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

AMBASSADOR JAMES D. PHILLIPS

Interviewed by: Charles Stuart Kennedy
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INTERVIEW

Q: Today is May 5, 1998 and this is an interview with James D. Phillips. You are known as Dan, though, isn't that right?

PHILLIPS: That is right.

Q: This is being done for the Association for Diplomatic Studies and Training and I am Charles Stuart Kennedy. Could you tell me when and where you were born and something about your family?

PHILLIPS: Let me provide a brief prologue. In the interest of full disclosure I should say that I am adding this paragraph after finishing the interview. When I looked it over I found there was very little in it about my family. Perhaps that's as it should be. After all, this is not a comprehensive autobiography but rather an account of the institutions, the people, the issues, and the situations I encountered as a professional diplomat. Still, it is important to acknowledge the role my family played in my career. They were an integral part of the adventure and they shared fully in - indeed they were in many ways responsible for - most of my successes. My first wife, Rosemary Leeds Phillips, helped me greatly during the early years. In graduate school she typed my papers, took care of our children and supported us with part-time jobs. She was with me in Washington, Paris, Lubumbashi, Kinshasa, and Luxembourg. She was a superb "Foreign Service wife," in all that that implied in terms of dedication and sacrifice. Our marriage didn't survive the stresses that nearly constitute an occupational hazard in the Foreign Service, but I would not have made it through the first half of my career without her. Our three children, Michael, Madolyn and Catherine, enjoyed the advantages of living abroad but they also suffered the disadvantages. Michael was in seven different schools before he was 14 years old! They were intelligent, inquisitive and adaptable children though, and they rose to the challenges of a nomadic existence magnificently. It would have been much less satisfying and much less fun without them. In 1984 I married Lucie Colvin Phillips. She is a linguist, a scholar, and one of America's foremost experts on African social and economic history. She contributed immensely to the second half of my career. Her two sons, my stepsons, Charlie and David Colvin, added a new and happy dimension to my life. There were others; my father, my stepmother, my sisters Patricia Daniels and Rosemary Partridge, my aunt Madolyn, my in-laws, other relatives and a maid/nanny named Minnie, all who helped me along the way. It didn't quite take a village to get me where I am, but it sure took an extended family.

To go back to your question, I was born in Peoria, Illinois in 1933. My mother died when I was six months old and I was raised by my father, who was an executive with Phillips Petroleum Company, and by my stepmother Marie Phillips, who my father married when I was about four. In 1941, at the beginning of the Second World War, we moved to Wichita, Kansas where I lived until I went into the army in 1953.

Q: Where did you go to grammar school?

PHILLIPS: I went to Catholic grammar schools in Peoria and Wichita.

Q: I am trying to capture some social history because its important to know who you are. How did you find your education at the elementary school level in the Catholic schools?

PHILLIPS: I think elementary-level education suffered during the war because of a shortage of teachers and personnel of all kinds. My early years in Peoria were fine but when I got to Wichita the war effort was draining resources away from both public and private schools. We were taught by nuns who normally would have retired earlier.

Q: I was in that era, too, and I saw that a lot of retired people came back to work and it really showed.

PHILLIPS: Yes, and we did not have any extras then. I don't remember having an art class or music class. Budgets were cut to the bone because of the war.

Q: Before you went to high school did you read much?

PHILLIPS: I was read to very much as a child by the adults in my life and when I learned to read on my own I was captivated by children's literature. I remember reading the entire Tarzan series.

Q: You went to a Catholic high school as well?

PHILLIPS: Yes, I went to Wichita Cathedral High School. By that time it was the post-war period but there were still teacher shortages. After a few years my family decided it would be better to try a private school and I transferred to a Benedictine school in Canyon City, Colorado. I graduated from the Holy Cross Abby school of Canyon City.

Q: We are going to talk about foreign affairs eventually. You were really in the heartland of the United States. Did foreign affairs intrude much into your life?

PHILLIPS: Not at all. I didn't learn any languages. I studied a little Spanish. At that point in my life I didn't dream of going into the Foreign Service.

Q: What year did you graduate?
PHILLIPS: I graduated in 1950

Q: You graduated in June 1950, which is an important month because of the Korean War. What did you do then?

PHILLIPS: I had started grade school a year early than most children, you have that choice when you are born in February, and I was only 17 when I graduated from high

school. I enrolled in college but I was not really prepared for college. I spent a couple of years at Wichita State University and then transferred to the University of Colorado, but I did not do well.

Q: Were you majoring in anything?

PHILLIPS: I was majoring in liberal arts. In 1953, I transferred back to Wichita State University. I had passed the draft deferral examination but I made the mistake of not taking enough credit hours to keep my deferral and in 1953 I got my draft call. At the time I considered trying to avoid the draft but since I was not doing very well in college I thought the army might be a useful experience. The Korean War was still on in June of 1953 when I went into the army, but it was winding down and finally ended while I was in basic training.

Q: Where did the army take you?

PHILLIPS: I was sent to Fort Bliss, Texas. I was offered officers training but declined because it would have meant at least a three year tour of duty. I just wanted to do my two years and get out. Fort Bliss is an artillery school. I had scored well on the Army aptitude tests so I was selected to be part of the Nike guided missile program. This was 1953, the program was brand new and we probably got more training than we needed. In any event, I spent a full year in training status at Fort Bliss.
Q: Can you explain was the Nike was?

PHILLIPS: The Nike was a surface to air anti-aircraft missile. It used radar to lock on a target and an early sort of computer to aim and fire the missile. The system exists today as a very effective and sophisticated weapon, but then it was primitive. After the extensive training, our group was sent to Philadelphia to set up what is called in artillery terms "a package." This is a unit of some 50 men and we were assigned to defend Philadelphia against air attack. Our home base was Fort Dix, New Jersey. We had the technical advice of civilian experts from Westinghouse, the company that actually built the system. But even with experts, the system had serious problems. For example, it worked fine - unless it happened to be raining. I am glad we had no occasion to use the system in those days.

Q: You did that until the end of your service?

PHILLIPS: I did that until the end of my service. This was a critical time in my education. We got a lot of publicity when we arrived in Philadelphia and a wealthy widow read about us and decided to donate her husband's library to our unit. The collection consisted of most of the great works of literature. The unit commander asked me to take on the role of "non-commissioned officer for education and training." This meant that, among other duties, I helped the guys who did not have a high school education get one through correspondence courses. I also had to set up a catalog system for the books. Without a lot of incoming enemy aircraft to occupy us we had free time and I started reading voraciously through the great books. By the time I left the Army in

1955 I had learned a lot. I had matured and I was ready to give college another try.

Q: Sort of an interesting Bible of the military service and what it did. Again, during any of this period had the Foreign Service shown up on your radar at all?

PHILLIPS: Not at all.

Q: Where did you go in 1955?

PHILLIPS: Initially I went back to the University of Wichita, but my father believed that all of his children needed a year abroad. My sisters, both of whom were older than I, had attended the University of Vienna in Austria while I was in the army. This was just after Vienna lost its four-power occupation status and was again the capital of an independent state. The University of Vienna offered a program that allowed students to begin taking classes in English and then gradually move into German. This is what my sisters did and my father suggested I do the same. Wichita University agreed that credits I earned in Vienna would apply to my requirements for graduation. I also found out I could benefit from the GI bill. So I went to Europe in the fall of 1956.

Q: When did you actually get there?

PHILLIPS: The school year started in mid-October. But no sooner had I arrived in Vienna than the Hungarian revolution broke out. The University basically shut down because of the crisis. An unprecedented number of refugees streamed into Austria, especially into Vienna. So students got involved in what we saw as a great adventure. We would go out to the border and stand in the fields waving flashlights until a group of Hungarian refugees saw us and came across. The border was wide open and the Hungarian government did not try to stop them. We would put the refugees onto a hay rack pulled by a tractor which would take them to a farm house where they would be given tea and food. After we had helped two or three groups we would call it a night and go back to Vienna.

This was very exciting, more a lark than anything, and lasted until almost Christmas. We didn't do it every night, but frequently. Finally I asked the head of the Catholic relief group what happened to the people when they left the farmhouse. He said they went to holding centers and then to embassies where the were processed to go to various countries as refugees. They frequently choose the United States or Canada. I knew about the U.S. Embassy because I went there to get my GI bill check. So the next time I went I asked an embassy officer about the refugees. He said if I wanted to volunteer they needed people who could conduct initial interviews. There were lines of refugees stretching along the street in front of the embassy everyday. So I did that for a while. You are probably wondering how I got in any schoolwork, and the answer is that I did just enough to get the credit hours I needed to graduate.

I got to know some of the younger embassy officers. We would go out for a beer and I had the impression their jobs were interesting and rather fun.

Q: How did you interview these people and what were your impressions?

PHILLIPS: The embassy needed an American citizen to conduct the initial interviews. If the refugees spoke German I knew enough to handle that. Most of them did not speak German though so we used an interpreter. I would help the refugees fill out the basic forms and then send them on to a consular officer. I saw such an incredible variety of people. Sometimes you could tell you were dealing with a legitimate political refugee; other times it was less clear. Maybe a 32 year old man would say he had lost his papers, would claim he was a persecuted journalist but was vague about what newspaper he had worked for, and he would say "And oh, by the way, this is my niece," who would be a 19 year old knockout who had also lost her papers. Maybe he had abandoned a wife and family to run off with his mistress, you didn't know. But what could you do? Send them back to Hungry? What I brought away from that experience was a sense of how repressive a communist regime could be, combined with a certain cynicism about human nature.

Q: Were any of the embassy officers telling you about the Foreign Service?

PHILLIPS: No, we were pretty young and they were mostly bachelors and we talked about women and sports, but I thought their life style was appealing.

Q: What feelings did you get from the Austrian students?

PHILLIPS: At that time Austria was at flat bottom. Vienna had not been destroyed by bombing but had no infrastructure. My 75 dollars a month from the GI bill permitted me to live like a king. You could get a three course meal for a $1.00. The best seat at the opera cost $3.50. I don't know what you pay for a ticket at the opera today?

Q: Don't ask.

PHILLIPS: There was a huge interest in America. Austrians wanted to know as much as they could about the United States. I had one friend who insisted I change all of my money with him because he wanted to hoard dollars. The poor guy probably lost a lot when the Austrian shilling appreciated.

Q: You left there in the spring of 1957 and what did you do then?

PHILLIPS: I had earned enough credits for my bachelor's degree. I knew I wanted more education. I spent 1957 and 1958 getting a masters degree in political science at Wichita University, with no special emphasis on foreign affairs. I then applied to several graduate schools including Harvard, Berkeley and Cornell. I was accepted at Berkeley and Cornell and chose Cornell because they offered me a teaching assistantship worth tuition and $600 a semester. I lived on that plus the GI bill and my wife's salary. By this time I was married. I had met a young American woman named Rosemary Leeds who was also studying at the University of Vienna and we had gotten married. In 1958 we went off to

Ithaca, New York. She got her undergraduate degree at Cornell but also held down several part time jobs to support us.

Q: You were in Ithaca for how long?

PHILLIPS: I was there from 1958 to 1961, working on a Ph.D. My major was political theory. My major professor was Mario Einaudi, whose father had been President of Italy just after the War. His son, Luigi Einaudi, works for the State Department today. I was working on a thesis dealing with the philosophy of Bertrand Russell, Ludwig von Wittgenstein, and A.J. Ayre called "logical positivism," and I fully intended to go into teaching. By 1960 I had two children and graduate school was financially difficult. I had taken the Foreign Service exam just to see if I could pass, which I did, and I was offered a position in 1961.

Q: Did you take an oral examination?

PHILLIPS: I failed the oral exam the first time around and I almost forgot about the Foreign Service. I had met all the requirements for the Ph.D. degree and was working on my dissertation when in the fall of 1961- President Kennedy had just been elected - I got a call from the State Department. The caller said the Department was reevaluating some of the oral tests because one examining board, the one that tested me, used much higher standards than the others. So they offered me a provisional job while I went through the testing process again. I discussed the offer with Professor Einaudi who encouraged me to accept, saying Washington was likely to be very exciting with Kennedy in the White House. So I accepted and went to Washington in 1961. My provisional job was in the training division of personnel, where I stayed until I went into an orientation "A100" class in June of 1962.

Q: Do you have any recollections of the board that didn't pass you?
PHILLIPS: I remember they thought that my background in political theory was too esoteric. They didn't deny that I had good credentials and my experience in Vienna was in my favor, but I was in the middle of writing my thesis and maybe I went on too much about logical positivism. I had to take the written exam again in early 1962 and that was a nail-biter, but the second oral exam was kind of a slam-dunk.

Q: What did you do while in personnel from 1961 to 1962?

PHILLIPS: It was the training division. We selected officers for training assignments. My boss was a wonderful man named Larry Goldman who let me do a lot on my own. He sent me to panel meetings where officers were assigned to various posts. The panel consisted of seven officers representing geographic areas including Washington, and the training division. There was a lot of horse trading because each area wanted to get the best officers, but the panel tried to find a rational fit between the job and the officer. I think the panel system worked pretty well but it was of course quite different from the heavily bureaucratic assignment process that evolved over the years. It was certainly a good experience for me. It was far from the intellectual challenge of graduate school but

it was a good introduction to the Foreign Service.

Q: One of the things I found while working in personnel was that you could dine out in the Foreign Service for the rest of your career if you had a solid feeling for how the personnel system works.

PHILLIPS: I dined out on some incredible stories about how people actually got to various posts. The panel tried to act rationally but it made some pretty bizarre assignments. But the personnel officers were not administrative hacks. There was an unwritten rule that officers who served in Personnel for two years of relatively unglamorous work got good onward assignments. So personnel attracted some superb officers. The value for me was two-fold: I got to rub shoulders with an elite group of officers and I learned first hand how the system worked.

Q: I was there in the late 1960s and personnel had people like Tom Pickering and others who were on their way. It was obviously an interesting and career enhancing assignment.

PHILLIPS: Most of the personnel officers I met at that time went on to become ambassadors.

Q: Can you give us a feel for the composition of the A100 class and how you and your classmates felt about a career in the government and Foreign Service?

PHILLIPS: It was a very interesting class, which included Tony Lake, Richard Holbrooke, Dick Bogosian and number of others who did very well. There were about 29 or 30 of us. The group had extremely high morale. We believed we were joining an elite service and that our jobs would be important and interesting. The State Department was the only bureaucracy most of us were prepared to join. The Foreign Service seemed to us akin to "Les Grandes Ecoles" in France.

Q: What did you think of the training, especially because you had already been in for a year? You knew quite a bit about what was being taught by then.

PHILLIPS: It was a good period. In those days they would take us to New York to visit the UN. I remember that Dick Holbrooke had party at his father's house in Scarsdale. The course was not heavy on academics but it gave us all a chance to get settled and we did learn some useful things about the Foreign Service.

Q: Where we you pointing yourself before the Service pointed you?

PHILLIPS: Well, I had the German language background but I didn't particularly want to go to Germany or Austria. I did not have a strong aptitude for languages and I thought French or Spanish would be easier to master. Towards the end of the training period I was told by the head of the A 100 course that I had two assignment choices, Paris or Rio de Janeiro. It was definitely a fork in the road. My career and my life would have been

very different had I chosen Rio. For one thing, I would have learned Portuguese and would have followed a completely different career path. I chose Paris, eventually learned French and spent the better part of my career in French speaking countries.

Q: You were in Paris for your first assignment?

PHILLIPS: I arrived in Paris at the beginning of 1963 and I stayed there until late 1965.

Q: Just to go back a bit. You were in language training when the Cuban missile crisis occurred. How did that affect your class of junior officers?

PHILLIPS: I lived in Arlington, near where Crystal City is now. There were some nice little houses there and I was renting one of them. I would drive to the Foreign Service Institute in Rosslyn to language classes which were held in the garage of an apartment building. We worked in small, windowless class rooms that reeked of automobile exhaust fumes. It was the least conducive place to learning a language that I can imagine. I remember at the height of the missile crisis driving to the Institute and looking at the monuments and the river and thinking that I might not drive home again. It was scary.

Q: It is hard to recreate those times. This was the real peak of the Cold War. You were in Paris from the summer of 1963 until 1965?

PHILLIPS: No, I was there from the beginning of 1963. In those days one went to Europe by ship and I think I may have sailed in late December of 1962 and arrived in January of 1963.

Q: What was your job?

PHILLIPS: There was a system of rotation for new junior officers designed to give you six months of experience in each of four different sections of the embassy. I started in the consular section doing routine work. Then I was transferred to the political/military section and then to the economic section. My boss in the political/military office, Jack McGuire, became a life-long friend. In the economic section I worked for Stanley Cleveland who had a major influence on my career. He was an intelligent, dynamic officer who has unfortunately passed away. He took a special interest in me and convinced me to try to become an expert on the European Community. About this time Ambassador Chip Bohlen needed a staff aide and Cleveland recommended me. I spent my last year in Paris working for Chip Bohlen.

Q: What a great experience. Before we move to that, what about the political military side? We still had a lot NATO bases in France. Was there any feel for how the French felt about what we had there or were you too far down the feeding chain?

PHILLIPS: There was no doubt the French were uncomfortable with the status quo. The U.S. had military bases throughout France and there was an American military clinic and PX in the heart of Paris, within walking distance of the embassy. There was a large and

imposing NATO headquarters establishment in the Paris suburbs. The French felt smothered and France constantly tried to find ways to assert its independence. Relations between the United States and France were strained to say the least. Ambassador Bohlen had a good personal relationship with De Gaulle but could not do much to change the course of events. In 1964 France recognized Red China and the Taiwanese were forced out of their embassy to make way for the Chinese communists, which didn't help. I knew relations were sour, but as you say, I was too low on the feeding chain to realize that France was on the brink of pulling out of NATO.

Q: Can you describe your impression of Bohlen and how he operated?

PHILLIPS: He was very professional in everything he did, especially in his dealings with figures like De Gaulle, Dean Rusk, George Ball and Presidents Kennedy and Johnson. He had complete self-confidence. He was a representative of American gentry in so far as there is such a thing; born to a prominent family in upstate New York, educated at all the right schools. He was brilliant, but he was also generous and kind. He would invite my family once or twice a year to dinner or lunch with his family. He was a wonderful person to watch in action. He rarely lost his temper and always kept his sense of humor. He was one of the last of a vanishing breed of ambassadors. He could pick up the phone and call Kennedy at the White House. He would argue with George Ball over the phone and I would sometimes be privy to the conversation as a note taker. So I got to see him in action and I would sum up my impressions by saying he was a consummate professional.

Q: Were you in this position when De Gaulle announced that he wanted the United States to pull out of France?

PHILLIPS: That happened after I left in 1965. Bohlen's strategy was to keep French behavior in perspective and not overreact to it. He constantly emphasized that France had its own agenda and had a hard time adjusting to its post-war status. He contended that we needed patience and diplomacy in reacting to French pretensions.

Q: Did you find as the ambassador's assistant and a junior office a division over De Gaulle among the staff there?

PHILLIPS: There were hawks and doves. Some argued for a more confrontational policy but there was not a deep division. There were extraordinary people in the embassy at that time. Cecil Lyons was the DCM. Perry Culley was the consul general. Bob Anderson was head of the political section.. They all knew France and understood the situation and generally accepted Bohlen's leadership.

Q: Did you run across French officials at all or prepare things for the ambassador?

PHILLIPS: The ambassador had an executive assistant who was my boss who did most of the front office substantive work. He had more contact with the Quai d'Orsay and other ministries. I went through the telegrams each morning and selected ones I thought the ambassador should see and put them in the order I though he should see them. I

would also work on his schedule. If he couldn't go to a particular function I would make sure that he would be represented by an appropriate officer. All of the military attaches were Army generals or Navy captains. So I had fun as a former enlisted man sending generals to ceremonial functions beginning with mass at 7:30 on a Saturday morning.

Q: As an ex-enlisted man myself there is something about speaking on behalf of the ambassador that is kind of fun. What about congressional delegations?

PHILLIPS: They came in huge numbers and often it would fall to me to escort them around. In those days there was a congressional liaison office at the embassy because there were so many congressional delegations coming through. A mainstay of the office was a wonderful young man who is still there named Johnny Berg, and I worked closely with him. I think I saw the show at the Lido a dozen times because congressmen always wanted to go. There is one story I can tell that shows what kind of person Bohlen was and how things worked in those days. A visiting congressman went on his own to the Crazy Horse Saloon where they had a pretty risqué show featuring an American football theme with scantily-clad cheer leaders using the American flag as a back drop. The congressman, whose name I don't remember, came to Bohlen and complained that the flag was being desecrated. Bohlen told me to get two seats for the show and he and I went. They were using the flag as the congressman described, so afterwards Bohlen asked the owner of the Crazy Horse to use red, white and blue bunting instead the actual flag. The owner agreed and that was the end of that, or so I thought. About three weeks later, Ambassador Bohlen called me in and grinning sort of sheepishly said he couldn't help wondering if the owner had really kept his word about the flag. He said he thought we needed to go back to check. So we saw the show again and I believe he was a little disappointed that it was in strict compliance as far as the flag was concerned. We had no excuse to keep on checking.

Q: You were at the embassy when President Kennedy was shot. What happened there?

PHILLIPS: I was at a dinner party the night he was shot, November 22nd. Somebody at the party came late and said the radio reported the President was injured. I left the party to get more news. I walked to the Champs Elysées, close to the Arc de Triumph, at 11:00 p.m. to see if I could get an early edition newspaper. As I got close to the drug store just across the street from the Arc I could see several hundred people milling about outside and they were all sobbing, these were French people, and I thought the news must be really bad. Of course by then they knew he was dead. So that is how I learned. Everyone remembers where they were that day. I was moved by the French reaction, by the outpouring of grief. I was at the requiem mass at Nôtre Dame which De Gaulle attended. It is indelible etched in my mind.

Q: After you finished your freshman year in the Foreign Service and your training where did you go?

PHILLIPS: The Department assigned me to Elizabethville, the Congo as vice consul. I discussed it with Ambassador Bohlen who said he knew from Stan Cleveland that I

wanted to go to Brussels to become a specialist on the Common Market. But he said I should be flattered by the Congo offer because it was a hot spot where only promising officers would be assigned. He said he thought it would be more interesting and fun at that point in my career than Brussels. I agreed with him and went to Elizabethville in the summer of 1965.

Q: How long were you in the Congo for?

PHILLIPS: I was there for three years. I was in Elizabethville for two years. I served as vice-consul and then consul. But in 1967, Robert McBride, who had been in Paris when I was working with Bohlen, was named Ambassador to the Congo. Following my tour in Lubumbashi, the name Mobutu gave Elizabethville shortly after he took power, I was hoping to have a year of university training. I had it all worked out. I would go back to Cornell, drop the thesis on political theory and spend a year doing a thesis on U.S. relations with the Common Market. Ambassador McBride, however, asked me if I would come to Kinshasa to work for a year. He said things were getting very tense and he needed someone with my feel for the country. I reluctantly abandoned my plans for university training and agreed. But to back up a bit, on Thanksgiving Day in 1965 Mobutu took power and opened a new chapter on the Congo.

Q: Let's talk about Elizabethville or Lubumbashi? When you went there what were you told was the situation and how was work there?

PHILLIPS: It was an extremely interesting post. Lubumbashi is the capital of Katanga province. Its copper mines made it the economic heart of Zaire. There had been a civil war there during the early 1960s and the UN, with full U.S. support, had intervened to crush the Katanga independence movement led by Moise Tshombe. So Americans were very much resented by the Belgian elite who had backed Tshombe. About a year before I got there Americans were not allowed to join Belgian- dominated social clubs. In 1965 there was still great resentment about the American role in Katanga because Belgians and Tshombe's Lunda tribesmen clung to the belief that Katanga could have been a viable state on its own. But the real agenda of the Belgian ex-colonials living in Katanga was to join Angola, Mozambique and Rhodesia in forming a white-controlled buffer zone between South Africa and sub-Saharan Africa.

I spent my first year reporting on the evolution of the copper industry and Mobutu's tightening grip on the province. I also followed the conflict between the Lunda's aspirations for independence and the central government's determination to keep Zaire united, a goal shared by the United States because we wanted to avoid the "Balkanization" of the country. Of course U.S. policy was also tied to the cold war interest of keeping the Soviet Union out central Africa. In 1966 things got very tense. Mobutu brought in a group of French and South African mercenaries to protect the northern area of the country whose capital is Kisangani, formerly Stanleyville, from communist-led insurgents. While the mercenaries were being paid by Mobutu they were also conspiring with Belgian and Portuguese agents - remember that Angola and Mozambique were still Portuguese colonies - to rekindle the Katanga independence

movement.

Q: Ian Smith was in Rhodesia?

PHILLIPS: Yes. And when he made his famous unilateral declaration of independence form the United Kingdom, the United States condemned the move and supported efforts to undermine his regime. Smith cut off rail links with parts of black Africa and countries like Zambia suffered sever oil shortages. The United States provided aircraft to fly thousands of barrels of oil into Zambia. The planes were routed through Kinshasa and Lubumbashi, and we at the Consulate helped with logistics. The airlift lasted several months until rail links were restored.

Q: You were saying that there was an unholy alliance between Tshombe, the Belgians and the mercenaries who were playing both sides.
PHILLIPS: Yes, and of course we didn't know until later the extent to which they were playing a double game. In Lubumbashi, by June of 1967, the focus wasn't on economics and copper mining but on the very real possibility of another civil war. This was the situation when I transferred to Kinshasa. I worked in the political section there and also had some responsibility for following events in Kisangani. You may recall that when that city was still called Stanleyville atrocities were committed against Europeans by the Simbas, a group of rebels financed by the Chinese communists. There was the infamous incident of a U.S. official being made to eat the American flag bit by bit. Belgian forces eventually liberated the town through a parachute drop.

Q: That was operation Dragon Rouge.

PHILLIPS: Yes. That all happened earlier. But Kisangani was now at the center of sporadic fighting and was the mercenary headquarters. Our Consulate was closed and Ambassador McBride asked me to go down there once a month to establish a presence. So part of my job description was "Acting Consul in Kisangani." 1967-68 was probably my most exciting year in the Foreign Service. When I would go to Kisangani, I always carried a sidearm. I would fly in on a C-130, which would be carrying rice and other food to be distributed by missionaries or the local authorities, such as existed at the time. I would spend the day there and then fly back. I would meet with the mercenary leader, a Frenchman named Bob Denard.

Q: Where was the danger coming from?

PHILLIPS: It was just total anarchy. Denard had little control over his mercenary troops, which were drawn from the slums of Johannesburg and Marseilles, often ex- Foreign Legionaries, who were absolutely lawless. There was tension between them and the locals. Moreover, rebel forces infiltrated into the city at night. It was a very tense situation. At one of my meetings with Denard, I asked him if he had any message for Kinshasa and he said no that everything was normal. Well, three days later he moved his forces from Kisangani to Bukavu with the intention of going on to Lubumbashi to "liberate" the Katanga. He got as far as Bukavu when the United States made a symbolic

gesture that stopped him in his tracks. We put six C-130s at Mobutu's disposal so he could transfer an elite army corps from Kinshasa to the Bukavu region. Once Denard saw that the United States was prepared to intervene, he negotiated safe passage for his entire army of about three hundred men into neighboring Rwanda. They were picked up by Belgian aircraft and flown back to Europe. Of course that left a huge military vacuum because at that time, hard as it is to credit, a trained force of three hundred well-armed men could control hundreds of miles of that sparsely populated part of Africa. Shortly after Denard left Ambassador McBride asked me to fly to Bukavu on a relief plane carrying several tons of food, blankets and medicine. We flew into a Rwandan airfield near the border and went into Bukavu with a convoy of several trucks that came with us on the C-130. Bukavu was indescribable. The Zairean troops had come in when the mercenaries left and the two forces had pretty much destroyed the city. The only enterprise fully functioning was the brewery. By four o'clock that day, the food and supplies had been distributed via missionary organizations and I was ready to go back to Kinshasa. But by now all of the heavily-armed Zairean soldiers were drunk. By the time I tried to leave that afternoon the soldiers had forgotten that I had come with relief supplies. When I tried to get back across the border to Rwanda they thought I was the last of the fleeing mercenaries. The driver of my car was a local consulate employee. He prevailed on the soldiers not to arrest me on the spot, and after a tense hour -long stand off I finally made contact with a sober officer and was able to get back to the C-130 .

Q: Going back to the time you were in Lubumbashi, what was you impression of the Belgians?

PHILLIPS: The Belgians were in way over their heads. The world had changed since the 19th century when King Leopold conquered the Congo. With the addition of Rwanda and Burundi to the Belgian Congo after the first world war, Belgium was responsible for a huge expanse of territory nearly half the size of the United States. But post-World War II Belgium was a small power that did not have the means or the stomach to rule. So when trouble started in the 1960s they just walked away. They abandoned the country. Unlike the French who had made an effort to create a governing elite in their colonies, the Belgians had done almost nothing to prepare the Congo for self-rule. I think there was one Congolese citizen in the entire country who had graduated from university when the Belgians left. My impression was that some Belgians were racist, but there were many who really wanted to help the country. They had little power, however, and as a whole the Belgians couldn't do much that was positive, but they could do a lot that was negative. I think they sensed rightly that they their time had run out in the Congo. In the middle 1960s, Mobutu had nationalized the copper mines. He still needed Belgians to run the mines, but they were doing little more than milking them for their own, and of course Mobutu's, account.

Q: I understand that it just kept going down and down.

PHILLIPS: The Congo produced copper, but made no investment in infrastructure, upgrading, modernizing or even what you would call maintenance. I was in Lubumbashi in 1996 on a mission to try to determine if the Congo (and I am using that name instead

of "Zaire" because that's what the country is now called) could hold free and fair elections. The copper mines, which were once the largest in the world, are shut down, the plant and equipment in ruins. It will take hundreds of millions of dollars to get them running again because you can't just neglect a facility for 30 years.

Q: How were relations when you left that tour?

PHILLIPS: By that time a lot of the Belgian colons had gone to Rhodesia. There was a new group that came in that wasn't as racist and anti-American, so relations were cordial.
Q: Who was the consul general?

PHILLIPS: There were two. Art Tienken was there for almost a year and then was replaced by Bill Harrop.

Q: How was Bill Harrop? He is a very serious, hard charger.

PHILLIPS: Yes he was, and the fact that he came to Lubumbashi shows that Bohlen was right when he said that an assignment to the Congo should be taken as a compliment. Bill was a very effective officer, very serious, but he also has a great sense of humor. He was delightful to work with and helped me a lot. He did some very courageous things.

Q: Were you there when there were threats and problems with the civil authorities in the Congo?

PHILLIPS: Sure. Mobutu's theory of governing was to divide and conquer. He appointed a governor from the far north of the country named Manzikala who, I am convinced, was criminally insane. Also, Mobutu would never allow soldiers who were born in the Katanga to serve there. So the army was like an occupying force that treated the local ethnic groups brutally. The American Consulate was next door to the Governor's mansion and we would often witness soldiers beating local people. One time when this occurred, Harrop had had enough. He got up from his desk and walked over to the mansion, pushed by the soldiers and went in and told Manzikala to stop the beatings, which he did. But Harrop could have been killed.

Q: What was your impression of the Mobutu regime in 1967, 1968 when you were in Kinshasa?

PHILLIPS: It was an extraordinarily corrupt regime from the beginning, although Mobutu did have a couple of good years. When I was first there the exchange rate for the currency, the Zaire, was two U.S. dollars for one Zaire. When I went back in 1996 it had changed to eight million Zaires to one dollar. The currency and everything else deteriorated over time. During the early years though the copper money was coming in and Chevron found some oil offshore. But Mobutu was putting most of the money into his personal bank account. No money was being invested in even normal government enterprises like roads and schools. All Mobutu was doing was making sure he stayed in power. We did not see that until later, however. At first it seemed that Mobutu was

keeping the country together. He was not a radical demagogue such as many believed Patrice Lumumba to be. I personally think we misjudged Lumumba, that he was more a sincere nationalists than a tool of Moscow. But what I think is irrelevant because he had been assassinated long before I got there and Mobutu was firmly in power. Across the river was a communist regime in Brazzaville. The Russians and Chinese were active and we knew that they - especially the Chinese - were arming the Simbas in the north and generally trying to unseat Mobutu. So the U.S. believed Mobutu represented the best option for the country. He was certainly a bulwark against communism in Africa and that was a serious consideration in those days.

Q: Did you have any dealings with the Zairean government?

PHILLIPS: My job in the political section was following internal politics, trying to figure out who was doing what to whom. I had a lot of contact with politicians and journalists but very little with government officials.

Q: What was the political life like then?

PHILLIPS: In spite of Mobutu's one party state, the Congo was fragmented and driven by ethnic tensions. There was no sense of being Congolese. If you asked a person what he was he would answer "Baluba" or "Lunda" or whatever tribe he belonged to, but rarely "Congolese." It is very difficult to create a nation state out of so much diversity, in a country where several hundred tribal languages are spoken. So there were tribal and regional politics rather that the kind of party politics that exists in a democracy. Mobutu did not tolerate opposition but he could not stop jockeying among ethnic and regional leaders for power within the ruling party. That is what constituted political life. One of the reasons the U.S. opposed the Katanga secession and stuck with Mobutu was because we believed the Balkanization of the Congo would create worse conditions for economic development and democracy than a unitary state.

Q: In Nigeria we were under a lot of pressure during the Biafran civil war just on that issue. We stuck to our guns on that and most of us in the Foreign Service believed in it.

PHILLIPS: The Africans had decided for themselves at the Organization for African Unity that a cardinal principle and iron rule of post-colonial life was to leave the old colonial boundaries alone. To do otherwise would open a Pandora's box because if you made changes in Zaire you would have to look at almost every other African country. The only time that I know of that this self-imposed rule was broken was when Ethiopia let Eritrea go and become and independent state, and there is still a Pandora's box potential in that arrangement.

Q: And Eritrea did exist on its own before. I thought we might stop at this point. Unless there is something else we should talk about.

PHILLIPS: I would just say on my career story at this point that I had two great first assignments. First I got to know Paris, saw how diplomacy works at a very high level and

observed a major Embassy's interaction with Washington. Then I went to a completely different world. Lubumbashi could not have been more different than Paris. Among other things it was a small post where we were "the United States." Our reporting was largely all that Washington had to go on and we felt a tremendous responsibility to get it right. During the rest of my career I alternated between these two extremes, between Europe and Africa.

Q: How much did the Soviet Union play a role in the thinking at the embassy in Kinshasa?

PHILLIPS: It was all-pervasive. Why else would the U.S. give massive aid to Mobutu when we knew that at best it was only partially used the way we wanted it to be? The question wasn't whether these funds would produce short term improvements, although we always hoped they would. The question was was this a good long term investment, a wise insurance policy. With twenty/twenty hind sight the answer is less clear, but at the time we believed Mobutu represented a lesser evil that a Soviet style dictatorship that well could have replaced him.

Q: We will pick it up again with your next assignment. Where did you go?

PHILLIPS: I went back to Washington and had a training assignment to study economics.

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Q: This is the 15th of July 1998. Now, Dan, you are coming back from where to go into economic training?

PHILLIPS: I came from a three-year tour in Zaire.

Q: When did you start this economic training?

PHILLIPS: I started in the summer of 1968. It was a six-month course. The course wasn't designed to make an officer a complete economist but to provide enough training so he or she could work competently on trade issues, for example. This was a short course in economic basics.

Q: What year was this?

PHILLIPS: This was 1968.

Q: How did you find this course?

PHILLIPS: It was exactly what it was advertised to be. It didn't make me a complete economist by any means, but I learned the basics and how economic analysis should be done. It helped me later as an Ambassador in judging how well economic officers on my staff were doing their jobs.

Q: In the last 1960s wasn't there a shortage of economic officers in the Foreign Service at this time?

PHILLIPS: I believe there was. This was why they designed the course.

Q: Where did you go after the training was finished, about Christmas time?

PHILLIPS: I had a departmental assignment. I first went into the Economic Bureau and worked on trade policy issues but I kept applying for a position in the office of Regional European Affairs (RPE).

Q: Within the Economic Bureau?

PHILLIPS: No, within the European Bureau. RPE monitored our relations with the European Economic Community. RPM, a sister office, monitored relations with NATO. I wanted to be in the European Bureau working on European Community issues. After three or four months a position came open and I got assigned there.

Q: Did you run across Francis Wilcox in the Economic Bureau?

PHILLIPS: Wasn't it Francis Wilson? She was the head of that bureau and I was not here favorite person by any means.

Q: Francis Wilson was the executive director and a very powerful person. She developed a core of economic officers that she fostered and watched over.

PHILLIPS: That is right and she did not see any reason why I should be transferred to the European bureau, but I didn't see any reason why I shouldn't try for a job I really wanted. Finally I won the contest of wills and was transferred to the European Bureau. But Francis Wilson never quite forgave me. She sort of kept an eye on my career and occasional I would hear that she had made caustic remarks about me.

Q: When were you in the European Bureau and what was the state of the common market at that time?

PHILLIPS: I was there from 1969 to 1971 and my responsibility was following relations with EURATOM. I worked closely with the AEC, the Atomic Energy Commission. Glen Seaborg was the chairman. This was an interesting if esoteric job. Our relations with EURATOM were mainly of interest to the AEC. Because I had this position and no one else in the State Department was too involved with EURATOM, I had very high-level access on a very narrow range of issues. I would go with Glen Seaborg, for example, when he called on the Undersecretary of State. Our office, and I think the State Department in general, believed that the EEC was a good thing for Europe and would eventually be a valuable trading and political partner for the United States. So we encouraged European unity. But on various issues this general approach would run into

opposition. For example, the U.S. opposed, for both non-proliferation and commercial reasons, the EEC's efforts to develop its own capacity to enrich uranium. We didn't want the EEC to become competitive with our enrichment plant at Oakridge, Tennessee.

Q: Let's talk about uranium. Was our concern making money or proliferation for the State Department?

PHILLIPS: It was both but I would say that far and away the biggest concern was proliferation. We had a plant at Oakridge, Tennessee that used the process of filtration to enrich uranium. The plant was several football fields long and the process was highly complex. The Europeans were working on a system to enrich uranium by centrifugal force. This would have made it possible to enrich uranium, the key element in nuclear weapons, in somebody's basement. The U.S. was trying to discourage the EEC from developing this new technology unless it could be safeguarded by the International Atomic Energy Agency, the IAEA. There were a lot of questions on the Hill about the effectiveness of the IAEA in monitoring and ensuring that uranium was used for peaceful purposes, and the EEC's efforts added to these concerns.

Q: Where was the pressure coming from? Who wanted what?

PHILLIPS: The IAEA wished the whole centrifuge thing would go away, but realized that it wouldn't. The AEC thought we should either provide the Europeans with a guaranteed supply of enriched uranium or go into a partnership with them to develop the centrifuge technology so that we would have some control over it. Public utilities also wanted to get into nuclear energy and that too played a role.

Q: As a State Department representative did you find yourself getting pressure from the Department of Commerce or Treasury who had different agendas?

PHILLIPS: Well, yes, but it was mainly the AEC. That agency took a different view of the emerging Common Market than the State Department, seeing it more as a threat that was evolving out of control. It was easier, they thought, to deal with the nuclear programs of France and England separately than with those of a super-state with multiple decision-making centers. There was never a bitter, antagonist fight. It was always recognized by the State Department that the AEC had the technical expertise. We had to try to strike a diplomatic balance between relations with EURATOM and the AEC so that tensions between the two didn't get out of hand and cause problems in our larger relationship with the EEC.

Q: What was your impression of the approach or philosophy of the EURATOM?

PHILLIPS: The European community has always been a mixed bag. The French wanted to be competitive with the United States across the board and eventually did become a middle-level nuclear power. The Dutch were involved in atomic energy for commercial reasons. Other EC countries realized that they couldn't compete with the United States as a nuclear power but they wanted a piece of the commercial action.

Q: Did you find yourself acting as the diplomat within the European Bureau with the people who were dealing with the common market because I take it that what was happening here was running off in a different direction?

PHILLIPS: Yes, very much so. I would have to sit down with my boss, Abe Katz, who was a wonderful economist and trade guy.

Q: Not Jules Katz, but Abe Katz?

PHILLIPS: Jules Katz was in the Economic Bureau. There were some pretty strong Europeanists in the European Bureau at that time. Art Hartman, Robert Schaetzel. They had been part of the early group that designed the Marshall Plan.

Q: They were really true believers.

PHILLIPS: They were true believers in the European Community. Stan Cleveland was one and so was Abe Katz. These officers wanted to encourage a strong Europe. Remember, this was not that long after the second world war. They sincerely believed the European Community was the best vehicle for channeling German energies in a more positive direction than had been the case after the first world war. So they were passionate believers in the benefits for Europe and the United States of a strong, united Europe. The AEC and some in Congress were more skeptical. They didn't exactly see Europe as a threat, except maybe from the AEC's point of view in terms of the spread of nuclear technology, but more as a commercial rival. On technology, the AEC feared the genie would be out of the bottle if a group of Europeans developed the centrifuge enrichment process. A lot of my effort was spent dealing with the AEC and explaining our policies, explaining AEC concerns within the State Department and working with the European Community to maintain a dialog.

Q: How do the Germans fit into this?

PHILLIPS: The Germans were of course part of the EEC but were reluctant to get involved in anything that had even a slight nuclear or military overtone. The EURATOM representative in Washington was a German named Kurt Heidenreich. He was made famous by the movie the *Longest Day*. There was one German plane that could not be shot down during the Normandy invasion and was constantly harassing the allied landing forces. Heidenreich was the pilot of that plane and his character was portrayed in the film. He personally provided technical advice for the film, but by then he was very pro-American. He became very popular in American Air Force circles. He represented the EEC in the ongoing U.S.-EURATOM debate, but more as a European bureaucrat than as a German.

Q: Were there any other major collisions during the 1969 to 1971 period?

PHILLIPS: No. Nixon was elected in 1968 and of course the main focus at that time was

Vietnam. Our relations with the EEC were steadily improving despite some seemingly intractable trade issues.

Q: Did the Soviet Union in the area of atomic energy play any role at that point?

PHILLIPS: Not directly. There was no difference between the AEC and EURATOM on the need to protect information and technology from the Soviet Union. The Soviet Union had its own capacity to produce enriched uranium.

Q: Was there concern about Israel, South Africa, Brazil and India?

PHILLIPS: Yes. There was an incident with a ship full of uranium, not yet enriched, that was supposed to be heading from a port in Holland to the United States and never got there. It just disappeared on the high seas. It was assumed that it went to Israel. The agency involved in tracking it was the IAEA, a UN agency. Its job was to ensure that enriched uranium that went to a non-nuclear power, for example India, was used for peaceful purposes. The IAEA was supposed to keep track of the uranium used in say a reactor at a university and ensure that the plutonium tails produced by the reactor were stored and classified and did not find their way into a weapons program. So when this ship disappeared that raised questions with the AEC about whether the IAEA could do its job.

Q: We had close ties with Israel at this time and did we not push as hard as we might if it had gone elsewhere?

PHILLIPS: The little I knew came from my dealings with the AEC which kept pointing to the incident as an example of the dangerous things that could happen, even with IAEA safeguards. I had the distinct impression that there was little interest within the United States government in finding that ship.

Q: You left there in 1971 and where did you go then?

PHILLIPS: Well, before I left I had an interesting experience. The Director General of the Foreign Service was a man named John Burns. He was a friend of a friend of mine from Paris named Perry Culley who was in the inspection corps. Burns told Culley he saw a problem in putting together an inspection team for Vietnam. At that time, through a program called CORDS, a number of young Foreign Service officers were stationed in remote areas of Vietnam where they worked with the military to try to win "the hearts and minds" of the Vietnamese people. They would be part of a five or six person team, usually consisting of one FSO and the rest military. These young officers had to be inspected like any other Foreign Service officer in Vietnam. Burns believed they were involved in work so different from traditional Foreign Service jobs that they would not relate well to traditional inspectors, normally older officers at the end of their careers. So the idea was to add two younger officers to the team. I was an FSO 4 at the time. So Burns through Culley got my name and the name of Charlie Higginson, another FSO 4, and they asked us if we would be part of the inspection team. It was a three month

assignment. Our responsibility was to inspect all the officers below the grade of FSO 4. We were assured we would have the same authority as any other team member.

Of course I accepted. The assignment lasted from mid-June of 1970 until the beginning of September. The inspection team leader assigned me the Delta and the Da Nang area in the north and Charlie got the central part of the country. We both inspected young officers at the Embassy in Saigon. I interviewed over 50 officers, saw a great deal of the country and met with people like the famous or infamous, depending on ones point of view, heretical ex-military leader John Paul Vann. I met with Ellsworth Bunker several times. It was a remarkable experience.

Q: I was Consul General in Saigon from 1969 to July of 1970 so we may have bumped into each other. I had some junior officers.

PHILLIPS: I remember Lange Schmermerhorn.

Q: I remember Lang. She is now an ambassador to Djibouti.

PHILLIPS: I have kind of followed her career.

Q: Let's talk about you going out into the field. What were you getting from the officers in the Delta?

PHILLIPS: It was varied, as you can imagine. It would depend on the officer, on what he was doing and how he related to the military. I remember one of them named Lacy Wright.

Q: I am interviewing Lacy now.

PHILLIPS: He was performing very well. He was doing things he would never have had a chance to do in a normal assignment. He had enormous responsibility, worked closely with John Paul Vann and was enjoying the job. Like most of these young officers, however, he was concerned about the dark side of Vietnam. He was keenly aware of South Vietnamese corruption and he sensed the futility of U.S. involvement. In other places I inspected, there was bad blood between the Foreign Service officer and his military colleagues. Teams that couldn't get along were worse than useless.

Q: This was about a year and a half after the Tet Offensive and it was as we were beginning a pullback of American troops. What was the picture you were getting at that time about what we were doing in Vietnam?

PHILLIPS: I had access to a lot of places that most non-military people rarely saw. I went by helicopter from Hue to Da Nang, flying low over a good part of the northern sector. Terry McNamara was Consul in Da Nang.

Q: Was Dick Moose there, too?

PHILLIPS: No. Moose wasn't there. I saw a lot of Vietnam even some newspaper reporters wouldn't have seen. I came to believe that the huge U.S. military presence was not effective. And there were social problems. Drug use and prostitution was endemic in Saigon. On the other hand, before I went to Vietnam I had been opposed to U.S. involvement, but when I got there I saw the war in terms of a sort of North Vietnam Sparta against a South Vietnam Athens. The southerners were corrupt and they didn't have the best management skills, but they didn't want to be dominated by the militaristic north. There should have been some way to reconcile the differences short of total domination by the north. I felt sympathy for the southerners. If you remember Saigon you remember the schoolgirls sort of flowing down the streets in their colorful school uniforms. It was somehow beautiful and touching. Saigon functioned fairly well despite the corruption. But it was clear that the Vietnamese would have to work out a solution for themselves. A continuing, massive U.S. presence was simply not viable a option.

Q: Did you see in later years a sort of Vietnam Veterans cadre developing within the Foreign Service?
PHILLIPS: I think a lot of officers had a very hard time after Vietnam adjusting to everyday working conditions. I followed Lacy Wright's career for a while. He went to London and it didn't work. To go from practically running civilian operations in the Delta to a normal embassy job was difficult. I kept in touch with some of the officers I inspected. But I don't think the Vietnam old boys network had much staying power. A larger, more influential network today consists of former Peace Corps volunteers.

Q: You left the European Bureau in 1971, right?

PHILLIPS: Yes, I came back from the inspection assignment in 1970 and worked in the European Bureau until the summer of 1971. Then I was assigned to Paris. It is interesting how that assignment came about. Allen Holmes followed internal French political affairs at the embassy, which is among the best jobs in the Foreign Service. Ambassador Arthur Watson, a political appointee who was a son of the founder of IBM, operated without any reference to State Department bureaucracy. He would only deal with Nixon and Kissinger and Rogers. He wanted to move Allen Holmes up from the internal job to be overall head of the political section. It violated personnel practice to move a middle-grade officer into a top Embassy position even at an ambassador's behest. But Ambassador Watson wanted Holmes for the job, so he simply moved him into it. Personnel was enraged and refused to fill the position Holmes had vacated. I got a call from Perry Culley, who by now was DCM in Paris, and he asked me to take the job. I spoke French and had just come from the successful Vietnam inspection assignment and Watson wanted me too. I have an iron rule of never saying no to Paris, so I accepted.

Q: When were you in Paris?

PHILLIPS: I arrived in the summer of 1971 and I stayed until the summer of 1975.

Q: You were in internal politics?

PHILLIPS: Yes, I did internal politics for two years. Do you remember the big student uprising in 1968 in France?

Q: In June of 1968.

PHILLIPS: I should begin by saying that the internal political position in Paris traditionally attracted good officers. Allen Holmes turned out to be a Foreign Service star. Other successful officers such as Wells Stabler and Dean Brown had the job. The attraction was the close contact with French politicians, journalists and intellectuals. The events of 1968 made it even more interesting. Washington did not want to be blind-sided by another massive uprising in France so the Department devoted more resources to following the French political scene. This meant more representation funds, which meant I could make extensive contacts within what the French call "la classe politique." As a result I became very knowledgeable about French politics. I was nominated for the Director General's reporting award for my analysis of the 1973 legislative elections, which I predicted the right-of -center parties would win. I called the election results accurately, within a two seats margin of error. A lot of people thought the Socialist would win that election. But I rightly predicted the right would hold on to power in 1973.

Meanwhile the United States was experiencing its own political upheaval because of Watergate.

Q: You are talking about the Watergate period.

PHILLIPS: The Watergate period. Sometime in 1973 Ambassador Watson got involved in some fracas with an airline stewardess. It got in the papers. I think he had been drinking too much. This was the sort of scandal the Nixon White House didn't need and Watson had to resign. He was replaced by John N. Irwin, who happened to be Watson's brother-in-law. Jack, as he was called, had married one of Watson's sisters. Jack was serving at the time as Undersecretary of State, working with Henry Kissinger who was Secretary. I don't know what the chemistry was between the two men or why exactly Jack left Washington, but he did accept the assignment to Paris. Shortly after he arrived he decided he needed an executive assistant who spoke French and knew his way around Paris and he offered me the job. I accepted with great reluctance because I really did not want to leave internal politics. But I accepted and spent my last two years in Paris as the Ambassador's executive assistant. First I worked in that capacity with Jack Irwin and then with Kenneth Rush, who President Ford named to replace Irwin when he took over from Nixon.

Q: Let's go back to the 1971-1973 period. Relations with France are unique. There is a theme that seems to run through these interviews among those who deal with the French of both admiration and terrible frustration. Here you were inside the monster. How did you find dealing with the French political class?

PHILLIPS: It was very pleasant. No matter how the French appear collectively to the outside world, individually they can be charming. The politicians, the journalists, the

academicians were by and large friendly. For example, I had lunch on several occasions with Jacques Chirac and with Francois Mitterrand. Of course they did not hold the positions then that they held later. Mitterrand was the leader of the Socialist opposition at the time and his chances of ever winning the Presidency appeared dim. He was happy enough to be invited to lunch by someone from the embassy. And so were other young socialists who eventually occupied positions of power. Chirac was an assistant to President Pompidou and he hadn't yet made it big on the national scene. The so-called centrist politicians were pro-American and were totally accessible. Only the communists were hard to see, and that was largely the fault of embassy policy.

Q: Was it because you weren't allowed to or you couldn't reach them?
PHILLIPS: You could reach them easily enough. And if you went through a tedious Embassy clearance process you could meet with them. But contact with the communists was mainly handled by the CIA. Everything was so predictable in those days you didn't gain a lot by taking a communist out to lunch. You knew you would get the party line. But the socialists were very open. The Gaullists were difficult on policy issues, but individually there were easy enough to get along with. Those most friendly towards the United States and the ones we worked most closely with were the parties of the center. The Radicals, the Giscardians, the Christian Socialists, and so forth - remember France has a multi-party system. The center parties were pro-European Community, less nationalistic than the Gaullist and more pro-American than the Socialists. They were critical of DeGaulle's decision to withdraw from NATO, for example. Neither the center-left nor the center-right was virulently anti-American, but both were suspicious of United States policies.

Q: Did you find the suspicion was the official policy or when you got to know them was there much interest in what we were doing?

PHILLIPS: No, not really. I could actually write a book on this. The French, since World War II, have had a terrible inferiority complex that often plays out in relations with the United States. France was genuinely opposed to what we were doing in Vietnam. But then no Europeans particularly liked our Vietnam policies. But in addition, the French did not want to see us succeed where they had failed. There was also a French tendency to side with third world countries because they saw them as underdogs. But at the same time most Frenchmen, regardless of party, were defensive about Algeria. Remember the French exit from Algeria in the early 1960s was a traumatic national experience. It caused a deep split in French society that nearly resulted in civil war. French politicians did not like to be reminded of Algeria and they certainly resented any comparison between their Algerian experience and America's Vietnam experience. So there was jealousy and some hypocrisy combined with the very real concern that U.S. dominance in world affairs would undermine French culture and its place in the world. The feeling was summed up by De Gaulle's insistence that the world acknowledge "a certain idea of France," which makes no sense to a non-Frenchman, but which resonates across all ideological lines in France. He was appealing to the French pride in France's history, to its sense of grandeur. But this said, France was part of the west as opposed to the communist east. The average Frenchman loved American movies and jazz, and most

French people were sincerely pleased to spend time with an American who spoke some French. So there was ambivalence about America, if not exactly a love/hate relationship, that still exists today.

Q: In regards to the Gaullists on NATO, was it implicate that the French thought that they could have independence from NATO but that if they needed help NATO would be there to protect them?

PHILLIPS: Well, they would not admit it in those words, but that was the case. DeGaulle had a policy he called "tout azimut" which meant that French missiles were aimed both east and west. The policy was meant to show that France believed in a threat from the United States as well as from the Soviet Union. But this policy didn't survive De Gaulle's departure. There was a feeling that the United States was a hegemonious power that poised a threat to French culture and influence. French policy accordingly was to try to weaken United States influence in general, but not to make it so weak that the U.S. could not defend Europe if needed. The official who most personified this approach was the Foreign Minister, Michele Jobert. Jobert, who was married to an American woman and knew America very well, was extremely difficult to deal with. He saw himself in competition with Henry Kissinger for attention on the world stage. He made life difficult for American diplomats. He was very critical of U.S. policy towards Europe and of course Vietnam. His attitude came partly from adherence to Gaullists ideology and partly from political ambition. He knew President Pompidou was ill and he thought that playing the anti-American card would make him popular enough to have a shot at succeeding him. He actually ran for president when Pompidou died but only got about three percent of the vote.

Q: What about on the left side? We had the Kissinger government. They were very suspicious of the Kissinger State Department. He was both NSC and Secretary of State. He was very leery of socialist governments in Europe. How did you find the socialists and what kind of emanations were you getting from the European Bureau about them?

PHILLIPS: Kissinger was fearful of the socialists throughout Europe, but especially in France. In France they could only win power through an alliance with the communists. Throughout this period the communists averaged about 20 percent of the vote in local and national elections. The socialist averaged less, but even if they were to win as much as thirty 30 percent of the vote they would still need communists votes for a majority. Kissinger was very upset when the Salazar regime fell to a socialist government in Portugal. He was prepared to do anything he could to thwart the left in France, but there was not much he could do. Until Mitterrand took over the socialist party no one seriously gave a socialist-communist alliance much chance of winning power. But Mitterrand was one of the most cunning, Machiavellian political leaders of the late 20th Century. In 1964, the socialist candidate for President got about five percent of the vote, and that's where the Socialists were when Mitterrand became party leader in 1965. He gradually made the Socialist party the largest party in France. He flirted with the communists but never actually let them get too close, and he used his formidable intelligence and debating skills to present a coherent vision of economic reform. He handled the

communists deftly, in effect slowly marginalizing them. Of course the communists were marginalizing themselves to a large degree by blindly supporting Soviet policies that were becoming more and more unpopular in France. By the time a left coalition won power the Socialists were dominate and the Communists were very much the junior partner.

Q: What year did the socialists come into power?
PHILLIPS: The socialists came into power for the first time in the early 1980s.

Q: Did you find that the communists being the running dog of Moscow, were not really a power to be reckoned with?

PHILLIPS: They held a unique position in French society for many years. The communist party was both a kind of religion and the main social organization for many working class Frenchmen. It was their support system when they got fired or became ill or needed money. It was very strong in blue collar districts. But nationwide it could never win more than twenty percent of the vote. While it was very unlikely that the communists would come to power in France on their own, they formed a large enough voting bloc in the National Assembly to be a force to be reckoned with, but reckoned with ironically more as a bogeyman than as a political partner. The Gaullists and the Centrists used the communist threat to argue that the left was unfit to govern, and this tactic worked until the economy changed dramatically. Blue collar workers started getting better salaries, working conditions improved, immigrants started doing the lion's share of hard menial labor. This lead to a less militant French work force and workers began to see their interests better served by the socialists than the communists.

Q: Were you reporting and watching the building efforts in the socialist ranks during your time there?

PHILLIPS: Oh, yes. We were following the socialists very carefully. We saw that they were beginning to make progress. We saw that Mitterrand was a consummate politician.

Q: While you were in France did you find yourself under pressure to explain American policy under Nixon and Kissinger? I would think the theme of their policies would be respected because the French always tried to look for themes.

PHILLIPS: I didn't deal with much the foreign office. I dealt with the politicians and the journalists. My contacts were interested in the game of French politics and they had little time for foreign policy issues. If we sat down to lunch and I said, "I saw Mitterrand on television last night," that would get them going and they would talk non-stop. Their only interest in U.S. policy was how it impacted on French politics.

Q: What about the French press?

PHILLIPS: The French press is quite different from the American press. Le Monde is the journal of record and while it tries to be somewhat neutral it has a pro-left slant. The rest

of the papers are party organs. Le Figaro is establishment Gaullist, for example, and Combat is socialist. You knew in advance exactly what line most papers would take on a given subject. The journalists I dealt with, political analysts such as Bernard Lefort, were the James Restons' of France. I had an expense account that allowed me to invite them to nice restaurants for lunch or dinner. They were very sophisticated and well aware of the inconsistencies in French policies. They were also quite cynical about the politicians. The politicians themselves were willing to explain their positions to me. There were never any shouting matches or acrimonious arguments, which might have been expected given the sometimes tense relations between France and the United States. But then I was dealing with party leaders, not rank-and-file hotheads. Speaking of my expense account, there was a family joke that my job description should be "lunch-eater" because I frequently invited people to lunch. When I got a promotion in 1992, someone at school asked my youngest daughter Catherine, who was seven or eight at the time, what I got promoted to and she said in all seriousness, "dinner-eater, I guess."

Q: This brings up another subject. You were dealing with these two groups, the political press and the politicians. Did you get involved with the French intellectuals?

PHILLIPS: I mainly dealt with people from the political class which includes some intellectuals. The political class consists of some several thousand people, mainly living in Paris. It includes the politicians themselves, political junkies that follow them, print, television and radio journalists and a few people from the universities. The ones from the university were really on the fringes. They would write analytical and historical books, but were less involved in day to day politics. I had contact with people like Philip Alexander, a prolific author and radio commentator, who was clearly an intellectual as opposed to a politician. But the kinds of intellectuals you may be thinking of, like Jean Paul Sartre, weren't among my contacts.

Q: Did you find any of this approach that I have found in looking at French movies, this Cartesian way of looking at things. Americans thinking this is the way it happened because it happened. The French think there is always a great plan behind events. Did this enter into the political scene at all?

PHILLIPS: Yes it did. I think without falling into the trap of characterizing a whole people one way or another one can say that some specific French character traits do exist. And such traits were pervasive among people I dealt with. For instance, if Kissinger so much as mentioned Africa in a speech, my French friends would study it, analysis it and ponder whether it meant America was about to challenge French influence in their former colonies. They would always see minor pieces of the puzzle as part of some master plan. I would explain that Kissinger's speech writer probably just wanted to get in a plug for Africa at the behest of someone in the State Department African bureau. But they would remain unconvinced.

Q: Given the events of June 1968 for internal politics were you looking at the students?

PHILLIPS: Yes, we were. We had contact with student groups. We had a program which

I think worked extremely well. It was managed by USIA and was called the leader grant program. Now I believe it is called the international visitors program. An embassy board selected young French leaders for one month travel grants to the United States. I was a member of the board and was able to nominate candidates. Because of my job a disproportionate number of my nominees were selected. Let's say we had 25 grants in a given year. Ten to 12 of those would be my nominees. I would try to pick young men and women who had been active student leaders. We hoped that exposure to the United States would give them a more realistic idea of America.

Q: What was your impression of what the French University was teaching? Was it pretty Marxist? Leftist?

PHILLIPS: The philosophy and history departments had a very left of center bent. The professors were strongly influenced by the intellectuals who emerged after World War II, many of whom were communists, or were deeply influenced by working side by side with communists during the resistance. The universities were a great strength of the left.

Q: You came a couple of years after the 1968 period. Were the student leaders following the same pattern that happens in other countries in that they were much less active after they left the university life?

PHILLIPS: Sure, because you have make a distinction between the regular universities and the Grandes Ecoles, such as Science Politique and ENA. Acceptance at one of these prestigious graduate schools automatically assures a promising career in government. A lot of the leaders of the 1968 student uprising were very bright and were co-opted into the elite graduate schools. Many of them ended up as high ranking government officials.

Q: What was you impression of how Dick Watson, the ambassador, dealt with the French government?

PHILLIPS: I don't have much insight into that. When he dealt with me, it was mainly about who was going to win the elections. Since I could tell him what he wanted to hear, that the Right would win, I always found him to be very congenial and jovial. I think he was very difficult for some people in the embassy to work with. He had a bit of a Jekyll and Hyde personality. At times he could be charming and he often showed genuine concern for his staff. He never spent a penny of his representation money. It all went to us so we were never out of pocket for our entertainment needs. He would give wonderful parties at the residence and make sure that junior officers were invited. But he could also be very difficult. I think he was frustrated because he wanted to run the embassy like a business, which really can't be done, and because the French were so often uncooperative. I don't think it was an especially happy time for him.

Q: Wasn't it Watson that told a Marine guard to chop down a tree?

PHILLIPS: That is a true story. Our administration officer was named Pete Skoufis, a wonderful person. He had one lapse in taste though. He bought this artificial tree that he

wanted to put in the beautiful entrance hall of the embassy. Of course security wasn't what it is today. People could actually walk into the embassy without going through security, but there was a marine guard on duty around the clock. The tree was made out of rubber or plastic and was supposed to look like a palm tree. Even from a distance though it didn't look real. I don't know why Pete bought the thing. He probably got it out of a catalog and thought it would liven up a dark corner of the entrance hall by the staircase. Well, Ambassador Watson hated the tree. Rumor had it that Watson would stay late sometimes and have a few drinks and maybe get a little tipsy. He hated the tree and came down the staircase one night and saw it standing there and on the spot ordered the Marine guard to take the fire ax and chop it down.

Q: Moving on to when Jack Irwin came and you were his special assistant. What was that like?

PHILLIPS: You have to understand that Jack was an entirely different kind of person than his brother- in-law, Dick Watson. He was a Rhodes scholar, a lawyer and a complete gentleman. He was from Iowa, and I think his family had some money, but nothing like the Watson money. He ended up in New York as a lawyer where he met and married one of the Watson girls. Just before he came to Paris his wife died, so he came as a widower. I guess she had died about a year before he came. He had a son and daughter in college, so he came by himself. He didn't speak French well and was not by nature a very outgoing or loquacious person. But he had great dignity. He was extremely pleasant to work for. I think his life in Paris was probably a bit lonely. He spared no expense to give wonderful dinner parties. He was just the opposite of the French stereotype image of an American. He wasn't brash or loud and he was always beautifully and conservatively dressed. He had the reputation of being one of the best ballroom dancers in New York society and women loved to come to his parties. He had the cache of being part of the IBM family. He was learning French and making real progress. But it was an especially difficult time because of Vietnam and Watergate. Relations with France were not improving. President Pompidou was still alive and Foreign Minister Jobert was Jack's main contact and, as I have noted, Jobert was a difficult man. Jack tried to introduce a more civil tone in U.S.-French relations, but he got little support from Nixon who was on his way out. Kissinger preferred to operate independently of the Embassy. If he had something to say to Jobert he would call him directly. Moreover, Jack didn't drink wine, which can be problematic in France. He did not have an easy time in France, but he made a valiant effort. I believe with time he would have been very successful. He was winning the respect of French leaders and he had a superb grasp of the issues.

Q: What was your role as special assistant?

PHILIPS: The Ambassador had his DCM and his political and economic counselors so I didn't get involved directly in formulating Embassy policy, but I did try to make sure the Ambassador saw the right people. I would go with him on most of his official calls. I tried to get him to meet politically attuned people so that he would understand the political dynamics of France. I did that too on the social side. I worked closely with Allan Holmes who was the political counselor, with John Condon who was the Labor Attaché

and with Jack Kubisch, and later Galen Stone, both of whom served as DCM. I helped Jack run his office so that he would be free to devote his time to substantive issues. Because we were often together, I was his closest confident in many ways. But I don't want to exaggerate the position. All of his top people were first rate and he worked closely with them.

Q: You left there in 1975 and was it hard to leave France?

PHILLIPS: I don't think it is important to dwell on this period but when President Ford took office he named Kenneth Rush as Jack's successor. Kenneth Rush never thought of me as his person. He had inherited me and replaced me as soon as he could, which was after about eight months. My last months in Paris weren't all that happy. It wasn't the same as working in the political section or working with Jack. Kenneth Rush didn't speak French. He had been Ambassador in Germany and before that the CEO of Union Carbide and before that Nixon's law professor at Duke. He was a southerner with a southern outlook on many things. He knew he needed me to interpret for him but he resented the fact that he needed me. It was not a good relationship. I was glad to go and he was glad to see me go. I went as DCM to Luxembourg.

Q: You were DCM from when to when?

PHILLIPS: I was there from July of 1975 to the late spring of 1978.

Q: Who was our ambassador at that time?

PHILLIPS: It was a woman named Ruth Louis Farkas. Her husband, George Farkas who is now dead, in fact both of them are now dead, played a minor role in the Watergate scandal. He was a very wealthy man who owned the Alexander department store chain in New York. He also owned properties in Brazil. When his wife was named Ambassador to Luxembourg he said publicly, "What, for $300,000.00, all I get is Luxembourg?" He bought the ambassadorship for his wife. She was a bright woman and had some talent and Luxembourg was not a very challenging place so she actually did all right. How he made the contribution became part of the Watergate investigation. At one time I actually had to serve a subpoena on him to appear in a U.S. District Court. He didn't take that too well but I really saw very little of him. He did not spend much time in Luxembourg.

I got along with Ruth Farkas very well. She was a kind of grandmotherly woman in her sixties. She had lost all interest in being ambassador by the time I got there. Nixon was gone and Ford was in the White House and Ambassador Farkas really wanted out. It was a delicate situation though. The person that her husband had paid off for the ambassadorship was a member of the House of Representatives from New Hampshire. He had resigned his seat and there was going to be a special election to replace him. The Ford Administration did not want Ruth to leave until after the election because getting her name in the papers would inevitably recall all of the Watergate stuff. I went into her office one day and found her in tears. She said "Dan, you know I have a beautiful house in Monte Carlo and an apartment in New York and George is never here and I want to

leave and the White House tells me I can't leave, what can I do?" I knew she had a good sense of humor so I told her to get George to give the Republican party another $300,000.00 and maybe they would let her go. She laughed.

As soon as the New Hampshire election was over she left. She was replaced by a political appointee named Rosemary Ginn who had been Republican chairwoman for the state of Missouri. She was close to Gerald Ford. She and her husband came and stayed on until after the elections in 1976 when President Carter won. In January as soon as he took the oath of office he let political appointees know they had to resign. Ambassador Ginn was gone by May. She was replaced by a career officer, Jim Lowenstein, whom you know.

Q: We took Serbian together along with Larry Eagleburger. Let's talk about the state of relations with Luxembourg during the 1975 to 1978 period. What were our main concerns?

PHILLIPS: We didn't have any serious bilateral issues with Luxembourg. We had an embassy there because it was a tradition. General Patton had liberated Luxembourg during the war and every year they celebrated "Patton Week." There is a large American military cemetery. It was a very pro-American country. What business we did have with Luxembourg was related to its membership in NATO and the European Community. I spent most of my time making sure that I understood what was going on in those arenas through my contacts with Luxembourg officials. Gaston Thorn was the prime minister. It was a Grand Duchy so there was a Grand Duke. As a Foreign Service assignment it was kind of a bird in a gilded cage. The work was boring but the social life was exceptional. There was the Grand Duke's court, the European Community institutions and the Luxembourg government. My wife and I had social engagements probably four out of seven nights a week.

There was only one time that the job became exciting. The presidency of the European Community rotated every six months among the member states. Kissinger and the EEC had worked out a deal that the state holding the presidency would be the focal point of diplomatic contact with the United States. This was an effort by the Europeans to stop Kissinger from using divide and conquer tactics vis à vis the Community. When Luxembourg was president for six months I happened to be chargé d'affaires and I was involved, at least in the sense of passing on information, in some very high-level discussions.

Q: I have a feeling talking to some others that this was one of the trickiest jobs for the DCMs as this has traditional been a political appointment for the ambassadors' job. You have to be very careful. Obviously you did it well but others haven't because you have a political ambassador and then a trained professional in as a deputy and it doesn't always work out.

PHILLIPS: That is right. I think maybe I was successful because the political Ambassadors I worked with were short term. I was with Ruth Farkas for about a year, then with Rosemary Ginn for another year and then with a first-rate professional, Jimmy Lowenstein, for my final year. With political ambassadors the DCM starts off as someone

who can do no wrong. He is their guide, leading them through the diplomatic minefield. But he is also telling them what to do, even who to invite for dinner. He speaks the language and often they do not. Now these are usually high-powered, successful people in their own fields and eventually the dependency causes resentment and tensions mount. Even if the Ambassador and DCM are personally compatible, tensions are built into the relationship. The DCM can also overstep the bounds and become a condescending twit. I tried to guard against it. My two political ambassadors were relatively easy to work with because they didn't have agendas of their own. They were just delighted to have the title of Ambassador.

Q: What about Rosemary Ginn? How did she operate?

PHILLIPS: She arrived totally unsophisticated about embassy operations. Before she left Washington she undoubtedly meet with President Ford who very likely told her he was counting on her in this very important post, and so forth. Then when she arrived she found that no one in the State Department above the Office Director level would even return her calls. At first political ambassadors think maybe they aren't doing the job right. I remember we went to the inaugural speech for the opening of Parliament. Gaston Thorn gave a very banal speech. Riding back in the car she said, "let's see if we can be the first ones to get this to Washington." I said " get what to Washington?" She said she had taken extensive notes and wanted to call in her secretary after hours to dictate a telegram. We ended up with fifteen pages. The desk office called me and said that he had gotten the thing over the weekend, that he was the only one who might possibly read it and that he didn't plan to read it. She was smart and she finally picked up on how things worked. She cultivated her relationships with Luxembougers and did a good job in building rapport with the Grand Duke. So she was happy enough to establish an active social routine and delegate day to day embassy business to me.

Q: What about Jim Lowenstein? Jim was a Foreign Service officer who worked with Senator Fulbright for some time.

PHILLIPS: He was probably the most overqualified person in the world for the Luxembourg job. He had been Deputy Assistant Secretary for European affairs. He knew NATO, he knew the Community and he spoke French. He was energetic and an activist. For some reason this was the Embassy he could get so he took it. He came out as a single person because he was divorced. He had a great rapport with Gaston Thorn. He was the first career ambassador assigned to Luxembourg since the war and the Luxembougers took his assignment as a compliment. He took the place by storm and would write these very thoughtful reports that were, of course, read only by the desk officer. He didn't need me or anybody else at the Embassy. He could have done the job entirely on his own. He took the boredom in good grace and did the best job he could. We got along very well. We split up what little work there was to do.

Q: The head of my organization, Association for Diplomatic Studies, is Ed Raul who later was ambassador to Luxembourg, had been ambassador to Portugal, said that one thing he concentrated on was Luxembourg as a banking center and its role in the financial

community. Is this something that you paid much attention to?

PHILLIPS: Yes, there was something like ninety banks in Luxembourg. It was kind of like offshore banking. However, once you had done a report on the banking sector, you had done the report. There wasn't much to follow up on. Believe me, they knew more in New York banking circles about what was going on in Luxembourg than we would ever know. Another major industry was steel and we reported on that. It wasn't really of great significance at that time.

Q: I take it you were ready to go by 1978?

PHILLIPS: By 1978 I was ready to go. I had been out of the United State since 1971. I had worked for Dick Watson, Jack Irwin, Kenneth Rush, Ruth Louis Farkas and Rosemary Ginn, five political appointees in almost as many years. I did not want another job as DCM. I had a good shot at DCM in Dublin but I didn't pursue it. I would have been sure to get a political ambassador and I did not want to go through that again. I did not want to go back to Washington either because my son Michael was in college and daughters Madolyn and Catherine were in boarding school and I needed a few more years abroad to get my finances in order. The Department was understanding. They gave me credit for having worked with all those political ambassadors. But I was too junior for an embassy of my own. So I went back and forth with personnel. There was nothing open that really appealed to me in Europe. But there was one post available that looked interesting. It carried the title of Chief of Mission but not Ambassador. It was in a small country in Africa called the Gambia and it was nothing more than a sliver of land in the middle of Senegal. It has a land surface about 20 miles wide on both sides of the Gambia river and its capital Banjul is a port on the Atlantic ocean. The chief of Mission in the Gambia at that time served under the nominal aegis of the U.S. Ambassador in Senegal but in fact operated more or less independently. It was also a 25 percent differential post.

Q: Which means you make 25 percent more of you salary.

PHILLIPS: Unless you bump into a salary cap. You can never make a higher salary than a congressman. But for various reasons and because a friend of mine named Hank Cohen was Ambassador in Senegal the Gambia looked like a fit. I had a two-year assignment in this beautiful little country. My residence overlooked the Atlantic ocean and I could walk down to a pure white sandy beach. The people were friendly and the climate was great. But talk about a bird in a gilded cage! It was an English speaking country and it had gotten some publicity because in Alex Haley's "Roots" he traced his ancestry back to the Gambia. Some black American tourists came ever year and the country was a favorite of the Congressional Black Caucus. Jimmy Carter's mother came out to visit and that was a major event. But there was very little substantive work to do. Luxembourg was a hub of bilateral activity compared to the Gambia. It was just off the face of the map. I did get the experience of managing a post with quite a few people. There was a large Peace Corps contingent and an AID mission with a budget of five or six million dollars a year. The President was named Dawda Jawara. He liked to play golf so I played golf with him once a week. He made a rule that we wouldn't speak about business on the course. But when I

wanted to talk to him about business his aides would remind me I had just played golf with him and ask why I needed to see him again.

Q: From 1978 to 1980. What sort of government did Gambia have?

PHILLIPS: It was a functioning democracy that regularly held elections. But the difficulty is that Africans tend to vote their tribal affinity. Since the Mandinka tribe was 60 percent of the population the Mandinka candidate always won. So the dilemma was that democratic procedures produced a one-party state. Eventually there was a coup d'état and the police force took over, but that happened about 18 months after I left. The post was also upgraded to full embassy status after I left.

Q: Did you get involved in the UN vote? Going out and saying please vote this way.

PHILLIPS: Sure, if I got a telegram with instructions that is what it was about. I would meet with the foreign minister and we would go through a little bird dance. He would say he understood our point of view, but please tell Washington the Gambia has to vote with the UN African group. I would ask him to take a special look at this particular issue and he would promise to do so. I must have had that same conversation with him fifty times and of course the Gambia always voted with the African group.

Q: What about the Peace Corps?

PHILLIPS: It was a large group for a small country, about sixty volunteers. One Peace Corps volunteer got raped on the beach but there were no other unfortunate incidents. For the most part the volunteers did their job as agricultural experts or health assistants or small business advisors. From watching the Peace Corps in action it is my opinion that the volunteers are the real winners. They contribute to the economic and social development of a country in a marginal way, but the experience profoundly enriches their lives.

Q: What about AID?

PHILLIPS: There was an AID Mission with a director and a few people working for him. My handling of AID was based on the belief that the AID officers knew what they were doing and didn't need much supervision. They did a very routine job. There was an agricultural program and some road building and participation in a lengthy study of a dam that somehow never got built. It was useful but not terribly exciting.

Q: I thought we might quit here and pick up in 1980.

PHILLIPS: In 1980 I returned to Washington for an assignment at the National War College. But prior to the War College there was an interlude in my career that is worth discussing. It was similar to my Vietnam experience as an inspector in that it was totally off the wall. During the two months in the summer between the time I got back to Washington and the start of the War College I worked with a delegation that was

preparing to go to the UN International Women's Conference in Copenhagen. I ended up as political advisor to the delegation. That was my first experience with an international conference and with women's issues. It was a fateful eight weeks assignment.

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Q: Today is the 22nd of July 1998. Dan, will you talk about the women's conference and your interest in it?

PHILLIPS: 1980 was an election year and Jimmy Carter was President. The International Women's Conference in Copenhagen had its origins in the 1975 UN Woman's Conference in Mexico City which had designated the years 1975-85 the "UN Decade for Women." The delegates in Mexico City decided there should be a follow-on conference in 1980, at mid-decade. It was a full-scale international conference with all member states participating. I knew nothing about the issues and I had no experience with international organizations. My background was in Europe and Africa, dealing with political and economic issues. The reason I was chosen to help with the conference was simply that I was available. I had nothing to do before the War College started, since I left the Gambia in May and the War College stared in August. I was a political officer and personnel thought it wouldn't be that hard for me to bone up on conference issues. The woman who was organizing preparations for the conference was named Vivian Derryck. Today she is head of the African Division at USAID. She is a very intelligent, personable black woman and we hit it off immediately. I wanted to help her insofar as I could. There were some really incredible women on the delegation. It was led by Sara Wedington who was the lawyer who had argued Roe versus Wade before the Supreme Court. It included Alexis Herman who is the present Secretary of Labor. The delegation consisted of 36 women and there were only two men, myself and a young officer who worked for the International Organizations Bureau of the State Department.

I was detailed to Vivian's office to help prepare for the conference. She eventually asked me to join the delegation and go to Copenhagen, which I did. The experience was a real eye-opener. These were high-powered, politically well-connected women. Some were chosen because they represented one or another feminist constituency, others because they were close to the Carter White House. There was also an unofficial Alternate Conference in Copenhagen for non-governmental organizations which drew the likes of Betty Friedan and Bella Abzug. I learned very quickly not to make light remarks or jokes that might seem even remotely sexist. I also learned that these highly accomplished women were out of their element at a UN conference. They had achieved incredible success in their fields, for example the law or human rights or labor, but they had no familiarity with UN rules and procedures and we got beat up pretty badly at the Conference.

Two major issues were always contentious at UN conferences in the 1980s: The Arab-Israeli conflict and South Africa. The Middle East conflict played out in the UN in a war of words. The most egregious blow to Israel was a formula adopted at the Mexico City conference that equated Zionism with racism. In any resolution proposed on any aspect of

the Middle East conflict, the word Zionism was added to a litany of isms to be condemned, such as colonialism and racism. The Israelis wanted that formula eliminated at all costs.

Democratic change had not yet occurred in South Africa. Mandela was still in jail. Prime Minister Botha was still very much in power. Most of the nations of the world wanted to go farther than the United States in condemning the apartheid regime. So the good work that women delegates would achieve on employment, education and health care issues would be undone by irreconcilable differences on highly charged Muddle East and South Africa issues. For example, female circumcision was practiced in some African countries and the conference gave African women the opportunity to focus world attention on what is really a rather brutal and unhygienic form of genital mutilation. The women delegates would propose resolutions condemning the practice and then see them side-tracked by squabbling over unrelated political issues. The U.S. delegation worked hard to get its positions on the non-political issues reflected in the overall conference document that had to be approved unanimously to have maximum impact, but when it came time to vote on the document the Arab states inserted a paragraph in the preamble with the standard language equating racism and Zionism. So I spent all night before the vote working with the Indian representative, who represented the group of non-aligned countries at the conference, trying to find compromise language for the preamble. But we didn't succeed. In 1980 OPEC was at the height of its power and the Arab states had no qualms about embarrassing the United States in a UN forum. Many UN member states assumed that Arab money would replace U.S. funds if the United States was pushed too far. In that political context it was impossible to get rid of the Zionism/racism language. When the overall conference document, including the offensive preamble, was put to a vote in the final plenary session the vote was 118 for, 3 opposed. The United States, Canada and Israel opposed. The European Community countries abstained. The women on our delegation badly wanted to support the substance of the document but we had to vote against the whole thing because of the preamble.

Q: How did this vote work anyway? In the first place, South Africa we were willing to vote against?

PHILLIPS: On South African resolutions we found an acceptable compromise formula.

Q: But the Zionism thing, a lot of the women leaders were Jewish. Gloria Steinem, Betty Friedan and others. I would have thought that many women would have said to forget that. Who ended up voting?

PHILLIPS: It was an instructed delegation and we had little leeway. Sara Wedington was on the phone with President Carter and Secretary of State Muskie to see if there could be any flexibility in our policy. Everyone tried to find a way around the racism/Zionism language but Middle East issues were critical for the United States. The Jewish women on the delegation were the most adamant in not giving an inch. So it was a deal breaker. All the other delegations were under instruction, too. And the American women were not the only ones who went away disappointed.

Q: In a way this showed a certain lack of power. You could have this women's' conference but it boiled down to men like Jimmy Carter or the men who were calling the shots in the capital of each country, telling them how to vote?

PHILLIPS: Sure, but that is true of any UN conference. No delegation to a UN conference can change U.S. policy on important questions at the conference itself. At Copenhagen we argued that it was inappropriate to try to resolve or even deal with Middle East issues at a conference on health, education and employment issues of special concern to women. But the Arab states did not agree. You have to remember that many Arab states felt threatened by the very notion of a conference devoted to women's issues and they had no qualms about poking a stick in the spokes. A lot of the women on the delegation cried when we cast our negative vote. It was an experience that was utterly exhausting. The lesson I learned from it and tried to apply later when I worked in the International Organizations Bureau was that every U.S. delegation needs an expert on UN procedures. Even with the best UN specialist in the world we might not have succeeded at Copenhagen, but we might have comported ourselves a little more professionally.

Q: What was your impression of some of the other delegations? I assume they were all women?

PHILLIPS: This was the 1980s and a woman was at the head of every delegation, but there was always a man lurking in the background who represented the political side of things to see that they didn't throw the baby out with the bath water. The way the UN system works is that once you have agreed on the language in a resolution at any conference it becomes like a precedent in law. It is very hard to undo once you have agreed by unanimous consent to a formula. Whether it is racism or Zionism or some formula on South Africa. But in spite of the setback, women at that conference went on to bigger things; one become the Prime Minister of Norway; others used it as a springboard for successful careers in other fields.

Q: Did you see much bonding or networking between the American women and other women?

PHILLIPS: Absolutely. The International Organizations Bureau of the State Department turned out to be my assignment after the War College. So I was able to track the careers of some of the women at the conference. There were friendships made, contacts made and networks formed that still exist to this day. The result is that a world-wide women's agenda is taking shape, despite a world of largely male-dominated governments. For example, all over the world the practice of female genital circumcision is now under attack. In the old days, African governments tended to call the practice traditional and allowed people to keep on doing it. Today that is changing.

Q: I am trying to capture slices of time. In 1980, here you are going off to a women's conference and when you came back did you catch any feeling about how the powers that be in IO and the State Department felt towards these women's things?

PHILLIPS: President Carter was a strong proponent of the equal rights amendment and he was eager to see the conference succeed. He tried to appoint the best women to the delegation but he was probably the only man in Washington who was terribly concerned about it. When I got back and told people what I had been doing it provided endless occasion for jokes about me and a thirty-six woman delegation. In those days the women's movement was still kind of a boutique phenomenon. It hadn't had much impact. You had writing by Betty Friedan and others, but the women's movement was still in its infancy.

Q: You came back and went to the War College and were there from 1980 to 1981.

PHILLIPS: Yes, that is a one-year program. I was a student. The War College is mainly for military officers, promising ones who are on their way to becoming generals or admirals. They send them for senior training to various military colleges, of which the National War College, today called the National Defense College, is the most prestigious. It brings the services together, along with a handful of civilians. In my class of about one hundred and eighty students, five or six were from the State Department, several from USIA and AID and one or two from other agencies. It was like a sabbatical year that let you catch up on reading and pursue intellectual interests that you may have neglected, but there were classes and seminars as well. The year was designed to bring people from various backgrounds together. I meet men and women from the military and formed some close friendships. It changed my perception of the military.

Q: You were there in 1980 during the election between Carter and Reagan. How did that resonate in the War College?

PHILLIPS: Well, I wasn't there long before Reagan won the election. I went in late August and the elections were in November. I would say that the military, even in those days, was largely Republican in sympathy. They believed Reagan would bolster the defense department budget, which of course he did.

Q: Was there a feeling you got that the military had reached a low point and had been starved and were recovering from the post Vietnam era?
PHILLIPS: They was a felling that the worst was over. They had a couple of bad experiences during the Carter era, most notably the failed hostage rescue mission in Iran, and the military appeared to be rethinking its mission. The prevailing sentiment, just like after Korea, was "no more Vietnams." Sometimes we had war games with scenarios that forced the students to decide whether to send in troops. It was amazing that the military students were the ones who held back while we in the State Department were all for sending in the Marines. Just the reverse of what you might have expected.

Q: In 1981 you went to IO, International Organizations?

PHILLIPS: In 1981 I went to the International Organizations Bureau. Back then we had a bidding process but it wasn't very highly developed. You got your assignment by asking around about what was available. I never applied for a job in IO and had no intention of

doing so. My experience at the Women's Conference was all I wanted of the UN. It was not the kind of diplomacy I was used to. A friend of mine named Nicholas Platt, however, was the IO Deputy Assistant Secretary. The Assistant Secretary, Eliot Abrams, was a political appointee. Platt said he had this office director position open and needed somebody he could trust because a lot of the new Reagan appointees saw the Foreign Service as the enemy. Now that wasn't true of Eliot Abrams. He was a very personable and sympathetic person to work for. But a lot of Reagan appointees who came into IO were basically opposed to the UN. My opinion is that the Reagan team saw that it would not be possible to enact much of the social agenda favored by the social conservatives in the Republican party. That would have complicated the possibility of pushing through the fiscal conservative's agenda of cutting taxes and building up the military. There was just so much Reagan could do with a Democratic congress. He calculated, I believe, that he could as least give the social conservatives something in international relations by putting pressure on the UN. Nobody in the Reagan administration thought much of the UN. It didn't have many advocates.

So Nick Platt called me and I was due for a Washington assignment. You are always better off to go where you are wanted in the Foreign Service, so I agreed. Nick gave me a handful of issues that no one else wanted because they were all rather unpopular. I served in IO from the fall of 1981 until the summer of 1984. I was responsible for relations with UNESCO, women's issues, youth and sports - important because the Los Angeles Olympics were coming up- and freedom of information issues. Within the UNESCO context controversy centered on the old Zionism/racism formula, but also on something called the New World Information Order. This was a third world effort to curb the power of the western press and was regarded as a direct and serious threat by the American media establishment. They saw it purely and simply as an effort to muzzle journalists around the world. There were hot button issues in all of my areas and it took a great deal of professionalism at international conferences to steer U.S. delegations through the various political and ideological minefields they represented. Eventually the United States got out of UNESCO. We left after the UNESCO General Conference in 1983, in spite of my personal opposition to leaving.

There were some dangers professionally for me during this time because I often had to take stands that were not popular with right wing, anti-UN advocates within and outside of the Reagan Administration. I survived in large part because of a friend and ally I made at that time in the person of Nancy Clark Reynolds. Her father had been a senator from Idaho and she had grown up in Washington. She moved to California where she served as Reagan's press spokesperson when he was governor. She had been one of the first woman television anchors in the LA area and Reagan used to watch her and eventually recruited her to work for him. She is a very attractive person and is basically non-ideological. She just had tremendous respect for Ronald Reagan. She worked for him throughout the period he was governor and then she and a woman named Helene Van Damm continued to work for him in his early campaign for the presidency. She and Helene handled most of the advance work at that time; making travel arrangements, scheduling appearances and so forth. She was very close to both the President and Nancy Reagan. When Reagan was elected, Nancy Reynolds did not want a full time job in the

administration. So President Reagan made her the U.S. Commissioner on the Status of Women at the UN, a part time job that took her to Washington and New York every couple of months. I worked with her in that capacity, and we got along famously. She introduced me to other people in the Reagan administration, like Helene Van Dame, who eventually went on to become the U.S. Ambassador to Austria. Through Nancy I also became friends with Ed and Ursula Meese: Ed, as you know, became Reagan's Attorney General. These people did not actively intervene politically on my behalf, but the fact that I had social contact with them insulated me to a degree from right wing sniping. And I did make enemies within IO. For example, I thought it would make more sense to work for reform within UNESCO rather that withdraw from the organization. But many in IO disagreed vehemently.

The IO assignment took me to a number of interesting conferences, for example the 1982 UNESCO Cultural Conference in Mexico City. That was a fascinating experience. There our main antagonist was France, which took the lead in condemning "Coca-Cola culture." A member of the delegation, Alan Weinstein, and I anticipated difficulties at the conference so we devised a plan to put the best possible U.S. foot forward. Instead of a major production, like sponsoring a one night performance of the Boston Symphony orchestra to showcase American culture, we invited five prominent Americans to be cultural consultants to the delegation. They included the author James Michener, Marta Estomin, who was Pablo Cassal's widow and the artistic director of the Kennedy Center, Billy Taylor the jazz musician, a philosopher from Harvard and someone whose name escapes me representing the visual arts. We rented a hospitality suite at the hotel where most of the delegates were staying and opened it for cocktails and informal meetings every evening. Our cultural representatives were always there and by the third night of the conference our hospitality suite had became one of the main attractions. Everybody came. For example, the Mexican poet Octavio Paz came and had an informal debate with Michener. It was a huge success.

Q: What were the French trying to do?

PHILLIPS: There was a Socialist government in France by this time, early 1982. The French minister of culture, whose name was Jacques Lange, was a darling of the left wing of the party. He was using the conference to play to his constituency back home. Maybe deep down he did believe that French culture was being overwhelmed by American culture, for example by Hollywood. But the other delegates really didn't want to get involved in choosing between French and American culture. They wanted to focus on other issues; for example copyright and intellectual property laws. It wasn't just a feel good conference, there were hard issues. In the end I believe Lange's performance was rather an embarrassment for France.

I went to Tashkent to a conference on the so-called New World Information Order. This was an idea that was making its way through UNESCO and other UN agencies, essentially contending that the Western definition of press freedom was inappropriate for the third world. This conference was held in 1983, a period when OPEC was still in the ascendancy and when the third world appeared to have a strong ally in the Arab states. The non-aligned states contended that economic development was of overriding

importance to them and that divisive aspects of democracy like press freedom got in the way of national unity and hence economic development. The U.S. and Western Europeans countered that freedom of the press and democratic liberties in fact promote economic development. The New World Order rhetoric absolutely drove American journalists nuts. They viewed it as a direct attack on everything they held dear. The World Press Freedom Committee, which was headed Leonard Marks, a former director of USIA, and Leonard Suskin, the director of Freedom House, closely monitored these conferences to ensure that the U.S. made no concessions, not even minor ones. The Information Order was a companion piece to another concept that was also pervasive at the UN during this period, "The New World Economic Order" which called for the global redistribution of wealth. Third world countries were basically trying to achieve politically what they were unable to achieve economically, in large part by playing the U.S. against the Soviet Union. The Cold War was at its height, and in addition to endless UN debates on South Africa and the Middle East, every UN meeting brought into play in one way or another Soviet-U.S. rivalry. The U.S. side would introduce a resolution calling for the right of self determination for all peoples. The USSR would counter with a resolution condemning United States colonialism in Puerto Rico.

So this was the setting when I went to Tashkent as political advisor to a small U.S. delegation to a conference on the New World Information Order. The day we arrived in Moscow the Russians shot down the civilian Korean airliner that allegedly strayed into USSR airspace. We got to Tashkent and Arthur Hartman, who was the U.S. Ambassador in Moscow at that time, called me on the phone.

Q: What was this Tashkent?

PHILLIPS: Yes. We were in Tashkent. I was the political advisor and the head of the delegation was a woman named Diana Lady Dougan. So Ambassador Hartman called me and said that as part of the sanctions against the USSR for having shot down the South Korean airliner American officials could not fly on Aeroflot. I said "Mr. Ambassador, we are in the middle of Central Asia, we can't go overland back to Moscow or south to China or Afghanistan, so how can we get out of here without flying on Aeroflot?" He said to figure something out. I didn't worry about it because I knew the only way to get out was on Aeroflot. Finally, we flew Aeroflot to Moscow and took a train to Helsinki and then flew Scandinavian Air to Washington.. That is really all we could do and the Embassy had to look the other way.

Our delegation was a group of about 10 people. We were assigned a small meeting room where we would meet and discuss strategy. We were upset because there were no Western newspapers available, only a Soviet paper translated into English. Yet we knew that planes were coming in and that the Herald Tribune and Le Monde and other papers should be available. One day we were sitting in our meeting room, which we assumed was bugged, and Diana Dougan proposed in a loud voice that if we didn't have newspapers in the delegate's lounge the next morning we should walk out of the conference. She put it to a vote and we all agreed very vocally. The next morning the newspapers were there.

Q: Could you talk about what was the problem with UNESCO and how you dealt with it and also how these hard liners of Reaganauts?

PHILLIPS: Shortly after I began my assignment in the Bureau of International Organizations in 1982, Elliot Abrams became Assistance Secretary for Latin American Affairs. At the same time his deputy, Nick Platt, was named Ambassador to Zambia. The Secretary of State also changed with George Shultz replacing Alexander Hague. A very inexperienced, young political operator from the White House named Gregory Newell replaced Abrams as IO Assistant Secretary and he came with the hidden agenda, I believe, of getting the United States out of as many UN organizations as possible. He would identify the U.S. goal as improving efficiency or reducing the budget, but I am convinced he was really trying to reduce our presence in the UN. He was smart enough to realize there were some organizations we couldn't leave, such as the IAEA, because of our vital stake in effective nuclear safeguards. Others, like the International Labor Organization or the World Health Organization had domestic constituencies that were too strong. But there was no strong constituency for UNESCO. It had the support of some university people, but even in intellectual circles it was not terribly popular. To be frank, UNESCO was badly managed. It was a top heavy bureaucracy that spent ninety percent of its budget in Paris headquarters and only 10 percent on actual projects in the field.

Q: Who was the head of it?

PHILLIPS: A Senegalese man named Mahtar M'Bow.

Q: And he was sort of a bête noir to an awful lot of people, even those who like the United Nations?

PHILLIPS: He was. Although he could be very personable, his style and some of his policies put people off. He was an African intellectual and of course French speaking. Earlier, UNESCO had developed a reputation as a place where anti-Israeli sentiment was strong and it was the home of the New World Information Order. M'Bow, perhaps unfairly, got blamed for some of the things that were really done at the direction of an overwhelming majority of member states. In any case, M'Bow was difficult to remove because he had the African group behind him and it is the largest group of states in the UN system. The United States didn't like M'Bow but couldn't get rid of him. When Newell became Assistant Secretary he targeted UNESCO as a prime example of a UN organization we could do without. My position was that we shouldn't abandon an organization that, however inefficiently, dealt with important cultural and educational issues. I thought we would be leaving the field to radical member states that could do great damage if their positions were allowed to prevail without being at least seriously challenged. For example, I thought we would do better to oppose the New World Information Order by staying in and fighting for our values rather than abandoning the field to the enemies of press freedom. For many of the same reasons the Israeli Ambassador argued against the U.S. getting out. He wanted us to stay in and help stave off attacks on Israel. Our European allies had no intention of leaving UNESCO and they

too hoped we would stay in. The United States had a unique leadership role to play and I thought we could only play it by hanging in and hanging tough on the contentious issues. So I had a major policy difference with Newell. Of course Newell was my boss and he ultimately called the shots. In 1983 the UNESCO General Conference became the focal point of our disagreement. The Conference had to adopt UNESCO's budget for the next two years and the U.S. position was that there should be zero budget growth. Most other countries wanted growth that at least reflected inflation. We had other substantive priorities we were pushing at the conference, and again I was the main political advisor to the U.S. delegation, and we were successful in getting them approved. The head of the delegation was a former Mobile Oil executive named Edmond Hennelly. He had no diplomatic experience but he was smart and tough and we worked well together. We won a huge victory on the New World Information Order in that all of the objectionable, anti-western rhetoric was deleted from the Conference recommendations. M'Bow was prepared to accept our position on the budget, too, but at the last moment the Scandinavians came up with a compromise they thought would help. They offered a resolution that split the difference between our "no growth" position and the two percent growth favored by M'Bow. They didn't realize the U.S. under Newell's leadership really wanted an excuse to leave UNESCO. The Scandinavian formula finally was negotiated down to budget growth of one half of one percent. But that was not "zero growth" and when the budget was adopted over our objections it was all the excuse Newell needed. He argued that M'Bow had failed to meet our conditions and a few weeks later the White House announced that we were pulling out of UNESCO.

By the beginning of 1984 we were out of UNESCO. The move was applauded by the Washington Post and the New York Times. We no longer had to pay the 50 million dollars annual dues but we also had no voice in UNESCO debates. I see no movement at this time to return to the organization. There is still no UNESCO constituency in the United States.

Q: What kind of affect did that have on UNESCO?

PHILLIPS: By 1983 there was a strong internal effort afoot to reform UNESCO. The world was changing. OPEC was just beginning to lose some of its clout. The Soviet Union was beginning to weaken. So ironically the U.S. left just as UNESCO member states were prepared to undertake serious reform. M'Bow was replaced by a highly respected Spaniard, a technocrat, named Meyer. He is still the head of UNESCO and has done everything except jump through hoops to get the United States back in. But neither the Reagan nor the Bush administration responded favorably. I think the first Clinton administration seriously considered rejoining in 1994 but the Democrats lost control of Congress and action on UNESCO was put on the back burner.

Q: Did Newell have a tendency to get everyone together and give long lectures which didn't sit very well?

PHILLIPS: I don't remember that but he was young and sort of brash. He was a very pious Mormon and was happy to surround himself with people who shared his right wing

ideology. He brought political appointees into IO who were completely unqualified.

Q: Did you and other sort of professionals have to keep an eye on these people during delegations to make sure they didn't sail off on their own and spout their own agenda?

PHILLIPS: Yes, the dynamics were very interesting because delegations to major conferences consisted of 25 to 35 people recruited by the White House. They were told they had an important mission, but in fact their role was extremely limited. For example, only one or two delegates could attend plenary session meetings because there were at most three seats at the table for each member state. The head of the delegation would occupy one seat along with an advisor and one other person. The rest of the delegates would be in other meetings or supposedly lobbing delegates from other countries, and they felt left out of the action. This adds to tensions between advisors and political appointees on a delegation. The latter are usually highly successful people in their own fields and they believe their talents are not being used. Career Foreign Service officers serve as convenient lightening rods for this sort of resentment. In my experience, many political appointees were also reluctant to accept policy guidance formulated by the State Department: They thought they knew better what the "President really wanted."
Q: What about the sports issues? We had boycotted the 1980 Olympics because of the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan. This was very controversial because it was being held in Moscow. The Soviet were boiling mad at us. You were looking forward to the 1984 Olympics. How did that play out for you? Did you get involved in this?

PHILLIPS: I did to some extent at first. What actually happened was that the organizers of the Los Angeles games were very efficient and quickly saw they could handle most issues without going through the State Department. So I sat in on some early meetings. But after a while issues such as whether the Soviets could have a ship offshore to house their athletes rather than put them in hotels became moot or were resolved without much input from me.

But other youth issues had an ideological tinge because the Reaganites thought we ought to be doing more with young people around the world. I was involved in a Free World Youth Conference we organized in Jamaica to counter the sort of youth jamborees the Soviets held annually.

But the main substantive issues I worked on during my time in IO concerned press freedom, UNESCO and women. Somehow women's issues had a way of staying with me. To jump ahead a little let me say that when I left Washington in 1984 I went to Casablanca as Consul General. Now the Copenhagen Women's Conference decided to hold a final "end of the decade" conference in 1985. I was in my office in Casablanca one day and when I got a call from Maureen Reagan, President Reagan's daughter. She said she had been appointed head of delegation for the 1985 conference in Nairobi, Kenya. She knew of my work in Copenhagen and asked me to come with her to Nairobi. That was my last hurrah as far women's issues were concerned: Serving as political advisor to Maureen Reagan in Nairobi for three weeks in the summer of 1985.

Q: Can you talk about that conference and Maureen Reagan's leadership and what issues were at that conference, how it went and the dynamics of it?

PHILLIPS: The dynamics were identical to the ones in Copenhagen, as were many of the issues. Of course the Republican women had a different take on some of the social issues, for example family planning and abortion. But the political issues hadn't changed. There was still tension with the Soviet Union. There was still the language on Zionism and racism. One major difference was that the conference was being held in a third world country, and Daniel arap Moi, Kenya's President, did not want the conference to fail. He did not want the daughter of the President of the United States to walk out. So coming to terms with third world leaders there was a little easier. On the other hand, Maureen Reagan was very difficult to work with. She could be charming one minute and throw a temper tantrum the next. You never knew which mood you were going to get. She was extremely bright and knew exactly what she was doing. She was able in the end to prevail. The litmus test for success was the U.S. signing off on the final report and recommendations of the conference, which we did. Maureen went to President Moi and told him the Zionism/ racism language had to be deleted from the report, including the preamble, or the U.S. would walk out. Moi found a way to do that by rallying the full support of the Africa group at the conference. The Arab States protested but went along in the end because they did not want to embarrass their African colleagues.

Q: I would have thought that as the political advisor it must have been difficult to be the professional with Maureen? Was your job on the line everyday?

PHILLIPS: Well, it was. But Nancy Reynolds and Ursula Meese were on the delegation, and they sort of insulated me from Maureen's wrath. Also, I wasn't the only man there. There was another political advisor named Allen Keys who, by 1985, had replaced Greg Newell as IO Assistant Secretary. Allen Keys is a black conservative with a capitol "C," was you may know.

Q: Maybe he is the one who used to run the long seminars in IO?

PHILLIPS: That could have been. He was truly as far to the right politically as anybody I had ever met. But even he had a hard time with Maureen. One day you were her favorite and could do no wrong, and the next day she wouldn't speak to you. She tended to do the opposite of whatever I suggested. I wasn't really bothered because the assignment only lasted three weeks. My real job was Consul General in Casablanca and I knew I would be returning to my post when the Conference ended.

Q: What do you mean by saying that Allen Keys was extreme right in the context of women's issues?

PHILLIPS: At the UN, as in the U.S. Senate, certain polite formulas are used: One says "my distinguished colleague" or "the honorable gentleman." Allen at times refused to use these formulas because of the contempt he felt for some of the third world delegates. I once heard him say of some Africans delegates from one of the more radical states that

they were no better than he people responsible for the Holocaust. On any number of issues at the conference, for example those linked to family planning, he took positions on the extreme right of the political and social spectrum.

Q: When were you in Casablanca?

PHILLIPS: I was in Casablanca from 1984 until 1986. How I got there is another story. When I came back from the UNESCO conference in 1983 Greg Newell had assigned a woman who was a political appointee to work on my staff. She was a very pleasant person but totally unqualified for the job. I don't want to sound mean spirited but before Reagan was elected she was working as a waitress in a Howard Johnson's restaurant. All she had going for her was complete loyalty to Newell. She had no experience in international affairs. Newell of course knew that I had opposed getting out of UNESCO. He also understood that media leaders, not the editorial writers for the Washington Post or the New York Times, but leaders like Leonard Marx and Leonard Suskin had agreed with me that the U.S. should try to defend free press values from within UNESCO. Newell did not trust me and informed me one day that this unqualified woman who was working for me would soon be my boss. He was promoting her to one of his Deputy Assistant Secretary positions. I told him that was not acceptable to me because the woman was unqualified. He could appoint her but I was not going to work for her. He did not want to push it with me because he was already on shaky grounds with higher-ups in the Department for making her a DAS. Everyone knew she was unqualified. But it was easier for the Department to let him have his way than to spend the time it would take to oppose him. As a career Foreign Service officer I felt it was wrong and I couldn't go along with it. This was the only time in my career I flatly refused something like a direct order. So I was shunted off to a small office with no staff. Newell couldn't fire me so he did the next best thing from his point of view; he assigned me to work on a meaningless study. During this time I started looking for another job. I knew I wasn't going to get an embassy without Newell's support, which was certainly not forthcoming.

Casablanca was open and I bid on it. I wasn't an Arab specialist but I spoke French and was qualified for the job. The system wanted me out of IO and Casablanca seemed like a good solution for everybody.

Q: And you where there from when to when?

PHILLIPS: I arrived in the summer of 1984. I was divorced in 1980 and I married Lucie Colvin Gallistel shortly before going to Morocco. Lucie and I and her two sons, Charlie and David, arrived in Casablanca in early July. Then in the middle of my tour I got an ambassadorial assignment so I only stayed until 1986.

Q: What was the situation in Morocco when you arrived and what did the job entail?
PHILLIPS: Joseph Verner Reed, a political appointee, was Ambassador. He had been an assistant to David Rockefeller and was from a prominent New York family. Rockefeller had the clout to suggest one or two appointments to a Republican President and he suggested Reed for Morocco. Vernon Walters had by now replaced Jeane Kirkpatrick at

the UN and Reed was also a close friend of Walters. King Hassan II was trying to move Morocco into a closer alliance with the West. He had taken some bold steps. For instance, he was one of the few Arab leaders who had met with an Israeli Prime Minister. Morocco was a monarchy with some embryonic democratic institutions and it was an important country for the United States, both in terms of East/West issues and the Middle East. So Ambassador Reed had every reason to try to strengthen our relations with Morocco. As far as I was concerned, he made it clear that as Consul General I was his man in Casablanca. He didn't want me to act independently.

Casablanca is to Rabat what New York is to Washington. It is the economic capital of the country while Rabat is the political capital. I saw my role as following Moroccan economic developments through my contacts with business leaders. It wasn't hard because they were friendly towards Americans.

A major problem for Morocco at that time was the Polisario revolution. My district included all of southern Morocco up to the Sahara desert so I followed political developments in the south. The Polisario was fighting for control of the western Sahara.

Q: I have talked to people who were involved in Morocco and Africa at this time and one thing that was told is that Reed was supposedly in the hip pocket of the king. One joke said that he would draft telegrams speaking about "our king." Did you see this or did you find an extreme case of localitis?

PHILLIPS: Reed was a flamboyant character. He always had a supply of ball point pens to pass out to Moroccans. At all of his stops he would have hundreds of pictures taken with people he met, which he would then autograph and send to them. He was close to the King but he wasn't operating outside of American policy guidelines. Developing close U.S.-Moroccan ties was clearly part of his mandate. The Polisario was backed by Algeria and some did feel Reed crossed a line in his unqualified support for Morocco in the Saharan war. Some U.S. Senators visited Morocco and got the impression that Reed cut a rather ridiculous figure because of his picture taking and glad- handing. He did constantly refer to Hassan II as "our King." He got burned a little in the end because the King certainly wasn't in Reed's pocket and he of course had his own agenda. Hassan II decided in 1985 to enter into a special alliance with Qadhafi, largely to balance Algerian influence with the Polisario. But Libya was the U.S. bête noire and the King's move flew in the face of U.S. policy. Reed was especially embarrassed because the King gave him no warning. He got blind-sided on an important issue and he never operated again with quite the same bravado. On the whole I don't think Reed in any way damaged U.S. interests in Morocco. He was a lightweight politically and diplomatically, but he was effective in keeping U.S.-Moroccan relations on an even keel. The King was trying to insulate Morocco from Islamic fundamentalism that was taking root elsewhere in the Arab world, and Ambassador Reed helped him by ensuring that he had U.S. assistance and support.

Q: From your perspective during this 1984 to 1986 period could you explain what the Polisario movement was?

PHILLIPS: The Polisario was an indigenous group of people who inhabited the desert area of southern Morocco, or northern Mauritania, depending on your point of view. There is nothing in that area except sand and phosphate deposits. I suppose you could say it was worth fighting for, but it was mostly just pure desert. The Polisario were desert people, not more than several hundred thousand, who believed they had an historical identity separate from Morocco. They wanted to form an independent state which they thought would be viable because of the phosphate. They were supported by the Algerians who claimed to see an analogy between Algeria's struggle with France and the Polisario struggle with Morocco. They also offered Algeria a low cost way to keep Morocco off balance. Algeria saw Morocco as its main rival for leadership in the western part of the Arab world. Hit-and-run warfare simmered on for years. The Polisario had its bases in Algeria and the Moroccan army could not pursue them across the border. At the same time, King Hassan II used the war as a rallying point for Moroccan nationalism. I think the country would have been much more difficult to govern had it not been for the war. It was a low maintenance war in terms of economic costs and causalities. Body bags were not coming to Rabat or Casablanca from the front in significant numbers. You could not meet a Moroccan from the left, right or center of the political spectrum, including communists, who did not believe fervently that the southern Sahara was part of Morocco. The war brought Berbers and Arabs together and made Algeria the focus of popular discontent.

Q: What about Algeria? What emanations were you getting from them?

PHILLIPS: In Casablanca, the Algerian Consul General was my next door neighbor. He was just about persona non grata within official Moroccan circles. He would come over sometimes to have tea with me because he felt so isolated. I was happy to see him. He contended that Algeria supported the Polisario for purely altruistic reasons; he said Algeria was defending the principle of self-determination. The U.S. was closer to Morocco than Algeria but we had good relations with Algeria. We were trying to get the two countries to resolve their differences through negotiations. Our position on the war in the Sahara was that it was a territorial dispute that should be settled through elections. I think to this day James Baker is working as a special UN envoy to try to resolve the problem. Everyone agrees there should be elections to determine whether the territory should be part of Morocco or independent. The difficulty is to determine who has the right to vote. Moroccans from the north have been moving south into the area and it is now difficult to tell who is Saharan and who isn't.
Q: What about consular problems? Did you find any young people heading to Morocco to live well and play with hashish?

PHILLIPS: Not in Casablanca so much. There was also a Consulate in Tangiers and it had a lot of problems of that kind. I didn't have many consular headaches, no Americans jailed or anything. Maybe one or two got picked up by the police, but nothing serious. There were the normal problems of Moroccans fraudulently applying for visas. I had a good Consular officer who would only come to me with a problem if he couldn't deal with it, which wasn't very often.

Q: In 1986 you got an ambassadorial assignment? I wouldn't think you would have been on anyone's list after your problems in IO?

PHILLIPS: Well, my problems with Newell weren't public. I didn't file a grievance and he didn't write a terrible efficiency report on me. He had his deputy write it and it was actually a good report. He didn't want trouble and I didn't want trouble. I just didn't want to work for the unqualified person.

Q: How did she work out anyway?

PHILLIPS: She was terrible. She didn't last very long. She lasted as long as Newell lasted. They finally sent her to Paris to be an observer at UNESCO although she had no French or substantive knowledge about the hot button issues on UNESCO's agenda. She had a little office in the embassy. I think she might have taken over the house abandoned by our Ambassador to UNESCO, Jean Gerard. I should mention that Gerard was also an incompetent, right wing Republican who remains memorable because of her deep personal hatred for M'Bow. Jean passed away recently, as did her husband. Her husband, Jimmy, was 20 years older than she was. He was an extreme right-winger who had actually been sanctioned by several of the private clubs he belonged to for leaving extremist tracts in other members lockers. The tracts often alleged that the UN was trying to take over the United States. They were a strange couple. When we got out of UNESCO, Jean Gerard was named Ambassador to Luxembourg. I think the incompetent woman, who I prefer to leave nameless, lived in Jean's old residence in Paris. All her job entailed was to monitor UNESCO and report to IO on its shortcomings. She could do that. I don't know what has happened to her since then.

Q: How did your ambassadorial assignment come about?

PHILLIPS: There was an internal State Department committee that reviewed senior officers for possible ambassadorial assignments. Nick Platt was Executive Director of the Department and sat on the committee. My name came up as a candidate for Burundi because I was a French-speaking senior officer. There were some fifty officers on the list. Nick saw my name and called me in Casablanca to ask if I was interested in the job. He said he couldn't do me any special favors but would make the argument that officers who spent part of their careers working in IO didn't get their fair share of ambassadorships. That may have been due to the fact that other Bureaus represent geographic areas with many countries which are natural places for officers who work in the Bureau to be assigned. IO, on the other hand, is involved only with organizations located in New York and a few other countries. I said I was interested and I guess Nick made a good case because I was offered Burundi. My nomination had to be cleared by the White House but there were few political appointees lined up to go to Burundi, so it worked out. I was happy in Casablanca but I couldn't say no to an embassy. One sidelight is interesting. President Reagan, to his great credit, called all career officers personally to ask them to serve as ambassador. So I knew I was going to get a call and the White House switchboard said to be ready at noon on a certain day. I am sure President Reagan had a

card in front of him with talking points along the lines, "Dan I want you to be my ambassador in Burundi, it is an important country." Then I was supposed to say I was delighted and honored. Then he would say he looked forward to seeing me in Washington and good luck, and that would be the end of the conversation. But Reagan wanted to talk a little about Casablanca. He said that maybe he made the mistake of his life when he turned down Casablanca. He was talking about the movie, of course. I said I had heard that he turned down the role of Rick and that he would have been great. He said Humphrey Bogart was fabulous, but maybe he could have done it, too. We talked about the film and the city for awhile, then he rang off. The White House switchboard later told me my call lasted much longer than most he made to perspective ambassadors. I was thrilled.

Q: Did you take the ambassadorial seminar?

PHILLIPS: Yes.

Q: I wonder if you could comment on the preparation. Here you were a professional going out to be an ambassador. Being ambassador really is quite different than other things. What was your impression of the seminar?

PHILLIPS: Shirley Temple Black was the coordinator of the seminar. It was interesting just to meet her. A lot of the seminar, however, was a waste of time. There are always a few good kernels of information you pick up and it is nice to meet and compare notes with 18 or 20 other people who are going out as ambassadors. But there is a lot of emphasis on routine stuff that most senior career officers know; for example, handling representational funds, delegating authority, sensitivity to minority concerns, ethical problems that might come up and as so forth. It was only a moderately interesting two weeks.

Q: What did you know about the status of Burundi at that time?

PHILLIPS: I didn't know much about Burundi. I had served in Zaire, which is in the neighborhood. Burundi has a border with Zaire but it is in the south near Bukavu, not near where I had been in Lubumbashi or Kinshasa. I of course knew about the tensions between the Hutu and the Tutsi ethnic groups, particularly about the genocide in the 1970s. But in 1986 most people in the State Department thought that that sort of violent hostility was a thing of the past, rather like lynching in the south. You knew it existed at one time but thought it was long over.

I learned more from my Washington briefings. Burundi was a Marxist one-party state with a Tutsi President named Jean Bagaza. Although the Tutsi comprise only about 11 percent of the population they hold political power in Burundi. Next door in Rwanda the Hutus are in control. But the Hutus in Rwanda are overwhelmingly in the majority. I saw that I would have to work with Bagaza and keep an eye on ethnic and regional issues. Burundi is not a rich or strategically placed country and at the time it was not considered a particularly important one in terms of United States interests. Most Americans could

not locate Burundi on a map. Still, I looked forward to the assignment.

Q: What about confirmation? Any problems?

PHILLIPS: Yes. My group of nominees was held up by Senator Jesse Helms who put a hold on us and it took a little longer to get through the Senate than anyone expected. I think Helms wanted to have somebody appointed to a post and the State Department disagreed. He was using our group as a bargaining chip. Eventually we had our hearings and I was confirmed..

Q: You were there from when to when?

PHILLIPS: I was there from 1986 until 1990.

Q: What did you find when you got out there? Do you think this might be a good place to stop.

PHILLIPS: Because events that had happened in Burundi and Rwanda while I was there put both countries on the map, so to speak, it might be interesting to go over my observations in some detail.

Q: I think we should go into some depth. You went to Bujumbura. You were there from 1986 to 1990. We have talked about you preparing and getting confirmation, but we haven't talked about when you arrived yet.

PHILLIPS: Right.

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Q: Today is the 13th of July, 1998. Dan, when you went to Burundi did you have any kind of mental agenda you were carrying in your private attaché case of things that you wanted to do?

PHILLIPS: Yes. I before I left for Burundi I read the literature that was available, which was not extensive. Most books on Burundi are in French. I read them and of course was well-briefed by the Department. I was keenly aware of the demographics. The Tutsis make up about 11 percent of the population and the Hutus 89 percent. The regime was authoritarian, verging on totalitarian. President Bagaza was a military officer and a hard-line Tutsi. He was also a Marxist. In those days Burundi was firmly aligned with the East. There was a huge North Korean and Chinese presence. I hoped to establish a working relationship with Bagaza that would permit decent relations with the United States. We always had business to do with Burundi whether regionally or in the UN. I also knew that ethnic relations were potentially explosive because of the past. The history was not encouraging. In Rwanda Hutus had massacred Tutsis and in Burundi Tutsis had massacred Hutus. In both cases the scale of killing had approached genocide. Of course I also kept in mind Burundi's place in Africa and the role it played in and East-West

politics.

Q: Burundi-Rwanda is sort of a generic, sort of like damn Yankee. It is a one-word thing. Did you find that congress itself, congressional staff, the black caucus or other groups felt deeply about the situation there? Was there a tie that you would feel that they would have or maybe they were true believers on what side or the other that we should do something? Did you detect anything like that?

PHILLIPS: No, Burundi was just a blip on the U.S. radar screen at that time. There was one nuance in regard to the position of the black caucus in Congress. Conservatives who supported South Africa contended that the U.S. should move slowly in opposing apartheid because the alternative might be worse. They often pointed to Burundi as an example of a black African country where an oppressive minority ruled. They charged that opponents of South Africa were hypocritical in not criticizing Burundi as forcefully as they criticized South Africa. The black caucus was eager to rebut that charge and its members were harshly critical of Burundi. So if there was any interest in Burundi it was derivative. Of course everyone hoped Burundi would adopt a more equitable system of power-sharing but it was not a hot-button issue.

Q: In small African countries often the major focus is on UN votes. Where was Burundi falling when you went there?

PHILLIPS: Burundi was voting with North Korea and Cuba. If you had a scorecard and 100 represented the best record for voting with the U.S., Burundi would have scored about a 3. It was very much in the anti- American camp.

Q: You went out there in 1986. Could you describe how you saw the country at that point?

PHILLIPS: Most people think of Africa as either jungle or open savanna. Burundi doesn't fit either image. It is hilly, to the extent that it is called the Switzerland of Africa. It is green and lush and has lots of forests, as opposed to jungles. Its main corps are tea and coffee. There are almost no minerals. It looks a bit like the hill country of the American Appalachians. Its Capital, Bujumbura, is a port city on lake Tanganyika, which stretches all the way from Burundi in the north to Zambia in the south. There is a fishing industry and some shipping and commerce but these sectors are small. Burundi is basically a rural country whose inhabitants are overwhelmingly poor peasants. It is a country of astonishing natural beauty. There was a little restaurant by the lake where you could have a drink in the evening and watch hippos frolic in the water as the sun went down. It had its charm.

The beauty of the country and the people, especially the tall, handsome, soft-spoken Tutsis, masked at first the ethnic tensions. It appeared a first glance to be a poor but fairly well-run country of peasant small land holders and larger coffee and tea plantations.

Q: Were these absentee owners?

PHILLIPS: The plantations were owned mainly by Belgians and a handful of wealthy Tutsi. There was a huge income gap between the peasant farmers living in the hills and the Europeans and Burundi elite living in Bujumbura. The peasants, both Hutu and Tutsi, were among the poorest people on earth. Let me give you an example. I was visiting a self-help project funded by the embassy. You know, "self-help" is the program that gives an Ambassador $100,000 in discretionary AID funds every year that can only be used for mini-development projects, such as village gardens, community wells, and so forth. Anyway, on a visit to one of these projects a little boy asked me if everyone in the United States was rich. I said not all Americans were rich. He thought for a minute and asked if everyone in the United States had shoes. I said yes, and he said triumphantly "then everyone is rich." That was the criterion. If you had shoes you were rich. Most Burundi had only the bare necessities; their clothes were tattered and they lived in mud huts. Wealthier people in this milieu had corrugated metal roofs on their huts. That was a sign of wealth; the first thing you did if you got a little ahead was put a tin roof on your shack.

So the poverty was apparent, but because the country was so lush people weren't actually starving to death. But one felt famine wasn't far off because of the population explosion. Most families had an average of 10 children. That was the norm. Often a man would take a second wife to be sure of reaching or surpassing the 10 child goal. And Burundi is a small country in terms of area, so it was teeming with people.

Because Burundi is so hilly there are no villages like one sees in other parts of Africa. People live in separate, extended-family compounds in the hills. The compounds consist of a four or five mud huts with cone shaped thatch roofs surrounded by a thorn brush fence. They are largely self-sufficient units. The people farm the side of the hill. They have a few farm animals, chickens, a goat; wealthier peasants might have a cow. They might go once a month into the nearest town to buy supplies. But they do not have a village life. It was an isolated, extended family life. On any hill that housed more that one extended family the people tended to be all Tutsi or all Hutu. But the ethnic groups otherwise lived in close proximity. There would be a Tutsi hill right next to a Hutu hill. Tutsi peasants were not materially better off than Hutu peasants. Wealth and status differences could be seen in the cities, particularly Bujumbura, where Tutsis had a near monopoly on government jobs and positions in the military and commerce.

My first impression was of a placid country with a troubled history making gradual progress towards economic development under the iron rule of the Tutsi military. It didn't take long to suspect however that there was a lot of turmoil beneath the surface. It was hard to know what was happening because there were no newspapers and almost no television. There was radio, but broadcasts were in the local language that few non-Burundi ever learned. But missionaries would come in from the countryside with tales of rising ethnic tension. There was no Peace Corps at that time, which was a contentious issue. We had offered a Peace Corps program but President Bagaza was dithering. He was not keen on establishing one because he saw the volunteers as potential American spies. We did have a small AID program and AID officials working outside of the Capital would also recount stories of serious ethnic tensions and increasingly oppressive

measures against Hutus.

At first, I had good personal relations with Bagaza. He was a young military officer and we didn't have a lot in common but he did speak French. He clearly did not want to antagonize me. He wanted to keep the U.S. presence in Burundi and the AID program. But he was afraid of the Peace Corps and never got around to signing the agreement we had worked out at a lower level.

As time went on, however, Bagaza's behavior became more and more bizarre. In response to increasing pressure from the West on human rights, he appeared to be preparing Burundi to become a sort of African Albania; that is, a closed, self-sufficient, authoritarian society. He seemed prepared to forfeit outside assistance from international institutions like the World Bank if it meant he could guarantee the predominance of a Tutsi regime in the future. He thought a Tutsi elite could maintain itself with the tea and coffee revenues and let the rest of the country scrape by as best it could on subsistence agriculture. He knew western countries would not use military force against him. He felt he could do whatever he wanted; expel the nagging human rights activists, clamp down on the Catholic church.

The Catholic church played a special role in Burundi. It was the only institution that rivaled the government in influence. The church was well established in the countryside and churches were the only places Hutus could gather and feel a sense of unity. On Sundays crowds of peasants would flow down from the hills to go to church. Bagaza saw the church as a rallying point for Hutu opposition. And the church did militate against the poverty and the regime's oppressive policies. Most priests were slightly pro-Hutu but not to the extent that Bagaza thought. Still his concerns weren't entirely paranoid. The church was supporting the Hutu cause in the sense that it helped them organize and gave them a sense of solidarity.

So Bagaza began shutting down churches parish by parish. A church would be burned down here or a priest would be expelled there. Foreign priests were expelled, Burundi priests were arrested. Anti-Catholic harassment came to a head about eight months after I arrived. The army arrested a Catholic priest, a Burundi, on clearly trumped-up charges and put him in jail. Western diplomats protested. The Vatican joined forces with human rights groups to alert the international community about the ongoing religious persecution. Belgium felt some responsibility for its ex-colony and took the lead in insisting that the priest be released. Bagaza ordered his release, but the following Sunday the priest gave a sermon in which he thanked God for his freedom. This so infuriated Bagaza that he had him re-arrested for not acknowledging that it was he, Bagaza, who had released him, not God. The incident showed that Bagaza was losing touch with reality. What could be a worse public relations gesture that re-arresting the priest because he thanked God for his freedom? After all, he was a priest and he would thank God. The anti-religious campaign caused U.S. relations with the regime to deteriorate badly. Catholics in the United States put pressure on the Administration to do something.

Herman J. Cohen was the African Director at the NSC and Chester Crocker was the

Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs. Both let me know that the situation was becoming intolerable. They told me Bagaza had to ease up on the Church and make some effort to improve the regime's overall human rights record or the U.S. would take steps towards breaking diplomatic relations. They said, and I agreed, that we couldn't just passively witness what was going on. I so informed Bagaza and it was during this conversation that I got the impression that he wouldn't mind if we left. He talked about how Burundi could survive well enough by modeling itself on Albania. I reported this back to Washington. But Tutsi political and military circles consisted of moderates as well as extremists, the classical division of doves and hawks. Moderate Tutsis were becoming alarmed with Bagaza's erratic behavior and did not share his enthusiasm for the Albanian model. Many Tutsis traveled regularly to Belgium, had children in schools in Europe and had no interest in Burundi becoming an international pariah.

In June of 1987, about a year after I got there, Bagaza went to a Francophone meeting in Quebec. He got on the plane and never came back because there was a bloodless coup d'état. The moderate Tutsis in the army ousted him and replaced him with a young officer named Pierre Buyoya. He was President during the rest of my time in Burundi. His first actions were to release the Catholic priests in prison and give top priority to mending relations with the Vatican. He became very close to the Papal Nuncio in Bujumbura. He also made a real effort to mend relations with the United States. He sought me out at a diplomatic reception and told me that many of the officers who took part in the coup had received military training in the United States. He said he wanted to send more of his officers to the United States for training. He also said he would be delighted to have the Peace Corps in Burundi. We set up a good Peace Corps program and did send more Burundi military officers to the United States for training.

Buyoya was a moderate who wanted to move Burundi closer to the West. He dismantled the old Marxist apparatus and started thinking about how Burundi could become a democracy. By this time the East-West dynamic was changing. The Berlin wall hadn't fallen but was showing cracks. Gorbachev no longer saw Africa as a pawn in the cold war. There was movement in Eastern Europe and democracy was making gains worldwide. All of this made my life easier. There was no longer any thought of breaking diplomatic relations. On the contrary, Buyoya apparently saw me not only as a representative of the United States but as someone he could talk to frankly. I would be at home in the evenings and a Mercedes would pull up in front of my gate and the driver would ask if I could come to see the President. No telephone call or advance warning. I would get in the car and be taken to Buyoya's residence. He would be in shirtsleeves. There would be two bottles of Primus beer and a couple of glasses and some peanuts on the table. We would sit and talk about democracy. The problem was how to make a one-man-one-vote system work in a country with Burundi's demographics and history. It posed the central question of democratic theory: How to assure power for the majority while protecting the rights of the minority? It was in many ways analogous to South Africa's problem. De Klerk and Mandela faced the same dilemma, with the whites as Tutsis and the blacks as Hutus. Buyoya admitted he was afraid democracy would mean not only political suicide for the Tutsis but perhaps even physical extinction.

Hutu refugees were in refugee camps still in existence in the aftermath of the 1971-1972 massacres. There were camps in Tanzania, Zaire, and of course in Rwanda. Hutus in the camps were arming themselves with the intent of bringing down the Tutsi regime.

Q: What about in Uganda?

PHILLIPS: No, Uganda shares a border with Rwanda, not Burundi. The refugees in Rwanda were Tutsis. Rwanda presents a mirror image of Burundi. In Rwanda it was the Hutus who drove out the Tutsis. The President of Uganda was part Tutsi so he was more sympathetic towards the Tutsi cause. Oddly enough, Bagaza, when he came back to Africa from Canada after the coup that forced him from power, ended up in exile in Uganda. He remained a rather sinister presence there, always trying to stir up trouble in Burundi.

Q: This problem was there in South Africa. In the Burundi context could you see any way of doing this, where you able to come up with any ideas?

PHILLIPS: South Africa had begun a process of bringing moderate blacks and whites together for regular discussions. I told Buyoya he should try that approach. The first step was to create a forum where Hutus could meet with Tutsis. It couldn't be the Parliament which consisted of hard-line Tutsis and docile Hutus. I argued it was important to start a meaningful dialog with Hutus who represented real Hutu constituencies. I don't want to take too much credit here. Buyoya had other advice and could himself easily see the merit of preparing the groundwork for democracy carefully. It was clear that he couldn't just announce elections in say six months time and have any chance of success. So he convened a group called the Council for National Reconciliation consisting of 16 prominent Hutus and 16 prominent Tutsis, all of whom were moderate and willing to work together. The goal of the Council was to begin healing the old ethnic wounds.

The Council decided that the first item on its agenda would be history. It counted as one historical period the pre-colonial era, another as the colonial era and another as the post-colonial era. They got through the first two eras quickly but then they started lengthy discussions about their history, taking it year by year from 1961 to the present. I thought that seemed like a rather laborious process. But Buyoya told me it was necessary because only by agreeing on what had happened after independence could they find a common frame of reference for the future. So they proceeded at a very deliberate pace.

While the Council was meeting, events occurred that underscored the gravity of the situation and gave an inkling of what was to come later. In the northern part of the country some Hutus went on a rampage and killed a number of Tutsis on neighboring hills. They massacred at least a 150 Tutsi men, women and children. They did it in a very barbaric way, with machetes, leaving dismembered bodies along the roadside, then they just faded back into the hills. Why they did it was never fully revealed. The Tutsi military got to the scene within 24 hours. They saw the carnage and reacted very brutally, massacring about 10,000 Hutus. They systematically went around the area killing Hutus.

This came as a great shock, because it was inconceivable that 10,000 people could be killed in a matter of days no matter what the provocation. We had thought that bloody Tutsi-Hutu conflicts on that scale were a thing of the past, but we were wrong.

Buyoya acted quickly and responsibly to bring the killings to a halt. He changed commanders in the field, personally went to the area, and eventually invited the diplomatic corps to the area to see it that the killings had stopped. He tried to repair the damage through a series of measures that were effective, but only in the short term.

The massacres brought international media attention to Burundi for the first time in many years. Reporters came from the New York Times, the Associated Press and CNN. A freelance reporter for the New Yorker magazine came to do a special in-depth report. The reporters stuck together. They traveled together in a cluster. They didn't speak the local language, and some didn't even speak French. I got an unsettling view of how the media works. I saw that stories feed off of each other and once a story line is established it is hard to correct.

Most diplomatic observers, relying on local contacts and on-the-scene accounts, had come to the conclusion that about 10,000 people had been killed. The journalists, however, came up with a much higher number. I think they checked their files and found entries like "Burundi, 1971 genocide," and assumed something similar had occurred. Buyoya gave the media free rein to travel anywhere in the country, which was a night-and-day difference in approach to what his predecessor would have done in a similar situation. So a group of journalists went to a hospital in the interior where a missionary doctor was treating injured Hutus. The Hutus of course had horrific tales of what had been happening to them. The doctor had been working for 48 hours without any sleep and was completely exhausted. The operating room was covered with blood and the reporters were probably a little traumatized as well. One of the reporters asked the doctor how many people had been killed. The doctor said he didn't have any idea. The reporter said that they were saying in Bujumbura about 10,000, and the doctor replied "multiply that by 10." He had no knowledge of the extent of the carnage beyond what he had seen in his small hospital. Nonetheless, the New York Times reported the figure of 100,000 killed and that became media gospel. The State Department urgently asked me to account for the difference between my estimate of 10,000 and press reports of 100,000 causalities. I rechecked the figures with my sources. I actually went to the hospital, about a days drive from Bujumbura, and talked to the missionary doctor. He admitted that what he told the reporters was just a figure of speech, that he had no idea how many had been killed. I told the reporters this, and they half-accused me of being part of a cover up. The estimate of 100,000 took on a life of its own. The New York Times story was picked up by Le Monde and eventually the 100,000 dead estimate appeared in virtually every media story about Burundi for the next several weeks. I was able to convince the State Department that the 10,000 figure was more accurate, largely because virtually every Western Embassy in Bujumbura had come to the same conclusion. This was important because the extent to which we were able to support Buyoya in his efforts to restore calm depended to some extent on how the story played among human rights activists in the United States. If 100,000 Hutus had really been killed, and if the Burundi government was trying to cover

up the extent of the massacre, pressure would have been intense to apply sanctions against the regime. Some Belgian scholars are working on a history of that period and I believe their work will vindicate our lower estimates. It was still a terrible massacre but not on the scale of what followed in Rwanda a few years later. After a several weeks the press left but the story had a shelf life of another couple of months.

The killings set off a stampede of Hutu refugees; probably 100,000 or more fled across the borders into Zaire and Rwanda where they set up make-shift camps supported by the UN. Buyoya wanted to get them back. He put guards around the hilltop compounds to keep squatters out. The guards protected not only the land but household goods and tools. He posted ownership lists in community centers and churches to assure that everyone knew who the land belonged to. He declared an amnesty for any refugees who might be accused of having taken part in the killing of Tutsis that set off the violence. He convened a regional summit which included the presidents of Rwanda and Zaire to discuss the return of the refugees. He allowed foreign workers from the aid agencies, UNICEF, UNDP, and others to establish a foreign presence in the area. So refugees began to trickle back across the border at night. They would see that their property was intact and they would report this back to the camps. Within three to six months the refugees began coming back en masse. They returned because their land was secure and their safety was assured to some extent by an international presence. They didn't trust the Tutsi military, but the presence of priests, missionaries and NGOs like Doctors Without Borders reassured them. Between 75, 000 and 100,000 refugees came back home in less than six months. It was unprecedented.

Let me get ahead of my story here for a moment. Hutus committed genocide in Rwanda in 1992 by systematically killing nearly one million Tutsis. A Tutsi guerrilla army moved from Uganda into Rwanda and ousted Rwanda's Hutu leadership. Hundreds of thousands of Hutus fled Rwanda for refugee camps in Zaire. I was a diplomat-in -resident at the Carter Center in Atlanta in 1993-94, and I wrote an Op Ed piece for the Atlanta Constitution on the refugee problem. I described what Buyoya had done to lure the refugees home and suggested it might serve as a model for defusing the current crisis. It didn't, however, because the Rwandan government, now dominated by Tutsis, was not prepared to do the sort of things Buyoya had done. Amnesty was the main sticking point. In Burundi in 1989 the Tutsis only lost about 150 people. In Rwanda in 1992, nearly a million Tutsis had been slaughtered in cold-blood and the new Rwandan government felt it could not declare a general amnesty for people who had killed on that scale. So the refugees never went back to Rwanda and the problem continues to fester to this day.

But back to 1989. Buyoya got the refugees to come home. The massacres, however, increased the sense of urgency about finding a long term solution to the power-sharing problem. Moderate Tutsis continued the talks with moderate Hutus. Buyoya named a distinguished Hutu as Prime Minister. You have to go back to the 1960s in Burundi to find that kind of ethnic cooperation. Buyoya did in fact hold free and fair elections which he lost. I was gone by then, but earlier I had asked him what he would do if he held elections and lost. His first reaction was that he wouldn't lose because he was popular among both Tutsis and Hutus. I pressed him by saying he had to be prepared for the

possibility of losing. He said if he lost he would step down which, when the time came, he did, and rather graciously. Buyoya is one of the few African leaders that turned over power to a democratically elected opponent. His successor was a moderate Hutu named Ndadaye. There were high hopes that he would lead the country to a period of increasing Hutu/Tutsi cooperation. But it was not to be. Ndadaye never got control of the military which was still 100 percent Tutsi. Now I am talking about things that happened after I left the country. A handful of hot-headed Tutsi military officers could not tolerate a Hutu in power so they assassinated Ndadaye. This threw the country into turmoil from which it hasn't recovered. As we speak today, Buyoya is again President but he was appointed by the military. He is still trying to work out a power-sharing solution but has less leeway because of the genocide in Rwanda. I talked to some Burundi friends recently, some formerly moderate Tutsis, who have become quite hawkish. If Tutsis had not retaken power in Burundi, they argued, their fate would have been the same as that of the Tutsis killed in Rwanda. Its hard to convince them otherwise. So the situation is again back to an ethnic stalemate in both countries which probably cannot be resolved for many generations to come.

Q: Just going back a bit you said that when you first arrived the North Koreans had a very large embassy. What they hell were they doing?

PHILLIPS: They built roads and a sports stadium. They were basically operating where they were welcome. If there was a friendly environment they would be there. They were also doing some mindless spying on the western embassies. Today they are so broke they can't do anything, but at the time they had funds which I suspect came from the Soviet Union and China. They invited third world leaders to North Korea to pay homage to their "Glorious Leader" Kim Il Sung and possible see their country as a development model.

Q: Did you find that the Belgians and French were too close to the situation and that the role of the United States benefited because it was somewhat removed from the colonial issues in Africa?

PHILLIPS: Yes, that helped enormously. The Belgians in particular had problems. They of course felt some responsibility for conditions in Burundi because it had been a Belgian colony. And they hadn't set a very good example of ethnic togetherness. When I was in Bujumbura, there was a mostly African and a mostly European section of the city. But when the Belgians were in charge it was segregated four ways. There was of a Tutsi section, a Hutu section, a Flemish section and a Walloon section. The Belgians were not in a good position to influence Burundi. They had lost all taste for trying to exercise power. Belgium's interests and energies were directed towards the Common Market and most Belgians preferred to let the colonial past go.

Q: Of course, they have an abysmal record in the Congo. Was that saying that there weren't many Burundis or Rwandans that had received an education?

PHILLIPS: That is right. And those that the Belgians had educated a little, enough to become minor clerks and priests, were Tutsis. Some Belgians had a guilt complex about

this favoritism towards Tutsis and tended to over-compensate by taking the Hutu side in the post-independence era. But the Hutus could do terrible things, as events proved. The French had some influence, but tended to defer to the Belgians. The Vatican, the UN and the United States were the most influential powers during my time in Burundi because, for different reasons, all three had credibility with both Tutsis and Hutus. I tried to be even-handed in my relations with Tutsis and Hutus. Contact with Hutu political leaders was all but illegal when I first arrived. But under Buyoya I could meet with Hutu leaders without being declared persona non-grata by the government. I had some influence with both sides simply because America was a super power, but also because Americans don't have any colonial baggage. Also our economic model worked I sent many Burundi leaders to the United States on USIA international visitor grants and they come back impressed. And this may sound immodest, but I think my diplomatic skills and ability to deal with people from all walks of life allowed me to influence events in a positive direction. There is an argument for putting career ambassadors in places where professionalism makes a difference.

Q: And often those posts are used to put a non-reelected congressman or the equivalent.

PHILLIPS: The most unhappy person I met at that time was the U.S. Ambassador in Rwanda. His name was Leonard Spearman. He was a wonderful guy. He was a black American who had been the president of a college in Texas and was a long- time Bush supporter. Leonard had an outgoing personality. He was bigger than life and wanted to make friends with everyone but he didn't speak a word of French. I saw him deteriorate. He liked to play golf and he would come to Bujumbura to play with me. He even started a little golf club in Rwanda. But he became isolated because he couldn't communicate in French. He stopped going to the embassy and stayed mostly in his residence. He admitted he was miserable. In Washington people had assured him that as a highly educated person he would easily pick up French. But at 64 years old you don't just pick up French. He stopped going to functions and dinner parties where he was the only one who couldn't follow the conversation. He had some influence at the White House and after two years he was transferred to Swaziland, which is English speaking. He hated his time in Rwanda and was certainly not as effective as his talents would otherwise have suggested, simply because of his lack of French. I think it is wrong to put political appointees is those kind of situations, and it is often done because no one foresees the importance of a small country. But Rwanda turned out to be important, if for all the wrong reasons.

Q: How about UN votes and things of that nature? Did that change?

PHILLIPS: That changed. Burundi became part of the main-stream African group in the UN. They voted less with the North Koreans and Cubans and Libyans and more with the United States.

Q: There were two events at the end of your time. One was then end of the Soviet empire in Eastern Europe and the other was the Gulf War.

PHILLIPS: Those actually came later. I left Burundi in 1990. I was in the Congo during

the Gulf War and Gorbachev was still in power. It was still the Soviet Union. The full break-up hadn't yet occurred. What did occur was the Chinese crackdown in Tiananmen Square. That was in June 1989. Until then, the Chinese Ambassador had been almost a part of our western group. We worked together closely and shared information during the ethnic crisis. There was a gourmet dinner group we both belonged to that met once a month. The Chinese Ambassador would have elaborate Chinese meals and his dinner was always the event of the year. He was a close friend. But after Tiananmen Square he kept his distance and tried hard not to make eye contact with me at diplomatic functions. I believe he was deeply embarrassed by his government's bloody crack down on the students. A personal friendship was no longer possible. We did not sever relations with China but contact with Chinese diplomats beyond what was called for by protocol was inappropriate.

Q: How well supported were you by the embassy?

PHILLIPS: I had an excellent staff, both American and Burundi. Both of my DCMs became ambassadors. All of the American guys were young and energetic.
Q: You said guys. At that time there was a lot of strong pressure to make sure that women were not being excluded from being the DCM career.

PHILLIPS: Absolutely. When I got there I inherited a DCM named Dennis Hayes. He was a terrific officer and a wonderful person. He had been President of the America Foreign Service Association. He was a superb young diplomat and extraordinarily helpful to me, but he left for another assignment a year after I arrived. When the question of his replacement came up personnel made it clear that I couldn't have just anyone that I wanted. I was given a short list of officers to choose from and if I chose a white male on that list rather than a woman or a black or another minority I had to justify it. So the system of giving an Ambassador immense leeway in choosing his DCM had changed. It was still your choice because it doesn't make sense to impose an officer on an Ambassador, but you had to justify your choice. My next DCM was David Dunn who was a white male who had served in Paris, spoke excellent French and had African experience. He had qualities that none of the other candidates had, particularly the French language. He was invaluable during the period of unrest. He was one of the first diplomats to go to the area where the massacres occurred. The Burundi government didn't want ambassadors in the area during the first days of the troubles because the security was uncertain. I didn't want David to go but he said he would be fine. So he went with a group of UN experts and some others and I didn't sleep that night. When he finally got back to Bujumbura around five in the morning he called and said he was okay. He was a very courageous and astute officer and a good writer. We had our 15 minutes of fame because of the massacres and the refugee problem and world attention was focused on Burundi for a short time. We wanted to get our reporting on events and our recommendations to the Department right. David was a large of part of our success.

Q: Did you have any problem with AIDS [acquired immune deficiency syndrome] at that time?

PHILLIPS: Yes, AIDS was at pandemic proportions when I was there. It was a horrible carnage and you could see people dying almost before your eyes. For some reason AIDS victims in the United States seem to linger. Your impression of an AIDS victim is of someone who is very thin and weak and dying slowly. But in Africa they don't linger. I would met a person and six weeks later learn that he had died. Medical resources were unavailable to keep them alive. Burundi has a sexually promiscuous culture. There is emphasis on having many children and polygamy was not sanctioned but wasn't frowned on either, so a lot of people were exposed to the virus. There were no corner drugstores selling condoms. Most people didn't even realize the extent of the danger. So AIDS was a huge problem and still is.

Q: Were you running the figures and seeing that if you had some many cases, it seems like and almost infinite number of deaths?

PHILLIPS: We would run the figures as best we could and occasionally send Washington a report on the epidemic. We got numbers from hospitals and from missionaries in the field. Women were passing AIDS on to their fetuses and children were born with AIDS. It was tragic. Through USAID we tried to sponsor condemn distribution, but the Catholic Church opposed it. Burundi culture placed great value on virility. That along with the church's opposition to birth control, its insistence on no sex as opposed to safe sex, increased the spread of AIDS. This was true throughout the region.

Q: You left there in 1990?

PHILLIPS: I left on a high note in 1990, well before the genocide in Rwanda and the elections in Burundi that I described earlier had occurred. Buyoya was still in power. He had turned around the refugee crisis, was steering the country towards democratic elections and a free-market economic system. The image of Burundi in the United States had vastly improved in the four years since my arrival. The Burundi government gave me some credit for this and organized elaborate farewell ceremonies for me. I had to turn down a number of gifts from Tutsis and Hutus alike. Ordinary people thought I had played a major role in calming the country after the massacres and then bringing the refugees back. I did play a role but I think it got exaggerated in the public mind.

The Department offered me a second embassy in Brazzaville. The Congo also had a Marxist dictator named Denis Sassou-Nguesso whose policies were ruinous for the country. I don't know if my experience with Bagaza was the reason for choosing me for Brazzaville, but it may have been a consideration. In any case, I was happy to accept.

Q: So you were in the Congo, Brazzaville from when to when?

PHILLIPS: I was there from the summer of 1990 until the early fall of 1993.

Q: What did you find out about Congo, Brazzaville prior to going? I assume you came back to Washington and went through confirmation and all of that? Were there any problems with confirmation or anything like that.

PHILLIPS: Well, there was a long delay in my Senate confirmation. Jesse Helms again had an issue with someone in my group. The Department tended to send groups of nominees before the Senate at the same time, and if one got delayed all got delayed. Eventually I was sworn in and arrived at post in July of 1990. It was hard to prepare for the Congo because there was not a vast literature on the subject in English. I went to the State Department library and the Georgetown University library and read a number of books and articles in French. There is more written about the pre-independence period than about the post-independence period. I read what I could and talked to academics like William Zartman who teaches at SAIS and is an expert on Africa. I contacted my predecessors who were still available, Al Lukens and Len Shurtleff, both of whom were very helpful. I had a full array of briefings from all the agencies interested in that part of the world.

Q: You have to explain when you say the Congo?

PHILLIPS: This was the Congo that didn't change its name. We used to distinguish the former French colony and the former Belgian colony by calling one Congo Kinshasa and the other Congo Brazzaville. Congo Kinshasa became Zaire under Mobutu and Congo Brazzaville never changed its name, or more accurately, changed it only slightly. It became a one-party regime shortly after independence in the early 1960s and as a badge of its radical Marxism adopted the name "People's Republic of the Congo" echoing the term used in some Asian and European communist countries. But it was most often called simply the Congo.

You can never learn enough about a country, but after my consultations in Washington I felt fairly well prepared. I spoke French, I had served in Zaire and I knew the region. It was helpful that State Department policy never permitted a change of Ambassador and DCM at the same time. The Deputy Chief of Mission, Roger Meece, had been in the Congo for two years and knew a great deal about the country. He provided expertise that I lacked.

Q: What were American interests and concerns in the Congo and did you have a mental agenda that you took with you?

PHILLIPS: Our interests were strategic and economic. The Congo had been a Soviet enclave. Brazzaville is right across the river from Kinshasa. If you think of Minneapolis and St. Paul, that is the relationship between Brazzaville and Kinshasa. It could be one city divided by a river. It was a listening post for the Soviets, a window on Angola, Zaire and all of Central Africa. It was an island of Soviet influence in the middle of a very troubled sea. One of our main interests was simply to know what the Soviets were up to. When I got there, Sassou Nguesso was the President. He had been elected like other communists leaders in sham elections and had been in power for 15 years. There was a huge Soviet, East German, North Korean and Chinese presence and just a smattering of Western embassies.

On the economic side, oil had been discovered offshore near the Atlantic port city of Pointe Noire. Congo's offshore fields are part of a vast area of oil deposits stretching down the Atlantic coast from Nigeria to Angola. Some analysts believe deposits in that area are equal to those in the Arabian Gulf. The oil is readily accessible because of new deep-water drilling technology. It is attractive to oil companies because they can add to their proven reserves, which is their basic goal. They love to have known deposits they can draw on when the time is right. If the Soviets were the most influential power politically, the French were the most influential power economically. Elf, the French quasi-national oil company, developed the oil fields and had worked out a very cozy relationship with Congo's political leaders. If you want to see corruption at its worst put together an international oil company and a communist dictatorship. There are absolutely no controls. No free press. No checks and balances. Elf was rather handsomely taking care of top Congolese officials and party leaders, probably not more that three hundred prominent families, and creaming off the rest for itself.

American companies wanted to do business with the Congo even though it was a Marxist state, and they had made some inroads into what the French regarded as a special sphere of influence. Conoco, Chevron, Citizens Energy, Amoco and Apache all had a foothold in the Congo. They were mainly working in areas Elf had rejected. Amoco had some production and the others had drilling rights. Just a bit south in Angolan waters Chevron had huge offshore production. So a major interest of the United States was to try to assure that American companies were treated fairly in a difficult environment marked by strong Soviet political influence and French economic ascendancy.
Q: When you arrived in June or July can you give a feel for how you saw Brazzaville and how you were received?

PHILLIPS: Let me answer with an anecdote. President Sassou-Nguesso was in his mid-forties. He had a daughter in her twenties who was engaged to marry the President of Gabon, Omar Bongo, who was in his sixties. It was a political marriage and a major event for both countries. The marriage was scheduled for a day or two after my arrival and the Chief of Protocol told me the President wanted me to attend the wedding and had arranged for me to present my letters of credentials immediately. This was an unusual gesture because normally Ambassadors had to wait weeks or months to present their letters. Ambassadors cannot have official contacts in a country before this ceremony takes place. The local press made a big deal out of it, taking it as a sign that the Congo wanted to move closer to the United States. Actually, I believe the Congolese were beginning to wake up to the fact that they weren't getting their fair share of the oil revenues and they wanted American oil companies to balance Elf's presence. So I was the object of a minor charm offensive.

I presented my credentials on a Thursday and the wedding was next day. There was a huge outdoor reception on the grounds of the Presidential Palace. The diplomatic corps was there along with about 2000 guests. The King of Morocco sent a plane full of cooks and waiters in Moroccan native dress to cater the event. I knew some of them from my time in Casablanca because they were the same crew that catered the King's parties. The reception was surreal, like something out of a Fellini film. Driving to the Presidential

Palace you passed through miserable slum after miserable slum. In spite of the Congo's oil wealth most Congolese were dirt poor. The roads were terrible, the schools, hospitals and clinics were dilapidated and the city was generally dirty and shabby. Even in Burundi the University had something of a campus; but at Brazzaville University the students were literally attending classes under the trees. So this sumptuous wedding reception was held against a backdrop of abject poverty. The Moroccan buffet was elaborate, with whole lambs roasted on spits. There was a bottle of Dom Perignon champagne in front of each guest's place at the table and it was constantly replenished as the evening wore on. The Congolese men wore beautifully tailored suits and their wives were dressed in Paris gowns and were covered with jewelry. The dinner went on until midnight and then the dancing began. There were lovely Congolese women available for anyone who needed a partner. Finally about four in the morning the German Ambassador said he was exhausted and asked me if I wanted to leave, which I was ready to do. We tried to go but the soldiers at the gate told us no one could leave until the presidents left. We had to stay until around six thirty in the morning. So that was my first impression of the Congo; a country of brutal contrasts between a wealthy elite and an impoverished people.

Q: Americans have a missionary background. We can't help it. Did you have any feelings of trying to do something about the situation?

PHILLIPS: Well, I had been in the Service for 30 years and I was pretty realistic about what I could do. We had no AID program because the Congo's oil revenues made it a middle-level income country by World Bank standards and we could not assist middle-income countries. I knew that aggressively working with opposition groups was a non-starter. Ambassadors could support democratic movements, but instigating them was another matter. It was also not in the larger interests of the United States to challenge France too directly in Africa because we needed French support in other areas. Things were happening on the world stage that completely overshadowed anything going on in the Congo. The Soviet Union was collapsing and no one wanted to rock the boat. My brief was basically to report on what was going on politically and do what I could to help American business interests. So I did not bring much missionary fervor to the job.

Q: I would imagine that you would have arrived at an embassy that at its own level would have been stacked heavily with CIA or Soviet Union types not looking at the Congo per say but looking at the North Koreans and others. This was a real transition time as the Soviet Union came apart while you were there. It was obvious the Soviets were withdrawing. Did you find that the embassy was pointed at something that was disappearing?

PHILLIPS: Yes. The Soviet empire was crumbling before our eyes. In Brazzaville there was both a West German embassy and an East German embassy. The East German embassy was five or six times larger than the West German embassy. But during my first year in Brazzaville East Germany was absorbed into a united Germany. The East Germans were sent home and the West German Ambassador inherited a huge embassy building. He called me one day and said he wanted me to understand what he was doing because it was purely personal and had no political significance. The East German

Ambassador was leaving Brazzaville and he was giving him a little champagne reception. He said he liked him as a person and thought that he might well be arrested when he got back to Bonn, so he wanted to make a farewell gesture. That was the sort of thing that was happening.

The Embassy adjusted rapidly to the new situation. Quite a few people were transferred and the post was seriously downsized. But we maintained a CIA presence because the Chinese and North Koreans were still in Brazzaville in force. Once a North Korean defector came to the embassy on a weekend asking for political asylum. The CIA station chief was on vacation and I had to call on Kinshasa for assistance. They sent a team over and whisked him across the river to Zaire and eventually got him back to Washington. It turns out he was a scientist the North Koreans wanted out of Korea for some reason and had posted him in Brazzaville. I learned that he gave us critical information about North Korea's nuclear program. The incident taught me that an intelligence capacity is like insurance, you never know when it will pay off.

Q: By 1990 or so Mobutu was in our bad books. He was no longer considered the bastion against communism. Was there any standby in case all hell broke loose in Zaire?

PHILLIPS: There was certainly the possibility that all hell would break loose in Zaire. By 1990-91 the U.S. hadn't totally abandoned Mobutu, but he was certainly out of favor. He had lost touch with his people and he ran what came to be called a kleptocracy. But he was still useful. He supported Savimbi in Angola which was popular with some powerful Republican senators, and he was helpful in resolving regional problems. Zaire was on the Security Council at the time of the gulf war and Mobutu consistently supported U.S. positions in the UN. So relations were cool, but the U.S. was not actively trying to oust Mobutu. Our hope was that Zaire would eventually elect a new leader.

Q: We'll move back to Mobutu. As a non-African expert I would think that in a place like the Congo, free and fair elections sounded good but had no pertinence to the tribal currents and all and communications in a place like the Congo?

PHILLIPS: Are you taking about Zaire?

Q: Kinshasa, Zaire.

PHILLIPS: You are right. Nothing could be more difficult than organizing free and fair elections in Zaire. Later, after I retired from the Foreign Service, in 1996 I believe it was, I led a mission to try to determine what it would take to hold elections in Zaire. Our team of six people from the National Democratic Institute and National Republican Institute spent about six weeks in Zaire looking at everything from infrastructure to communications to political will. We concluded that well over three hundred million dollars would be needed just for election logistics. In fact we came to believe that it will take years and much more of an investment than that to organize meaningful elections in a country whose infrastructure - roads, telecommunications, administrative services - are broken or non-existent.

Q: Brazzaville was not a center of dissident forces then that we were stroking?

PHILLIPS: No, absolutely not. There may have been dissident forces opposed to Mobutu in Brazzaville, but we had nothing to do with them.

Q: What was your embassy doing during the time you were there?

PHILLIPS: I would like to tell the story in several installments. The first chapter began when I arrived in June of 1990. Sassou-Nguesso was in power as the Marxist head of a one-party state. The embassy was organized as a listening post and an economic support post. We had almost no consular work. We had a cultural center which was a magnet for anti-U.S. protests. Relations were improving, however, because Chet Crocker, the Assistant Secretary for African Affairs, used Brazzaville as a base when he was trying to broker a peace agreement in Angola. Sassou-Nguesso had been helpful because it was in his interest to see the Angolan conflict resolved.

That was the setting, and had business continued as usual my life in Brazzaville would have been rather uneventful. But in September of 1990 a major labor dispute broke out that had unforeseen consequences. The labor unions were normally part of the communist establishment, but because of changes in Eastern Europe and the decline of Marxist influence worldwide, the Congo's labor leaders were emboldened to challenge the regime. There was a strike that the government handled rather badly. Other dissidents began openly criticizing the regime and the security forces appeared unwilling or unable to crackdown as they would have in the past. In fact the Marxist regime was reeling. It could no longer convincingly justify its hold on power. A university professor told me it was as if people were waking up from a bad dream; they were asking themselves why they were on foot while party leaders were riding around in Mercedes.

There were no lack of cause for popular resentment. For example, a beautiful, modern building in Brazzaville had been built with European assistance funds as part of the university. But instead it was being used as headquarters for the youth wing of the party. It was a hangout for all the young Marxist thugs. Ordinary people began to question such things, and the government had no answers. The old argument that the party served the interests of workers and peasants rang hollow.

Sassou-Nguesso tried to buy time by proposing new elections, but he was fast losing credibility. Opposition leaders came out of the woodwork and began insisting on a uniquely African institution called a national conference. The idea was to bring people together in a setting where everyone could have a say on the model of palavers held in African villages. The point of such a gathering was to establish procedures for adopting a new constitution and eventually electing a new government. Sassou-Nguesso fought the national conference idea tooth and nail, but it gained momentum and he had no choice in the end but to convene one.

The National Conference met in the parliament building, displacing the communist legislators. It was a grass roots institution and was launched with high hopes. I say that a

bit wistfully because the story has a sad ending. But at the time we did not know how things would turn out.

Q: Were the progressive forces in France paying attention to this and thinking of giving support and were we involved or other Europeans? I am thinking of the socialist/labor left of European politics which was helpful in Portugal and other places like that.

PHILLIPS: The Congolese at this point were not relying much on outside help. What was occurring was a full-scale popular revolution, but a bloodless and disciplined one. I don't think the French immediately saw it as a Pandora's box in terms of their interests. As the National Conference progressed, however, it became clear that its participants harbored tremendous resentment against both the Soviet Union and France. Speaker after speaker demanded an accounting of the Congo's oil revenues, alleging they had been lost to Elf and government corruption. Speakers also expressed the strong belief that the ruling party could not have maintained its hold on power for so long without French complicity. But the aim of the conference was not so much to rehash the past as to build the future. Its main goal was to establish a transitional government that would organize democratic elections. The new situation brought dramatic changes for me. The new leaders expected support from the United States, particularly in preparing for elections. The difficulty was that Washington had a narrow focus in Africa, limited largely to South Africa and Angola, and had no budget for assisting emerging democracies like the Congo.

Q: Could you have tapped into the various non-governmental organizations? You mentioned the institute of democracy. There are various things in the United States that are quasi supported by the government. I would think you could say come on over here and help.

PHILLIPS: It was more difficult than you might think. The bureaucratic process in Washington was cumbersome and ineffective when it came to assisting emerging democracies, and the NGOs were part of the system. I am getting ahead of the story but let me say that once the Congo set a time table for elections, I pleaded regularly with Washington for assistance funds. I remember sending one telegram that ended with the plaintive questions: "If not the Congo where. If not now, when?" The answers I got were bureaucratic gobbledygook. There was an interagency committee on democracy assistance that was tied up in knots. It was incapable of acting in a timely fashion. Moreover, Washington's idea of help was to send consultants to lecture, for example on the role of a free press in the democratic process. Important sure, but not the kind of help the country needed. What the Congo needed was assistance with transportation, communications, election materials and equipment, things that cost money. Neither official Washington nor the NGO community was prepared to provide that kind of assistance.

But lets go back to the late 1990 early 1991 period. The National Conference got off to a good start. The delegates elected a Catholic bishop as their presiding officer and set up committees to deal with legal, political, economic and social issues. They decided to choose an interim government to prepare for elections and manage the country until an

elected government could take office. Two main candidates for the job of interim Prime Minister emerged. One was Pascal Lissouba, a well-educated biologist who had been jailed and then sent into exile by the communists. He had been living abroad for years, working for UNESCO. The second was Bernard Kolelas, a political activist who saw himself as the Nelson Mandela of the Congo. He had been tortured on several occasions by the government and would not hesitate to show you his scars. He had been a gadfly to the Marxist regime for 20 years. To his credit he saw that his election as interim Prime Minister might be too much for the Marxists to swallow. They still had the power to cause trouble and Kolelas wanted to avoid a fight just then. He planned to run for President eventually, and made the tactical decision to stand aside for a surrogate candidate named Andre Milango, an economist who had spent a number of years in Washington at the World Bank.

Because Lissouba had lived in Paris while working at UNESCO and Milango had lived in Washington, the press and local political observers claimed that Lissouba was favored by France and Milango by the United States. Rumor soon had it that I was actively supporting Milango. The truth is that at that point I had never met either man. I think it is human nature to see politics as theater. It was inaccurate but made good theater to believe in a French candidate and a U.S. candidate. The National Conference was fairly evenly divided between Lissouba backers and Milango backers, but Milango was narrowly elected by the delegates.

The National Conference started in December of 1990 and ran through July of 1991. It ended on a positive and rather moving note. There was a massive fountain in the courtyard of the parliament building and all of the country's political leaders, including the former dictator Sassou-Nguesso, gathered there on the last day of the conference for a hand-washing ceremony. The symbolism was meant to suggest they were done with the divisive past and were ready for a united future. The conference decided that henceforth the Congo would have a multiparty system of government, changed its name from the "People's Republic of the Congo" to the "Democratic Republic of the Congo" and adopted as its slogan the familiar words, "of the people, by the people and for the people." It was a hopeful beginning. I shall always believe the United States should have and could have done more to help this small country which had courageously overthrown a Marxist dictatorship. But we didn't give them much besides advice.

Now starts the second chapter in my Congo saga. I was the first Ambassador to meet with Milango after he was sworn-in as interim Prime Minister. He asked for United States help in preparing for elections. I said I would inform Washington of the request and suggested he make up a list of priority needs to distribute to friendly governments, the European Union, the UN and non-governmental organizations. His government prepared such a list, but it reflected a lack of experience and a lot of wishful thinking. It included a fleet of cars, helicopters and airplanes, among other complete non-starters. But it also identified many practical things that were essential to the electoral process. France, Germany, Italy, the European Union and the UN used it to shape their assistance programs. The U.S. contribution was minimal. We did send a team of election observers to monitor the voting, but we simply had no funds for much else. In fairness to the Department, it was

not clear at that time what would happen in South Africa and significant funds were frozen to meet possible requirements there. I was able to do one thing. The political parties wanted transparent ballot boxes of the kind they had seen in France. They wanted boxes you could see into. So I went to Conoco, which was a subsidiary of Dupont, and asked if they could contribute some sheets of heavy plastic to make the boxes. They agreed to provide sheets of a transparent plastic material and to contribute the funds needed to have the ballot boxes constructed locally. But the Conoco manager told me it was very expensive to fly in the material because it was heavy and they could only send so much. When it arrived we gave it to a local firm to make the boxes. A day or two later the firm called to say there wasn't enough to make all the boxes the government needed. They proposed making two sides of the boxes out of the plastic and the other two sides and the top and bottom out of wood, and we said okay. I invited all the political leaders to a cocktail party to unveil a sample ballot box. To a man they complained that the boxes "were not really transparent." You could see into them of course, but that wasn't enough; they wanted all four sides transparent. They had no experience with democratic procedures and were deeply afraid of being cheated. Still, they found they could live with “semi-transparent” boxes.

During the transition period tensions with Elf flared up. The Milango government wanted to take a hard look at Elf’s dealings with the former government, not least of all because when it took office the treasury was absolutely bare. There was literally no money in the till. But Elf stone-walled and the investigation got nowhere. The government then asked the World Bank to audit Elf 's operations in the Congo, but again Elf refused to open its books. At about this time there was a big oil spill near Pointe Noire and Elf refused even to let the Minister of the Environment on its property to inspect the damage. Elf had been all-powerful in the Congo during the previous regime and was behaving as though nothing had changed. But the company was beginning to realize just how much reform could threaten its interests and it lobbied the French government to put pressure on Milango to leave Elf alone. France became much cooler towards the new regime and Elf, for its part, apparently decided it would do whatever it took to maintain its dominance. It caused a great deal of trouble as the Congo's new institutions tried to take hold.

Presidential, legislative and local elections were scheduled for the summer of 1991. The government secured enough funding from European countries, the EEC and the UN to finance the elections and it did its best to ensure that they would be free and fair. As the election campaign began, however, it became clear that the country was fracturing along ethnic lines. The problem is endemic in Africa. In the Congo's case, ethnic divisions had been masked by an authoritarian, one-party system for nearly thirty years. But the introduction of multiparty democracy brought them to the surface and perhaps exacerbated them. There were no great ideological differences among the newly-created parties. They all to a lessor or greater degree favored democratic pluralism and a Scandinavian-style mix of socialism and free-market capitalism. So they differentiated themselves on the basis of ethnicity. This was done almost subconsciously. Party leaders didn't overtly play the ethnic card, but they didn't have to. Most voters just naturally gravitated to candidates from their tribal group. As the campaign intensified this tendency solidified. By the time election day rolled around the vast majority of Congolese voted on

the basis of ethnic preference.

The results of both the municipal and legislative elections, which preceded the presidential elections, confirmed the reality of tribal politics. On a map of the Congo we used different colored pins to track the strength of the different parties in each region of the country. Of course different ethnic groups were dominate in different regions, and the electoral map ended up being a mirror reflection of the ethnic map. For example, the northern regions of the country showed mainly red pins, the center green pins, the south yellow pins. One district would go 90 to 95% for party "A," another would go 90-95% for party "B," and so forth throughout the country. Since there were a number of small ethnic groups in the Congo and no one dominate group, a number of small parties won seats in the legislature. The voting system was a single-district-majority-winner system, but it might as well have been proportional representation, given the results. With no party or ethnic group winning a clear majority the country would have to be governed by a coalition.

The presidential election used the French system of two rounds of voting. The first round was held on the second Sunday in July and the second round on the following Sunday. If no candidate won a majority of the votes in the first round, the two candidates winning the most votes faced each other in the second round; all the other candidates were eliminated. All of the major political leaders ran in the first round, and I think many observers were surprised by how little appeal they had outside of their ethnic groups. For example, Sassou-Nguesso, the former President, got only 8% of the vote, almost exactly proportional to the 6-9% percent of the population his Mbochi tribe represents in the country as a whole. This may explain why the Mbochis embraced Marxism as a means of attaining power and then once in power resisted democracy so fervently; they knew that as a small ethnic group they would be hard put to win elections based on majority rule. This, by the way, is true throughout Africa. Daniel arap Moi, the dictator in Kenya, belongs to a tiny tribal group and would have a hard time winning in fair elections.

The two first round winners in the presidential contest were Pascal Lissouba and Bernard Kolelas. Lissouba represented a coalition of related ethnic groups located in the center of the country, and Kolelas was the leader of the Bakongo people who lived in the heavily populated areas in and around Brazzaville. Lissouba won the run-off election with sixty-four percent of the vote, handily defeating Kolelas. He did so by forming an alliance with Sassou-Nguesso and several other political leaders who had been eliminated in the first round of voting. European and American election observers noted some irregularities but by and large judged it a free and fair election. Kolelas, the persecuted, long-suffering opponent of the Marxist regime, could not believe that he could lose except through foul play. He protested loudly but got no international support for an investigation into alleged electoral fraud. There were rumors that France had given financial support to Lissouba's campaign and that the U.S. had done the same for Kolelas. I can't say what the French did, but I can assure you the United States contributed nothing to Kolelas.

Because he needed a majority in the legislature, Lissouba was obliged to form a coalition government. He named a Prime Minister who began negotiations with the various parties.

The obvious partner was Sassou-Nguesso's old Marxist party, rebaptized a European-style Socialist party, because it had thrown its support behind Lissouba in the second round of voting. Although it only represented 8% of the vote, Sassou-Nguesso's group demanded the key ministries of Interior, Defense, Finance and Energy. Some observers speculated that these demands were based on the simple arrogance of a party used to governing; others contended old regime activists needed powerful posts to stave off embarrassing investigations of their tenure in office. Whatever the reason for their demands, Lissouba and his Prime Minister were not about to give them that kind of power. They offered them instead the ministries of Education, Public Works and Health. It is unclear if Sassou-Nguesso's party actually refused these posts. But what is clear is that they opened discussions with other parties with an eye to forming a legislative majority opposed to Lissouba. The only party large enough to achieve this end was Bernard Kolelas's party, the arch enemy of Sassou-Nguesso and company for nearly 30 years. Nonetheless, Sassou-Nguesso and Kolelas began negotiating.

About this time Kolelas asked to meet with me privately. I agreed and we met one evening at the DCM's residence. By then Roger Meece had been assigned to a new post. My new DCM was an excellent officer named William Gains who had established a personal friendship with Kolelas. After some embarrassment, Kolelas told me he was about to form an alliance with Sassou-Nguesso. He explained that he still considered Sassou-Nguesso the devil incarnate, but that politics makes strange bed-fellows. He claimed to believe Lissouba was potentially a worse dictator than Sassou-Nguesso and that a political marriage of convenience was the only way he could be stopped. The idea was to form a bloc in the National Assembly which would vote to reject Lissouba's choice for Prime Minister. This would bring down the government because the constitution provided that the President had to select a Prime Minister from the ranks of the majority in the Assembly. If his nominee was rejected, Lissouba would have to turn to the Kolelas-Sassou-Nguesso newly minted majority for a Prime Minister, and by extension for his entire government. Now the constitution was somewhat ambiguous on this point. I still recall that it was Article 72 that provided that the Prime Minister must be selected from the Assembly majority, but it also provided that the President could dissolve the Assembly and call new elections if his nominee for Prime Minister was rejected. The problem was that the constitution, modeled on French constitutions past, was not clear on whether the Congo would have a strong president and a weak legislature, or a weak president and a strong legislature. There are precedents in French history for both. The Kolelas-Sassou-Nguesso alliance forced the new regime to confront the issue within weeks of its inception.

I told Kolelas that I thought it was a terrible idea. Not only would he lose credibility by joining Sassou-Nguesso, he also risked throwing the country into chaos. I pointed out that the new institutions were in the infant stage, that no supreme court existed to sort out constitutional questions and that average Congolese citizens had no experience with democracy, let alone with a democracy that posed complex constitutional issues several weeks after a bitterly contested election. I argued he would be better off to accept the role of leader of the "loyal opposition." He would then be in a strong position to run again in the next elections. Kolelas listened politely, but it was apparent he had made up his mind.

Within the week the scenario played out as Kolelas said it would, but only partially. The new Assembly majority rejected Lissouba's Prime Minister, but instead of turning to Kolelas and Sassou-Nguesso in naming another one, Lissouba dissolved parliament and called for new legislative elections.

The stakes were high. Sassou-Nguesso and Kolelas were trying to marginalize Lissouba by shifting power from the Presidency to the National Assembly. They were trying to win by constitutional maneuvering what they failed to win in the elections. Both sides dug in their heels; both honestly believed they were in the right. When it became evident that Lissouba was serious about dissolving parliament, Kolelas supporters staged a protest march in downtown Brazzaville. This is when the first blood was shed. Lissouba's security forces confronted the marchers and shots were fired. About a dozen protesters were killed. This effectively polarized the country and created a situation marked by acrimonious charges and counter-charges and political ambiguity. Both sides thought the constitution justified their position. A hostile stand off was created that lasted a long time.

Lissouba called for new elections, but the opposition parties declared they would boycott them. I met with both sides to try to get them to work out some kind of compromise and eventually they did agree to a date and procedures for new elections. But this time it was the Lissouba administration that was in charge of organizing the elections, not a neutral transition government or a national conference. So the opposition was suspicious of every aspect of the preparations. In the event, Lissouba's party and its allies won a slim majority in the National Assembly, but the Sassou-Nguesso/Kolelas forces cried foul. They claimed that serious fraud had occurred in seventy voting districts: If their allegations were true in even a majority of these cases and if the results were reversed, the opposition would have a majority in the Assembly and the country would be back to square one. That is, Lissouba would be obliged to select a Prime Minister from the ranks of the opposition. It boiled down to the question of who would govern the country. Lissouba argued that his victory with sixty-four percent of the vote in a legitimate national election for the presidency gave him a mandate to govern. His opponents claimed they had won a majority in the National Assembly in the first legislative elections and had been cheated out of a majority in the second elections. Although European and American monitors had declared the second elections free and fair, suspicion and animosity now ran too deep for either side to back down. Political leaders began demonizing each other, political parties began recruiting and arming militias and the country was on the brink of civil war. All sense of tolerance and national unity had been lost in the several months since the end of the National Conference. I don’t know how many people were killed in the ensuing fighting, but I would guess that it was in the tens of thousands.
Q: Was it tribal mainly?

PHILLIPS: At first ethnic groups formed into two loose coalitions, but as time went on there was some switching of sides. Towards the end each tribe came to believe it could only rely on itself, and there was near anarchy. But yes, the fighting was largely tribe against tribe.

Political problems were becoming intractable and economic events were also proving to

be divisive. When Lissouba took office he inherited an administration that was dead broke. He couldn't provide even rudimentary services. Civil servants hadn't been paid for nine months and there was no new money coming in to pay them. Elf informed Lissouba that the previous government had in effect mortgaged the Congo's royalty oil far into the future. Lissouba went to France hat in hand asking for financial support and he did get a little from the French Government and from Elf, but he was infuriated by Elf's refusal to open its books. Elf was telling him basically to be a good boy and he would be taken care of. Lissouba refused to play along and insisted that the Congo have at least treatment from Elf equivalent to that given other Francophone countries such as Gabon. Elf at the time was operating like a state within a state and the company turned on Lissouba when he became too insistent. Lissouba's relations soured not only with Elf but with France.

Q: Was he finding that the cause picked up any supporters among the French investigative press? It sounds like maybe everyone was in the game.

PHILLIPS: Politicians and journalists were either in the game or didn't care. Neither the Socialists or the Gaullists wanted to upset Elf's apple cart. France saw its former African colonies as a special cultural and linguistic sphere of influence and were paranoid about encroachments, real or imagined, by other countries, especially the United States. The French government was protective of Elf and began to see Lissouba as a threat to its political and economic interests not only in the Congo but throughout Africa.

Q: And Brazzaville has a particular spoke in the Gaullist thing.

PHILLIPS: That is right. When De Gaulle left France to set up the free French movement during the second world war, he went initially to Brazzaville. He lived there for some time before he went to London. Brazzaville was called the cradle of the French resistance. They French Ambassador lived in the villa that had been De Gaulle's residence, and there was a statue of De Gaulle in downtown Brazzaville. But even before that, Brazzaville had been the administrative capital of French colonial Africa. So the French believed Brazzaville was special for them and they resented Lissouba for raising embarrassing questions about Elf.

Q: During this very critical time what was your relationship with the French ambassador and what was he doing?

PHILLIPS: Our relations were good on a personal level. The Ambassador was an accomplished diplomat named Michael Andre. We were quite friendly at first, but when Occidental Petroleum got involved in the Congo, we began to deal with each other with more circumspection. Ambassador Andre tried to be even-handed, but he had to implement French policy which became more and more a hostage to Elf's interests. We were always cordial, but in the situation that evolved we could hardly remain close friends.

Q: You were talking about Occidental?

PHILLIPS: Yes. Lissouba's early efforts to woo France had failed and by the fall of 1991 he was distinctly out of favor. France was disenchanted with the Congo's somewhat messy democratic movement, and Elf didn't hide the fact that it would have preferred to have Sassou-Nguesso back in power. But at first Elf 's tactic was simply to stone wall Lissouba whenever he requested a more open and beneficial relationship. Later Elf played hard ball. The trouble started when Occidental came in with a very high-powered team to try to win an offshore drilling concession. But the more Oxy looked at the Congo, the more it saw a unique opportunity. As I mentioned earlier, the Lissouba government was desperate for money. The second legislative elections mandated by the dissolution of parliament were fast approaching. Lissouba badly wanted to pay civil servant salaries before the elections. The Congo had some "royalty oil," that is the government's share of the flow of oil produced by Elf and its partners, that wasn't mortgaged, and Lissouba tried to use it as collateral for a massive loan from Elf. But Elf didn't want to help Lissouba politically and refused. Oxy, however, had no qualms about helping Lissouba and began negotiating for the outright purchase of the royalty oil. Both sides recognized the huge risk involved because of increasing political instability, so the price was advantageous for Oxy. But the deal was also advantageous for Lissouba because of the timing. He needed to pay the civil servants and show some financial benefit for the country to win the legislative elections and maintain his hold on power, and the Oxy deal was all that was available in the short run. The result was that Lissouba agreed to sell Oxy the royalty oil plus drilling rights in two major offshore blocks for 150 million dollars. I was kept informed as negotiations went along, but I couldn't become directly involved as Ambassador because that would have been showing special favor to one U.S. company. Chevron and Amoco, for example, might have asked why I didn’t do the same for them. But I was as supportive as I could be. Dave Martin, who was the president of Occidental Petroleum, called me one evening to say that agreement had been reached and that Oxy planned to transfer $150 million to the Congo. I asked when and he said, "tonight." I suggested wiring the funds to the local branch of a Belgian bank. I knew the French would have fits when they found out about the deal and that money sent through the main bank in Brazzaville, which was French, might get conveniently "delayed." This had actually happened in the past, causing irritating delays in several of our PL480 rice sales to the Congo. The next morning the astonished manager of the Belgian bank called me to ask if I could explain why he suddenly had a 150 million dollars he didn’t have yesterday. I told him it was for the treasury of the Congo so he wouldn't have it for long.

When the French found out about the deal there was a major hue and cry. Local French businessmen led by Elf accused the United States of trying to replace France in the Congo and perhaps in all of West Africa. This was absurd. All we wanted was a fair shake for American firms trying to do business in the Congo. We even advised U.S. companies that they had a better chance of succeeding if they took on a French partner. Elf knew this, but was terrified that opening the market to American firms would force it to open its books for public inspection. Elf did not want to explain publicly why the Congo got only 13% of the oil produced on its territory while Gabon and other African countries got the normal 51%. Elf was in fact in the process of covering up a major scandal which eventually resulted in its CEO being fired and jailed, but at time we are discussing it was still all powerful. It had its own intelligence service and allegedly

supplied money and arms to African allies when it suited its interests. It began actively opposing Lissouba and supporting Sassou-Nguesso.

All of this occurred ten days before the elections. Lissouba used the money to pay the civil servants some six or seven months in salary arrears, which was wildly popular, and his party went on to win a majority of seats in the election. Now the French were sure America had bought Lissouba and the elections. They did all they could to undermine the new Oxy/Congo relationship. Elf told Lissouba that if he would cancel the Oxy contract it would give him $150 million plus for the same deal, but Lissouba refused. He was pleased to have an American presence to balance Elf's power and went so far as to request that Oxy provide him with a team of advisors to help him put the Congo's oil production on a more solid footing. In my view this was a terrible idea because I thought it would create unnecessary headaches and in the end would prove impractical. Oxy thought Lissouba was asking for technical advisors and agreed. But the French thought he was trying to use Oxy for the much larger purpose of exposing Elf's corrupt practices. The French loved conspiracy theories and saw the whole thing as a design to exclude Elf from the very lucrative oil fields in neighboring Angola. Elf went ballistic, and the French government was almost equally upset. France saw Lissouba as nearly a traitor and began to behave accordingly. My relations with Lissouba improved significantly, but unfortunately I lost the trust of Sassou and even Kolelas because they thought the Embassy was implicitly involved in the Oxy deal and therefore in Lissouba's election victory. It took me some time to regain Kolelas's trust, and I never did reestablish particularly good relations with Sassou.

The final chapter in my Congo story is decidedly unhappy. Lissouba's coalition won the elections but the results were violently contested by the opposition parties. There was no Congolese institution capable of resolving the dispute and neither side would accept a compromise that excluded it from power. The country slid into a prolonged period of low-grade civil war. By low-grade I mean that there were never two fully equipped armies engaged in conventional warfare; rather there were a series of guerrilla skirmishes fought by ragtag militias. Of course Lissouba was able to rely on the Congolese army to some extent, but not entirely. He couldn't count on army elements from the northern provinces where Sassou's ethnic group held sway. There were strong indications that Elf supplied the opposition forces with money and arms, although I don't have concrete evidence of this. In any case thousands of Congolese lives were lost. The violence was concentrated in the Brazzaville area and I had to evacuate non-essential Embassy personnel. The evacuations were complicated by the fact that Kinshasa experienced sever civil unrest at the same time. So we had evacuees coming across the river to Brazzaville just as we were contemplating sending evacuees across to Kinshasa. In the end, both groups left from Brazzaville's airport which miraculously stayed open through all of the turbulence. Eventually both sides suffered enough causalities to become war-weary. They asked me to mediate which I tried to do, but a compromise agreement proved illusive at the time. A month or so later they turned to a United Nations mediator who, with the help of the President of Gabon, finally brought the two sides together. In early 1993 they agreed to have the election disputes resolved by a team of international jurists. The jurists investigated claims of fraud in seventy electoral districts and found 13 cases where

irregularities had been serious enough to constitute fraud. Of these 13 contested seats they decided 10 should go to the opposition and three to the government coalition. That decision did not alter the majority in the National Assembly and it confirmed Lissouba's hold on power, but the opposition was exhausted and accepted it.

When I left in September 1993 a sort of uneasy peace had been established. The Embassy evacuees were able to return. Lissouba made Kolelas the mayor of Brazzaville and another opposition leader named Thystere-Tchicaya the mayor of Pointe Noire. This helped the process of reconciliation, but did not go far enough. Lissouba feared and hated Sassou-Nguesso and refused to give him any sort of face-saving position.

So that was the situation when I left the Congo. As an epilog I can tell you that Sassou-Nguesso eventually mounted a bloody coup d'etat with the help of French arms and Angolan soldiers. Our Embassy and residence were destroyed in the fighting. Sassou-Nguesso is once again President of the Congo. Lissouba is in exile in London. Oxy sold its interests in the Congo back to the government. We have an Ambassador to the Congo, but he is resident in Kinshasa. He will not move to Brazzaville until we get a new Embassy building and residence, so probably not any time soon. That's how things stand now.

Q: During the time you were there was the African Bureau so fixed on South Africa and what was happening there that in other areas interest was just lacking?

PHILLIPS: Yes, it was a case of bad timing. Suppose events in the Congo had occurred in the 1980s, before the Berlin wall came down. Imagine the interest that would have been focused on an oil-rich African country that overturned a Marxist dictatorship and established a democratically elected government friendly to the West. Our financial and moral support would have been overwhelming. But by 1991 events in the Congo were just a side show. By then the only place in Africa that drew sustained U.S. interest was South Africa. Moreover, Washington wasn't prepared to challenge the French claim to a special sphere of influence in parts of Africa. The attitude was that France wouldn't seriously challenge the United States in Panama, for example, so why should we seriously challenge France in the Congo. This is not to say that Washington was not supportive of Oxy and other American oil companies that tried to gain a foothold in the Congo. But there is support and there is support, and we were never prepared to go as far as the French in using political and diplomatic means to secure economic ends, at least not in France's African backyard. Oxy left the Congo voluntarily in 1995. Other American oil companies came in, but mainly as partners with French firms.

Q: Do you have any feel about Elf, have they changed their spots?

PHILLIPS: Well, when I left Elf was still unreconstructed for the most part. It had re-negotiated some contracts to give the country a better deal, but it was still profiting immensely from its Congo holdings. Since that time Elf has been entirely reorganized and privatized and I understand it no longer operates as a state within a state.

Q: You mentioned the lack of a real university. What would you say about the educated level of people in the government and business?

PHILLIPS: It was very high. Brazzaville had been the administrative capital of French West Africa. In the geography books when I was in grade school French West Africa was always colored blue, British Africa was pink and Portuguese Africa was green. The blue stretched all the way down the west coast of Africa, from Senegal to the border with Angola. The capital of that vast territory required administrators and clerks and the French educated a number of Congolese to fill those positions. This produced a well-educated elite. Ordinary people in the cities were by and large literate, but in the countryside the people were uneducated. Success in the Congo came to be defined as having a government job, a notion that was reinforced by the Marxist regime. The work of farmers and laborers and even entrepreneurs is not highly valued to this day. This mindset in not helpful as the Congo tries to develop a modern economy.

Q: What happened to the three hundred?

PHILLIPS: If you mean the three hundred Congolese families that I estimated thrived during the Marxist period, they lost their perks when they lost power. But most of them had money socked away in foreign banks. Some moved to Paris. Some moved back to their homes in villages in the northern part of the country. Elf continued to keep some on its payroll. Many came back to positions of power along with Sassou-Nguesso in 1996.

I would like to make a point that is not entirely related to your question. This is not based on extensive research, just on my own observations and reading of history, but I believe there is a pattern. Colonial powers, whether French, British, Belgian or Portuguese tended to favor large ethnic groups that lived along lines on transportation, a river, a railroad, later a highway. They would draw on these groups for their clerks, priests and minor functionaries of all kinds. They would give them whatever education it took to perform these tasks. At the same time they would draw on smaller ethnic groups from the more remote areas, often located in the north of the country, whose main activity was hunting as opposed to agriculture, for their security forces, for the native soldiers in the colonial armies and police forces. In the process they created an educated elite and a military elite from different ethnic groups. When independence came the educated elite, which had often provided leaders for the independence movement, claimed political power and formed the first post- independence governments. But it didn't take long for the military elite to realize they had the guns and therefore the real power and they deposed the educated elite and took over the government. They tended to be authoritarian and anti-democratic because they were from minority ethnic groups that could not win in a one-man-one-vote system. Examples that come to mind are the Congo, Zaire and Kenya: Sassou, Mobutu and Moi are all from minor, "warrior tribes." There are other examples, but that's enough to illustrate my theory about how Africa came to be ruled largely by military dictatorships from the mid-1960s to the mid-1990s.

Q: Did you have any significant visits from the powers that be?

PHILLIPS: No. There were not many official visitors while I was there. A few senators, some State Department officers at the Assistant Secretary level and some American businessmen, but those visits tapered off when the civil unrest began. There was one incident with a visitor that was tragic but bizarre. A young woman courier had to stop over in Brazzaville for several days during the height of the fighting. There was a curfew and most of the city was sealed off by barricades. She stayed with another young woman on my staff, a communicator. They were both interested in wildlife and the zoo was one of the few places one could still visit, so on a Sunday they took some food over to the zoo to feed the animals. This was an act of kindness because the zoo had been totally neglected during the fighting. The courier got too close to the lion cage trying to toss in some meat and a lion reached out and badly mauled her. Her friend called the Marines and they took her to a French clinic. The doctor called me and said he would have to amputate her arm nearly to the shoulder and that the only alternative was to med-evac her to South Africa where they had better equipment and might be able to save her arm. There was a Swissair ambulance service available that we could use, but we needed to get permission from Washington to use it. I also needed her husband's approval, either to have her treated in Brazzaville or sent to South Africa. Finally, I needed the Congolese government to open the airport which was closed because of the curfew. So I spent the rest of the day on the phone. I called the husband, I called the State Department Medical Division duty officer and I called President Lissouba and got him up from his lunch. It was difficult to explain to them, especially Lissouba, how it happened that this person was attacked by a lion. I think the President thought I was drunk until I told him the whole story. Finally the husband and Department okayed the evacuation and Lissouba had the army open the airport. The French doctor bandaged her up and we sent her out on the plane that arrived about eight hours later. Unfortunately, the doctors in South Africa couldn't save her arm and it had to be amputated.

This sad story involving an animal reminds me of other, happier, encounters with wildlife. During my time in Burundi I became fast friends with the great chimpanzee researcher Jane Goodall. Her main base of operations is at Gombe Stream, in Tanzania and I met her there on a mini safari we took in 1988. She was deeply concerned about chimpanzee orphans and she asked me to help her set up a chimpanzee reserve in Burundi. Adult chimps are hunted as part of an extensive bush meat trade in Africa. The babies are often captured and sold as pets. Baby chimps make adorable pets for two or three years but they become unmanageable and quite dangerous as they get older. Once in captivity, however, they can never live again in the wild because they simply do not have the necessary survival skills. African zoos are not the answer because they generally provide at best run down, miserable cages. Since chimps live forty or fifty years it is terrible to condemn them to a life in animal prison. Jane's idea was to set up a sort of "half-way house" where the chimps could be in an enclosed natural area but would still be taken care of to some extent by wildlife experts. I went with her to discuss the idea with President Buyoya who agreed to set aside some land in a national park for a reserve. Jane brought in some people to manage it and they trained some local Burundi as guards and research assistants. And it worked well until the civil unrest forced Jane to move the chimps to Kenya. I helped her establish a similar reserve in the Congo near the port city of Pointe Noire and it still exists. It is a major facility that was financed in large part by

Conoco and today houses over sixty chimps. It has somehow survived the Congo's civil wars.

There was one chimp named Gregoire at the Brazzaville zoo who had been in the same tiny, dirty cage since De Gaulle's days in the Congo. Jane took an interest in Gregoire and tried to find ways to make his life more bearable. She enlisted the aid of Brigitte Bardot, who financed a new, ultra-modern living space for Gregoire at the zoo. It was very touching to watch Jane gently encourage him to move into the new space. It was terrifying for him at first because he had lived in the same cage for over forty years, but he finally moved and he is now quite healthy and appears to be very happy. I continued my association with Jane after I retired from the Foreign Service as a member of the board of directors of the Jane Goodall Institute.

Q: You left the Congo in mid-1993?

PHILLIPS: I left in September of 1993. I was assigned as a diplomat-in-residence at the Carter Center in Atlanta, Georgia, and stayed there until September of 1994, when I retired.

Q: Could you talk about what you did and what was your impression of President Carter?

PHILLIPS: The first time I met President Carter personally was when he came to the Congo to address the World Health Organization at its African headquarters in Brazzaville. This was in August of 1991. One of Carter's pet projects is the eradication of guinea worm disease. He has been very successful and there are only a few areas, mainly in Africa, where the disease still exists. So he came to give a talk on guinea worm to the WHO. It so happened that he arrived just days after the Congo's elections and he became the first foreign dignitary Lissouba received as President. Carter of course was delighted to meet a newly elected democratic leader and the two men hit it off very well. Lissouba spoke English so they could communicate directly. The Carter Center eventually sent a team of election monitors for the legislative elections in 1992.

I helped Carter during his visit in the normal way; for example the Embassy provided his transportation around Brazzaville, I went with him when he met with Lissouba and I invited him to lunch at my residence. So when I was proposed as a diplomat-in -residence at the Center Carter he remembered me and agreed. Perhaps I should say a few words about the program. The State Department has diplomat-in-resident positions at several universities around the country. These assignments are for one year and usually entail teaching a course and being available to meet with students who are interested in a career in diplomacy. It also gives senior diplomats a sort of sabbatical year to write and reflect on their careers. The Department has such a position at the Carter Center but the emphasis there is on working with President Carter on his foreign policy interests.

President Carter was in his late '60s the year I arrived in Atlanta and he felt he was in his prime. After his election defeat in 1980 he went through a period of bitterness and

depression, but he was over that and was on his way to winning near unanimous approval as the nation's "best ex-President." President Carter supported Clinton in the 1992 elections and was close to Warren Christopher. With Clinton in the White House and Christopher at State, Carter looked forward to working closely with the new administration. He had had excellent working relations with the Bush administration which had used him on several occasions as a sort of roving elder statesman. He liked James Baker and was close to Gerald Ford. So he felt he had a role to play in the international arena and hoped the Clinton administration would make use of his expertise. He wanted to build on his humanitarian and election-monitoring projects abroad by getting more involved in conflict resolution. Because of my experience in Africa I was asked to work with him on his peacemaking efforts in Sudan, Ethiopia and Liberia. But I wasn't alone. There were several retired Ambassadors working at the Center, not as diplomats-in-residence, but as members of his staff. These included Marion Creekmore who had been Ambassador in Sri Lanka and Harry Barnes who had been Ambassador in Romania, Chili and India. Bob Pastor, formerly with the National Security Council, was responsible for Latin America, and a university professor named Richard Joseph was responsible for Africa. They headed up the Cater Center's full-time foreign policy staff and functioned like a mini National Security Council. The Center's Presidential library, health and agricultural sections were separate operations.

I was part of the foreign policy team. Some of us worked on Africa, some on Latin America, some on Korea and some on the Balkans. But we backed each other up and we all tried to contribute to whatever Carter was trying to accomplish. We had some notable successes. And when I say "we" I mean everyone at the Center but especially President Carter who was the heart and soul of the operations. For example, he took Colin Powell and Sam Nunn to Haiti to defuse a very dangerous and volatile situation. He was less successful in Bosnia, but he made a major contribution to world peace in Korea.

I think history will show that without Carter’s intervention there would have been an extremely bloody war on the Korean peninsula in 1994. The United States Ambassador to South Korea was from Atlanta and knew Carter well. He warned him that North Korea was reacting badly to U.S. pressure on nuclear issues and might do something irrational. At the time, no one knew how ill the North Korean leader Kim Il Sung was or if he remained fully in control. Seoul and many of our military bases were within easy range of North Korean artillery, and even though it would have been suicidal for the North to launch a missile attack on the South the Ambassador believed it might happen if the North Koreans felt cornered. North Korea could have inflicted heavy causalities and done immense damage before they were defeated. Carter had volunteered on several occasions to go to North Korea on the theory that nothing is gained from isolating the leader of a rogue state. He thought tragic miscalculations might be avoided if people were at least talking to each other. But the Bush Administration and then the Clinton Administration told him the time wasn’t right. The concern about North Korea was that it might be developing a nuclear weapons capability and Carter thought he knew as much as anybody about nuclear weapons. He studied nuclear physics at the Naval Academy and worked with Admiral Rickover on nuclear submarines. North Korea, for its part, was willing to receive Carter as a private citizen and extended an open invitation to him to give a

university lecture. When he saw the situation deteriorating in 1994 he decided the time was right to accept the invitation and he got a grudging green light from the White House.

By way of background it should be noted that North Korea was a signatory to the nuclear non-proliferation treaty but was very likely not abiding by it. They had nuclear reactors for supposedly peaceful purposes that should have been under IAEA supervision, but IAEA inspectors did not have access to them. So we didn't know what they were doing with the weapons-grade plutonium produced by the reactors. The U.S. was pressing for condemnation of North Korea and a sanctions regime imposed by the UN unless North Korea gave inspectors full access to its nuclear facilities. The North Koreans apparently took this as an unacceptable ultimatum and threatened to react strongly if the UN adopted the U.S. position. There were no direct contacts between the United States and North Korea and our Ambassador in Seoul thought the situation was spiraling out of control. This was the situation when Carter went to North Korea. He spent hours with Kim Il Sung and the two men established something of a friendship. They had a mutual interest in fly fishing and Carter invited Kim Il Sung to come to Georgia to fish. Apparently Kim Il Sung was impressed by the first American statesman who had taken the trouble to meet with him and he agreed to allow the IAEA inspections. This took the steam out of the U.S. drive for UN sanctions and avoided the possibility of an irrational move by the North Korean military. The questions of inspections and North Korea's nuclear posture remain unresolved since Kim Il Sung's death but negotiation are ongoing. I believe Carter's intervention avoided the worst.

Q: On this subject, last Friday, I have been doing a series of interviews with Winston Lord who was the assistant secretary for East Asian and Pacific Affairs at that time and he talked about this. He said there was great reluctance to do this because Carter was considered somewhat of a loose cannon. Because he established this relationship with Kim Sung, who was dying, the fact that Kim Sung had made the commitment to carry on talks, that when he died, that this gave sanction for the new government, led kind of by his son but also by his successors, to continue with this and had this not happened at this time who knows what would have happened. It was kind of grudging credit to Carter on the part of Lord.

PHILLIPS: I am glad to hear that. I think history will see it that way. The commander of U.S. forces in Korea was named General Lux. He told Carter the United States could loose 10,000 to 15,000 men in the first hours of fighting if the North Koreans launched an attack. Lux didn't think Washington was focused on the risks implicit in its tough line at the UN and asked rhetorically what the public reaction would be when the body bags started coming home. That is why Carter felt a sense of urgency and that is why he defied the administration to some extent and went to Korea. He did coordinate his activities with a man named William Gallucci, I believe his name was, who was Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for Asia.

Q: Gallucci was the one who took on the negotiations.

PHILLIPS: Yes. I believe Gallucci opposed pushing the North Koreans to the breaking point, but there were forces within the administration that believed we would do better to bring the nuclear issue with North Korea to a head sooner rather than later. Again, from what I understand, Gallucci thought those who made that argument were not factoring the full risks into the equation and he became sort of a Carter ally. In any case, this to my mind was the most significant success Carter had as a mediator after he left the presidency.

Q: One of the things that seemed to be Carter's Achilles heel during his administration was his attention to detail and getting too involved which took away initiatives and bogged him down. The other was a form of ego or Christian servitude. When he made up his mind about something he said this is what I am going to do and that was it. Did you run across either of those?

PHILLIPS: No. I think he had mellowed enormously since he left the presidency. He still micro-managed things to some extent but largely because he was smarter than everyone else. I have never known anyone with his command of facts. He knew more about Ethiopia, for example, than experts we would invite to the Center to brief him. When you gave him a briefing on any subject you had to be careful to give him new information because he got impatient if you went over things he already knew. But he also had a good sense of humor. I remember one very tense negotiating session we had with some Ethiopians. At one point they left the room to consult among themselves. Carter and I and sat there waiting for them to return. I said to Carter that we were probably the only Americans right then not talking about the Tanya Harding scandal which had just hit the news. Carter began to give me his take on the scandal and then stopped short and said, "Oh, great, now we are taking about it."

Q: Tell me about the role you played in Sudan and Ethiopia.

PHILLIPS: Let me mention Sudan first. Carter had been following the devastating civil war in Sudan for years and knew that it was as brutal as any conflict anywhere in the world. It was a human tragedy on a scale larger than the clan warfare in Somalia but it got almost no media attention; there were no graphic accounts of bloodshed and famine on CNN. The country is split into two distinct regions, the Arab, Islamic north and the Bantu, Christian south. In modern times the north has always dominated the south but the southerners were in rebellion and that, along with the clash of culture and religion, gave rise to a seemingly endless civil war. The situation is complicated by the fact that there are huge if as yet untapped oil deposits right in the middle of the country. So partition is not an option because there is no clear way to decide who is entitled to the oil. In addition the government in Khartoum is dominated by Islamic fundamentalists. It is not as radical a regime as that in Afghanistan today, but it is certainly modeled on Iran.

Carter went to Sudan several times and developed good relations with both sides and was trying to mediate. It was a complicated process because the southerners did not present a united front. There were three factions that were just as capable of fighting among themselves as against the north. While I was there we met in Atlanta with representatives

of the main southern warlord, John Garang, and tried to broker a cease fire among the southern factions. Carter went to Khartoum and tried to get peace negotiations started. He also set up several health and agricultural projects in Sudan, both for humanitarian reasons and as leverage in dealing with the two sides. Unfortunately neither side is as yet prepared to compromise and despite Carter's truly heroic efforts, civil war, famine and disease continue to ravage the country.

Q: What about the Ethiopian side of things?

PHILLIPS: In Ethiopia, Meles Zenawi, who came from a small ethnic group that lived in the Tigray region, a sparely populated, mountainous part of the country, overthrew the Marxist, very repressive Mengistu dictatorship after some years of fighting. His group was also authoritarian but more Leninist than Marxist and once in power showed signs of moderation. Carter developed a very good relationship with him. Ethiopia had allowed Eritrea under the leadership of Afwerke Isaias to break away and become an independent state. This enraged the Amharas and other ethnic groups that had been in power during the Haile Selassie era and they vigorously opposed Zenawi. Their opposition was also based on the belief that Zenawi was an upstart and that they were the natural ruling elite of Ethiopia. Numerous exiles from these groups lived in United States and Carter was in close touch with them. So the goal in Ethiopia was two-fold: To reconcile the opposing groups and to help build civil institutions as a first step towards democracy. The Center had a five million dollar grant from Denmark to finance civil society projects and we had projects in three areas: Public safety, the judicial system and the constitution. We sponsored some retired police officers from Chicago who were in Ethiopia teaching techniques of community policing. We had a group of American and European jurists trying to introduce judicial reforms and several American constitutional scholars were helping the government write a new constitution. I was involved in Carter's mediating efforts and in administering the projects. But both were long term efforts and continued after I left.

Q: Was there a spillover into Eritrea?

PHILLIPS: We didn't have any programs in Eritrea but Cater knows and respects Afwerke Isaias and is willing to help Eritrea if he is called on to do so.

Q: You left there in 1995?

PHILLIPS: I left in 1994. I was at the Carter Center from October of 1993 until October of 1994.

Q: And what have you been doing since then?

PHILLIPS: I retired and set up a consulting firm called Dan Phillips and Associates. A wealthy Lebanese man who I met through his involvement in some oil deals in the Congo asked me to be the head of a foundation he established to manage his charitable activities in the United States. It is called the H.M. Salaam Foundation. I also started a foundation

called the Central African Foundation. Its goal is to channel private sector funds into development projects in countries where for one reason or another the United States does not have an aid program. I am not sure it will take off because of instability in the part of the world it targets. We need a period of peace and stability to do any good, so I may have to give up on the Central African Foundation if the area remains chaotic. I am on the board directors of the Jane Goodall Institute.

So I am still active and have an office in Washington, but I also play a lot of golf. There is life after retirement.

End of interview