got it a couple of days later in a quite informal way from Dean Brown. In any event, how it happened I have no idea.

Ambassador Davis' announcement launched me on a whole series of involvements that I had never anticipated before. Beginning with and most significantly, the whole business

of meticulously working out the paperwork that was required by the process, specifically the kinds of detailed presentations of one's background and financial interests, etc., that were required by the Senate Foreign Relations Committee. These detailed procedures had been put in place by Senator Fulbright, the Chairman of the Committee, who was trying very rigorously to weed out the excessive utilization of worthy large contributors to political parties as candidates for US ambassadorships. The Committee had, for example, instituted just two years earlier very rigorous requirements about full disclosure of political contributions. All the career officers had to do this, even though it was quite clear to the members of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee and its staff that the typical Foreign Service officer didn't have enough pennies in his back pocket to contribute to any political activity, whatever the connections. But the only way they could get at the problem of major contributors to one of the primary parties was by subjecting all ambassadorial nominees to the same process.

I can recall quite vividly the afternoon that several of us appeared before the Foreign Relations Committee. I especially remember the questions I got about Mauritania first and foremost from the chairman, who was on his last legs, as it turned out, as the chairman of the committee. He dutifully read the questions which had been prepared by the members of the staff to be put to me and the others. There was another member of the committee who fancied himself as a world traveler and apparently kept score of the number of countries he had visited.

Q: It sounds like Ellender.

HANDYSIDE: It was Ellender.

Q: I was in Yugoslavia one time and he said he had never been in Romania and we went through God knows what to get him into Romania for an hour or two just so he could say he had been there.

HANDYSIDE: Senator Ellender said to me, "I can't remember whether or not I have ever been in the country to which you are about to be assigned, see if you can help me resurrect my recollection." He described where he had traveled in Africa. I decided that discretion being the better part of valor, I would interpret the facts he provided as suggesting that while he had perhaps never actually been on the ground in Mauritania, he had indeed overflown Mauritania. He just beamed. He thought that was just great. I had no particular problems while before the Committee, but I must say I certainly hadn't expected that kind of a question.

In any event, the Committee hearing, which was one of the early things in this process of nomination, was quickly followed by Senate confirmation and finally by the swearing in ceremony on the Eighth Floor and all of the various people who had been involved in one way or another in my development as a professional Foreign Service officer as guests. Interspersed throughout the process were the detailed mechanics of mastering the substance involved and of getting to the post.

I still have very clear recollections of conferring with some parts of the Department, for example Security. I had a car that I was terribly fond of and wanted to take it to post. So I asked Security, "Am I permitted to take my personal automobile to post?" I was a little taken back when the response from the appropriate security officials was an absolute and thunderous “no”. When I said, "I don't understand. I have always had a car wherever I have been", they said, "Mr. Ambassador, we will give you the car we want you to ride in and we will not permit you to be a passenger in any other car." This was my introduction to the kinds of security precautions that were made for senior US officials living and working abroad. In all of my years in the Foreign Service, in spite of all the bullets I had dodged and the numbers of times that I had to crawl around on the floor of my living room because the dissidents were shooting into my windows, it had never occurred to me that at some stage in the game I was going to have to ride in an automobile that had the kind of built in protection that would fend off not only stray and intentionally aimed bullets, but would protect the occupants of the car against land mines.

Sure enough when I arrived at Mauritania there was a new official car that, while not a fully armored vehicle, was armored from the floor boards up to the window sills, so that if we drove over something and it exploded, the occupants of the automobile would have a reasonable chance of surviving.

One of the other things I very quickly learned after I arrived in Nouakchott and checked into the Residence, was that I was expected to sleep behind a steel door. When I objected mildly to this, the DCM said that given some of the people I hadn't met yet, but would during the course of the next few months, I would discover that there were some people resident in the community who were not very friendly to the United States and who certainly did not make a profession of wishing the American Ambassador well. He ended with “ we think not only in terms of your official responsibilities but in terms of your survival, you will want to sleep behind a steel door”.

That was my first introduction to a way of life which has unfortunately now come to characterize the existence of most Foreign Service people living abroad. And as I look back, Stu, at the kind of life the Foreign Service presented to us when we were freshman in this organization, where we were still bright eyed and bushy tailed and enthusiastic about traveling abroad to see new things and to visit with new people and get involved in winning friends and developing influence for the United States, we were living in an environment which prompted a degree of naivete that is almost painful to recollect now. Certainly the Foreign Service I encountered on my last posting to Mauritania was a far cry from the Foreign Service I joined in 1955 with such enthusiasm and such anticipation.

Q: When you went out there did you have any concept of what were American interests, if any, or what you were going to accomplish?

HANDYSIDE: Early in the nomination-confirmation process I learned that as far as the United States was concerned, Mauritania was important for a number of reasons. It

certainly wasn't a major player in any of the various international groupings it was a member of. But it provided a view into the Arab caucus, (because Mauritania prides itself on being an Arab country and insists that it is Arabophone, not Francophone), the African group, and the "Third World" generally. So even though Mauritania was usually the most junior of junior partners in the Arab League and they rarely played a leading role in the discussions within the pan-Arab organizations, nevertheless from the point of view of the United States government, it was very interesting and sometimes very useful to get the impressions of a particular Arab League meeting or more generally of inter-Arab discussions from the Mauritanian government. As part of the US government's continuing efforts to figure out what the Arabs were thinking and why they were thinking it, Mauritania provided a useful, sometimes very profitable, window into the Arab diplomatic mind.

Similarly, Mauritania viewed itself as an African power and was not only a founding member but a very active participant in the Organization of Africa Unity. Consequently, to the extent the US government needed from time to time a similar or a parallel window into the deliberations of the African states south of the Sahara, by discussing these problems with our Mauritanian counterparts, we frequently could get insights that were not necessarily available or at least were confirmatory to things that other representatives of the United States government had picked up in other embassies throughout the southern two thirds of the continent of Africa.

[end of side]

...Mauritania was a very active participant in various parts of the UN system. Because it was a member of various of the groupings within the world of parliamentary diplomacy, Mauritania was also useful as a kind of vantage point on developments taking place behind the closed doors of the African caucus, the Arab caucus or the Third World Caucus, or the Bandung Conference caucus, or whatever it was. So our interest was an intelligence/information gathering one.

In addition, 1975 was about the third year into the terrible drought in the Sahel. Since the US had an interest in responding in a humanitarian fashion to the terrible impacts of the fifth and sixth years of no rain in that part of Africa, and more specifically, since we had a bilateral aid effort in Mauritania, Embassy Nouakchott had frequent interactions with the Mauritanians on drought relief.

Q: What was the political situation in Mauritania when you were there?

HANDYSIDE: Mauritania was a typical newly independent nation and government that reflected all of the characteristics of a whole generation of African independent states which had either earned or wrested their independence from the usually European colonial powers in the period immediately following the Second World War. Mauritania had originally been a part of what was called French Equatorial Africa along with Mali, Niger, and Senegal. While a quite different piece of the French colonial puzzle, it was

nevertheless part of the French colonial empire, just as Morocco and Algeria a little further to the north had been at a somewhat earlier period. The man who was then President of Mauritania had been the primary independence leader, Mokhtar Ould Daddah. He had been the firebrand who pushed the French government into relinquishing its direct control of this piece of desert real estate, and was valiantly attempting to make the transition which a whole host of other African leaders like Leopold Senghor, Kwame Nkrumah and all the others who had begun as independence movement leaders, were struggling post-independence to become governmental leaders and international statesmen.

Mokhtar Ould Daddah was a French educated Arab/African whose intellectual analytical capabilities were very similar to those of his French counterparts. He was much more of that Cartesian cast of mind than the more pragmatic, practical minded Anglo-Saxons, whether they were in Great Britain or in the United States, or in the African countries which had formerly been British colonies.

It was a fascinating experience from a professional point of view. It was not a terribly comfortable experience because Nouakchott was then and still is a very primitive city built on the edge of the desert. In the summer time the ambient temperature just a few miles inland from the capital city is 140 degrees, F. Even with the moderating influence of the Atlantic ocean, the summer-time temperature in Nouakchott is frequently 110 to 120 degrees. Moreover, even on what seems to be the clearest and crispest day, there is an enormous amount of dust suspended in the atmosphere. So one of the chores the household staff had to do each sundown was sweep up all the dust that had accumulated on the various porches and patios. If any of the outdoor spaces were going to be used for entertaining that evening, we simply couldn't have guests sit on those dusty chairs. This surprised me greatly; I had been fooled into believing that because the air looked so clean and crisp that there wasn't any dust suspended in it. The day's accumulation of dust on the flagstones or the patios, while obviously considerably less than the accumulation during a real dust storm, was still nevertheless a significant thing to be reckoned with.

One of the other major problems we faced was that we were really at the end of the supply line. The Embassy in Mauritania was frequently referred to, both in the Department and by our colleagues in Dakar, Senegal, as “Fort Apache”. We were really on the edge of civilization and at the end of the supply line. Over time, I learned that we could cope reasonably well with the supply line realities by planning further ahead and ordering things sooner. We had to anticipate our needs, both official and personal, and get the orders in; otherwise we had a gap in supplies.

The other reality of existence in Mauritania was the almost total lack of medical support. The Embassy had an Embassy nurse. We were very fortunate, we were able, at least all the time I was there, to find among the longer term American residents or within the mission family, an Embassy wife or a missionary wife or a business wife who was a registered nurse. And we were close enough to the home base of the regional medical officer, who was stationed in Dakar, to benefit from one or two-day visits. He scheduled

more frequent trips to Mauritania because he recognized that literally there were no health care personnel to be trusted in Nouakchott, unlike other parts of West Africa where there were some reasonably well-educated medical personnel to take care of the embassy staff.

The only medical care that existed in Mauritania was provided by a team of French military physicians. I don't know how the French army went about recruiting these doctors, but they obviously didn't know very much medicine. Moreover, whatever little knowledge they did have was seriously undermined by the totally inadequate standards of cleanliness and antisepsis in the building that passed as the government hospital. In Nouakchott, an ill person would be better off not going to the hospital than exposing him or herself to that kind of sewer.

As a result, our standing operating procedure for anyone who got the slightest bit sick: if we couldn't consult with either the regional medical officer or occasionally the Peace Corps doctor, who was stationed in Dakar by telephone and find out what to do, we simply flew the patient out. If they were mildly ill we would fly them to Dakar; if they were seriously ill, we would get them on an airplane and send them off to one of the Defense Department hospitals in Western Europe.

Q: How did you find your American staff while you were there?

HANDYSIDE: The American staff in terms of Foreign Service quality was really quite good, far better on the substantive side than on the management side. I had an absolutely superb DCM when I arrived. He was and still is a first rate officer who has since gone on and has had by now at least two missions of his own.

Q: Who is that?

HANDYSIDE: David Shinn. He was a terribly knowledgeable and competent guy who had enormous amounts of background in African affairs and who had been in Mauritania about eight or nine months by the time I arrived. He was already well-connected within the community. There was an absolutely first rate junior political officer who was there for the first six months I was at post. He has now moved up to the senior ranks of the Foreign Service. Finally, there was a highly competent husband and wife team: administrative officer- American secretary. The Embassy at that point consisted of five Foreign Service Americans in the Embassy and the beginnings of an AID presence of two. The AID presence was strictly for the organization and delivery of humanitarian assistance to ease the drought. During the time I was in Nouakchott, almost three years, we went from five Americans in the Embassy and two AID people, up to an American diplomatic mission of about 40 plus a group of about 10 Peace Corps volunteers, plus another, perhaps, 50 Foreign Service Local employees. So we went from a sleepy little post of five Americans and maybe 15 local employees, which it was for several years before my arrival, up to a group of about 40-45 American employees and an equal number of locals.

We gradually built a major AID mission because we phased out of purely humanitarian drought assistance into a full-blown economic development program. The AID mission grew from a food stuffs delivery staff into a group of highly sophisticated, economic development planning people. There were some very able development people who worked closely with their counterparts in the Ministry of Planning and in the technical ministries. There was also a Peace Corp contingent. It was a Peace Corps presence that posed some very serious problems at the outset, but we finally managed with the help of some people back in Washington to get it sorted out.

Q: What were the problems?

HANDYSIDE: The problem was twofold. First, the Mauritanians didn't quite understand what the Peace Corps and its people were all about. Second, there was an almost total lack of support in terms of bureaucratic infrastructure and pipeline support to the Peace Corps contingent on site in Fort Apache. On one of my consultation trips to Washington, I went around to the Assistant Director of the Peace Corps for Africa and said in effect, "Your operation in my country has now gotten to the point where it is an embarrassment to the United States and the United States government. I insist that you either fix it or pull it out. I simply cannot any longer put up with this gaggle of incompetence. It has come to the point where the Peace Corps is undermining some of the other things the Mission is trying to accomplish."

Q: The incompetence was where?

HANDYSIDE: In Washington mostly. The result of my very quiet, very candid, and very firm intervention with this senior Peace Corps person, who admitted that he knew there were problems but had no idea they were of that variety and that serious, was a commitment to fix the program. And sure enough in a very short period of time, the person who had been the Peace Corps director, who was terribly nice and terribly well-meaning but generally incompetent, was transferred out and replaced by a very, very bright young guy who was a first rate officer and a real dynamo. He was a Foreign Service brat, bilingual in French and English who had been brought up in a political officer's family and who had lots of intercultural antenna all over. He was superbly qualified in terms of language and just had all kinds of things going for him. He was a young fellow about 25. He worked incredible hours and within a matter of three or four months, he had the Peace Corps program back into shape. He organized a whole new crop of volunteers who began to filter in, and were installed in key places around the country where they could do something meaningful.

Q: What were they doing?

HANDYSIDE: Most of them were teaching English. A couple of them were teaching agricultural technology of one kind or another. Mostly it was an English teaching program. They had been well recruited, well prepared. They came to Mauritania with some vague knowledge of Arabic and a useful working knowledge of French.

Consequently they were able to plug in right away to the various secondary schools and other places where they were supposed to be teaching English. The new Director, strongly supported by Peace Corps Washington, turned the program around. But I am firmly convinced that if I hadn't made a real issue of the unsatisfactory situation and had not done it in a way that forced people to confront the problem, we would have bumbled along, and never would have gotten the damn thing fixed.

I had a similar problem with my people from Langley. The Agency presence in Mauritania had been a very carefully constructed arrangement. It had taken months to negotiate the treaty between the State Department and the CIA. What the State Department had ultimately agreed to was a modest, almost minimal presence, created for one purpose and operating within some very tight parameters. If Agency staffers in the course of running around the city picked up ordinary bits of intelligence of interest to a typical Foreign Service officer, they were required by the terms of the treaty to turn that information over to the Deputy Chief of Mission. The DCM would either report the information himself as a political reporting officer, or would farm it out to one of the other economic or political officers. The information would be combined with other information that had been obtained by State Department people and sent into Washington as an Embassy report. Reciprocally, if any State personnel came across information related to the Agency's sole purpose, it would be turned over to the station and reported in Agency channels.

The first young man and his very attractive wife, who was his helper, who established the Agency presence in Mauritania, were absolutely first class. He was totally loyal to the mission and had absolute and complete respect for the terms of the treaty. He turned out to be one of the best young political officers I ever had the good fortune to supervise. He and his wife were extremely useful members of our little community.

In the fullness of time, however, he was rotated out and replaced by a guy who had delusions of grandeur. He had not been involved in the negotiation of the treaty with the State Department, and as he read it he obviously must have said to himself, "This is a lot of bunkum and I am not going to pay any attention to it." The upshot of it was that I kept having problems with him getting into things that he was not supposed to get into and operating the way he probably would have somewhere else where their mission consisted of the full spectrum of things they ordinarily do. Rather than make an issue of this by written communication, I took advantage of another trip back to Washington on consultation, and went out to Langley to see their equivalent of the Assistant Secretary for African Affairs. I had organized this consultation through his principal deputy who was a fellow that I had known very well at one of my previous posts. I called my former colleague and said I had a problem and wanted to come out and talk to them about it. He set it up. We had a very candid discussion. I laid it right out, very calmly: "These are the kinds of things that are going on. I am unwilling to permit this to continue. I have cautioned this guy about it; I have called his attention to the terms of the memorandum of understanding between our two groups. The thing that I am concerned about is that it is ultimately my responsibility to make the political judgment as to whether or not what we

are doing is going to get the United States into trouble. Whether that trouble is going to be only local, or whether that trouble is going to be regional, or whether that trouble is going to be worldwide is one of the things that I have to judge. I have to balance what is the anticipated product of a particular course of action against the risks that are involved. I can't do this if I don't know what is going on. I can't do this if the guy goes and does something and then tells me afterward. We are at a crossroads now. I intentionally have not put any of this down on paper because I don't want any record of it. What I want is the three of us talking the problem out at this meeting and over lunch. If you guys will fix it, then I will never mention it again. But it has to be fixed because I just can't take the risk of our continuing down the path we are now on."

They heard me out. Then the senior of the two fellows said, "I don't know about my deputy here, but I had no idea that this was going on in your backyard. It should not be going on in your backyard, and I will fix it. If I am unsuccessful in fixing it the first time around, you will have a new member of your staff." "Perfect, that is exactly what I wanted to hear." I remained in Washington for a few more days. By the time I got back to post a couple of weeks had gone by. I never knew what headquarters had sent out by way of a communication, but I hadn't been talking to the Agency staffer for more than five minutes before I recognized that somebody had dropped a ton of bricks on him. I never had any more difficulty with him.

Q: Why don't we stop at this point and we will get together again.

HANDYSIDE: Okay.

Q: Today is May 28, 1993. Handy, let's continue with your time in Mauritania. How did you find the Mauritanian government? How did you deal with it?

HANDYSIDE: Of the various Third World governments I dealt with, the Mauritanian government certainly compared favorably. There were areas of very considerable competence. There were other areas of typical Third World lethargy and incompetence. But in general, it seemed to me given the kinds of problems it had and the environment in which it operated, the Mauritanian Government as I knew it, that is before the military takeover, was a reasonably effective organization in terms of meeting the needs of the country and its people. Mauritania is both the westernmost of the Arab countries and in a sense the southernmost of the western Arab countries. Or, put another way, the northernmost of the black African states. It was both a member of the Arab League and the Organization of African Unity. The senior people of the Mauritanian government, specifically the president, the speaker of the parliament and the minister of foreign affairs, frequently made mention of the fact that Mauritania participated actively in both these international groupings of like minded states. And this indeed was one of the reasons that Mauritania was of particular interest to the United States. It was a good listening post into both the Arab community and the black African community. In many respects, however, Mauritania was quite different from the other Arab governments. Perhaps this was in part a reflection of its one foot in the African camp. For example, mind you this was 1975,

there were typically two or three women cabinet ministers and other senior female officials in the Mauritanian government. Like their male counterparts they were enormously competent individuals. Their presence in the government reflected a widespread popularly held view. Indeed, the male Minister of Planning observed to me once that Mauritania had too few educated and experienced citizens to rule out the participation of one half the population in the management of the country.

Q: How long had Mauritania been independent?

HANDYSIDE: It became independent in the early 1960s; I was there roughly 15 years after independence.

Another one of the things that set Mauritania apart was its insistence that it was an Arabophone, that is an Arabic speaking country. This insistence was curious for a couple of reasons. First, because Hasaniya Arabic is technically quite different from even Western Arabic and is mutually unintelligible to most speakers of Arabic in the eastern end of the Mediterranean. Second, French was the only written language a large portion of the population knew; most African dialects at this stage of the game have no writing system. As a result, most of the government's business, at least with people outside the borders of Mauritania, was done in French.

One of the other things that I think was interesting about the government was that the senior officials recognized, and it was one of two governments in all of Africa in the 1970s that did, that they had a divisive social problem created by the presence within their country of black Africans and Arabs. Recognizing that this was a potentially difficult, perhaps even a destructive force, the Mauritanian government, in a very self- conscious way, began to pursue almost immediately after independence a set of policies that was designed to knit the two communities together. There was a great deal on the radio, and finally when the government began to publish a newspaper, which happened during my time in Mauritania, there were repeated references to the "new Mauritanian man." What they were getting at here was trying consciously to integrate the Arab community and the black African community, and to build a single national population into a single nation state. The government pursued this objective in a variety of ways. The most obvious one was in the educational system. All the youngsters who were beginning school were instructed in their native language only in the first couple of years. Beginning in about the third grade, they were instructed in Arabic and in French. So as this initial group of youngsters began going through the school system, they were beginning to fill a pipeline with individuals who had two languages in common, and the pipeline was set to begin pouring out into the society. For the first time all the youngsters in Mauritania knew and could use both French and Arabic as means of communication. This program not only gave the black Africans a modern Western language as part of their intellectual baggage and an economic tool, it also made it possible for them to deal more effectively with the other half of the population and with the government via Arabic. Simultaneously, the program provided the Arabic-speaking youngsters a working knowledge of French which enabled them to communicate with their black fellow citizens as well as the world outside

Mauritania. In sum, the government was embarked on a very real, conscious effort to build the African and Arab communities together into an integrated whole.

Sudan was the only other country in Africa which faced the problem of fundamentally different populations on the same scale. We see now in 1993 that the separation of the two communities and the antagonism between the Moslem Arabs of the north and the Christian or animist blacks in the south of the Sudan is every bit as difficult now as it has ever been. The Sudanese government, unlike the Mauritanian government, never attempted to knit these two communities together. Unhappily, the end result 25 years later in Mauritania is not a great deal better. But this is largely because of the decisions and actions of the various military coup governments. They first ousted the civilian government led by President Ould Daddah. The subsequent military coup governments quite consciously started off in the other direction. One after another they very intentionally began once again to pit the two communities against each other. This new approach ended up two or three years ago with a series of riots induced by the authorities in Mauritania which killed tens, if not hundreds of black Mauritanians. These massacres were followed by riots in Dakar with the black Senegalese population attacking the very large Mauritanian expatriate community. I understand there were some 400 Mauritanians killed in Senegal.

Q: The time you were there did you find easy access to the Mauritanian government?

HANDYSIDE: Oh, yes. There was no problem with access at all in spite of the policy differences. The Mauritanians were very upset with our continuing support of Israel. They were equally and continually upset with American support of the last vestiges of the European colonial regimes in southern Africa. They were upset with our very friendly relationship with the South African government. Finally, they were upset by our actions in Vietnam. In formal sense, certainly at the beginning when I arrived in 1975, it was a very prickly relationship. During the presentation of my credentials, the President lectured me on Vietnam, and then chastised me and chastised my government for our continued support of Israel and South Africa. He felt so strongly about these problems and he felt it was so important to impress upon the new American Ambassador the unhappiness of his government, that I had a real Dutch uncle kind of talking to for a period of 15 or 20 minutes. But as time went on, the Mauritanians began to realize that we had been supplying a very substantial amount of food and other humanitarian assistance to help them sustain their drought-decimated population. More importantly, they came to understand that we had done this without asking for any kind of quid pro quo or asking for any political change of attitude. Slowly their attitude began to change. At first they changed on the basis of personal relationships. There were four Western ambassadors resident in Nouakchott at that point: the Americans, the West Germans, the Spanish, and the French. In all four instances, the ambassadors were people who were of some special competence, had some particular background in working with underdeveloped countries and typically Arab countries. They were also people who were personally very approachable and personable. Consequently they were all able to build a warm working association with the host government. So there was a period of time when things began to

get significantly better on a personal level. And subsequently even on a governmental level, the relationship became warmer and certainly more productive.

During the mid 1970s, the US government reacted with considerable annoyance to some of the official positions that were taken by the Permanent Representative of Mauritania to the United Nations. As a member of the Arab bloc and as a member of the revolutionary black African bloc, and as virtually a charter member of the Third World with a pronounced Bandung Conference mentality, the Mauritanians frequently signed on to sponsorship of various initiatives in the General Assembly or the Security Council and once in a while in one UN subcommittee or another, or in other fashions adopted positions that Washington found very offensive. Frequently Nouakchott's policy proclivities were exacerbated by the tenuousness of its control over the senior representative in New York. Frequently, things were said and done by him and by his staff in New York that did not accurately reflect the much more nuanced policy direction of the President and the Minister of Foreign Affairs. All too often the actions and rhetoric of the Mauritanian mission were very heavy and very ham-handed and the Perm Rep behaved as a kind of rah, rah, cheerleader.

Q: I take it they probably almost became captive of militant anti-Western groups.

HANDYSIDE: Yes, almost. What made it worse was there was a succession of senior representatives in New York who took it upon themselves to engage in rhetoric that I think must have been embarrassing to some of the senior people in Nouakchott. There was one issue that the United States was particularly unhappy about. That was the support the Mauritanians provided the Committee of 24 on the issue of Cuba. The Committee of 24 had the responsibility for producing the annual decolonization report. One of the topics that was always covered in this report was the unhappy relationship between the United States and Cuba, particularly after the famous Bay of Pigs operation.

Some time in either the summer of 1975, or more probably, early in the following summer as the preparatory work for the 1976 General Assembly got underway, the newly in-position Assistant Secretary for International Organizations Affairs, Mr. Sam Lewis, sent out instructions all over the world that the United States had decided that it was going to become much tougher on countries who talk one way in New York and talk another way in their own capital. Embassy Nouakchott was on the receiving end of a long instruction which particularly cited the Committee of 24 disagreement. Subsequently, there were some special addenda for Mauritania which came in the form of Official-Informal letters. The Official-Informals spelled out Washington's unhappiness with the Mauritanian who was in New York at that stage of the game. He had a particular tendency to get up on his hind legs and bay at the moon in ways that were really very distressing to many of my IO, AF, and NEA colleagues in Washington. I was instructed to go in and do something about it.

It was quite clear to me that I could go through a standard kind of presentation to the Foreign Office, that I could have an hour with some senior person in the Ministry of

Foreign Affairs, such as the Permanent Under Secretary, deliver my message, and that would be the end of it. If I really wanted to have any kind of a long range impact, I realized I would have to go about it in some way other than the traditional senior level demarche. And since there was no time limit, no specific deadline for an action report, and because I still had some eight weeks before the General Assembly was to begin, I decided I would structure the required demarche as a kind of professional seminar for a couple of senior people in the Foreign Office. I decided to approach the problem not as an American senior diplomat accosting senior Mauritanian officials as representatives of their government, but more in terms of a discussion amongst professional diplomats who were bureaucratic equals.

I made known to the Permanent Under Secretary and indirectly to the Minister of Foreign Affairs that I thought we ought to sit down and start talking a little bit about the upcoming General Assembly. I suggested that to the extent we could do so, it would be useful to lay groundwork that would minimize conflict later on. And they agreed. They thought this was a good idea.

This came roughly at the time I had been accepted personally by the senior people in the Foreign Affairs Ministry, and they were beginning to have a slightly different attitude towards the United States. We were becoming somewhat more helpful than others in terms of the POLISARIO civil insurrection against the Mauritanian government in the context of the decolonization of the Spanish Sahara, and of a whole series of other issues that were important to the Mauritanians. They had, I think, expected us to take a rigidly "anti" position on the Sahara and we did not do that. Thus, on an issue that they considered terribly important, they discovered that the United States was the only one of the large countries of the world that was at least willing to sit down and talk to them about the Rio de Oro, instead of immediately rushing to the assistance of Spain, the colonial power. So the scene had been set for a productive discussion.

I organized a series of perhaps six or eight two-hour sessions which for the most part turned out to be one-on-one. Once or twice there were a couple of other senior people involved, but most of the time it was in effect the Permanent Under Secretary of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and me. The gist of my pitch was simply, "Hey, fellows, you need to learn how to do a much more professional, much more effective, much more complete job of analyzing the content of the various options that are presented to your government. You need to have a better sense of what courses of action are going to produce what kind of results, to rack up those that are going to be beneficial to Mauritania, and to set them off against the ones that are obviously going to be detrimental to Mauritania." Then I was able to start using some of the examples taken from the UN context. I got on to the one about Cuba and said, "Look, here is one of the UN topics that poses a problem. Let's use it as an example. I urge you to go back, and in effect do your policy arithmetic much more carefully than you have done it in the past. Why? Because quite clearly if this year you become a sponsor of and become a vocal supporter of the attack on the United States over Cuba, there are a series of things that you are going to lose from the United States. There is just no question about it. Partly it is the new

atmosphere in Washington, but just any rational analysis of what the attitude of the United States is going to be to this kind of kicking in the shins can be established in a fairly objective way."

"So, if you support the Cuba business, then on one side of your ledger you want to outline the adverse things that are unquestionably going to result from this in terms of the actions the United States and various other countries in the UN will take. And then rack up your list of positives on the other side of the ledger. What profits can you legitimately expect to get by sponsoring the Decolonization Committee report and the attack it usually contains on the United States over Cuba? What are you going to get? You ought to get something from the Cubans for supporting them in their fight with the United States. But I would suggest to you that what you are going to get from the Cubans is probably zero. Theoretically you ought to be getting some goodies from some of the other sponsors of the Committee and of the Report, some of the other prominent leaders in the Third World movement. I find it a little difficult to imagine what they might be, but you ought to sit down and rack all these things up. When you have done the analysis on the plus side and the analysis on the minus side, then somebody should sit down and balance one against the other. At that point you then decide whether it makes sense to continue your pattern of sponsoring the Committee of 24 diatribe against the United States or not. I don't make any recommendation to you at this stage of the game. Maybe I will be required to six weeks from now after the General Assembly gets started, but now we are professionals talking together, discussing diplomatic technique."

These sessions went on roughly once a week for the interval, which was probably another five or six weeks. I was struck by the fact that the Under Secretary never canceled a single session. I derived from that the satisfaction of knowing that he was finding them at least interesting, if not valuable. The upshot of it was that the last one of these sessions probably went into the actual period of the General Assembly. And as we came up against some of these issues, such as the Committee of 24 report, which arose about four or five weeks after the last seminar, well into the General Assembly. When some of these issues were becoming important, I was called in by the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Hamdi al-Mouknass. He started out by saying, "I won't take up a great deal of your time, Mr. Ambassador, but I did want to pass along to you one specific thing. The President just signed and we sent out last night the instructions to our mission in New York to govern their activities during the rest of the General Assembly and beyond. These instructions were reformulated on the basis of your long series of conversations with the Permanent Under Secretary. I just wanted to let you know, let your government know, that the instructions which by this time have arrived in New York, are very explicit. They say that neither the Permanent Representative nor anyone else in the delegation is to take a position which is gratuitously anti-American. There will probably be certain issues during the course of the General Assembly where the government will decide that it is in our interest to take a particular position which may upset Washington or may tromp on American toes a little bit. But at least we now have clearly established the principle that we are not going to make any gratuitous statements. We are not going to jump on a bandwagon just because there is the bandwagon wheeling by. This all comes as a result of

your very welcome and careful discussion of this set of issues over the last five or six weeks."

I was quite pleased at the Minister's statement because I thought not only had we managed to produce a political result which was going to be significant in its own modest sort of way in terms of our relations...of US relations with Mauritania… and modestly significant in terms of the United States' overall position in the UN in New York. But I also had the sense that I had managed to communicate to senior officials in the Mauritanian government the need for a much more systematic and analytical approach to problems in foreign policy decision-making which would stand them, and indirectly us, in good stead for at least the length of time that particular group of men then in charge in Nouakchott were running things in Mauritania.

Q: What was our position? Mauritania, just looking at the map, has a troubled border, butting on Algeria, and the whole mess up in Morocco and the Sahara. What was happening there in brief and also what was our position at that time and how did we deal with it?

HANDYSIDE: The borders, with one exception, that is the border with Morocco, were not any more or any less troublesome than other borders throughout the northern third of the African continent. That statement covers a large part of the terrain. These were borders that were drawn on a map largely by the French; no one had ever really made a systematic effort to try to set the map onto the terrain. So while some of the borders have been appropriately demarcated by survey parties and physical border markers, most of them were just some place in a great stretch of desert.

The problem arose in the difficulties that were going on in the Spanish colony, the Spanish Sahara, where there were increasingly more active efforts on the part of the local residents to throw the Spanish out. The Spanish Sahara was one of, if not the last, certainly one of the last two or three colonial areas on the African continent. There was an active independence movement for which the acronym was POLISARIO. The POLISARIO grouping was made up of a variety of people, many of whom were indeed technically Mauritanians because the population is a very nomadic one. The bedouin population circulates in fairly large circles throughout what was then Spanish Morocco, the Spanish Sahara, northern Mauritania and westernmost Mali. Traditionally over the centuries there were a couple of major nomadic routes. One was an ellipse that was focused on the Atlantic coast, with a north and south axis. The other one was an ellipse that was focused on roughly the boundary with Mali; it also was a north and south movement of populations on a north-south axis. This was an area where the mapmakers and chancellors of Western Europe simply didn't recognize or reflect any of the on-the-ground realities. They drew lines on maps that didn't correspond with any kind of social practice or ethnic background.

As the POLISARIO struggle against the Spanish overlords continued, it became increasingly, in my view, a question of their longer-range objective. It gradually became

clear, as we learned more about the group of young men who ran the POLISARIO, that their long range objective was a nation state based on the ethnic group that in Mauritania was called Moors. These were the people who were an amalgam of the Arab population streaming westward out of the Arabian peninsula and moving regularly and methodically westward across north Africa, and the Berber population that had been indigenous to the Atlas mountains in Morocco. When these two groups of people began to inter-marry, over the centuries they became what in the western part of the Arab world was called the Moors.

There were a whole series of young Moorish men who had been trained in Western Europe; one or two had been trained in the United States. They were determined that they were going to modernize their home territory. Moreover, they were determined they were going to start running things their own way. The objectives of these young Moors were both identical to and in certain respects, clashed with the national ethnic aspirations of the then-president of Mauritania. Mokhtar Ould Daddah regularly in his speeches prior to independence had referred to an entity he called "Greater Mauritania", and talked and wrote regularly about getting independence from the French and the Spanish in order to establish this Greater Mauritanian state.

Tracking back through the records and finding the speeches that he had made in the early 1950s made it quite clear that for Ould Daddah, Greater Mauritania began at the Senegal River, which was the frontier with Senegal, and went northward to a place called the Wadi Drah, which is located some 70 or 80 miles north of the traditional southern boundary of Morocco. Similarly, Greater Mauritania extended as far east as bits and pieces of Algeria and bits and pieces of Mali. This eastward thrust was required to encompass the nomadic ellipses I mentioned earlier on, to ensure all the territory they covered would be included within the boundaries of Greater Mauritania. Thus there was an intellectual basis for this territorial desire. All the Moors living in the Spanish colony were to be included, thus all the Spanish territory. Finally, the Wadi Drah boundary would bring in all the Moors who lived in Morocco and who were considered second class citizens by the Moroccans in the north of the country.

For the first several years, that is the latter half of the 1960s and the first couple of years of the 1970s, the Mauritanian government was outspokenly supportive of the POLISARIO fight against the Spanish and frequently provided refuge for the leadership in Mauritania. The government also provided, to the extent that it had any spare cash at all, financial support for the POLISARIO. Additionally, it provided political support for the POLISARIO with frequent diplomatic activities in the UN and other places. They were joined in this, in these early days, by the Moroccan government, largely in order to push the Spanish out. Although I suspect that even at that early stage of the game, the Moroccans were more interested in acquiring the Spanish territory in toto, as they subsequently made explicit. That is, they were interested in controlling the phosphate deposits that were located in the Spanish Sahara in order to enhance their own monopolistic position in the world phosphate market. At that early stage it was simpler to

be ambiguous about their objectives and made it easier to work happily with not only the POLISARIO, but also with the Mauritanians.

About 1975 or early 1976, it became clear that the independence effort was reaching a new stage. This was in part because the Spanish had finally become sufficiently unhappy with what was going on, that they had decided to cut and run. All of a sudden, it began to look as if there were real possibilities some time in the next few years of moving the Spanish out. As soon as the Spanish decision came to light, some of the divergent and conflicting objectives that had been hidden by the rhetorical ambiguity came out into the open.

At about this stage, I discovered that through my Spanish colleague, the Spanish Ambassador, and members of his staff that I had from time to time a pipeline to some of the POLISARIO people. I recall one conversation with the Spanish Ambassador who had just finished a two or three-day session in Nouakchott with these young men a day or so earlier. One of the things he passed on to me following this session, was the description of the POLISARIO leadership as being absolutely determined that their objective was a nation-state based on their ethnic group. This was made explicit by a couple of these young fellows who told the Spanish Ambassador that they no longer shared the Mauritanian view that the southern boundary of the new Moorish state was to be the Senegal River. They explained they no longer shared the Mauritanian government's view because there was a strip along the northern bank of the Senegal River that was black. The POLISARIO leadership redefined the southern frontier for the Spanish Ambassador as the ethnic, linguistic border line in Southern Mauritania between the Moors and the black Africans. Their view was very, very clearly and very vigorously articulated. They told the Spanish Ambassador that one of two things would happen. Either they would draw the border along that ethnic boundary and then Senegal could take over the southernmost 20 miles of Mauritania. Or they would simply use military force and push the blacks across the river into Senegal. They didn't want them in their new Mauritania under any circumstances. They were going to solve this centuries-old community rivalry problem by simply exporting the blacks to the other (south) side of the river, or by redrawing the frontier.

Learning this fact was the thing that really crystallized my appreciation of this problem. It became very clear to me at that point that the objective was not just to throw out the Spanish and it was not necessarily just to have a nation-state so that they could have a foreign ministry and ambassadors around the world. It became clear to me that there really was some theoretical and philosophical fire underlying their objective of having their own ethnic-based nation-state.

Apparently the Moroccans must have come to about the same conclusion, because it was at that stage of the game that the Moroccan government began to be considerably more active in this situation. Rabat began pushing its real border farther and farther south into the old Spanish territory. Then the Moroccans and the Mauritanians finally worked out the way in which they were going to divide up the Spanish territory. Realistically, neither

government was going to support a separate state for the Moors. Further, the Moroccans were simply not going to allow Moors to have their own nation state in the whole of the old Spanish territory. And the extension of that nation state into southern Morocco was simply out of the question.

Originally when the negotiations began between the Mauritanians and Moroccans, we believed the Spanish territory was going to be divided one-third Moroccan and two-thirds Mauritanian, with the boundary located at the extension of the area that jutted out into Mauritania. However, by the time they were finished, the power positions had altered. The split was still one-third, two-thirds, but the Mauritanians were to get only the southern third. The Moroccans on the scene began pushing farther and farther south after the negotiations. So that by the time the Spanish pulled out, the old Spanish territory was in fact divided in that fashion.

Q: When did they pull out?

HANDYSIDE: It must have been about 1977.

Q: But, you were there?

HANDYSIDE: Yes, I was there. On a couple of occasions, I reported back to Washington my philosophical, analytical conclusion that what the young men of the POLISARIO were after was a nation state based on their own ethnic group. It became clear from various follow-on instructions and a number of Official-Informal letters that Washington thought this was a quaint idea, to which it didn't accord any real weight or meaning. Twenty years ago, nobody had any final judgment on this hypothesis. But I would submit that the very fact that this fight is still going on, the very fact that the POLISARIO problem still has not been resolved, although things are looking a little bit better now than three or five years ago; that my basic conclusion that there is not going to be a final resolution of this problem until there is in fact a nation-state based on this ethnic group is still true. Moreover, the problem is going to continue to plague the peoples who live in that area and all the rest of us who have anything to do with them from time to time, until it is resolved in some fashion that meets the aspirations of the Moors.

Q: Obviously we were basically bystanders in this. You must have been reading communications from our embassy in Rabat and they were reading yours. I don't recall who the ambassador was there, but particularly the political ambassadors tend to become captive of the king. He gobbles them up and they begin to report as though they were loyal Moroccan subjects. Did you find this phenomenon happening when you were there?

HANDYSIDE: I was certainly conscious of this, although if you ask me if I can produce a particular example of this mentality I would have to say no. At one stage, perhaps in mid 1977, I secured the Department's permission to go to Rabat and then on to Algiers to consult with my two counterparts. I found my session in Rabat of special interest because

Bill Crawford, who was the chief of the political section at the time and an old friend, was willing to be totally candid. What I heard in our private discussions was a detailed description of the various subterfuges Bill and the political section staff had to use to get uncomplimentary information out of the embassy and back to Washington. One of their time-honored devices, inherited from their predecessors, was a candid memorandum of conversation covered by a brief innocuous airgram. Bill or one of his political officers would have a long conversation with some political figure who was either critical of the King's policy or was in explicit, overt opposition to the King and his government. Back in the office, instead of doing a proper analytical reporting and analysis telegram or airgram which would put the information from this particular conversation into a matrix and then offer up the embassy's interpretation, they would prepare an Airgram/MemCon combination. They would follow this course because they knew they couldn't get a candid analytical piece out of the front office. Washington got the hard anti-government information in the MemCon and the analysis in a later official-informal-letter to the desk officer. In my view this subterfuge was a complete abdication of a political officer's responsibility for reporting fully and accurately and interpreting what he was reporting. But it was the only way to get that kind of information out of that embassy.

Q: But there has to be a form of communication that allows at least both sides. You can't have an ambassador being the only voice. What is the point of having other people there? If the ambassador has become captive of the state, or sometimes in opposition to the state, you have to have something.

HANDYSIDE: There is an anecdote that comes from my posting to Lebanon, which I did not mention earlier, but which fits precisely here. Ambassador McClintock took quite the opposite view on this problem. Toward the end of the famous summer of 1958 when after both Marines and Airborne troops had been put in place and the situation finally began to move toward a resolution on the basis of a “no winners, no losers proposition”, there was still the potential for a new flare up. In late September, the Christian community in Lebanon began to make it quite clear to some of us middle-grade officers that if certain kinds of things happened, if the government agreed to allow certain dissidents to do certain sorts of things, they were determined to reignite the inter-community warfare.

A number of the Arabic Language School students kept coming back into the embassy and putting down in memoranda of conversation these kinds of comments. Our information was in total conflict with what the ambassador was being told by the senior members of the government and by the heads of the political parties. When this conflict finally crystallized within the embassy, we had a session with the ambassador. We described to him the kinds of people we had been talking to. He told us that he was getting quite the opposite from the President of the Republic. One of the students suggested that the senior political leadership in Lebanon did not really understand what was going on in its own constituency. The members of the Christian political party who said there would be no flare-up simply didn't know how their own followers were thinking.

After reflecting for a moment, Ambassador McClintock said, "Okay, let's do this. You men write up the impressions you have been getting from these conversations, and then I will put in an introductory paragraph or a concluding paragraph which will state that this information is diametrically opposed to what I am getting from the Lebanese leadership. Then I will add a final paragraph that says we don't know how to sort this all out at this point, but we think it is important and that Washington should know about it now."

And three or four weeks later the place exploded. There was another final, orgiastic burst of inter-community killing before the leadership finally was able to put the lid back. Eventually by November the crisis was all over.

Q: McClintock treated this thing as a professional rather than becoming captive. As I do these interviews one notes that there often is this split between the junior officers, who are out talking to ordinary people...they are not always right and they tend to go after the opposition; its more fun. So one has to take this into account. But at the same time at the upper level they become trapped by dealing with the government. They really don't have the time to get out and do this. And they hear this and then comes the problem of the balancing. Sometimes there isn't a balance, particularly from the top because they become almost creatures of the government to which they are accredited. It is not just political appointees, it is sometimes career officers who get caught this way too.

Handy, just to clear up one thing. Your conversation with Bill Crawford, we are talking really about somewhat different time because that was when Henry Tasca was the ambassador, which was in the late 60s. He became ambassador to Greece in 1970.

HANDYSIDE: That's right. My conversation with Bill Crawford was probably in 1977. But the problem persisted.

Q: And it continues today. King Hassan of Morocco has again and again captured our ambassadors. The ones he doesn't capture became persona non grata.

HANDYSIDE: And He tells the United States to withdraw them.

Q: Bill Crawford was one of those who was not enamored of the king and the king likes to be enamored. Well let's see. Were there any other major issues in Mauritania before we move on?

HANDYSIDE: There are two anecdotal kinds of things that I would like to relate; I think from the Foreign Service point of view they are interesting and important. One was that during the POLISARIO civil war, the center of action at one stage of the game, moved sufficiently to the south, so that the POLISARIO brought the war to the capital of Mauritania.

Q: This was while you were there?

HANDYSIDE: While I was there. This was during the summer and must have been 1976 or '77, at this point I am not sure which. In any event, one of the marauding columns that had made its way south very substantially into Mauritania had eluded the forces of the Mauritanian Republic. By navigating cross lots, if you will, through the desert, the POLISARIO suddenly arrived on the outskirts of Nouakchott. Since this was obviously a hit and run raid, it was not aimed at attacking the capitol frontally. Instead, the primary target was the Presidential compound which contained both the office and the residence of Mokhtar Ould Daddah. It just so happens that the American embassy compound is immediately next door to the President's compound. And since the Polisario raiding party was not all that accurate in its gunnery, a couple of the rounds that were destined for the Presidential residence or the office building landed in the ten or twelve acres of scrub desert at the rear of the American embassy.

This attack occurred late in the afternoon, it was still light. Somehow or other we heard the first couple of rounds impact in the Presidential compound. A couple of other members of the embassy and I quickly got up on the roof of the residence where there was a masonry parapet that we could hide behind but still see over. Some two and a half miles out into the desert to the east of the city, we could see a group of maybe ten or twelve Land Rovers stopping and moving, stopping and moving and shooting.

The rounds that landed in the embassy compound came close enough to shatter several of the windows in the Residence living room. The Presidential guard finally rallied round and began to chase the raiding party back into the desert darkness, and the thing was all over. The whole episode probably didn't last more than 15 or 20 minutes at the most. It was clearly a politically-motivated hit and run raid on the capital. But from the point of view of the Foreign Service, the POLISARIO raid did bring home one more time that the profession you and I entered nearly 40 years ago, has been transformed from a decorous international conversation into something that is quite different.

The other anecdote I think we ought to record is that small, remote capitol cities produce unusual friendships. The arrival dates of three of the senior chiefs of mission in Mauritania, the Soviet Ambassador, the Chinese Communist Ambassador, and the United States Ambassador, were in close sequence. As a consequence, whenever we assembled for some protocol function, the first one in line would be the Soviet, and then the American, and then the Chinese or vice versa. The result was that I got to know my two communist counterparts quite well in at least a superficial, formal way. It was fascinating. From a professional point of view it was very useful. And it enlivened the interminable protocol formations at the airport. The command performances were either to say goodby to the President who was off to Addis Ababa for an OAU meeting or whatever, or to say welcome home when he came back. The homecomings were worse because the plane was always late. The thing that took the edge off these ultimately boring experiences was the chance to have interesting conversations with my Soviet or my Chinese counterpart. By that I became quite personally fond of both of these gentlemen for quite different reasons.

The Soviet, whose name was Startsef, was from Siberia. He had a wife and two late teenage sons who were stashed away in some school in Moscow; so he was in Nouakchott by himself. He had a huge embassy staff; it was very difficult to figure out what they all did at any given time. The Soviets were in the process of building an enormous new embassy compound during much of the time that I was in Mauritania. Finally it was finished. It had a whole series of interesting design characteristics that made it possible for the rest of the diplomatic corps to twit Ambassador Startsef on many, many occasions. There were, for example, two moving picture theaters in the embassy, one for the ambassador and one for everybody else. Startsef was really a jolly kind of a guy. As a Soviet Middle East hand, he had gotten to know some of our Foreign Service colleagues like Bill Eagleton, quite well in other parts of the Arab world. He used an Arabic interpreter, but his English was good, so he was an interesting companion. Also, getting to know him, and through that process getting to know some of the members of his staff, dovetailed very neatly with one of the Embassy's objectives. It was therefore very fortuitous that our arrival dates were close together. And it turned out for a very personal reason as well to be very rewarding.

It so happened that Mr. Startsef had without any question the best cook in Mauritania. Far better than the French Ambassador's. Periodically I would be invited to the Soviet residence for an absolutely fantastic dinner. It was great fun. In turn I would invite Startsef to my house for dinner. These exchanges of hospitality gave me an opportunity to get to know some of his junior people. And it gave my junior people an opportunity to get to know some of his junior people, since both sets of juniors were invited to the various functions.

But it was the Chinese who actually turned out to be the more interesting. He was a representative of the old school in China. I never knew enough about him to know where his independence and his clout came from. But it was quite clear that he enjoyed a position of special privilege or importance. This was immediately obvious upon meeting him and his wife at a formal, social function. He was always appropriately attired in his Mao suit, but she, instead of being clad in the female equivalent of a Mao suit, was always attired in the most wonderful silk brocades, cut in the most fabulous new fashion designs. She was a stunning woman. They were both older. I would suspect that the Chinese Ambassador was certainly well over 70 in 1977-78. And she must have been nearly his age, perhaps a couple of years younger, but very much old school Chinese.

At the time of the Chinese Ambassador's arrival, the issue came up of making calls on our counterparts. It soon became very, very obvious that the Chinese Ambassador was a stickler on protocol. My recollection is that he came quickly to see me in my office in the American embassy, but he limited his call to a ten minute visit with a handshake. Then he disappeared. He refused to permit me to make the required diplomatic return call. Perhaps he felt that he could justify to the militants on his staff his going over to see the American Ambassador, but he couldn't justify to the militants on his staff receiving the ambassador from a country with which China had no official diplomatic relations at that time.

But, in spite of this very persnickety kind of attitude towards things protocol, it quickly became apparent that on informal occasions and on neutral territory, like somebody else's residence or some public building, the Chinese Ambassador was always more than willing to engage his American counterpart in conversation. It became great fun talking to him. His foreign language, acquired during his education in China, was English. While he had taken some French in school, once in Mauritania he quickly discovered that his aim of trying to refurbish his French was a hopeless cause. He was just too old, in effect, to learn a new language. So he decided it would be much better to spend the same amount of time refurbishing his once-fluent command of English. So that was what he did, and the results were quickly apparent.

He very quickly became one of the members of the English-speaking group of the diplomatic corps. The German Ambassador, the Spanish Ambassador, the Chinese Ambassador, the Pakistani Ambassador, and I, became kind of a linguistic sub-unit within the diplomatic corps. Very soon after this evolutionary social arrangement had been worked out, the Chinese Ambassador would seek me out at the Residence of the French Ambassador or at a public place or function, because he wanted someone to talk to. Because his French was next to non-existent, he was unable to talk to the Mauritanians without having one of his interpreter flunkies around. For any conversation, the presence of an interpreter is an inhibiting factor. But I suspect that for political reasons as well, it was inhibiting as far as the Chinese Ambassador was concerned, given his ties to the Mandarinate of the old days in China.

In any event, this whole business came to a laughable peak towards the end of my stay in Mauritania when the Pakistani Ambassador organized a dinner party and evening for the English speaking subgroup of the Nouakchott diplomatic corps. In telephoning the invitations around to us, he stressed that this was to be an English evening and was only to be for the English speakers. Therefore there was no need to bring any staff members along to bridge linguistic gaps. He apparently told the Chinese Ambassador exactly the same thing. So the Chinese Ambassador arrived at the Pakistani residence by himself. But in the meantime, as the Pakistani Ambassador was wont to do, he had completely changed the rules of the game. Once we got inside his Residence at this English speaking evening, we discovered that it was heavily populated with a large group of senior Mauritanian officials whose only foreign language was French. So here was the Chinese Ambassador, who had been assured that there was no need to bring his French interpreter, suddenly dumped in the middle of a bunch of French-speaking people.

The Chinese Ambassador and a shifting group of the other English speakers clustered together, and started to make the best of this rather strange evening. Then all of a sudden we were told that his Excellency, the Minister of Foreign Affairs, was to arrive. And sure enough within another fifteen or twenty minutes, Mr. Mouknass appeared in the Pakistani's living room. He quickly declared in his impeccable French that he couldn't stay very long, that he had just dropped in to say hello. The Minister noted that three of the English speakers, the Soviet, the Chinese, and the American, happened at that moment to be engaged in a lively conversation. The Minister came over to greet us

briefly. He began by repeating a comment he had made many times before...that it was always such a joy for him as the foreign minister of a non-aligned country to see the senior representatives of the three great powers in deep conversation and obviously enjoying themselves.

The Minister moved on to greet briefly several more conversational groupings. Then it became clear that he wanted to see individual members of the diplomatic corps in an adjoining room for a brief personal chat. Lo and behold he started his series of conversations with the Chinese. Since the Chinese Ambassador's French was about as good as Mouknass's English, that is, next door to non-existent, they quickly discovered that they couldn't communicate. I first learned of this when the Minister's staff aid dashed up to me and said, "Mr. Ambassador would you please come?" I asked, "What do you need me for?" He replied, "The Foreign Minister needs you." Another command performance. So I put down whatever I was doing and went off.

To make a long story short, I was dumped into the middle of the embarrassing and very difficult position of having to serve as the English-French interpreter for the Chinese Communist Ambassador's talk with the Mauritanian Minister of Foreign Affairs. I think I was more embarrassed by this than they were. The other two didn't seem to have any problem at all. But I must say, even as I look back on it, I am still most uncomfortable with having been put in that position. It is one more indication, however, that as a member of the Foreign Service one has to be ready for anything, and should not be too surprised when very different kinds of things happen.

Q: I found myself one time being an interpreter between an American mortician expert and a Yugoslav mortician expert sitting in a graveyard in Skopje, Yugoslav after a bad earthquake and they talked about techniques. It was just after lunch. Why don't we break now and pick it up next time when you leave Mauritania?

HANDYSIDE: Fine.

Q: Today is January 11, 1994 and this is a continuing interview with Holsey Handyside. We had just left Mauritania. I have you going from Mauritania to Policy Planning for a rather short spell in 1978. How did that come about and what were you doing?

HANDYSIDE: At this point I don't recall exactly how it came about, but what I was doing was working on a policy paper for Africa. I was tasked to do the initial analysis and draft as a temporary member of the Policy Planning staff. When I finished the draft, it was put into the regular work stream of the Policy Planning staff, and was presumably carried through to completion by one of the permanent members of the staff. (At about that stage of the game I was on my way to an assignment on a secondment to the Department of Energy.) I am not quite sure what precisely happened to this African policy paper. I learned a great deal in the process and got the chance to talk to a lot of people around Washington who had been more directly and more consistently involved for many more years than I had been in Africa. The experience also gave me an opportunity to

work with a couple of interesting people who almost immediately thereafter disappeared from the Washington scene, but only recently have come back and resurfaced in the White House: Mr. Tony Lake and Mr. Sandy Berger. But apart from a little professional development, in terms of learning a lot more about particularly the southern part of Africa than I had ever had to learn before as one who had been assigned consistently to North Africa and to the Arab parts of the African continent, that period of six months or so was an "excursion tour" away from the usual pattern of my Foreign Service assignments.

Q: Just an impression, this was mid-Carter. We have waxed and waned on our interest in Africa and Carter was the new boy on the block and one would think that a Democratic administration would be more prone to reaching out to Africa. I am talking about black Africa. What were your impressions of the situation?

HANDYSIDE: Well, I think there was something very real about that. I can recall very soon after the inauguration of President Carter there was an African chiefs of mission conference in Abidjan. One of the people who came out from Washington, partly to be involved in the chiefs of mission conference and partly to meet Houphet Boigny and other Ivory Coast leaders before continuing on to several other African nations, was Andrew Young. He had been appointed only a few months earlier been appointed Permanent Representative of the United States at the UN. Ambassador Young's participation provided the assembled African ambassadors an opportunity to hear the new administration's pitch on Africa. I was quite impressed. It was very vigorous and apparently very sincere. Moreover, Ambassador Young and the staff people he had brought with him, were operating on all twelve cylinders. It was quite clear that they had come to Africa to work. It was equally clear that they had not come to preach to a lot of people that they had access to, but to learn. During the two or three days Ambassador Young and his staffers were in the Ivory Coast, they kept on the move all over the country. Young had spent a better part of one whole day with the chief of state, Houphouet-Boigny, and had visited the President's home region up country.

One of the observations Young made to us at the chiefs of mission conference was especially significant. He noted that he had heard for years, particularly from some of the activists on his staff, that no good could ever come from having metropole nationals in a newly independent African country. But in the 12 or 14 hour day he had spent with Houphouet-Boigny, Young had come to a quite different conclusion. Having the large number of French technicians and businessmen who were living and working in the Ivory Coast was obviously very advantageous for the country was concerned. The continued French presence was particularly advantageous as far as the people of the Ivory Coast. Young completely threw out as really no longer tenable, the assertions that the most important thing African countries could do was to throw out all of the Europeans. I found Young's view particularly refreshing because it was really a conclusion reached on the basis of the evidence that he had seen. Relying on his own experience, he had rejected the conventional wisdom that most of the black scholars in the United States of African affairs at that stage of the game had adopted.

Q: When you were doing this paper was it pretty much a straight forward thing? Was there an ideological input into it?

HANDYSIDE: My recollection, and I must say Stu, that I am pretty vague on this, is that it was a straight forward analytical approach and that at least insofar as writing the first draft was concerned, it was a very respectable piece of scholarship. What happened to it in the second and third drafts I don't know.

Q: Okay, then you left there and from 1978-81 you had this sort of out of State Department assignment.

HANDYSIDE: It came about in large part because I was casting around vigorously for some sort of interesting job and in part because the newly established Energy Department at that point was just beginning to get started. Secretary Schlesinger had tapped one of our own Foreign Service types, Harry Bergold, to be Assistant Secretary of Energy for International Affairs. Schlesinger had come to know Bergold when Harry was assigned to the Pentagon. Harry in turn was interested in finding rather quickly a replacement for Nelson Sievering, who had been one of his deputy assistant secretaries in Energy. Sievering was on his way to Vienna to take a four year assignments as the chief administrative officer of the International Atomic Energy Agency. When the Deputy Assistant Secretary slot suddenly opened up, State and Energy began recruiting. The Energy staff laid on a whole series of interviews. I met a number of interesting people. I knew some of them, like Harry and some of the people on his staff. But there were many I didn't know, like John Deutch, the number three man in the Energy Department. Under Secretary Deutch was very skeptical about any Foreign Service officer, and particularly one that had been in places like Africa. But after a frosty beginning, Deutch and I hit it off. Eventually, the Energy Department decided to ask the State Department to send me to be a Deputy Assistant Secretary in the International Division to the Energy Department. After struggling through more than the usual amount of paperwork, I found myself Deputy Assistant Secretary for International Technical Programs.

It was a fascinating assignment. My portfolio consisted of three primary activities. The first, and certainly for me the largest scope and the most interesting, was the development of additional international cooperative arrangements in research and development in energy technologies. By the time we rounded the corner into the new administration in 1981, the Reagan Administration, the Energy Department, and the US government more generally, had concluded some 30 agreements with countries or groups of countries around the world covering some 55 projects ranging from energy fusion with the Japanese on the most complex side, all the way across the spectrum of energy technology, to biomass projects with Israel. These arrangements were enormously useful from our point of view. The US would invest half, or a third or a sixth of the money required and get all the technical benefits. This was because the results of the experimentation were shared completely on an equal basis. So when the US paid 50 percent of the cost, we got 100 percent of the results. From an economic point of view and from a budgetary point of view, these arrangements were enormously attractive.

That was the one major area. The second area was the cooperative development of national energy plans. The Department of Energy, with the assistance of several of the national laboratories, had been developing a series of analytical techniques to examine a nation's energy situation and develop solutions which made sense on a national or regional level for the major problems. Having developed the technology, the analytical approach, and the computer technology to do this, the US began making this capability available to countries that were interested. By the time I arrived, the US had two cooperative studies under its belt and we were beginning to expand the program fairly actively. At one stage of the game, somewhat later, I think we had six studies going on. We had one with Spain, one with Korea, one with Portugal, and two with a couple of South American countries. The energy experts from the two countries would construct a description of the production and consumption of energy in the target country. The designated group in the sponsoring government would then collect all the numerical data and together the technicians would plug them into the computer model. As they went along, the experts would tailor the general model to the specific country. Eventually, they would have an accurate computer model of country X's energy economy. The very great advantage of this technology and this approach was that it made it possible to examine a whole series of "What if?" kinds of situations. What if they doubled the tax on imported oil? What if they lowered the threshold on such and such? Or what if they increased the investment in such and such energy production and capability? By running the model it was possible to get at least an approximation of what would happen if the host government decided to change its policy in that direction.

These studies were fascinating from the point of view of both social science and economic analysis. And they were fun to do.

Q: We are looking at this from the foreign affairs point of view. Did you find much interest from the State Department in this type of activity? What was the foreign affairs establishment's reaction to this type of thing?

HANDYSIDE: Well, the answer about the State Department has to break down into at least two parts. One is whether you are talking about the sixth floor and below or whether you are talking about the seventh floor.

Q: Seventh floor being the Secretary of State and the principals of the Department.

HANDYSIDE: The principals of the Department weren't really terribly interested. I am not even sure how much they really knew about it. As far as the assistant secretaries and the office directors were concerned, this was a very important activity. Partly because it was a way for us, insofar as the energy and analytical work was concerned, to make available the results of some terribly hard work that we had done for our own benefit first, to people who were friends of ours and who were having real problems in terms of organizing their energy economies.

Q: OPEC was really...

HANDYSIDE: OPEC was a major problem at that point. So far as the research and development things were concerned, these projects were of some considerable interest to some of the Desk officers and some of the Office Directors in the State Department. They recognized that there was an immediate political impact on a very small segment, perhaps of the host government, or the energy ministry and the technical people, more broadly, who were involved and perhaps on some people in the academic area. Moreover, to the extent that the government of the host country recognized that it did indeed have energy problems, the operational people would welcome this kind of assistance.

So far as the joint research and development projects were concerned, some of the people in State were also aware of the importance of the budgetary equation; that this was a good deal for us. As time went on more and more people began to get involved in the geopolitical overtones of these kinds of projects, there were people in the United States government who became interested in what kind of funding deal we were going to work out with, for example, the Japanese. There was some very hard ball played with the government of Japan in terms of telling them point blank that they were expected to pony up X tens of millions of dollars to participate in this project. The rationale was that they owed it to us, in effect. As soon as that sort of thing started to happen in the technical community, people in the State Department began to be very interested indeed. They suddenly discovered that some of their pet oxen were being gored. Those who were terribly protective of the Japanese were very upset with some of the things that the Under Secretary of the Department of Energy was saying with the backing of his counterparts in the technical sections of the White House to his counterparts in the Japanese government.

Q: What would be the problem?

HANDYSIDE: The problem was that the Japanese looking at the project from a very gimlet eyed point of view, particularly their people in either the ministry of finance or MITI, would say, "What are we ever going to get out of this? These are long-range technological research and development efforts and like most R&D programs maybe they will pay off and maybe they won't. We really want something more certain out of our investment." The arm twisting was done at the political level of the Japanese government where our Secretary of Energy, or the Deputy Secretary or the Under Secretary, would be in direct contact with the Japanese embassy. Or they would be on a trip to Japan, and then very quietly, behind closed doors, would turn the screws. They would simply announce that as long as the Japanese weren't doing anything very effective to reduce their trade surplus with us, this was an area where they were expected to pony up. I must say, after a certain amount of squirming and being very unhappy about it, the Japanese were good soldiers and they did it. The result was that some of the agreements we had, from a technical point of view, were very productive. Whether either country ever got a real return on its investment, I don't know.

Q: In terms of energy I think particularly in terms of the French because they seem to have been working very hard on solar energy, etc. What was your impression of the French?

HANDYSIDE: The French across the board in the kinds of energy technologies that we were looking at, particularly in terms of solar, weren't terribly interesting technically at that stage of the game. They had done a lot of interesting work on solar energy, but by the late 1970s it was no longer at the cutting edge. At least that is my recollection.

On the other hand, they were doing fascinating things in the nuclear area and because of French sensitivities about wanting to do it on their own, there was very little scope for any kind of cooperative research and development either bilateral or multilateral. Nevertheless, we were in very close touch with the French atomic energy people because we found it very useful, first of all to compare notes with them and secondly to try and get an opportunity to keep up to date on some of the new things they were doing. They were working on a whole series of new concepts for the disposal of nuclear waste products. Some of them very daring. So we were very anxious indeed to see what the results of their experiments were going to be. This is the so-called glassification technology. Radioactive wastes are taken out of a nuclear power plant, for example, and run through a process that encases all the hot stuff in glass. Then the little glass beads are loaded into stainless steel containers which are then stored in an underground cavern six or eight hundred feet below the surface of the earth. The French were absolutely convinced, for both practical and technical reasons, that this is the answer to the problem. As far as they are concerned, they don't have a waste disposal problem anymore. They have solved it. There are technical people in this country who agree with them, but there are a lot of other people who say that 27 million years from now they are still going to have to be watching over this stuff, and may blow up the earth in the process, etc.

Which leads me to talk about the third leg of the three-legged stool: The development and implementation of policies that would ensure the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons. Briefly we were involved in persuading other countries to impose controls on certain kinds of equipment and in the civilian power generation process. Things such as enriched uranium for fuel rods and the dangers posed by the reprocessing of spent fuel elements. Reprocessing produces plutonium, one of the building blocks of a nuclear bomb. The British, the French, and the Soviets argued reprocessing was an economic necessity, that it was the only way to realize their investment in the nuclear area and to permit the advancement of nuclear technology. We said it was simply too dangerous.

So those were the three areas that I supervised. From time to time, when Mr. Bergold would be out of the country and the senior most deputy assistant secretary was also gone, I had the great fun of being involved in the overall workings of the Energy Department, beginning with attending the Secretary's staff meetings. I was acting sometimes for a day, sometimes for a couple of weeks at a time. Both when Jim Schlesinger was the Secretary of Energy and subsequently when his successor, Charles Duncan, was the Secretary. This was my first opportunity to see what the activities were and the various administrative

and bureaucratic processes were at the upper echelons of a cabinet department. It was a great education. But most importantly, I think, I had an opportunity to work on a set of problems that were terribly interesting and terribly important. Moreover, insofar as the impact on international relations, it was direct, immediate, and substantial.

Perhaps one of the most difficult diplomatic assignments I ever had was as the senior US government representative on the joint group that directed the cooperative solar energy project the US had with Saudi Arabia. The Saudis had been talking to us for some time about the desirability of joining forces for the development of solar technology. There were technical people in Saudi Arabia who recognized that this was one of the resources they had (second to oil, obviously) in large quantities, and who believed they really ought to start thinking seriously about doing something to exploit it. More to the point, this is one of the things that Crown Prince, later King Fahd, had a particular personal interest in. There was a Saudi state visit to Washington during President Carter's administration. Earlier there had been some preliminary discussions between the Americans and the Saudis about the desirability of some kind of a joint project, but our representatives had not been terribly enthusiastic apparently. They were thinking in terms of a few million dollars. At the state dinner, at least according to the anecdotal evidence, the King of Saudi Arabia stood up as scheduled at the appropriate point. But in a completely unplanned and unscheduled departure, he proposed that the United States and Saudi Arabia join forces in a solar energy R&D program. Moreover, he suggested to President Carter that the two of them right then and there should pledge $50 million apiece to fund this effort. Caught off guard, President Carter rose to the occasion and allowed as how this might be a very good and useful thing to do.

So there we were. Starting with a $100 million commitment, we developed a joint research and development program called SOLERAS. The result was that we spent some four or five years working on some fascinating projects in tandem with the Saudis. We did a series of technically path breaking projects in a number of solar technologies that no one had either had the courage or the finances to do before.

Q: What type of projects?

HANDYSIDE: For example, we were interested in whether it was possible to develop a workable solar driven water demineralization process and plant. Another was generation of electricity using solar energy. One of the ones that I found most fascinating was to see whether solar energy could be exploited in some fashion to produce air conditioning. The Saudis, for obvious reasons, were interested in the air conditioning project. But we were critically interested in it as well because we were discovering about that stage of the game, in the southwestern part of the United States, the burgeoning air conditioning load in places like Arizona and New Mexico was putting enormous strains on the power generation and distribution facilities. The planning groups of the various public utilities and state governments were eagerly searching around for some way to ease off the requirements for peak energy generation in the middle of the summer. Some of the planners had begun to realize that it would be a great idea to find away to use the sun,

which is the cause of these enormous peak energy requirements, to drive the air conditioners. Or to put it another way, to use the sun to defeat the sun by using solar energy to drive the air conditioning equipment. Since success here might reduce the requirement to build more power generating plants, it was part of the R&D program that lots of people were interested in.

On the electrical generating side, we jointly built a station in Saudi Arabia that fed directly into the power grid around Riyadh. I don't remember what the technical specs were of the station, but at the time it was built it was the largest photo-voltaic power plant anywhere in the world.

We were less successful in the desalinization area, although we did explore some technologies that no one had ever thought about before. When we put out requests for proposals to the technical community, we were fascinated with a proposal that came back from the Chicago Bridge & Iron Company which proposed demineralizing water by freezing it. The project was based on the two facts of physics: First it takes five times more energy to change water into steam than into ice. Since solar energy is diffuse and difficult to collect, a process requiring only 1/5 the energy obviously has enormous advantages. There is lots of sunshine in the Southwest and in Saudi Arabia, but in terms of collecting it and converting it for use in a major project, it is scarce. Second, freezing produces pure water just as boiling and evaporation produces pure water.

We took that concept as far as we could in the laboratory, but never, at least to my knowledge, made the decision to spend the amount of money required to build a pilot plant. But at least we produced the basic documentation of the concept. This by the way, was one of the cardinal propositions of the whole SOLERAS program: whatever we did we published so that the concepts, drawings, and test results immediately became available to the public.

We picked three candidate projects in the air conditioning area and built pilot models in Phoenix, Arizona. We never could get two of them to work, although they worked beautifully in the laboratories. As soon as we scaled them up a hundred times to small industrial size, they refused to work. But the third prospect turned out to be a real gem. We arranged with the owner of a building that was under construction to install a regular air conditioning system as well as making provision for us to put our equipment on the roof of the building and pipe in the cooled product. So long as the solar energy air conditioner cooled the building properly, the owner would not start up his regular system. But it would be there on standby just in case the solar system didn't work. The last time I visited Phoenix in this period, the SOLERAS equipment had been working highly satisfactorily for the better part of three months. They had not had to turn on the regular air conditioning system once during this period. SOLERAS was obviously on to something. Whether anybody in the air conditioning industry has carried the development effort forward to scale up the pilot plant to a full size industrial plant, I simply don't know.

Q: You talk about these projects, it is now 1994 and although I am not a science buff, I certainly am not aware that the promise of solar energy or other types of energy producers has really made any great impacts.

HANDYSIDE: Well, the problem with this, as a result of what was done in the Carter Administration and the whole framework of economic incentives that Congress legislated into existence, an enormous amount of work was going on. Various solar technologies were at different stages of their development. Some were farther along and were about at the stage where the next sensible thing to do was to find a specific site and design a specific project for that site and build it. It was at this point that the Department of Energy program became terribly important because only the United States government had the resources to take the technology to that next step. Most solar energy developmental work has been done on a real shoe string budget by very small outfits who simply don't have the resources, mostly financial but also technical (people) resources to take the ideas they have out of the laboratory and build a pilot model. It was at this point that the Energy Department's intervention was so terribly important. This was true not only in solar energy but also true, for example, in coal technology where we were trying all sorts of new approaches to the combustion of coal as an energy source. At the time you begin to scale up out of the laboratory into a pilot model you really start talking a major effort in dollars and people.

All of these various technologies were moving along, they were doing quite well by this time. So along came the new boys in Washington, the Reagan Administration. David Stockman was head of the Office of Management and Budget, and a couple of people that had been on his staff while he was on the Hill were brought down as his primary people in the OMB. One of them was a real gung ho arch conservative, private enterprise type. In the early days of the Administration when people were casting around for ways to cut the budget, the Stockman team happened on this Energy Research and Development program at the Energy Department and said, "Ah ha, this is how we can get rid of a great chunk of money. We will just cut it out." The philosophy was that if the technology is any good, there will be some private company some place at some point who will realize that it is valuable technology, that it can be developed, and they will invest their own money to develop it. The converse of that is if the technology isn't worth a damn, no private sector business is going to waste its corporate money or its stockholders money in this kind of technological dead end. And therefore, QED, get the government out of the technology development business. So in a matter of about three months in the first four or five months of the Reagan Administration, the Energy Department was instructed to scuttle its entire program and do it immediately, not phase it out.

The upshot of it was that on the R&D projects we had participated in through multilateral arrangements, through for example the International Energy Agency or the IAEA , we simply withdrew and our former partners went on their way. Having withdrawn from the projects, we didn't get any research results out of them either. On some of the projects, the partners we pulled out on were so annoyed that our action became a political problem. The Japanese, as far as I can recall, never came in with anything formal. But there was a

series of informal conversations, both in Washington and Tokyo, in which the Japanese government made it very, very clear that they were very unhappy. But they never committed this to any formal diplomatic activity, as far as I recall. On the other hand, both the British and the Germans did. Both of them made formal demarches to the United States government accusing us of having reneged on our international commitments.

The diplomatic note that came in from London was particularly pointed and particularly bitter. This finally prompted a response out of the political people at the State Department. I kept getting telephone calls from my Foreign Service colleagues and my State Department counterparts wringing their hands about the unfortunate unilateral cancellation of joint projects and the terrible impact it was having on our international relationships. I put my cards on the table with these people and told them there was nothing I could do about it. I said, "We fought the fight over here and we lost. One of the reasons we lost is because the new theologians tell us that we are on the wrong wicket. That the government shouldn't be in this business. And then if we counter with the fact that our cancellations are having an adverse impact on our international relationships they say, 'What the hell do you know about that? You are in the Energy Department?' So if you guys in the State Department want to do something about it you are going to have to do it yourselves. We will pitch in and follow along and give you whatever documentation you need, but we cannot be at the cutting edge because the White House has already told us to zero out these projects".

So finally the State Department pulled itself together, particularly on the British side, and moved a draft letter up to Secretary Haig's desk. He looked at it, found out what the background was and in effect said, "Strengthen it, this isn't sufficiently hard hitting." He indicated he wanted a letter to Mr. Stockman that said he fully supported the President's budget cutting efforts, but that when we start to cut the budget where it is going to have an impact on our friends and allies, then this was something else again. And rather than cutting it off cold turkey, we ought to figure out a way, at least as far as the British and Germans were concerned, where we could phase down the program and not have official communications from HMG that accuse the United States of reneging on its solemnly undertaken international agreements. When a beefed up letter went up to the Secretary, he signed it with a great flourish and sent it off to Mr. Stockman. In the fullness of time, about ten days or two weeks, he got a letter back from Stockman which was an absolute you know, the kind of thing that ought to be kept in a museum. This true believer who was the head of the Office of Management and Budget told the Secretary of State where to get off at saying, "You really don't understand what the President's budget cutting objectives are and if the British are upset, so what. If they are arguing that we have reneged on an international agreement it is up to you to disabuse them of that idea because we obviously didn't do that. We are just cutting the budget at the President's instructions." The gist of the final paragraph was: "Buster, you had better start getting religion and start supporting this Administration or.... Sincerely yours, David Stockman."

So, then school was out. There was no way to salvage this program at that stage of the game. I presided over the dismantling of nearly all of the various energy research and development programs and projects that we had spent five years building.

Q: So you then moved over to...

HANDYSIDE: No, not quite. The last thing I did of note, after that was out of the way, was...the United Nations was having a new and renewable energy conference in Nairobi in August 1981. The United States knew that this was going to be a very tough row to hoe. This was an international conference aimed at developing and popularizing new and renewable sources of energy, and we had just gone through this process of cutting the budget and scaling down the whole US program. Because there had been a fair amount of unhappiness, both in the United States Congress, but more particularly in the great assembly of non-government organizations, NGOs, that were interested in solar energy...the environmentalists, the energy conservationists, the "appropriate technology" people, etc. This was the kind of international conference where NGOs had the right to participate and voice their views. Having been the manager most directly responsible for the international phase of this program, it was decided that I should be a member of the US delegation.

The head of the delegation was a young fellow by the name of Stanley Anderson. Stan Anderson had been a deputy assistant secretary in the Congressional Relations Bureau of the State Department perhaps six or seven years earlier. I had known him vaguely from that point. He had gone back into the private practice of law, but during the 1980 presidential campaign he had been the chief counsel of the Reagan/Bush campaign. Giving him the opportunity to be the head of the delegation to the Nairobi energy conference was apparently part of the largesse that traditionally comes along in American politics.

We had a very interesting group of people. I was the most senior Energy Department person there, but there were a couple of technical Energy types. There was a good group from the State Department. The executive secretary of the delegation was a State Department guy who had been working this particular international conference problem since the time the UN had decided they were going to hold this conference. So he had been the real organizer of this thing for some 24 months prior to the time of the conference itself.

When we all arrived in Nairobi and the spokespeople for the delegation began presenting the very much reduced American renewable energy program, we were severely beaten around the ears, by both the other countries' representatives, and even more importantly, by the Americans who also had a special interest in this sort of energy. The result was that we had a very bad press in Nairobi. Lots of very critical articles about the Americans not doing their share, etc. At one stage of the game it was decided, and I don't know how or by whom, that the delegation was going to have a press conference to put its own point of view out to the public.

There were a couple of anti-Reagan Congress people who were accredited members of the delegation. This was the result of the fact that the Republicans on the Hill had dropped the ball. Letters had gone from the White House requesting both the Senate and the House of Representatives to nominate Members of Congress to be part of the delegation. Whether there was no follow up from the White House or no follow up from the State Department, I don't know what happened. But the Senate didn't appoint anybody, neither Democrat or Republican, and the Republicans in the House of Representatives completely dropped the ball. They didn't nominate anybody so there wasn't a Republican spokesman from the House of Representatives to defend the Administration's point of view. To the contrary there were two Democratic Members of Congress, one of whom was extremely outspoken in his criticism of the Reagan Administration's approach toward energy generally, and renewable energies specifically. The other Congressman was considerably more balanced in this area, although his particular personal preferences and predilections were pretty obvious. He thought the US government ought to be doing a lot more.

With the entire US delegation in place, the Delegation Chairman opened the press conference. Almost immediately the United States government was under attack. The representatives of other countries...the senior people obviously didn't come, but they sent their faceless subordinates… were diplomatically critical. But the main thrust of the attack came from Americans who were part of various interest and pressure groups. The NGO attack was strong and sustained. The delegation response was desultory and unconvincing. It finally got to the point where nobody was responding. I finally leaned over to Stan Anderson and said, "Look, I really don't think we can let this stand. The criticism is not well founded at all." He said, "Okay, if you want to say something do so." So I stood up and made a little speech in which I said that I thought it was necessary to recognize that even after the cuts, the R&D program being operated by the Energy Department was larger by several hundred million dollars than the next largest program anywhere in the world. I thought it was essential that everyone understood that. That the US was still very much in the renewable energy research and development area even though we had substantially reduced the size of the program. We had cut the program about in half. But there still was a very significant amount of work going on as measured in budget dollars. That sort of quieted down some of the non-governmental organization people.

But the attack continued. Gradually the press conference evolved into a dialogue with the audience. At this point, the more outspoken of the two Congressmen stood up in response to some prodding from one of the NGO representatives, and took it upon himself to deliver a diatribe against the Administration, specifically against the Energy Department. I was really very unhappy about this; I looked at the chief of the delegation to see what he was going to do. He wasn't going to do anything.

Q: Why was he so passive?

HANDYSIDE: I don't know. There was also a guy from the White House staff whose name I don't remember any more. Neither of these two Republican political persons was about to respond to this Democratic Congressman. So I stood up again and said, "I really think it is necessary to lay out explicitly some of the facts of the current political and social environment in the United States, because otherwise this discussion is so removed from reality that it makes no sense at all. One of the first things that we ought to recognize is that we had an election last November and that President Reagan was elected in a landslide on a platform of budget cutting. We must recognize that this is not just the Reagan Administration, this is not just the Energy Department, this is quite clearly the articulated will of the American people. Now you all may not agree with it, and that is your privilege. But you have to recognize that there has been a fundamental change in the political equation in the United States. The second point is that it is apparently necessary to recall explicitly that the cuts that have been made in the Energy Department budget were proposed by the Administration, but they were enacted into law by the Congress. Therefore I think it is necessary that we recognize that the majority of Mr. Bedell's colleagues in the House of Representatives shared the view point of the Administration and not the view point that he has expressed to you earlier this afternoon." And there was more of the same.

The reason that I had riposted this way was because in response to my earlier involvement in the presentation this particular Congressman from Kansas, had stood up in front of the audience and in a very polite and partially indirect way had called me a ruddy liar. He asserted that the points that I had made in terms of the continuing size of the renewable energy program in the Reagan Administration were wrong, that I had been lying to the public. So I was anxious to ensure that the significance of the election of Ronald Reagan and its impact on the size and scope of the US government was explicitly spelled out. I don't think I changed any minds insofar as the representatives of the American NGOs were concerned. But I think we did change some minds insofar as some of the international members of the audience were concerned, perhaps even some of the members of the press corps.

I found the task of defending the Reagan Administration’s policy decisions in the renewable energy area a particularly difficult one because I think you could tell from my earlier conversation I was fundamentally opposed to the dictates of the Stockman Office of Management and Budget. I thought both in terms of procedure but more importantly in terms of substance, it was absolutely the wrong thing to do and constituted a terribly foolish ideological demonstration of political clout. But I thought somebody had to stand up and defend the President of the United States and his Administration, particularly after it had been attacked by a Democratic Congressman who was a member of the delegation.

After the press conference was over, I was besieged by a bunch of people. I can remember among them a very large woman, very vociferously pounding on me because I didn't understand the problem. I finally said, "I don't think you understand the fact that there has been a change in the United States. I don't know whether you have been overseas too long or what, but we have a very different country now than the one we had eight months ago.

The United States government, and I as a representative of the United States government, have got to reflect that, whatever my personal views may be." Well, she muttered in her beard and disappeared.

Then I turned to another person who obviously was a foreign type with a little grey beard. As soon as he opened his mouth I recognized that he was British. He said, "Mr. Handyside, I want to offer my congratulations. You gave us a demonstration this afternoon of something that we British take for granted, but which is really, as I understand it, in terms of American governmental practice quite rare. And that is the sight of a senior civil servant stepping forward to defend the policies and decisions of the government in office. I am convinced by listening between the lines that you were fundamentally opposed to the decisions that were taken by your new administration, but you stepped forward, unlike the other people in your delegation, and manfully attempted to support the decision of the Reagan Administration in a very public and effective way. I think you did a damn good job."

The curious thing was I never did find out why the two politicos on the delegation chose not to defend their administration.

Q: Do you think they were just along for the ride?

HANDYSIDE: I don't know. The guy from the White House was a real gung ho, partisan Reaganite who obviously had been very much involved in the campaign and had gotten his White House job as a result of his political involvement. As far as Stan Anderson was concerned, I don't know whether he was just uncomfortable in the rough and tumble of this kind of public political meeting or whether as a very good lawyer, he was more comfortable in the privacy of a law library and a legal office. But people that I would have expected to stand up and at a minimum take issue with the criticisms did not. The politically based assertions highly critical of the Reagan Administration should have been answered by the chief of the delegation, but they were not.

Q: Handy, after this you moved to the State Department.

HANDYSIDE: Yes, I moved back to the State Department because it was quite clear that there was no program left in the Energy Department and because not only were they cutting budgets but they were cutting personnel rosters, and so on. Furthermore I had decided that I didn't really want to continue working in the kind of atmosphere where every day we went into the office we discovered that something that we had been doing that was useful the day before had been on the chopping block and discontinued.

So after I got back from Nairobi, I wandered over to the State Department and talked to a number of people saying, I think the time has come that you ought to bring me back. First of all you will have to do something formal in the next two or three months. I don't really remember what the anniversary date was, but I had been there for three years and there was going to have to be another exchange of letters saying that they wanted Mr.

Handyside's services again. I said that I don't think anybody in the Energy Department is going to ask the State Department for me because I am looked upon as an unreconstructed Carterite. You may recall Stu from your own experience at that stage of the game, there was an absolute conviction on the part of most of the newcomers that the idea of a career service was an oxymoron. There was no way that anybody could possibly have served the previous administration and then turn around and serve the new administration. We were being confronted by these attitudes at every turn. From Penn Warren, who was the chief of personnel for the Reagan White House or from various Reagan ideologically oriented appointees in the Energy Department, or from various new Schedule C appointees in the foreign affairs agencies.

I can remember, for example, attending an Open Forum session in the State Department at about this time, a discussion of some foreign policy problem. Part way through the question period at the end of this session, a man stood up (I later found out that he was the equivalent of a deputy assistant secretary in Arms Control and Disarmament) and made the clearest and most definitive statement of this position that I had ever heard. He was just categorical; as far as he was concerned and his friends in ACDA were concerned, anybody who had ever worked for the Carter Administration was not to be trusted. There was absolutely no way that they could turn around and logically and willingly begin to implement the policies of the new administration. Therefore, the only thing that was being done with these people was to throw them out.

I had earlier been through several changes of administration almost as an outside observer from the Foreign Service looking at what was going on. The Carter-Reagan shift was a new experience. I had never seen anything like this. It was the kind of ideological transfer that one expected and saw as a matter of course in various elections in foreign countries where the Tories threw out the Labor Party or vice versa. But I had never seen anything quite like this not only with the ideology as a kind of item of conviction, but with the vigor, with the vehemence that it was expressed and implemented.

So it was quite clear that no one in the new Reaganite Energy Department was going to ask for my services, because while I had been appointed by President Jerry Ford as Ambassador to Mauritania, I was looked upon as being a Carter appointee. So I figured my days were probably numbered at the Energy Department. And, besides, I didn't want to stay.

So I did some rummaging around. I finally discovered by happenstance that the minute Dick Kennedy, who was then the Under Secretary for Management, found out that I was shopping around for a job, he immediately gave instructions that I was to be corralled for his office. So my landing point when I got back to the State Department after three years in the Energy Department was as a special assistant to the Under Secretary for Management. I was to be his troubleshooter.

The primary problem that Kennedy had at that point was the Security Enhancement Program. By this time, State had finally begun to realize that there were a whole lot of

either crazies or people who wished us ill wandering around unmonitored and unscathed in various foreign countries who were launching attacks against American embassies in various ways. Either taking hostages or tossing bombs over garden walls or whatever. There had been a enormous effort on the part of a lot of people to say, "Look, we really have to do something about all the vulnerable people and buildings we have abroad. A common sense approach tells us that there are a whole lot of things that can be done but we have to get on with it." The Congress understood this. The Members appropriated a very substantial amount of money, and the program started.

What Kennedy couldn't understand was why it was taking so damn long to accomplish anything. This program had been going for a couple of years under Cyrus Vance and already by this time it was nine months into the new administration with a new Secretary of State and still nothing seemed to happen. So my first task was to immerse myself in the Security Enhancement Program, find out what was wrong and figure out how we were going to fix it and then come back to Kennedy and tell him. Since I had never done anything like this before at all it took me a fair amount of time to get my bearings and find out what the facts were, etc.

One of the things that I discovered in this process was that it wasn't just the State Department that was the cause of the delay. The slow start could also be traced to all the people in this country who were at the same level of ignorance about how one went about making posts abroad more secure. For example, one of the things that had taken an enormous amount of time was the need to define precisely the characteristics of various building materials so that we could reasonably expect that if we went through a lot of time and effort to install bullet resistant glass in various embassies abroad, the material would indeed resist the bullets. This had meant, and obviously nobody understood this, that the physical security people in the State Department had literally been required to start from square one. It was necessary to do all the terribly complex analytical work, beginning with the physics of the firepower of various handguns and other kinds of assault weapons, what their technical characteristics were, how much damage they could do in areas of a certain size, etc. Then the follow on question had to be addressed: what kind of defense characteristic had to be built into a piece of bullet resistant glass or other armored material that would successfully stop, not just the first, but the second and third bullet that was fired at it from the sort of weapons that were readily available to terrorist attackers. This had taken an enormous amount of time because it was a highly complex thing, and involved the National Bureau of Standards, all of the manufacturers of this kind of material, and so on.

Finally, our physical security people had arrived at the point where they had defined the specs. They knew what it was that they wanted and how they were going to use this stuff. Then they had to go out and get it manufactured because there were no companies in the United States that were manufacturing any of this material up to this level of protection. They had been manufacturing a lot of stuff that resisted a crowbar or a hammer that had been installed in banks, but it wasn't the kind of material that would successfully resist a determined assault by people with fairly sophisticated weapons.

Once they discovered there were no manufacturers, then there had to be some way of adjudicating the proposals that were going to come in from various manufacturers in response to a request for proposals by the State Department. So one of the other things the physical security techs had to do was to devise a complete testing procedure for the desired material. They worked it out in such a way that the testing procedures were so specific as to exactly what had to be done, and exactly how it had to be done, that the resulting protocol could be taken to any materials testing laboratory anywhere in the country and the lab could follow the procedure. The tests didn't have to be conducted at the Aberdeen Proving Ground or wherever. They could be done any place in the country. All of this basic foundation work had to be done before State could start rebuilding buildings.

I found another problem. The people who were involved in this program, I think almost without exception, had never in their State Department or Foreign Service careers had to deal with anybody that was even at the assistant secretary level in the State Department. They certainly had not dealt with the ambassadorial level at an embassy abroad, to say nothing of an Under Secretary for Management. Especially one who had to be briefed on program and progress not in a 45 minute rambling discussion, but in a five or six minute presentation. Nor had the staffers devised an electronic management information system that would make it possible for the Under Secretary to pull up automatically and quickly, a series of crucial benchmarks. Kennedy would ask for a progress report on the program, and these guys would send him literally reams of computer printout, as if he were supposed to figure out how to read through these bean counting reports.

I found that the Department had a very real story to tell that nobody had ever told Kennedy. And consequently nobody had ever told the Secretary. And therefore neither of them had ever told the Congress. I thought we had a very good record and indeed, more than that, that we had some feathers in our cap that we could brag about a little bit, given the fact that we had started out really not even at square one.

After I had been digging into the Security Enhancement Program for about six weeks, I finally thought I knew what I was doing and thought I knew how we could fix the program. So I asked for an appointment to see Mr. Kennedy. Both his regular executive assistant and his secretary asked me if I didn't want to have other people in the room with me to make this presentation. I said, "No, no. I want this one-on-one. I don't want anyone else in that room." So the time came and I walked into the office and Mr. Kennedy said to me, "I understand you want to do this all by yourself?" And I said, "Yes, sir, I do." He said, "Okay, shut the door."

So I spent an hour, an hour and fifteen minutes, with him telling him things that the people who were managing this program should have been telling him for the past seven, eight or nine months, but didn't have the bureaucratic experience to realize it. Or perhaps they had been scared off because Kennedy had a terrible reputation of being an irascible and temper-prone guy, and they didn't have the courage to stand up to him. I figured at

this stage of the game it didn't make any difference, as far as I was concerned. It was pretty clear that it would have taken some kind of bureaucratic miracle to get me another embassy at that point, so I had better do what really needed to be done.

So I sat down with Dick Kennedy and said half a dozen times during the course of the conversation, "But Sir, you don't understand." or "But Sir, you cannot do it that way." The upshot of it was that by the end of an hour, I think I had been able to give Dick Kennedy his first real understanding of this complicated program. I had given him a number of vignettes of bureaucratic success that he could pass along the next time some Congressman climbed all over him saying, "Why haven't you got this done, it should have been done last week" kind of thing. In addition, I pointed out the critical need for the creation of a management information system that would give him and anybody else at this level some real understanding of what progress is being made. More importantly that is, an MIS that will identify the crunch points for the senior executive. They are going to manage by exception. They don't care about the actions that are going well, they want to find out where are the ones that are going to fall apart on you if they don't do something about it. The staffers involved don't understand this. And it is going to take some real doing before they understand what it is that a senior officer in the Department needs in order to supervise the execution of this program. “They obviously don't understand it now. I don't know how you want to solve that problem, but that is one of the things that has to be done." And then right on down the list, a whole series of things like this.

The upshot of it was that it took an enormous amount of hard work. It took a couple of trips to the field by me and sitting down and talking turkey with chiefs of mission and deputy chiefs of mission to get their attention focused on this program. Because like most senior Foreign Service officers they didn't want to be bothered with “administration” and they had foisted the program off onto their underlings. As a result, things weren't getting done.

I found two particular examples. There was one in Latin America where the ambassador was not present; he was off some place the four or five days that I was visiting his post to explore the shortfalls in the program. I dealt with the deputy chief of mission. He and the political chief kept saying, "But it can't happen here. Things like that aren't going to happen here because these are nice people. And even if they weren't nice people, we would know because we know enough about what is going on in this place and enough about the mentality of the people who run this government that nothing like this would happen. There would be no attacks against the United States government. So this is a huge waste of money, effort, etc." Well, I also discovered that in this particular place there was a very large AID mission and that the then mission director and his several predecessors had either inadvertently or consciously chosen to ignore the records, retirement provisions of AID procedures, and regulations. So there was an enormous amount of classified material in the offices of AID that should not have been there.

Before I left I had a one-on-one very candid discussion with the DCM, and said, "You know you guys had better get this fixed because the last thing the State Department needs

at this stage of the game, is to have another embassy attacked and wiped out, people hurt and more importantly classified material lost. You have stuff coming out of your ears here that has no business being here. It should have been retired not just last year but fifteen years ago. If anything happens in your mission and there is an enormous compromise of classified material, the Congress is going to go through the overhead. As a result the State Department is going to have to take drastic action. And what that means is that it is going to be the end of your career and the end of the ambassador's career. Therefore, my advice to you, as a fellow Foreign Service officer, is to get the lead out and get this fixed."

The Ambassador and/or the DCM followed up on the suggestion I made. The mission had a really big ship it out, burn it up party. There was a major effort to enhance the security not only of the embassy building proper, but also of the AID building. In this wonderful Latin country, where neither the host government nor the people would ever do anything like this, I was fascinated about three years later to read in the newspapers that the AID building had been trashed and burned and was completely unusable by the time these wonderful people had gotten finished with it.

Another example was a post in the Middle East. As soon as I entered the Embassy I went to the front office to inform the ambassador's secretary that I had arrived. Nothing would do but that I had to go to the ambassador's staff meeting which was to start in about fifteen minutes. At the meeting the ambassador, who obviously was unhappy about the fact that the Department had sent another senior officer out to look over his shoulder on this program, put me on the spot by saying, "Tell my staff what the hell you came here for." Trying to be as diplomatic as I could, I said that I had been tasked to look into the SEP and find out where the problems were. I had come up with a list of some twelve problem cases, and this embassy was one of them. It was clear that I had to visit each of the twelve to see where the problems were and what needed to be done to get the SEP back on track. At which point the ambassador said, "There is no problem out here. All we have to do is to get the State Department fixed up so that you start answering our mail and doing the things that we want you to do." I responded, "That may very well be, and that is one of the things that I have come to learn."

After the staff meeting, the security officer, who was a nice young fellow, and I started to make the rounds. It was quite clear that this guy was very competent; I don't know where Security found him but he was bright and knowledgeable. He wasn't the most polished or the most elegant diplomat, but he was obviously a very accomplished guy. It was equally obvious that nobody paid any attention to him. To start our physical inspection of the place, we went over to the consular building and went into the outer office reception area. The so-called hard line, the wall that separated the public areas from the protected private areas, was pierced in two places. There was a receptionist behind a protected window and there was a door. The security officer went up and to the receptionist, told her who we were, and that we would like to talk with the consul. She got on the phone to alert the section chief.

In the meantime, standing off in one corner, I was carefully observing the activity in the public waiting room. I was a little taken back to see one of the senior local consular employees come out the door in the hard line, into the reception area, a room filled with Middle Eastern visa applicants, and intentionally disable the locking mechanism as he came out the door. Instead of letting the door slam and lock, he put a yellow pad between the door and the jamb. I watched the FSL for four or five minutes carry on a conversation with one of the visa applicants in the waiting room. The entire time the door that penetrated the hard line into the internal area of the consulate was open. It was shut, but it wasn't latched. Several more minutes went by. Finally this senior local employee reentered the protected area. The door closed properly behind him and latched.

At this point, the security officer and I were informed the senior consular officer would see us. As we went in I nudged the security officer in the ribs and said, "Did you see what I just saw?" He said, "What?" "The consular staffer intentionally disable the locking mechanism on the hard line door so that he wouldn't be bothered with having to ring the bell and have somebody open the door for him. As a result, the entire time he was talking to the applicant in the waiting room, there was no protection for all those people behind the hard line." He replied, "No, I didn't happen to see that this time, Mr. Ambassador, but they do it all the time."

Once in the consul's office and the opening chit chat over, I set out the reason for my visit. The consul expressed a certain amount of apprehension about the local situation, but added that he had a good staff and everything was going very well. I said, "Your judgement doesn't jibe with my observation of your operation. As a matter of fact, I think you have some very, very serious problems here. It is quite clear that even the senior members of your staff do not share your appreciation of the problem or of the dangers involved. I think you ought to start doing something to correct the situation. The episode I have just witnessed means that neither your nor anyone else in these offices here has any protection at all." "What do you mean?" I told him the story, and added, "What you are doing first of all by not being aware of what is going on and secondly by not fixing it and thirdly by not making sure that you establish a management environment in which your people will not even be tempted to do this sort of thing, is that all the time and effort and expense the State Department has gone to to protect you and your staff has been vitiated by an unsatisfactory management approach to the problem. And I think you ought to do something about it."

Prior to my departure from Washington I had been tipped off by the staffer who was the action officer for this particular embassy that he had been having a terrible time trying to get the embassy to negotiate the necessary lease changes with the several landlords who owned the buildings the mission was housed in. These changes were required before the State Department could invest a fairly substantial amount of money in “hardening” these buildings. We had to have a lease clause that in effect was a hold harmless agreement. If each landlord was not prepared to let us make the desired changes and then accept them as additions to the physical configuration of his building, then we had to have some very specific written understandings as to what our responsibilities were to return the property

to its previous state or to pay the owner. Unless and until we had this series of agreements in hand, we could do nothing to harden these leased properties. Once on site, I discovered that the Washington staffer was correct; the agreements had not been negotiated. Worse, the general services officer wasn't even working on them. The counselor for administration had told him not to worry about them, that there were too many other things that needed to be done first.

After two more days of observation and interviewing, I collected my thoughts and prepared for my exit report. Since the Ambassador had left the capitol for the day, I met with the DCM. He was an old Middle East colleague, and a very good troop. I had a long, one-on-one session with him. I reported what I had discovered. I told the DCM the story about the consulate; I described the problem with the hold harmless agreements, and so on. I concluded, "As an outsider looking at this, I think it is quite clear that the reason this program is not moving is because neither you nor the ambassador has made it a priority item on your agenda. Moreover, the fact that you have not done so has seeped down to everybody in this mission. They all have either decided that the SEP is foolish or that it is unimportant. Clearly, they have come to the conclusion that you fellows don't consider it important and they are not going to break their backs because (a) you are not beating on them, or (b) even if they did break their backs, you wouldn't give them any kudos for having done so. If you really want to turn this program around, you and the ambassador are going to have change your attitude toward it".

One of the things the ambassador implied in his staff meeting three days ago, was that if things didn't get better very soon, he was going to send a rocket into the Under Secretary for Management complaining about the nonfeasance of the State Department. I think you would do the ambassador a real service if you would tell him that that is not an advisable thing to do. I can guarantee that he will get a rocket in reply. One of the reasons he will get a rocket in response is because I will write it and I will get the Under Secretary for Management to sign it. There is enough fault to go all around, but the real fault is here. It is not in the security apparatus of the State Department back in Washington. The hold harmless agreements are the basic case in point. Until you can change your administrative counselor's attitude towards this problem and the administrative counselor instructs the general services officer to start negotiating these hold harmless agreements as a matter of top priority, there is nothing that the State Department can do. The Department is not going to spend substantial sums on hardening these buildings until such time as that necessary, preliminary requirement has been met. And Washington can't do that for you; you have to do that here. In the meantime, please convey my most personal and candid advice to the ambassador that he better put his own house in order before he starts throwing rocks at the State Department."

I went back to the hotel and began to get myself ready to go to the airport at 6:00 the next morning. At about a quarter to six, the phone rang. It was the ambassador. He reported he had been briefed on my discussion with the DCM. He then commented, "I take your point about postponing any zingers to the Department. We are going to get this problem fixed, it may take a little while." I replied, "Mr. Ambassador, those are the most welcome words

I have heard since the time I first set foot in this place three days ago. I think I can guarantee you that when you all start to move this program forward, Washington will do all it can to help because we want to protect your people and your facilities. And as soon as we see this effort marching along, you can be certain that there are not going to be any long turn around times in the United States. We will get it going." The upshot was that in a year or so, that mission was buttoned up.

More broadly, so far as the other ten problem posts were concerned and the Security Enhancement Program more generally, I was able as the Under Secretary's troubleshooter to fix some things and to secure some forward motion. With Kennedy's clout and my experience of running an embassy, and my readiness to be quietly, but brutally frank with my senior officer peers, I managed to move the bureaucracy a part of the required distance. But it took a couple more serious attacks on embassies and the involvement of Admiral Bobby Inman before the business-almost-as-usual attitude of SY and FBO and of administrative sections abroad was replaced by a "do it now and do it right" mind set, and the hardening of our facilities really began in earnest.

Q: Okay we are going to cut off now. Handy was saying that there are some things that he would like to revisit, e.g. the US- the Saudi R&D program, before we finish up with the Management side.

HANDYSIDE: Looking back over our last session where I was describing the various cooperative research and development programs in energy technology, I thought that there were some particularly interesting observations that ought to be made about the SOLERAS program: the joint Saudi Arabia-United States program in research and development of solar energy technology.

SOLERAS was an effort that was undertaken primarily at the instigation of the Saudis who recognized that one of their primary resources other than oil, was sunshine, and that they ought to address in some systematic way the exploitation of this enormous natural resource. It just so happened that at about the same time a number of things had been going on in the United States in terms of environmental concern and environmental law and regulation that prompted a number of people in the United States to say, "There are some things in the solar area that we ought to know more about. If we can use the Saudi proposal as a vehicle to begin to look at some of the research areas that would be particularly beneficial for us, we could really make a joint program payoff in a technical as well as a diplomatic way."

So the US started down the track of planning a detailed approach to a cooperative R&D program with the Saudis, and to identify, at least in a preliminary way, the kinds of solar technology that might be of particular interest simultaneously to Saudi Arabia and to the United States. One of the areas we quickly spotted was desalinization, the demineralization of water. This was important to the Saudis for obvious reasons; they have very little water other than fossil water deep underneath the Arabian peninsula, and lots of sea water on two coasts. If there were some way to convert sea water or brackish

water inland to drinkable water using the sun's energy, the technology would be an enormous benefit to the people of Saudi Arabia. At the same time, the possible application of solar technology to the desalting of water was of special interest to the United States as well at that particular juncture, the late 70s and early 80s, because the Congress had recently enacted legislation requiring all those who withdrew water from a water course in the western part of the United States to ensure that the water was at least of equal quality when it was restored to the water course. This meant that people in the southwest were faced with the prospect of having to establish water clean up facilities and process their discharge water throughout the entire region. Quite clearly, if some way could be found to harness the sun to provide the energy to activate a large scale desalting project, it would be to the advantage of a great many people in the southwest.

There were other similar areas. For example, there was growing recognition in the southwest at that time that the burgeoning air conditioning load throughout the area was putting an enormous demand on the power generation and distribution facilities for peak period power. Clearly if some way could be found to harness the sun's energy to drive air conditioning equipment, this would very neatly balance off the source of this additional air conditioning requirement; the terrific heat of the sun during the middle of the day.

Q: You mentioned that there was some promising experimentation in buildings, and all that.

HANDYSIDE: Right. After we had identified several of these promising areas of technology which were of interest to both the Saudis and to us, we began to develop a detailed program by recruiting people who were interested in such an effort and had some expertise and knowledge to contribute. As the deputy assistant secretary for international programs in the Energy Department, I was very quickly tagged as the man who would be the senior US representative on the governing board of the SOLERAS organization. The SOLERAS governing board was to be made up of an equal number of Saudis and Americans. As members of the board were designated, we began to evolve a specific research and development program: general goals, specific technology targets, technical approaches, organization, and people.

It quickly became obvious that all the Americans involved were going to have to square a very difficult circle. While the Saudis were clearly less experienced technically and in designing and managing a research and development effort because of their absence of highly trained solar experts, research technicians, engineers and project managers, they quite clearly were going to demand that they be treated as an equal partner. So from the very beginning we had a situation where we had to treat as an equal a government and a group of technical people who were clearly not either as knowledgeable or as experienced. Some of the senior Saudis explicitly recognized this dichotomy, but only in informal, closed door discussions. This reality conflict created what turned out to be over the next two and half to three years, undoubtedly the most difficult diplomatic assignment I ever had.

Q: I can well imagine.

HANDYSIDE: One of the ways my Saudi counterpart, who was head of the Saudi Arabian Science and Technology Agency, and I decided to address this problem was to broaden informally the objectives of the R&D program to include a goal of providing education and training in both technical and management areas.

Q: Were you able to sit down with your counterpart and say, "Look, we have a problem" and talk about this in realistic terms rather than diplomatically pussyfoot around what was a very obvious problem?

HANDYSIDE: Yes, this gentleman who was the first Saudi Arabian to earn a Ph.D. in a foreign university, was a very capable and perceptive individual who had a very realistic appreciation of the education and management gap confronting us. In addition to these educational and bureaucratic attributes, my counterpart also had the very distinct advantage of having been one of the protégés of Crown Prince Fahd. Since, the relationship had continued quietly after Fahd became king, it gave my counterpart the clout he needed from time to time to ensure that some of the more nationalistic younger Saudis didn't stray off the reservation.

My counterpart and I decided we would have to insure that the objective of training Saudis up to the point where they would be our technical and managerial equals was widely understood, accepted, and implemented. This proved to be easy so far as the diplomats and senior managers on both sides were concerned. As far as the technical side of the house was concerned however, this proved to be a bit more difficult because inherently it was a longer run objective, and fell outside technical objectives and competence as narrowly defined. The Saudis did their part by scouring around and turning up a dozen or more young men who had graduated from American engineering schools, and persuaded them to participate in the SOLERAS project. So we were dealing with young men who already had a fairly systematic and substantial technical and engineering foundation. But on the management side, there were really very few Saudis who had ever been involved either at the project direction level or at the program management level in any kind of research and development program, whether in solar energy or anything else. So this was clearly a missing element. But at the same time it was an area where the gap could be filled much more readily and perhaps more quickly, by recognizing the problem and then by devising either educational programs or on the job training programs or mentor type arrangements with American project managers and program directors. As a result, my counterpart and I were able, at least in theoretical terms, to square the circle of a program based on equality between unequal partners.

So we started down this track. We began to get the Saudis involved in the process of defining the technical areas we wanted to focus on and, in doing the initial drafts of requests for proposals and describing the kinds of things that we were looking for. Obviously the young Saudis at the outset had relatively little to contribute to this process, but one of the fascinating and gratifying things was how quickly some of them developed

a sense of how to handle these sorts of things. They became real stalwarts in this process. Then as we began to define candidate projects in detail, we began to draft requests for proposals to put out to the solar energy community to enlist their active participation in the SOLERAS R&D effort. At no time was it intended that the United States government would undertake all the R&D tasks by itself.

The chairmanship of the SOLERAS board was to alternate between the senior American and the senior Saudi. At the insistence of my Saudi counterpart, I became the chairman for the first year. This worked out quite well. We met at least twice a year. At the outset the meetings were in either in Saudi Arabia or in the United States. Subsequently, we found that it was convenient to meet half way, so we had one SOLERAS board meeting in Madrid and another in Rome. It was easier for each of us to go half the distance than for one side to spend 12 hours in a nonstop airliner. At the end of that first year, as the next SOLERAS board meeting was looming on the horizon, I began to think about turning the chairmanship of the board of directors over to my Saudi counterpart. After thinking about it for a while, I jotted my thoughts down in a letter, and sent it off to him. I was a little surprised that I got no response. When I arrived in Riyadh for the board meeting, I went directly to see him. Almost immediately the topic came up. He proposed that we should drop the alternating mechanism and that I should simply continue as the chairman. I responded that I was prepared to do this, but was very concerned about our basic problem of equal partnership among unequal partners. I had already had separate conversations with a couple of the very bright eyed youngsters on his staff who were much more concerned about the reality as well as the appearance of equality. More importantly, they were openly looking forward to the time when the Saudis were going to chair the board. I told my counterpart that I didn't really want to raise the series of situations and problems we would face if we made this decision.

We talked about the possibility of opposition quite candidly, quite openly for some time. He finally said, "I really don't think that is a problem. In the case of a couple of my young staff members, I can explain to them why I think it is important to do this; I think I can persuade them. They are very sensible, rational people. Once they get some sense of what the problems are and what you and I have been facing together over the last twelve months, I think I can bring them along. As far as the others are concerned, if I can't persuade them intellectually, I think I can ultimately persuade them in terms of the underlying dynamics of Saudi Arabia." I finally agreed, but said, "I obviously cannot propose this myself. There has to be some bow to appearances as far as the American side is concerned. So if you really want to do this, I think you are the fellow who has to speak up publicly and propose it." He replied, "Okay." He put the proposal before the board; the board agreed. The result was that I remained the chairman of the SOLERAS board for all the rest of the time that I was associated with the program, that is another two and a half years or so.

But the problem of squaring the circle was never totally resolved. Each time we would bring a group of young Saudi academics and technicians along to the point where they had acquired the technical or the managerial skills needed, we would have to start getting

them ready to take the next step up the ladder. So we never really got away from the quiet, behind the counter objective of the educating and training element of the SOLERAS program. For as long as I was involved in the program, the US was doing the job of educating the professional elite of Saudi Arabia in project management and program direction as well as in solar technology.

A word, I think, might be in order at this point about some of the results of the SOLERAS program. SOLERAS built the largest photo-voltaic electrical generating station anywhere in the world outside Riyadh. Subsequently, using the lessons learned from that project, a number of airport authorities in the United States built equivalent solar energy facilities to power the electrical lighting systems of their airports, particularly in places west of Mississippi River.

One of the air conditioning project concepts which was field tested in Phoenix, was successful. Whether the company involved decided there was a market for a solar air conditioner and built an industrial size plant, I don't know. One of the major objectives of the SOLERAS program was the achievement and spread of solar technology. The primary means of achieving the second half of this goal was the publication of all the documentation on every R&D project undertaken in the program. The initial analytical studies of need, technical approach, technical and economic feasibility, etc., progress reports, and final evaluation reports, were all to be published to permit the international solar energy community to learn what we and the Saudis had done, what worked and what had failed, and exactly how they could pick up the R&D where we left off and carry it forward. All this documentation was published by the Solar Energy Research Institute, which was located on the outskirts of Denver, Colorado.

But what is important about the SOLERAS program as far as the Foreign Service and the State Department are concerned, indeed as far as American foreign policy is concerned, is not the technical aspects of the R&D program. It is rather the diplomatic challenge that was involved in making a highly complex, highly technical program a success, despite the fact that at the outset, the theoretically equal partners were almost the farthest thing imaginable from being equal. Recognizing that if you scratch your head long enough, you can figure out ways to get around even fundamental conflicts, and devise methods to address both the primary objective of a particular technological program and the diplomatic or political realities and requirements, including the inequalities of technical preparation or managerial background.

I believe the SOLERAS program is an important example of an area of success in American diplomacy that has never been recorded or published. All the technical studies published by the SERI focused on technical problems; they did not even mention the diplomacy of the management of the program. Moreover so, as far as I know nothing has ever been written about this aspect of SOLERAS, nor has it ever been the subject of an oral presentation.

Q: This leads into something that you said you wanted to make a comment on. Your bridging between the science side and the Foreign Service side.

HANDYSIDE: Yes. As I look back on the 30 years that I spent in the Foreign Service, it is now clear with the advantage of 20/20 hindsight, that for 25 years my career path went almost directly from one assignment to another at the intersection between foreign policy and diplomacy on one side and science and technology on the other. From very early in my career I discovered that I found myself in places where I had to spend a fair amount of time and energy mastering technical subjects in order to have the knowledge, expertise and understanding to address the diplomatic overlay of the problem to devise a solution in an international context which was responsive to both the technical and diplomatic/political considerations involved.

The first time I found myself at the technology/diplomacy interface was the nearly three year assignment as the US commercial attaché in the embassy in Baghdad. I found that there were a whole lot of things I had to learn in order to be helpful to the American business people who were trying to sell airplanes, diesel electric locomotives, and in a third instance, expensive and technically sophisticated trucks. In order to be of maximum assistance to the various groups, sales people and engineers, who came to Iraq from the American aircraft industry or from the American railroad locomotive industry, not only the vocabulary but also the concepts underlying the functioning of their equipment and why the US version was so much better than the product the Iraqis would get by buying from a European supplier or from the Soviet Government. It became quite clear that as the commercial attaché in Iraq, I was going to have to learn an awful lot of technology and engineering that I had never been exposed to before.

I noted another area of the interface between diplomacy and technology earlier, when I described how I stumbled on the explanation for the malfunctioning of the radar equipment the Soviets supplied the Iraqis, which had puzzled the staff of the Air Attaché office for months. This was another illustration of how my assignment at the interface of diplomacy and science and technology contributed directly to the understanding and appreciation of an intelligence problem that had been bedeviling the appropriate intelligence collection people for some 12 or 14 months, and thus, to the pursuit of US interests in Iraq and perhaps even further afield.

Q: Did you feel that anybody was trying to put this together, or was this happenstance?

HANDYSIDE: I think it was happenstance because there were all sorts of other reasons in the case of each of the early follow on assignments at least, that I would go on to the next post.

The next place I found myself at the technology/diplomacy interface was assignment as head of the political section at the embassy in Tripoli, Libya. Once in place, I discovered that one of my primary areas of responsibility was going to be the support of the operations of the US Air Base, Wheelus Field, which was seven or eight miles down the

road, east of the city. In order to be the most helpful to the Air Force and to keep the Air Force out of political trouble or smooth over political problems that arose out of Air Force operations, I had to know an awful lot more about high performance aircraft and about the people who flew and serviced them than I had ever found necessary to learn before. Thus I was catapulted into another learning experience. If I were going to do my job effectively, I was going to have to impose on the good sense and the helpfulness of a lot of Air Force counterparts to learn how fighter airplane functioned and what made fighter pilots tick. As a result of this cram course, I found that it was a lot easier to explain to some person in the Libyan Ministry of Foreign Affairs what had happened, why it had happened, what we were going to do to try to ensure it didn't happen again, and what we were going to do about it. In the sense of compensating the farmer whose chicken house was destroyed by the bomb rack that fell off an airplane as it flew over head, or the bedouin whose camel was killed after wandering on to the gunnery range and so on.

In answer to your question, however, perhaps the previous incumbents of my various jobs had come to the same conclusion that I had. But they had apparently never made their observations known to people back in the Department either in the training area or in the personnel selection assignments section. I think I was selected for the Embassy in Tripoli job because I was at the right level and was a political officer and I was an Arabist, rather than whether I knew or didn't know anything about the technology of airplanes.

I found myself even more intensely involved in the technology/diplomacy interface as the director of the Office of Nuclear and Space Affairs in the Bureau of Political Military Affairs here in Washington. Ron Spiers, who was the director of the Bureau at that point, and Tom Pickering, who was his deputy, recognized both the interface and an incumbent's crucial need to learn the technical facts. They were the ones who gave me six months to learn my way around in nuclear matters. They recognized that coming in cold, I couldn't even understand what the problems were let alone be able to address them in any kind of a creative fashion. As I noted earlier, I spent a good deal of time in my first six months in PM going to various military technical schools to learn the basics about the design and production of nuclear weapons and about the handling of this equipment by the US military. In a parallel effort, I had to learn an enormous amount about the characteristics of nuclear powered warships: why they were so important to the United States; what kinds of things were required by routine operations; what kinds of problems were involved in bringing ships of this variety into ports, either in the United States or more importantly, abroad. This was a very, very hot issue, indeed. Most countries around the world simply threw up their hands and said, "We don't want any of your nuclear warships in our harbors."

I found myself literally in the cross fire between the political officers in the Department and the operational planners in the Navy. Gradually, over time as I learned more and more about the technology involved, I was able to be more and more effective as the honest broker. I was able to convince the State Department of the necessity for operational reasons of some of these visits and to demonstrate to them that operational

necessity overrode the diplomatic problems involved. At the same time I was able to persuade the Navy that some of these diplomatic problems were so difficult to resolve that it would make an enormous difference if the Navy could revisit the requirement or at least approach the problem in a slightly different fashion which would then pose the diplomatic problem in a more solvable fashion.

The final time that I was involved directly at the interface of diplomacy and technology was my assignment to the Energy Department. I think we have already talked enough about assignment and the technical problems I encountered in DOE with the exception of the one area that took at least a third of my time: non-proliferation. Although I had been introduced to much of the technology involved in PM, I had no operational responsibility for the diplomatic efforts to persuade other governments to take or refrain from actions with proliferation implications. OES, ACDA, and DOE had the lead. But the minute I set foot in DOE, I became a major player. I quickly discovered that US efforts to prevent proliferation involved reactor design and dual use equipment. I had a lot to learn. Equipment that appeared to have only a peaceful civilian use, frequently could also be used for military purposes. If our non-proliferation effort was to be successful, we had to put export controls on equipment that was seen to have purely peaceful civilian purposes. We were notably unsuccessful in this area. Moreover, as we look around the world these days after some 12 or 14 years of intense activity on the part of the US government, it is clear that we were particularly unsuccessful with some of our European friends. German industrialists in particular continued to manufacture and ship, and the German government, despite our best efforts, allowed them to do so...a whole lot of very complex pieces of equipment that contributed very immediately and very directly to the development of several nuclear weapons development programs abroad. An awful lot of this equipment was peddled because of the profit motive. In some instances, the German manufacturers were perhaps honestly ignorant of the dual uses of their equipment. But in most instances they knew perfectly well what the buyer was up to, and they sold the hardware to make money.

But enough of this to illustrate the fact that over a series of years and at increasingly more complex levels, I was involved directly at that point where diplomacy and science and technology came together. I am not sure that the people in the Director General's office had any real appreciation of the interface while I was in the Foreign Service. I am not sure, even after having been retired for several years, that the State Department as an institution really understands the interface. I am afraid that the level of understanding of the personnel managers in the Department has not really gone much beyond the science attaché level. I think they have yet to discover that there are a large number of jobs in the Foreign Service where the incumbent must have a fairly sophisticated knowledge of science and technology in order to perform his diplomatic functions. And I would suggest that this requirement is going to become increasingly more important in the years to come. As we get farther and farther away from the over-arching political, political/military problems of the cold war, the demand for technically savvy diplomatic officers will become more and more intense. Moreover, the need will appear throughout the Department and the Foreign Service. It will not be limited to the Bureau of Oceans

and Scientific Affairs, PM, and ACDA. If the ordinary Foreign Service Officer is to do the diplomatic job that must be done, he or she is really going to have to have a more extensive background and the time and the means to acquire the special technical knowledge required for effective performance in a specific diplomatic position. It seems to me that this says or should say a great deal to the personnel managers in the State Department in terms of recruiting, in terms of training, and in terms of the assignments process.

Q: As a final thing without going into a lot of examples because they are within the text that we have, but could you give any impressions of being an Arabist? An Arabist for years has been given a connotation of practically being an alien being; of being anti-Semitic, which is sort of an oxymoron because you are dealing with the Arab/Semitic world..

HANDYSIDE: I think the first thing to recognize is that the group of people, mostly men when I first started out, but now men and women, who are loosely covered under the tent like definition of "Arabist" really fall into three, or more different categories. Their placement in these categories stems largely from the reasons they took the time and made the effort to learn enough Arabic to function in that language. By far the largest number of people who made the enormous effort involved in learning Arabic did so because they saw Arabic as one of the tools of the trade. For some reason, whether an analysis of the current political scene or a projection of future need or challenge or because they like sunshine instead of snow, they chose to concentrate on the part of the world located on the southern littoral of the Mediterranean and extending a little further to the east. Having decided to focus on this area, they realized that to be an effective representative of the United States in that part of the world they had to acquire a good deal of knowledge about the culture and the society and the language of the people who inhabit the area and with whom they wanted to work. So that was one group, probably the largest group.

There was another group that was made up of people who went the next step beyond that and became interested in knowing Arabic and dealing with Arabs for ideological reasons. They became victims of localitis in the same way personnel in the State Department and the forerunners of the present Agency for International Development, quite early in the Greek and Turkish AID program became exponents, indeed advocates, for their clients or their host governments as opposed to being exponents of American policies and American interests. There is a parallel group within the category of "Arabists". They have become spokespeople for Arab political and economic and cultural objectives.

Then there is a third group, which is really quite small, but nevertheless significant, who learned Arabic because they were fascinated by language and the mechanics of languages. They became intrigued by Arabic because it is so completely different from the typical romance language or even Indo-European language, and stands as a fascinating, learning challenge. There are, or at least were, a number of people who fit into this group. They tend to gravitate toward jobs as translators and interpreters. I went through Arabic school with an FSO who became fascinated by the mechanics of the language. He was just

delighted that the State Department was going to continue to pay his salary and give him three squares a day so he could spend all of his time every day fiddling with this fascinating new body of knowledge. He really wasn't interested in using Arabic as a tool like a typewriter or a telephone; the language became an end in itself, instead of a means to an end.

So, I think the first thing we need to do is recognize that the term "Arabist" covers a wide variety of people who had varying objectives in learning the language to start with. Then after they had learned the language and began to use it, they tended to follow career paths that reflected or put into practice their initial aims. But by far the majority of the people who were "Arabists" fell into the first category, that is, people who saw it as a means to an end.

Q: It was a career move.

HANDYSIDE: Yes, a career enhancing move. Learning Arabic equated to learning how to type in order to cope with the modern world. And just as 35, 40, 50 years ago, people took typing courses in high school, not to earn the half credit that went along with the successful completion of the course, but to acquire the skill, recognizing that if they were going to go on to college and write term papers and so on, they really couldn't exist on hunt and peck. They had to learn how to touch type. Most of the people who learned Arabic, I think, learned it for a parallel kind of a reason.

That having been said, I think one needs to go on to the next level and take a look at the time individuals decided to learn Arabic. There were and still are in that group of people called "Arabists", people who had some missionary background. Perhaps either their parents were missionaries and they grew up in some part of the Arab world where they learned and used Arabic as children as a medium of communication. Or perhaps they acquired Arabic in preparation for a career as a missionary or a related service occupation, and then changed their minds. As a subgroup of the missionary, there were a number of men who were prominent in the earliest days of "Arabists" in the State Department, that is before 1950 and in the early 1950s, who had come to foreign affairs via experience in the US military during the Second World War, but who were the sons of academics or educators, who lived in various Arab countries as teachers in American sponsored high schools or colleges. These people inevitably had a somewhat different view towards their target clients than the missionary sons. Their experience as faculty children often gave them a much deeper knowledge and understanding of the Arabic culture than some of us later arrivals had simply because they had lived in the Arab world and had associated closely with Arabs over a period of years. So there was this mix of reasons for learning the language and there was the difference in experience and understanding of Arabs and Arab culture which produced certain kinds of results in terms of job performance.

Whatever the particular background of the "tools of the trade" variety of Arabic language and area specialists, I think that the US Government and the US as a nation, have been

incredibly well served by the people who were "Arabists". I think that by far the majority of these men and women really were Americans first and people who were interested in the Middle East or in Arab culture and Arabs individually second. I think the US had a group of incredibly competent, very objective and very successful diplomatic personnel. They were operating, however, in an atmosphere that was very highly charged. Moreover, the fact that the geopolitical issues generated high and conflicting emotions in the US and around the world loomed large in the consciousness of all the "Arabists" on a daily and continuing basis. In addition, the "Arabists" were constantly being confronted with yet one more problem created by the very fact that the Arabs and the Israelis were at war with each other. Sometimes it was a very active shooting war, but at all times it was a conflict over real estate, which became a conflict over values, which became a conflict over habits of living and ways of looking at the rest of the world, and which ultimately was a conflict over continued existence.

The Arab-Israel relationship was a highly charged relationship in the Middle East, but it was equally highly charged in terms of the policy making process back in the United States. US diplomats generally and "Arabists" in particular, were dealing with representatives of one of the governments involved, the government of Israel, who for at least the 35 years that I have known anything about this problem, have generally taken the position that if a diplomat or his government is only 98 percent in favor of the Israeli position and only supports Israel 98 percent, he in effect is my opponent. It would also appear, although I am less certain of this because I have had much less direct personal experience, that the American Jewish community operates from the same basic premise, that either you are 100 percent for us or you are against us. This then sets up a kind of policy environment that makes policy making in this area much, much more difficult than it is in other areas of the world with different geopolitical and international problems. I suspect that until the end of the cold war there was only one other area of policy that posed the same kinds of hurdles in terms of the policy process and the policy environment. That was the long standing and wide ranging fight between the Irish and English and among the Irish, over Northern Ireland.

Q: I think you also have to mention the Greek/Turkish situation because, having served in Greece, the Greek Americans have the same attitude over Cyprus.

HANDYSIDE: Well that is true. Lesser numbers perhaps.

Q: Well, but in a very important process. It has often been pointed out to me that Jewish Americans, if you take California, Florida and New York out of the equation, I am talking about political pressure, it is not as important, but boy the Greeks are scattered everywhere and they are usually restaurant owners and members of chambers of commerce.

HANDYSIDE: I think that is true and a point well taken. There may be a couple of other conflicts of that variety, but the reason I put in the prior to the end of the cold war qualification, was because World War II and the Cold War suppressed most of the ethnic,

nationalistic conflicts. That was certainly the case of the ethnic conflicts in the former Soviet Union, many of which have surfaced in the new Russia. The Armenian problem for example, was not a major problem in terms of US politics, until the USSR disintegrated. Prior to 1985, I think you could probably tic off on the fingers of one hand the kinds of policy problems and policy environments that were as highly charged as the Arab-Israel problem. Summing up, I believe the nature of the policy environment explains in large part why the term Arabist has become a term of opprobrium.

There is a related factor. That is the very large increase in the last twenty years in the number of academics who have specialized in Arabic and the Arab world. They differ from US Government "Arabists" in two important ways. First, most of the academic Middle Eastern specialists have never lived in the Middle East for more than 30 days at a time. Consequently they had never been forced to cope with the day-to-day irritations and the day-to-day problems that come up by living side by side with Arabs in the Arab world. As a result, I think they have tended to underestimate some of the kinds of problems US representatives encounter in the peace process. It is one thing to have an intellectual appreciation of a set of very difficult problems, gleaned mostly from text books, conversations with other experts, and from short, intermittent field trips. It is quite different to have the kind of the "seat of the britches" sort of sense of how what things are important and how people will react to certain events or proposals. That comes from having to cope with Arabs and Arab culture from morning until night, day after day, week after week, year after year. Whether it was a trip to the grocery store or a trip to the dry cleaners, or whether it was trying to get a taxi in the middle of the street, an American living abroad in the Arab world quickly came to understand that each of these very simple problems cumulatively pose very real and very annoying, and sometimes very difficult problems. All of that, it seems to me, provides a wealth of background and an understanding of the environment in which political and diplomatic judgements have to be made. Second, not having lived in the middle of the highly charged policy environment over a sustained period of time, the academic Arabist has not been directly confronted with the consequences of straying off absolute neutrality in the Arab-Israel conflict. Moreover, his academic status both confirms on him a degree of leeway that his USG counterpart does not enjoy, and exempts him from the intense scrutiny and criticism by the interested public which concerns itself primarily with actual decision makers.

Finally, I believe that a large part of the criticism of the Foreign Service has been generated by Arabists who have become publicly outspoken on Middle East policy issues subsequent to their retirement from the Foreign Service. For example, there has been a lot of discussion for 25 years about the impact of Arabists on foreign policy making within the State Department. But I think it is only in the last decade that people have become sufficiently agitated about the influence of the "Arabists" that they have begun to make speeches about it and write articles and books about it. I believe the rise of the criticism coincides with the retirement of a number of the most senior people in the Near East area of the State Department, men who had entered the Foreign Service in the late '40s and early '50s. A number of them became either quietly outspoken or vigorously and very publicly outspoken after they left the Foreign Service. The media were not always careful

about reporting their retired status; they were frequently identified as State Department Arabists. Moreover, those who were vigorously outspoken, were generally from that category of Arabists who had become theologically involved while in the Service and then became real red flag wavers upon retirement. They got an awful lot of people excited. Some of them are still vigorously waving their red flags and in my view, are compounding the problem for the Arabists still in the State Department.

Q: By the way, to put this in context, the normal setting is one that somehow being an Arabist is being an anti-Semite. You are really talking about the accusation being anti-Semitism against the Jews.

HANDYSIDE: Those who are more sophisticated will say that it is anti-Israeli, or maybe anti-Zionist. But ultimately, what the serving and the retired Arabists are really dealing with is an accusation of being anti-Semitic, meaning anti-Jewish.

The response to this charge that I have discovered as being the most effective over the years, if I am finally pushed into the position of having to address this topic, and that means I usually try to avoid it, is: After 30 years in the Foreign Service, most of which I spent either working in the Middle East or on the Middle East, I have concluded that the only sustainable judgment about the Arabs and the Israelis is "a plague on both their houses". Stated vigorously, this judgment does one of two things. It either immediately terminates the discussion, and someone awkwardly shifts the topic. Or it opens up the discussion for a series of interesting and meaningful exchanges.

Q: Well, Handy, I want to thank you very much. This is great.

HANDYSIDE: It has been my pleasure, sir.

End of interview