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

AMBASSADOR R. GRANT SMITH

Interviewed by: Charles Stuart Kennedy
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INTERVIEW

[Note: This interview has not been edited by Ambassador Smith]

Q: Today is March 5, 1999, and this is an interview with R. Grant Smith, and this is to be done on behalf of the Association for Diplomatic Studies and Training, and I'm Charles Stuart Kennedy. Grant, let's start kind of at the beginning. Can you tell me when and where you were born and something about your family?

SMITH: I was born on Long Island in 1938. My father was then a professor out there, but he later came to Washington during the war, to the War Production Board, and then joined the State Department and was Wristonized in 1956.

Q: Wristonized meaning he was -

SMITH: He became an FSO.

Q: Yes, a Foreign Service officer.

SMITH: He went from Civil Service to FSO in 1956, and then he backed up a bit. He had already served as a reserve officer in Bangkok and in Karachi, and in 1956 he became a regular Foreign Service officer and subsequently went off to Sri Lanka and New Delhi. I did not accompany him to Sri Lanka and New Delhi, but I did in Bangkok and Karachi. I actually went to school in India, and then I did visit him in Sri Lanka.

Q: Well, let's move back a bit. In 1938, your father was a professor where?

SMITH: Hofstra.

Q: What was his field?

SMITH: Political science. No, I'm wrong. *His* father's field was political science. He was an economist. He was an economic officer.

Q: Your family came from a professorial background, was it?

SMITH: Well, those two generations. Before that there had been a businessman, and there had been a mix before that. My grandmother's family was from upstate New York. My mother's family was from banking in the Long Island area.

Q: Growing up as a young lad, World War II was sort of over by the time you were becoming more or less aware of the world. Was that it, would you say?

SMITH: That's right, yes.

Q: Where did you go to grammar school?

SMITH: Actually, I went to grammar school in the District of Columbia, various places, but I went to fourth, fifth, and sixth grade in the District of Columbia.

Q: And then high school?

SMITH: High school I was part of the time in India and came back and finished at BCC -

Q: That's Bethesda-Chevy Chase High School. Well, what about while you going into elementary, grammar school, what were your interests?

SMITH: I guess my interests were more mechanical - science and engineering.

Q: And did that continue through high school?

SMITH: Yes, it did.

Q: What type of science or mechanical engineering were you doing?

SMITH: Most everything - mathematics, science, engineering.

Q: Were you into taking automobiles apart, building model airplanes, that sort of thing?

SMITH: Well, given the places I was - you don't take automobiles apart in northern India. So I did finish a basement on a house, completely, so there was more carpentry and electrical, photography.

Q: For the first two years of high school you went to, or the first three, or what?

SMITH: I went half a year at BCC and then went off to India. There's an American missionary school in north India, Woodstock, and I was there, then, for two years and

came back and finished at BCC.

Q: What was Woodstock like?

SMITH: It's up in the hills, so it's at 6,000 feet. It closes in the winter because it's too cold, lots of snow. It's a missionary school, more so then than it is now, and fairly strict, but a fascinating place, and in my class we had about 20 percent Indian students, so I got to know some Indian students very well, with whom I've maintained contact over the years.

Q: This would be sort of when?

SMITH: I was there in 1953 and 1954.

Q: Were there any problems that you felt as a young boy between Indians and Americans there?

SMITH: Well, there were the problems, I guess you'd call them, of post-colonial society that the Indians were clamping down difficult restrictions on a whole variety of things, but there were also the problems that at that time were just beginning. Our relationship with Pakistan, our differences of perception over the Kashmir issue. I can remember arguing with my roommate, who was an Indian, about Kashmir.

Q: Were your teachers missionaries mostly?

SMITH: Mostly, yes.

Q: Were you getting a sort of a straight-line missionary type education, or were you getting "whither India?" and concentrating on Indian affairs?

SMITH: Woodstock is accredited in the United States, so it has very much an American curriculum and always has and still has, so we got a fairly standard American curriculum. What we got about India was culturally being there plus there was a course in Indian history which I took. I did not take a course in the language.

Q: Would there have been a language you could have taken a course in - Hindi or Urdu?

SMITH: They gave a course in Hindi. But the course in Hindi which they gave was really meant for their Indian students so they could be sure of passing the exam in Hindi, which they needed to do for their own advancement. Therefore, the people who were in it were not beginners, and it was being taught as what we would call *shud* Hindi, which is very proper, correct, newspaper-newscast type of it.

Q: Were you picking up American-Indian relations at home when you came home?

SMITH: Going home meant going to Karachi, which meant taking the train down from

the hills and then flying from Delhi to Karachi. Yes, my father was economic counselor in Karachi at the time, and I heard more about U.S.-Pakistan relations and stories about that than I did about India, but just making that trip, one got a fair idea of the problems and the refugees on both sides. My roommate was from a refugee family, so one heard, certainly, about he India-Pakistan relationship and some of the things about the U.S. role, although less about U.S.-Indian relations, as I recall.

Q: Well, this is quite soon after the partition in '48. We're talking about '53-54.

SMITH: We still had war surplus peanut butter available in the bazaars.

Q: How about the British? Were you getting any feel for who people really looked upon the British at that time?

SMITH: Some. The relationship has always been very complicated, I think, between the Indians and the British. Of course, the Indian students in our class were not studying for an Indian examination. They were studying for a Cambridge exam, and therefore they were into the British system that way. This was in the very early period. We did meet with Nehru. Our senior class met with Nehru. We made a trip to Delhi and met with Nehru. I can remember he was quite prickly that evening. Somebody asked him a question - I may have been one who asked him a question - somebody asked him a question on a political and international affairs subject, and he sort of brushed it aside. He was prickly.

Q: When you went back to Bethesda-Chevy Chase High School - this would have been '55-56, thereabouts?

SMITH: Yes.

Q: Did you find this was a different world? I mean, was it a little hard to adjust?

SMITH: It was a difficult adjustment. The number students who had been overseas was fairly small at that time. The faculty, although they gave me credit for the time at Woodstock, I can remember that they didn't want to give credit for the course in Indian history. They said, "Well, that's sort of like taking a course in the history of the state of Maryland. You don't get credit for that." But since I actually had been ahead of myself in school, so that I'd taken a lot of the required courses already, so the last year at BCC I was able to take courses which I wouldn't have been able to take otherwise, including a course in journalism, advanced physics, advanced chemistry - which meant that I wasn't doing the same thing that everybody else was, and I think the course in journalism, for instance, really made the difference as far as I was concerned.

Q: Were you on the paper and all?

SMITH: Yes, I ran the school paper.

Q: Well, looking at '55-56, McCarthyism was a pretty big thing. Was that sort of a subject at the time you were there in school?

SMITH: I don't remember it being a subject at school; I remember it being a subject I heard about at home. Because with a parent who'd worked in the federal government during World War II, who knew some of the players, a father who was then in the State Department, I heard a fair amount about it, concern about it.

Q: Well, tell me now, with this sort of emphasis on sciences and mechanics and also a strong background in Indian history, where did you want to go to school?

SMITH: Well, as I recall, I wanted to go to someplace where I could do both, and therefore I looked at universities and colleges where I could do science but also either at the same time or, as it ultimately proved I changed my mind, do international affairs or history, political science, economics courses.

Q: So where did you finally point yourself towards?

SMITH: I went to Princeton. I entered as an engineer.

Q: Well, what happened at Princeton? You were at Princeton what, from '56 to '60?

SMITH: I graduated in the class of '60, yes. And as an engineer, the initial courses are very set. The first year I was taking all of the initial courses, and I don't even remember what my elective was. I think I had one other course. And the second year also, but since I had already met a language requirement, I think it was the second year I took economics, and by the end of the second year I'd decided that I didn't want to be an engineer. I was interested in political science and international affairs. I was also interested in science, so by the end of the second year I'd gotten admitted to the Woodrow Wilson School but also was taking enough science courses so that I could still change my mind if I wanted to - but not engineering but physics at that point. I continued taking physics courses junior year and finally gave up by senior year. But in the Woodrow Wilson School I think I did more economics and history than anything else, partly because I felt those were the stronger departments - some political science, but more economics and history.

Q: Well, you've grown up with a father in the Foreign Service by this time. Were you thinking at all of the Foreign Service, or was this on your radar?

SMITH: Well, I certainly was by senior year because I took the exam. And in the summer of 1959, I was in Colombo with my parents. I did some research work there. I had a small grant from the university and did some research on technical assistance programs in then Ceylon, now Sri Lanka. So by senior year I was thinking of the Foreign Service, although I interviewed and continued to think about other things. There was a possibility of working for a company active in international affairs, like, I think it was, ESSO Standard Eastern. Stanvac was just breaking up, and ESSO Standard Eastern was being formed.

Q: Was your father encouraging, discouraging, your mother, where you wanted to go?

SMITH: I think they were fairly neutral about all of this.

Q: Well, you took the Foreign Service Exam in 1959, was it?

SMITH: I passed the written, did not pass the oral.

Q: Can you recall what the oral that you didn't pass was like? Do you remember any of the questions?

SMITH: I don't remember who was there. I do remember that I wasn't prepared enough for the motivational questions for it.

Q: Why you want to be in the Foreign Service?

SMITH: Yes, that type of thing. They were really looking for answers like "to do good for the world" and things like that.

Q: I think this is always a difficult one in any case to apply, because you don't want to overdo it. "It sounds like an interesting life and they pay me for it, what the hell," isn't a very satisfactory answer.

SMITH: They didn't like that answer.

Q: Well, having taken it and not passed the oral exam, did you take it again, or what happened?

SMITH: Well, I went on to Columbia School of International Affairs for 1960-1962, took the exam again in the fall of 1961 and passed the written, passed the oral this time. This time I can remember that the chairman of my panel was Homer Byington, III. You may have served with him at some point.

Q: No, I didn't, but his name was hanging around because I was consul general in Naples, where he, his father, and his grandfather all had been consuls general.

SMITH: And I remember that one of the questions in the oral happened to be about food assistance to India, PL-480 to India, and because of my background in India and my interest in economics, was something that I understood fairly well and understood that it was the equivalent of budgetary subvention, very helpful to the Indian government. So in 1962 I did pass the Foreign Service Exam and spent six months in the Marine Corps and entered at the beginning of '63.

Q: Let's talk about Columbia first. Why Columbia, and what were you doing there?

SMITH: I looked at three graduate schools. I'm not quite sure why I chose Columbia over Tufts, where the Fletcher School is. But it was nice to be in New York City. I found that in some ways it was not as academically stimulating as the preceptorial system at Princeton. On the other hand, some of the course there - there was the School of International Affairs... At least, I had a specialty in South Asia. That was before they had the Southern Asian Institute, but there were some people there who were very good in south Asia. So some of the courses were exceptionally useful. There was one on the United Nations, there was one on international law, which were very dry courses but proved very valuable later on. Two or three courses in south Asia, one a very good one on Indian history [with] Embry, another one on politics of South Asia with [Wilcox].

Q: Were you finding yourself attracted to south Asia, the subcontinent, or was this because you had some experience you might as well fill in with in that area?

SMITH: No, I was definitely attracted to it, more so than other places. Linguistically, I'd studied French. I could certainly read it easily enough; I wasn't that good at speaking it. But I wasn't particularly attracted to Europe or to Africa at that point.

Q: Well, of course, this was the period, '60-62, sort of the discovery of Africa by the United States. We were opening posts, and Africa was quite exciting because of the decolonization there. Did this catch you at all, or what about our colleagues? Was there a movement towards learning more about Africa there?

SMITH: I don't remember that there was at that point. I know there was an East Asian Institute; I know there was a Russian and/or Eastern European Institute, a Latin American Institute. I don't remember whether there was an African Institute there. I remember it more as an issue that we would discuss in courses on the UN or international politics - peacekeeping in Africa, things like this. The Congo was particularly on top of everybody's plate.

Q: Well, 1960 was the Nixon-Kennedy campaign, and it was for many a time when people of your generation were particularly caught up by sort of the spirit of Kennedy and working for the government. Did this touch you, or not?

SMITH: Well, I think I'd already been caught up by it. It didn't change my approach that much, and I remember a lot of enthusiasm among one or two of my roommates, but I don't remember that translating into going into government. But to back up a bit, if you go back to college and graduate school at that time, people even before Kennedy, were already looking at going into government, and the percentage of people from Princeton entering the Foreign Service was significant. I think there were eight or nine classmates who came into the Foreign Service. These days it's very, very small, much smaller than that.

Q: I was not a veteran, but I went to college '46-50, and 75 percent of my class were veterans, but also our teachers, many of them, of course, had military service or had worked in the government, so that going into the government was a very natural step. The

fact that a significant number of my classmates went into the CIA...

SMITH: And professors at college tended to be people like that, who'd had some background of this kind.

Q: And there was, subtle or not so subtle, a recruitment. I mean, these were people who had come out of this, and it's interesting, and going down to their students and sort of pointing the way, which I don't think happens much any more.

SMITH: I think it happened more at the undergraduate than at the graduate level. I should say, at the graduate level, I was a participant in the first year of the International Fellows Program at Columbia, and that had people there who became very much involved - Dick Gardner, who there during the year, came down to Washington to be assistant secretary for international organization affairs.

Q: Oh, yes.

SMITH: And as part of that program, we came down to Washington and met with a number of people through the connections of the head of the program, Bobby Kennedy included. So it was certainly part of that program. It was not part of the general academic program at Columbia.

Q: Well, then, you came into the Foreign Service in early '63, is that right?

SMITH: Yes.

Q: I take it you took the A-100 course, the basic officer course.

SMITH: That's right.

Q: Can you characterize the people who were in that at the time, or describe the people who were in it at the time?

SMITH: We were a very small class, about 13, with varied backgrounds. I can't say that I've kept track of all of them. I kept track of a few of them. Some of them have left the Foreign Service, didn't serve a full career there. It was a very stimulating group. We had a lot of fun together.

Q: Where you trying to get back to the Subcontinent?

SMITH: I did ask for Karachi for my first assignment, and I did get Karachi. I don't know whether there was any competition. I suspect that there wasn't.

Q: I suspect that's true. So you went out to Karachi - in '63?

SMITH. *Q:* In '63.

Q: And you were there from '63 to when?

SMITH: '64.

Q: '64, just a short time.

SMITH: Well, in the middle of my tour I went to the embassy one Saturday morning and there was a telegram for me which basically said, "Go directly to Kathmandu; do not pass GO." Because the consular officer position in Kathmandu had come open because Desaix Anderson had been pulled out for someplace else, whether it was Vietnam or Japan I don't remember, and they needed a consular officer urgently. So I went to Kathmandu, and I'd got married just before we went to Karachi, so my wife and I drove most of the way to Kathmandu. We had a Volkswagen beetle, and the regulations at that time were that they wouldn't ship that car, so I said, okay, I'll drive it. And they way I read the regulations - and I later persuaded the State Department was the correct way to read them - was that if I drove they had to pay me mileage. Whether they could ship it or not, they still had to pay me mileage if I drove it, so we had a fascinating trip.

Q: Well, let's go back to Karachi. You were in Karachi from '63 to '64. In '63 it was the embassy at that point.

SMITH: Karachi was the embassy.

Q: And could you describe the embassy - who was the ambassador, and operations there?

SMITH: Well, Walter McConaughy was the ambassador. Bill Cargo was the DCM. Dick Greider was the economic counselor. Sneider was the political counselor. It was large, and I was a rotational officer, served in the Economic Section, the Political Section, briefly in the Consular Section, but mostly in the Economic and Political Sections - the first year I was there I started out in the Economic Section - and working on small things, at that time, but it was an interesting time to be there, very much a continuation of that earlier period that I mentioned. You could see a lot of changes in Karachi compared to when I'd been there 10 years earlier. But the Pakistanis were developing their relationship with the Chinese then. As I recall, Zhou En-Lai came to visit while we were there. There was, of course, a very large aid program and military assistance program, and although we didn't know much about it at the time, we knew that there was something up in Peshawar, which was our base and listening post.

Q: The U-2 and all that sort of thing. Well, did you feel at all the hand of Walter McConaughy, or not. I mean, was his presence noticeable at your level?

SMITH: Much more the DCM.

Q: The DCM being -

SMITH: - Bill Cargo, who'd come out about the same time. In fact, his wife and my wife had been in the initial wives' course at the same time then.

Q: Often there's been this tension between our embassy in Pakistan and our embassy in India. Was this apparent at that point?

SMITH: Very definitely so.

Q: Can you talk a little about this?

SMITH: I just remember, in the sense of being conscious of the cables from New Delhi being very much from the Indian point of view. That was by then... Bowles was there on his second time in New Delhi, and Lane Timmons was the DCM, I think, and it was a fairly shrill time. I don't remember following that closely what was going on with India, because that was the post-China war situation.

Q: '62, I think.

SMITH: '62, and I don't remember being that aware of it. One of the complications was that I'd actually been at Parris Island during the '62 war, so I didn't know very much about the '62 war except what I'd gone back and found out about.

Q: This was when you were in the Marines.

SMITH: Yes. Much more conscious of the things that were going on between the U.S. and India and Pakistan and our attempts to mediate the Kashmir dispute, although I've forgotten the details of it. It's the kind of thing I go back and read about now in books.

Q: What was your impression of the Pakistanis with whom you were dealing?

SMITH: I think that we had always been impressed by the professionalism of the Pakistani bureaucrat, and we knew some of the military officers, since my wife is a rider, and that's the way you get to know the military. Very professionals, very good with Americans, and comparatively open. I don't remember having the feeling that they were very closed. They certainly gave the impression of being open. You could travel around, and they would say, "Well, you shouldn't go up there because there are tribesmen up there," but you could travel other places.

Q: I've never served in either of the two countries, but the Pakistanis, certainly in the earlier times, seem to have impressed the Americans more than the Indians. The Indians always seem disputatious and argue, and usually come at the United States lecturing us on where we've gone wrong, and of course Americans prefer to lecture other people on the morality of something. And it doesn't seem to work very well. Did you have the feeling that the Pakistanis seem kind of like us, or something like that? Was that at all noticeable?

SMITH: Well, this was a period, remember, of basically military rule.

Q: Ayub Khan at that time?

SMITH: Yes. And it was also a period, I think, if you'll go back in the intellectual history, you'll see that we were thinking of the military in some developing countries serving as a modernizing influence, and Pakistan was often cited as an example of a place where the military would be nationalizing and modernizing influence - which was something that one could relate to in Pakistan at that time.

Q: What about the Soviet menace? Was that something that was in the air, or was Pakistan far enough removed to not make it a problem?

SMITH: Well, of course it was a factor in our relations with Pakistan. The Pakistanis have always been much more focused on India than they have been on Kashmir. On some occasions they're focused a little bit on Afghanistan, but not so much on the Soviets.

Q: You did mention your wife being a rider. What was the background? How did you meet your wife and her background?

SMITH: She comes from Princeton, New Jersey.

Q: Ah. So you met her at that -

SMITH: I met her at college, and we dated when I was in graduate school. And after I got in the Foreign Service we got married and went off to Karachi. We took a ship from New York to Naples, in the days you still could do that, and that was sort of our honeymoon.

Q: The Constitution *and* Independence*?*

SMITH: Yes.

Q: Well, you were in Karachi when President Kennedy was assassinated. How did that hit Pakistan? Was there any attention paid to that?

SMITH: I was very impressed by the reaction of everybody. I think we were out at the Yacht Club when the news came, and the Yacht Club just shut down for the day. The Yacht Club was certainly a relic of the British Raj and still had a significant number of expatriate members, but it was Pakistan Navy also. No, there was a tremendous outpouring at all levels in Pakistan, from Pakistanis as well as from the expatriate community.

Q: You went to Nepal, to Kathmandu. You were there from '64-

SMITH: To '65.

Q: Tell me about the trip up there. It doesn't sound very easy. A Volkswagen Beetle sounds like a pretty rough trip.

SMITH: I've often thought that if I was going to write anything in the way of a memoir, I would write about trips I'd taken, and this would be the first, because we didn't drive from Karachi to Lahore. We'd already driven from Karachi to Lahore before, and we knew that we didn't want to drive that again, but we put the car on the train up to Lahore and then drove. So we drove from Lahore across the border between India and Pakistan, which is always an experience, going across the land border there, and then on to New Delhi. I don't remember whether we spent the night in Amritsar or not - yes, we spent the night in Amritsar and went to the Golden Temple, then drove on to New Delhi. We had a dog with us. We had to find a hotel that would have the dog. We spent a day or so in New Delhi. My wife, of course, had never been to India before, and then we looked at the map and we saw that the direct road, the old Grand Trunk Road, didn't have a national highway number on it. The national highway went south through Agra and sort of looped around and came back into the old Grand Trunk Road. Well, we thought that that's a national highway; it's a good way to get to Agra and see the Taj Mahal, which I'd seem but my wife hadn't. So we went to Agra to see the Taj Mahal, and the next day, after 10 or 20 miles out of Agra, we encountered a flood. There had been heavy rains that year, the Jumna had flooded, and we had to make a decision whether we were going to try and find out whether Volkswagen beetles could float - because we could see camels wading through it - it was up to their knees - or we were going to turn around. And we chickened out and turned around, and we had to go all the way back to New Delhi, spend another night in Delhi, crossed the Jumna in New Delhi, and drive a very long day's drive, I think it was, to Khanpur and spent the night there in a terrible hotel, drove another night to Patna, another terrible hotel - no sightseeing along the way. And from Patna, to go north to Nepal, first you had to cross the Ganges, and there was not bridge at Patna then. To find a bridge it would have meant a detour of a couple of hundred miles, so we put the car on a ferry, which was an experience. It took a long time, as we watched the bodies come floating down the Ganges, but we got across, we got to the other side. We were approaching the Nepal border late in the day, and the terrain was beginning to change; the language was beginning to change. This whole time I'd been able to speak Hindi. I'd studied Hindi-Urdu. I'd been able to speak during the whole trip, and suddenly as we got up close to the border, the... In India, you know, they say that every 50 miles the language changes, and if you go far enough you aren't going to be able to understand it. Well, by then I wasn't able to understand it, and we had gotten cool, and we were steaming along, and a beautiful new bridge up ahead of us we saw. We screeched to a stop because we realized the whole approach had washed out. We had to go down a little tiny trail, down to where they had a raft where they would ferry you across; and the raft consisted of two country posts - like big canoes - lashed together with a bamboo platform. But fortunately it was a Volkswagen Beetle, and we had no trouble getting it on. At one point one wheel went in through the bamboo, I guess, and the guys were helping us pick it up that time. And we got across, we got to the Nepal border at just about dark or after dark. The Indian side was difficult, lots of forms. Particularly when you're trying to arrive or leave with a car you have lots of forms. We got across. We got

to the Nepalese customs post, and they said, "Oh, it's very late. Why don't you go spend the night and come back, and we'll check you through in the morning," wich is what we did. There was a very nice state guest house there, and we came back the next morning and did the customs paperwork and drove to Kathmandu and had the heater on by 11 o'clock in the morning.

Q: Can you describe the embassy, the ambassador and the embassy at that point?

SMITH: In Kathmandu, of course it was a very small embassy. Henry Stebbins was the ambassador, and Harry Barnes was the DCM. I always consider that I was fortunate to serve in a-

Q: Two professionals... Later, anyway, this became often the plaything of some wealthy contributor who liked to hike or climb mountains or shoot animals or something.

SMITH: Stebbins was the first ambassador and was there for I don't remember how many years. I think it was four or five years. And Carol Laise was the second, who was also there for a considerable period of time. But we had very a professional ambassador, and a very hard-charging young DCM who spoke the language, had studied Nepali with the Peace Corps, and was a real example to everybody on the linguistic side, and was determined that people not spend too much time in Kathmandu. He insisted that everybody go out and trek. At one point, I was sent off on a trek with our admin officer, who although he was a hunter, he hadn't been off on any treks in the hills. We went off to eastern Nepal and trekked there for a ways, did some political work.

Q: What was your impression of the situation, economic and political, in Nepal at this point, '64-65?

SMITH: Well, I was doing consular work and economic work, so I saw much more of the economic side, and I certainly became very knowledgeable about the problems of small countries which are economically linked to larger ones, as Nepal is to India, and the complexities of trade, exchange rate, and development in that case. They were just beginning to think about developing Nepal's hydroelectric potential at that time. Nepal has enormous hydroelectric potential. I remember some years later an Indian telling me that one project alone was larger than the entire installed electric generating capacity in north India. That project still hasn't been built, largely for political reasons.

Q: Did the Nepalese know about the United States, I mean the ones you were dealing with? They're kind of far away.

SMITH: They knew about the United States. The level of education and knowledge was much less than of course in India, where you had and have that very well-educated international - then Anglicized - group. That group was much smaller in Nepal, a very, very thin veneer, so if you got below that level, you really did need Nepali, and you wouldn't have anybody who knew much about the United States. We did have a substantial Peace Corps contingent there, and for the size of the country it was then one

of the larger ones, I believe - 40, 50, 60 Peace Corps volunteers spread around the country really had an impact, and several of them subsequently joined the Foreign Service.

Q: What type of work were you doing?

SMITH: I was the consular officer. There was very little to do in the way of visas. There were some American citizen services problems, but it was before the influx of tourists because at that time only DC-3s flew in, and you just can't get that many tourists in a DC-3. So we had few tourists, but I didn't have any large numbers. It was before the hippies. I didn't have any large numbers, and as it turned out when I was there, there were no mountaineering accidents or major catastrophes like that.

Q: Because also there was always the mountaineering, but it also became a sort of haven for what we call the hippies, people coming after narcotics and-

SMITH: Yes, my successor had those problems.

Q: Were there many contacts with the Nepalese government at your level?

SMITH: Yes, there were contacts. I can't remember feeling that we developed personal relations with too many, although with some. Some people in the Foreign Ministry I can remember developing relations with, some younger people in town, whom I later saw in other capacities.

Q: Did you have any impression of the effectiveness of our aid program?

SMITH: The AID mission in Kathmandu was very large. It actually institutionally was [more like an] the embassy. The embassy came in after the AID program and in many ways we were piggybacking on their infrastructure. They were very involved [on] a lot of different levels, doing a lot of agricultural development, rural development, things like that. I don't remember at the time having strong impressions of impact of those programs - with the exception of some of the work that was done on road building, which was obviously very visible and important in tying the country together. And that became more after I left, in fact. But I don't remember having impressions of the impact of the developmental activities.

Q: Was Communist China much of a presence there?

SMITH: Very definitely, and much more so than you would say that the Soviet menace was felt in Pakistan, the Chinese presence was felt in Nepal. They started building the highway from Kathmandu to Tibet while we were there, and with large numbers of Chinese workers. We saw the examples of the kind of aid which China gives, building things - a brick factory, as I recall, a leather factory. I don't remember whether they built a stadium or not.

Q: What about Tibetan refugees or events in Tibet? Was that sort of spilling over into where you were?

SMITH: The big influx from Tibet had occurred earlier. There certainly were Tibetan refugees, and there were Tibetans. There were Tibetan refugee camps, and there were Tibetan articles available in Nepal. I didn't personally have a strong sense of what was going on in Tibet that I didn't already have from my acquaintance with India. But going back to your earlier question about the Chinese, of course that was a period when we, the United States, were very concerned about Chinese influence, which led, while I was there, to the "deal" with India, that we would provide India some assistance - as I recall, some equipment - so that they could help build a portion of the east-west highway and preempt the Chinese down in Tarai from building roads down in the southern part of Nepal, which is plains and geographically much more connected with India. So there's a sense of cooperation with India vis-à-vis the Chinese and Nepal.

Q: How about the presence of the Indians? Were they pretty much calling the shots?

SMITH: They were very influential. This was another post-colonial society, although the colonists in this case were more like the Indians. The British had left at Independence, and what had been the British embassy because the Indian embassy, and just as if you had read recently about how in Tibet the only way you could send a letter was to send it to the British embassy. In Nepal, when we were there, the best way to send a letter was through the Indian post office at the Indian embassy. The Indians had been very involved, were very involved in Nepal, had been very involved in the restoration of the monarchy there. The Indian embassy - I think it was then a third or second secretary who actually sat in the Nepalese cabinet meetings when the monarchy was restored, to give you an idea of Indian influence - that individual was then director for Nepal in the Indian Foreign Ministry back in New Delhi.

Q: What was the impression you were getting from the ambassador, DCM, about the king and the royal family and the government at the top level?

SMITH: Supportive. I'm not sure of the exact sequence of events, but of course the current king, who was then the crown prince, went to Harvard for a period. We certainly had a hand in arranging that. So there was an interest in modernizing the monarchy. At the same time we had relations with the democratic elements, the Nepal Congress elements, relations of whom were there in Kathmandu and others were outside of Nepal.

Q: Were we comfortable with the situation there, or were we hoping to have a more democratic form of government at that point?

SMITH: I think I can say yes.

Q: For both.

SMITH: For both.

Q: What was social life like there?

SMITH: There was quite a small international community, but there were some younger Nepalese who participated in the social life of that international community, who were students or airline pilots or filmmakers - I remember those three in particular.

Q: Were you all intermingling fairly well with them?

SMITH: With them, yes, but as I say, I never established the kind of relations... I established them to some extent, but not to the extent that I later did in other places with younger Foreign Service officers or government officials and academics that I was later able to. It was a little bit harder in Nepal.

Q: The war was beginning to heat up in Vietnam. Did that have any reverberations in Nepal, or was that just too far away?

SMITH: Not much at that time. Some. I think we were certainly aware of it. I don't remember diplomatically exactly what we were doing about it. Of course, the embassy there later became much more involved with the shuttle flights, Bunker-Laise.

Q: Well, you left there in '65. Whither?

SMITH: I came back to Washington to work in the Office of UN Political Affairs.

Q: And you were there doing that from '65 to -

SMITH: - to '68, late '68.

Q: How did you get your car back?

SMITH: I sold the car.

Q: Enough was enough.

SMITH: Enough was enough. It was right-hand drive.

Q: When you came back in '65 in United Nations affairs, what was your responsibility?

SMITH: That was back in the days of the old officer-in-charge system. This was the Office of UN Political Affairs, and they had an officer in charge of the Middle East within that, issues in the Middle East, and I was his assistant.

Q: Who was the officer in charge of the Middle East? Do you remember?

SMITH: I knew you were going to ask that. Campbell. I can't remember his first name

right now.

Q: And who was the head of IO, International Organizations, at this point?

SMITH: Elizabeth Ann Brown.

Q: She had a long time in IO.

SMITH: And Virginia Hartley was there also.

Q: When you say UN political affairs, what does that mean?

SMITH: Well, it was the major issues.

Q: I mean Middle Eastern affairs.

SMITH: It was mostly the Arab-Israel issue. At that time, it's hard to remember before the '67 War, but the Arab-Israel issue in the UN context came up primarily in the debate on UNRRA [United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration], on aid to Palestine refugees. That was the vehicle for the whole debate. There was no separate issue the way it is now. So we were very involved, not only in what was going on there, the operations of the UN Truce Supervision Organization, which was the peacekeeping organization which was observing the armistice between Egypt and Israel, Egypt and Jordan, Lebanon, and Syria, but also the refugee affairs part of it.

Q: I imagine everything divides between pre-June of '67 and... How did we view the Palestinian refugee situation? Were we looking for a plan to do something about them, or we just willing to let this kind of fester?

SMITH: My recollection is then that, yes, there were a lot of plans to try and resolve this problem, unwilling to let it fester permanently, as it has since. Although there were a lot of refugee camps, you hadn't had the '67 or '73 wars, so you were still working on the basis of the *original* Arab-Israel conflicts, the original armistice, the refugee flights - everybody harked back to those events. And there were lots of plans around for resolution in some way of these problems, many of them being done by people concerned about the refugees.

Q: Did you find, during the first half, was there much interest on the part of the politicals in the United States about the refugees?

SMITH: Yes, but I don't think to the extent that they later got anybody's attention, and... I was thinking back whether there were major efforts during this period to resolve the problem, as there were later, and I'm not sure that I remember any. I may be wrong.

Q: Those of you who were dealing with this, was there a feeling that we were kind of alone in being concerned about this, or were other countries concerned about the

Palestinian refugees?

SMITH: Other countries were concerned. We certainly had a leadership role because of our particular relationship with Israel, and we were seen that way. As I recall, the head of UNRRA was an American in that period, and we had the deputy, and we had another person in an important post back then.

Q: Well, I realize you were not in the UN up in New York-

SMITH: No, I wasn't.

Q: - but back here, did the Israeli influence, particularly through the Jewish lobby, have much influence?

SMITH: Well, I became more aware of it later - let's put it that way. I'm not sure that the issues were out there at that time, as they later were.

Q: Yes, it was just how much money, what we can do to support this and all that. I take it that there wasn't much of a feeling of support for helping the refugees in the other Arab countries as far as trying to resettle them at that point.

SMITH: I don not recall that as being our policy. We were still giving very substantial amounts to UNRRA.

Q: I gather that for most of the Arab world -

SMITH: - the idea of resettlement would have been an anathema.

Q: Yes.

SMITH: That's right.

Q: I mean, it was something... "The festering will continue." This was the general... I think, too, that the Palestinians weren't that well regarded throughout the rest of the world.

SMITH: Well, they were recognized for their intellectual abilities and the Saudi representative in New York at the time was actually a Palestinian.

Q: You had Palestinians running things in a lot of the Arab world, but again, it was a little bit almost the mirror image of anti-Semitism in Europe: these were essentially a more capable group of Arabs, which does not necessarily generate love.

SMITH: Yes. The Security Council at the time, as I recall, was caught up in issues, cross-border incidents - this was, again, before '67 - a continuous stream of cross-border incidents, not with Lebanon, but with the other three countries.

Q: But there was no real organized Palestinian Liberation Organization. These were more sort of at the local level.

SMITH: As I recall, yes.

Q: Well, then, let's talk about the June, '67, war, which was precipitated by Nasser and what he did. Could you talk about how this developed, as far as we were seeing it? I imagine you got caught up in this, didn't you?

SMITH: Yes, it was something of a Greek tragedy, as Nasser demanded the withdrawal of UNEF, and the natural result of that... Well, the question of the withdrawal of UNEF and there was the question of blocking the Straits of Tiran, as I recall. And these two were naturally driving things towards conflict. At the same time, it was... Well, the U.S. felt that UNEF should not be withdrawn. On the other hand, UNEF had been put in in a way that if the troop-contributing countries reacted to Egypt by withdrawing their troops, there was very little that the UN could do about it. As I recall it was only on the Egyptian side of the border. It was there with the approval of the Egyptian government, so it was very hard for the UN - given the way UNEF had come about - to keep UNEF there if Nasser insisted on withdrawing it. And therefore you could see where this was going. At the same time, I think that we were surprised by the Israeli attack and confused ourselves. At least, at my level I was. The higher-ups may have been clearer-sighted about exactly what had happened in those first hours.

Q: Well, where were you when the whole thing started, the attack?

SMITH: I was in Washington - as I recall, having just gotten out of the Marine Corps reserves, so I didn't have to go off to summer camp that year, and the Office of UN Political Affairs staffed the task force in the Operations Center together with the Bureau of Near Eastern Affairs and split the responsibility to a certain extent. The Op Center was a much smaller place in those days.

Q: Were we basically bystanders while this war was fought?

SMITH: We certainly were not basically bystanders. In the Office of UN Political Affairs we were trying desperately to get it stopped, although in hindsight - and I'm not sure whether I thought about it at the time - when you look at maps there are logical stopping places, and the logical stopping places were the Suez and the Jordan, but the problem was that in Syria there was no logical stopping place. I was on duty, I think, the night as the Israelis were pushing towards Damascus, and it was not clear if and where they would stop, because there was no logical stopping place. We didn't know about the phone calls that were going on at that time between the White House and Moscow - at least I didn't - but certainly tensions were rising considerably.

Q: What was the feeling within the bureau that you were picking up from people who were dealing with it? It was U Thant, wasn't it, who was the Secretary General, and there

were those... At least I remember at the time criticism that when Nasser said pull out the United Nations forces, he sort of saluted and did it right away rather than stall and try to make it apparent to all that this was not a good idea.

SMITH: Well, I think he didn't do it quite that quickly. Those of us in the bureau who followed the UN felt that, given the way UNEF had been created, he really didn't have much choice. He could have tried to delay a little bit more, but it wouldn't have made any difference when the national contingents began withdrawing, when the Indians began withdrawing. I think the Yugoslavs were withdrawing also. He didn't have much choice. And I guess we understood the political pressure on him to be harder-lined, but didn't see how he really could be.

Q: When the war started, what was the feeling? It was a six-day war - say on Day One, was there a feeling that the Egyptians and the Syrians and all and the Jordanians are in for a very bloody nose?

SMITH: Remember, it only began with the Egyptians. The Jordanians joined later. I don't remember exactly when the Syrians joined, but the first run was with the Egyptians, and I think everybody recognized the Egyptians were going to have a very difficult time.

Q: Their air force was wiped out before the war started.

SMITH: That's right. Well, as the war started.

Q: A surprise attack.

SMITH: Everybody, I think, felt that Jordan did the wrong thing, the wrong thing for the country, perhaps the right thing for the survival of the monarchy, because I don't remember at the time the details, but I do remember that there was some question whether the régime would have survived *not* participating. But certainly as far as Jordan was concerned, it was a bad decision, because they lost the Left Bank and gave the Israelis an excuse to take territory that they had long wanted, particularly East Jerusalem.

Q: By the time this was moving on and the Israeli armies were advancing, was there concern within the Department about the Soviets? Was this being done on a level that didn't really penetrate?

SMITH: The time when there was concern was when they were moving against the Syrians. As I recall, the sequence was they took care of the Egyptians and then went after the Syrians, and so in the case of the Egyptians, there was a logical stopping place. They may have even sent a message to that effect, but it was pretty clear. Would they go for Cairo? But in the case of going up the Golan, there wasn't a logical stopping point, and that's where there was concern about the Soviets and their reaction.

Q: When this thing was over, after the six days, what were you doing then?

SMITH: Well, after the war itself, of course, any effort turned to some kind of framework solution, and that was the negotiations about what became 242, which went on... I don't remember the exact sequence, but 242 was adopted by the Security Council in November, was it? It was many months after the war itself. It took a long time, a tremendous amount of effort, to get that agreement in place, and it was very difficult. The negotiations were very difficult with the two sides and with the other permanent members.

Q: What were you doing during this time?

SMITH: The work that a junior officer would do in that kind of an office but, I remember, very involved in minutiae about wording and references to exactly how the resolution would be worded, exactly what word would be used, how you would bring in the past, all of those details.

Q: What about the various Desks in NEA, the Israeli, Egyptian, Syrian, Jordanian, and all? Were they part of the team?

SMITH: There was very much a cooperative relationship. We jointly manned the task force. The UNP, my boss or myself, went to their staff morning meetings - very much a cooperative relationship there, and I think a very good relationship.

Q: Well, too, I think that during this period - I try to capture the atmosphere a bit - what were the... Since '56 we had not been great admirers, at least at the top levels, of Egypt's Nasser, and was there a certain amount of, oh, discreet pleasure about his missteps that had caused this disaster for Egyptians?

SMITH: I don't remember that sentiment specifically. I do remember that we did have some very strong differences with the Egyptians, not only Nasser, writ large, but also specifically the kinds of things they were doing in Yemen at that time, because as I recall, one of the first uses of poison gas was by the Egyptians in Yemen, and we had closed our embassy in Yemen, I think, even before the Six-Day War. But we already had differences with them about Yemen. The concern I remember the most out of this was for the Jordanians, that they had been the biggest losers and, in a sense, the innocent bystanders who had really gotten hurt the most in this.

Q: Well, was there in what you were dealing with an immediate focus about "now what are we going to do about the West Bank Arabs and all?

SMITH: Well, we thought that the basis for the long-run solution was present in that resolution, in 242. But there wasn't much focus yet on things like that. It was very much on getting the overall framework, in my recollection. Well, and getting some mechanisms in place to supervise the new lines.

Q: Here all the attention of you and your colleagues is focused on this war. Was there the feeling at this time that the United States was being overly distracted by Vietnam?

SMITH: I don’t remember that sentiment.

Q: I understand. You're down worrying about the nitty-gritty of the thing. I'm just trying to capture any feeling. Well, then, in '68, what did you do?

SMITH: I had been assigned to the embassy in Tunis. In fact, I had been going to early-morning language classes and gotten up to the 3/3 level in French, but sometime in late '67, I think it probably was, we had the first GLOP, and as a result of that, the junior political officer position in Tunis was abolished, so I did not go to Tunis, and I was scrambling around as to what I was going to do. This was the end of the year or the beginning of '68, and there wasn’t much there at that point. The only thing that was there was the post in Belize.

Q: Oh, yes.

SMITH: As actually the number two in Belize, which was then British Honduras. So I took that, in I guess it was March of 1968, and we went off to Belize.

Q: You were in Belize from when to when?

SMITH: '68 to '70.

Q: I've read this book - what is it, Our Man in Belize*?*

SMITH: I haven't read it.

Q: Well, there's a book about when the hurricane hit. When did the hurricane hit?

SMITH: '61.

Q: '61, so this is before. You have to check on that. It's an interesting book. What was Belize like in '68.

SMITH: It was still a British colony. There was a British garrison out near the airport but not visibly present in the city. It was very much in the British tradition, in the sense that policemen didn't carry guns. It was very peaceful. The governor wore a hat that looked very colonial, with plumes and everything. The economy was very open, as was usually the case in the colonies, but it was *de facto* much more tied to the U.S. than to the UK. The Belizean dollar was then, as it is now, I believe, pegged to the U.S. dollar. The major exports were sugar, orange juice, some vegetables. As far as Belize was concerned, their share of the sugar quota of the United States and whether there was a freeze in Florida or not were major economic issues. It was poor but quite open and democratic. There were regular elections. The government changed. I'm not sure whether it changed while I was there, but the prime minister, who was prime minister several times later, used to drive himself around in an old Land Rover. Everybody knew him, driving around in an old

Land Rover. The major issue was Guatemala - the Guatemalan claim - and how that would be resolved. And we were involved in negotiations. I must admit I don't remember the details of the negotiations any more, but we had produced a proposal which had been rejected, and the opposition was strongly against any deal with Guatemala. We'd often have demonstrations, "We don't want no Guatemala."

Q: Did Guatemala claim a part of Belize or all of it?

SMITH: That was the problem. Guatemala claimed the entirety of Belize.

Q: That's a little difficult to negotiate.

SMITH: It's one of those cases where the very existence was threatened by the claim, not a sliver but the whole country. And it dated back to the previous century and the history of British colonization of that coast and the agreements with Guatemala at the time. But in fact, the country had become very British. It was slightly less than 50 percent of Indian or Hispanic origin people and slightly less than 50 percent of blacks who'd come in from the West Indies, and a small percentage of Chinese, Portuguese, English. But very balanced racially, very mixed racially. And a fascinating place to be because, I used to say, it's the only place where there is no difference between macroeconomics and microeconomics, and you could almost look at the balance of payments or balance of trade and track individual transactions because everything was so small.

Q: Who was the consul general there?

SMITH: Bob Tepper was the consul general.

Q: And what was your job - well, you were number two.

SMITH: I was number two, but I was the economic officer and in charge when Bob Tepper wasn't there.

Q: Did America have any interest other than just not wanting to have unrest in the area?

SMITH: We certainly had an interest in the resolution of the dispute with Guatemala, this being our back yard, and we had an interest in that being resolved peacefully. We were not, however, in a position, I would say, that we were strongly... We were supporting a resolution of the dispute; we were not out-and-out supporting Belizean independence.

Q: What about Guatemala? Did our consulate general have much relation with our embassy in Guatemala?

SMITH: We used to go there periodically. In fact, we took the pouch by plane to Guatemala and picked one up and brought it back, which gave us a reason to make that trip regularly. Guatemala was a very different place. You could hear machine gun fire at night. Our ambassador was later assassinated there, as I recall. When we had visitors

from Guatemala, we would take them down to a street corner political rally to remind them what democracy was like. The few AID programs that we had in Belize were being run out of the regional office in Guatemala, which was another reason for our going there and people coming over.

Q: What about the British? Were the British committed to the independence of Belize?

SMITH: They were committed to the protection of Belize. They weren't committed to pushing ahead with independence blindly. They very much wanted a negotiated solution themselves, because if they pushed ahead blindly, then they had to protect Belize, and they weren't sure that they wanted to protect Belize that completely, although they did show an interest in the readiness of the airplanes of the Guatemalan Air Force.

Q: As far as Guatemala was concerned, it seems like Guatemala, more than the other Central American governments or societies, is in a way more prone to violence. It sounds like Belize is relatively quiet and the Guatemalans use their revolvers and machetes.

SMITH: That was our impression at the time. Subsequently, things have changed a bit, in the sense that there is some almost gang warfare in Belize City now. So some of the violence that later came to affect U.S. cities affected Belize also, but at that time, certainly, Belize was very peaceful. While we were there, we had one robbery. Our trash cans were stolen. And it was some kids, we were pretty sure, and we asked around and found out who they were and sort of left a message at the home of one of them that if the trash cans weren't back by noon we were going to report this to the police; and the trash cans were returned. The place was extremely peaceful when we were there.

Q: When was the "Soccer War?"

SMITH: The Soccer War happened while we were in Belize.

Q: This was between Guatemala and Honduras.

SMITH: That's right, and we had very little impact in Belize. Both sides were concerned that somehow there might be something going on in Belize supporting their opponent. I can remember in the middle of the war a DC-3 from the Salvadoran Air Force arrived, and the Honduran consul went, "Ah," to the governor and said, "You must impound that plane. It might have been bombing." Although it was clearly a cargo plane. And the governor, I always felt, was sort of uncertain about what to do, but he got his police chief and asked the police chief to go see if the pilot would let them have a look in the plane. And that's what the police chief did. By that time the plane had been on the ground for several hours, so when the police chief looked at it, it had already been loaded with a full load of Scotch Whiskey. So the Salvadoran Air Force, in the middle of the Soccer War, was running whiskey. Ballantyne's, or Scotch, was then $18 a case. You can see why they were coming to Belize to buy Scotch.

Q: The Belize government had a prime minister and all. Did you find that except for the

defense element it was a pretty independent operation, or were the British still pulling all the strings?

SMITH: No, we found it quite independent. The area that the British had control of, of course, was foreign affairs and the negotiation with Guatemala, where they were the prime negotiator but were not going ahead without the agreement of the Belizeans. There was a British advisor in the police department, as I recall, who was from the intelligence side, but the level of British influence was certainly not oppressive, and the prime minister was basically in charge of things at home.

Q: How was life there?

SMITH: It was isolated. It was quiet. The consulate had a Boston Whaler. I'm not sure whether it was justified on the basis of recreation or justified on the basis of evacuation, officially to Washington, but it certainly served the recreation purposes, because the U.S. government paid for the boat, and the consulate staff could use it, go out. In a 45-minute run you'd be out on a little spit of sand on the reef and some of the best skin-diving in the world.

Q: Yes, it still is Lumber - was that a big industry still?

SMITH: Lumber was the reason for the establishment of the British presence in that part of the coast but it had become much less of an industry by the time we were there. Again, sugar - there was a big British sugar mill - citrus, some vegetables - they were beginning to grow vegetables for the U.S. market. There was an expatriate community. There were three social clubs. The one which was predominantly British, which was dead. There was a Latino one, which was quite lively, and there was one whose backbone, I would say, was black civil servants, which was also very interesting but in a different way. It tended to focus more on cricket and things like that.

Q: Did the Caribbean weigh in? I'm thinking of Jamaica, particularly, or what about Mexico?

SMITH: Mexico was influential. There was a considerable smuggling trade from Belize to Mexico. If you looked at their trade statistics, you could only understand them if you knew that all of that champagne that was being imported was in fact being smuggled out to Mexico, and other things like that. The Mexicans had taken a position on the Guatemalan dispute that was interesting. Mexico also claimed part of Belize. They didn't claim the whole country, and their position was that if the Belizeans and Guatemalans resolved their claims, the Mexicans would withdraw theirs, which was a position that certainly gave them a lot of credit with the Belizeans.

Q: Yes, I would think. I mean, this gave them somebody behind them. How did you all feel? Did you feel that this Guatemalan claim was something you really wanted to do, or was this just sort of a local election ploy?

SMITH: We felt that the Guatemalans had made a large issue out of it. They were printing stamps, Belize was theirs. It was certainly an issue, or seem from our side to be an issue in Guatemala. On the other hand, it was clear to us that the Belizeans - certainly the Anglophone ones, but most of the non-Anglophone ones as well - didn't want much to do with Guatemala.

Q: Well, Guatemala was also not a very impressive place.

SMITH: Well, from our personal standpoint that was something else. Here we had a country that was really a democracy and that, by developing country standards, an impressive democracy. And if you look at the statistics, you'll see that elections in Belize are won by 15 votes and that the government has regularly changed from one side to the other. It is a democratic place, and it goes down; it isn't just an elite.

Q: Well, did you feel there was much interest in what you were doing in Washington?

SMITH: Not too much. (End of tape)

I was talking about democracy in Belize and how it really was a democracy, and you asked whether there was much interest in Washington. There was interest in resolving the dispute, and that had engaged people in Washington, but I don't think there was much interest beyond that. I remember some years later when Belize did become independent, I happened to be working again in UN Political Affairs and was working with our mission in New York on the statement that we would make at the time Belize became independent and became a member of the United Nations, and I had to keep reminding them how much history the United States had with Belize. After the Civil War some people had fled to Belize and established plantations there. We'd had the strong history of rum-running during Prohibition, which wasn't something we were about to touch on. But Washington didn't see Belize as a key country in Latin America by any means then.

Q: Were there any disputed islands off Belize? Some of these places in the Caribbean... any island problems?

SMITH: The Guatemalan claim, of course, meant that all of the Belizean islands were disputed, and subsequently there has become a dispute with Guatemala over where the border is, but at that time, there wasn't a dispute because it was all or nothing as far as Guatemala was concerned. There was no dispute; there is a history of relations between Belize and the Bay Islands of Honduras. I don't think there's any claim there, but there are strong cultural ties.

Q: I think it was during this time - maybe I'm wrong - that we inserted troops into the Dominican Republic. Was it at this time, or was this a little earlier?

SMITH: I believe it was a little bit earlier.

Q: Maybe it was earlier.

SMITH: But the events of that kind had very little reverberation in Belize. Things that would go on in the English-speaking Caribbean would have some effect there, because you did have a community of Jamaicans or Trinidadians, but those were fairly small. It was a very insular place, with one big issue, which was Guatemala.

Q: Well, why don't we stop at this point? We'll pick it up next time. In 1970, you left Belize. Where did you go?

SMITH: I came back to Washington to work in the India Desk.

Q: All right, we'll pick it up then.

***

Today is April 29, 1999. Grant, you came back in 1970 to work in what, the India-

SMITH: The India Desk.

Q: India Desk. And you did that from when to when?

SMITH: Until the summer of 1972.

Q: What did the India Desk consist of? I mean, was it large?

SMITH: Well, then as now, it covers India, Nepal, and Sri Lanka, as well as the Maldives and Bhutan. Then we had a director, a deputy director, two political officers (I was the junior of the two). The deputy director was also the senior economic officer, and there was a junior economic officer, plus there was a Desk officer for Sri Lanka and one for Nepal.

Q: This was an interesting time, wasn't it, for being on India? Kissinger was in the White House and was interested in the China via Pakistan connection, and India seemed to be getting sort of short shrift. Did you feel that, or was this a fair way of saying it, or how would you describe it?

SMITH: Well, the key event of the two years I was there was the December 1971 India-Pakistan War, and the key action that we took during that war that affected our relations with India for many years thereafter - if not still - was the dispatch of the carrier task force headed by the *Enterprise* to the Indian Ocean during the war. And it was something that, when it happened, we on the Desk didn't know about. We found out about it later. It was done by Kissinger, and he always made clear in the little book he wrote when he commented on this, that this had been done "in the context of the relationship with China." In other words, Pakistan was an ally of China, and because of our new opening to China and the relationship that Pakistan had in establishing that opening, he didn't think that we could stand by in the situation which *could* have occurred towards the end of that

conflict, which was that India succeeded in liberating Bangladesh and would then turn to Pakistan.

Q: This was later. It didn't start in '70, did it?

SMITH: No, the events which led up to it started in March of 1971.

Q: What area were you dealing with in India?

SMITH: Particularly as we looked at political aspects of the cultural relationship, scientific relationship, Peace Corps, and things like that, all of which were... Well, it wasn't an easy a time for any of those. Certainly the AID program was declining in size; the Peace Corps was declining in size; so there were political elements to all of this.

Q: Who was sort of "Mr. India" in the State Department at that time?

SMITH: Dave Schneider was the country director, and I guess you could say he was Mr. India. The deputy assistant secretary in the NEA front office was Chris Van Hollen, who of course covered all of South Asia.

Q: Well, just to get it into the picture, who was India's prime minister at that time?

SMITH: Well, that was Indira Gandhi.

Q: And who was our ambassador?

SMITH: Ken Keating.

Q: Ken Keating.

SMITH: Right.

Q: What was your impression? I mean, you had been in Belize, and all of a sudden you're dealing with India. What was your impression of what we were getting out of India, and also that always tricky relationship between India and Pakistan as far as within our own internal State Department? Were you feeling a sense of rivalry, or what were you picking up?

SMITH: Well, of course, this was a time in India-Pakistan relations... Well, our relations had gone through a number of cycles with Pakistan, and there was one particular cycle that lasted up until 1965, the 1965 India-Pakistan War. And of course I'd left the area, although not having worked specifically in India immediately before the India-Pakistan War - I left the area just at that time - and we did not support Pakistan in the 1965 war. We were always criticized by Pakistan for that. Of course, our relationship with India had been framed by the 1962 Sino-Indian War, where we did help India, but not as much as they wanted. So there were, as there have been always when I've worked on these issues

in Washington, questions of sales of particular pieces of military equipment to Pakistan, resuming the sales or one-time sales - those were very much issues during that period in Washington. I must admit I don't remember all the details right now.

Q: What were you picking up as you sort of arrived on the Desk, as what did we really think about Indira Gandhi at that particular point?

SMITH: My recollection is that we were still learning about her. She'd come to power as a compromise candidate after the death of Shastri, and she was put on the throne by some of the old party bosses, expecting that they would be able to manipulate her, and turned out to be a very strong person in her own right. And this was a process that was going on while I was there. I don't remember the exact dates of specific events, and I believe it was during that period she nationalized the banks and also withdrew the privy purses from the princes, the former princely rulers. So she was in the process, in that period, of establishing herself more firmly, taking these very populist actions that won her public support, didn't have that much effect in terms of long-term development of the country (although the banks had some effect, certainly), but were very clearly taken for populist reasons.

Q: And for you, I imagine they sliced the pie up in a certain way - what part of the Indian-American relations did you have?

SMITH: Well, as I say, being the junior political officer, I was doing a lot of the political aspects of the cultural relationship - Peace Corps, AID, things like that. I was fortunate in the first few months that I was there to be involved in the visit of an Indian parliamentary delegation headed by the speaker of Parliament, and both involved in planning the visit and actually went along also as an escort officer, which as far as I was concerned was a wonderful opportunity, because I got to arrange a schedule for them to see the midterm elections in the United States, which gave me, of course, an opportunity to do that, and did a lot of things that aren't necessarily the common way that things are done. For instance, as I recall, we pooled our resources in San Francisco and invited the head of the Field Poll to come and give a presentation on the polling there in San Francisco at a lunchtime presentation, which went very well. It also gave me the opportunity to get to know these members of the delegation, because I subsequently went to India, and of course, we were old buddies.

Q: How did you find it? I mean, I always had the impression that the upper class of the Indians had picked up a certain amount of disdain for the Barbarian American, picked up both internally and also from their British colleagues. Did you sense any with this delegation that came through, or were they a different breed of cat?

SMITH: Perhaps among some of them, but not among most of them, because the delegation was headed by the speaker, who was a Sikh from one of the main Sikh groups, and the other members were not, for the most part, ones that would fall into that category. I know very much what you mean, and I remember being convinced both on this occasion, later in India, and later other places, that to understand a recently independent

view of the United States, you have to go back and look at the mother country's view of the United States. In the case of India, very much, the London School of Economics' view of the United States certainly affected Nehru and a generation of senior Congress Party officials and bureaucrats.

Q: I've often felt that the London School of Economics and its predecessors did more damage to the Third World than Lenin, Marx, and the whole group.

SMITH: Well, India is certainly an example of that, because unlike many Third World countries it was large enough to have a continental economy and to turn inward and try to do everything itself in a way that many other countries could not.

Q: Well, how did you and your colleagues see the situation before the Bangladesh thing, which at that time was East Pakistan? How did you see that situation developing?

SMITH: Well, of course it began, as I recall, in March of 1971 with the crackdown by the Pakistan military in East Pakistan, as it was then, which came after the election in Pakistan, which had actually resulted in a majority for the main politician from East Pakistan, Sheikh Mujibur Rahman. The crackdown by the Pakistan military immediately resulted in this massive flood of refugees, and we're talking about a magnitude that, looking at present-day situations, makes present day numbers, as bad as they are, seem small, because there were 10 million altogether that came into India from Bangladesh, including the poor peasants but also the Bengali leadership. And one of the things that I was very involved with was organizing the money to transfer, as I recall, to UNHCR [United Nations High Commission for Refugees] to help these, although the Indians, I believe, did not want to call them refugees. They were "temporarily displaced persons," because the Indians did not want these people to stay; they wanted them to go home, and they did not want to give them full refugee status. The whole purpose of Indian policy was to create a situation in which they could go home. Pakistan has always accused India of masterminding this whole thing so that it would divide Pakistan, split off East Pakistan and become independent. My view was much more that the Pakistan army, the West Pakistanis, were responsible for the events that precipitated everything, but once those happened and the refugees began to flow, then India, yes, Indira Gandhi, made a very hard-nosed decision that India would do what was necessary to stop this problem, and what was necessary to stop this problem involved training, equipping the Bengalis to be fighters in East Pakistan, supporting them with the Indian Army, which before the war actually started was, as I recall, operating across the border into East Pakistan. So India, pressured by this massive flow of refugees, did everything to force that conflict in East Pakistan, and its whole objective then was to hold to the west and to liberate East Pakistan - which it did quite quickly.

Q: Did you have any feeling as the situation was developing, you and your colleagues, that we were giving too much support for the Pakistan position and too little for the Indian position on this?

SMITH: Very much a sense that we were not addressing the fundamental problem of this

massive flow of refugees and what do you do about it - and the human rights violations which had occurred in East Pakistan, which were very fully covered by our team which was then in Dhaka, reported on. Mrs. Gandhi visited Washington in November, 1971. I was there the day she was received at the White House. It was an unusually warm day, and people were quipping about Indian summer, and of course I reminded them about the real meaning of Indian summer, but she was coming as a last minute effort to try to get support so that this problem could be resolved diplomatically rather than as it ultimately was. And she spoke about the problems that India was facing, and Nixon, as I recall, really pretty much dodged that issue. There had been a cyclone in Orissa in Eastern India, and he spoke about concern about that. Well, you know, in absolute terms, yes, there was a lot of death and destruction from that cyclone in Orissa, but compared to the 10 million people that had flowed into India from Bangladesh, this was very small, and he pretty much ignored that. And I think that reflected the kind of policy that was going on. People were not really focusing on the bigger problem.

Q: Did you see the Bangladesh, still called East Pakistan, situation sort of coming out the way it did? Was there a thought that India might just plain annex this and have a greater Bengal or anything like that?

SMITH: I don't remember specifically considering that issue at that time. I remember in looking at it later and being convinced that India definitely did not want to have East Pakistan - Bangladesh - become part of India. India did want a relationship with East Pakistan, and the bottom line for India in that relationship would be that this kind of thing never happen again, that Bangladesh would never cause this kind of problem for India again, that there would never be a huge inflow. And of course, after Independence there still was a substantial Hindu population in Bangladesh, and there were a lot of problems left over from the war and before the war between the two. But no, I didn't have the impression that India wanted to annex Bangladesh. India wanted primacy in South Asia, wanted that to be recognized, although when you speak of India, there are a lot of different factions in India and different people wanted different things; but the majority position I don’t think was that they wanted to take over the other countries of South Asia.

Q: How did the Gandhi trip go when she came here, outside of the fact that Nixon seemed to be dodging?

SMITH: She didn't get what she wanted, and she went home, and things progressed towards war.

Q: Did you get any feel for the tension between our embassy and - what was the capital of Pakistan then - Islamabad?

SMITH: Islamabad

Q: And in the consulate general in Dhaka with Archer Blood, did you get any feel for sort of that these two were not speaking the same language?

SMITH: My recollection is that that was a problem, but you should put Arch Blood on tape.

Q: We have Arch Blood on tape.

SMITH: Yes.

Q: I was wondering whether we were looking at... One of the major tensions in the world is between Pakistan and India, and to have Pakistan in the Near Eastern Bureau at that time (it's now changed) and India being in the-

SMITH: No, everything was in the Near East-South Asia Bureau, so there was no problem of a scene.

Q: Okay, it was the Near East -

SMITH: - South Asia Bureau, and there was no problem of a scene. Chris Van Hollen was the deputy assistant secretary for South Asia, the senior person working on South Asia.

Q: Did you find, being part of this bureau, that Palestine sort of seemed to absorb most of the tension - I mean the problems of Israel and the Arab world? Did that seem to pretty well absorb the energies and attention of the principals?

SMITH: Yes. There always has been that problem, and I think the only time that there was somebody heading the Near East-South Asia Bureau who was really interested in South Asia was actually before I joined the Foreign Service, was Phil Talbot, who was there early in the Kennedy Administration, who was a South Asianist. But after that, certainly, there was a problem getting attention for South Asia, and I was in the bureau later; I know that that was a problem.

Q: How about when the Enterprise *was sent to... "Steam" isn't the right term, but it used nuclear power, but its task force to go into the Indian Ocean? How did that hit you all?*

SMITH: It hit us pretty hard. And you should interview some of the people who got together and formed a particular group to protest. But it wasn't clear the exact purpose of it. One of the problems was, and I think often is in the question of ship movements, that ship movements are done and not explained - which is probably part of the idea. But certainly India saw this as a threat to India, and there was a lot of misinformation about exactly how far it went. Actually, it didn't go very far into the Indian Ocean. I don't remember; at one time I learned the exact level to which it went, but it wasn't very far up into the Indian Ocean at all. But they saw this as a direct threat to India, that the U.S. had sent a very powerful task force, presumed to have nuclear weapons, to threaten India in a situation where India believed itself to be completely in the right and where India - I don't remember the exact timing now, but it became very clear after India succeeded in Bangladesh, that it was not going to begin an all-out offensive against Pakistan; it was

just going to hold as far as Pakistan went. It wanted a cease-fire then: hold in the west, win in the east, cease-fire. And the purpose of sending the *Enterprise* was, I believe, because we did not know that that was the Indian [intent] or were not convinced or sure that that was what India planned to do, and if India had planned to turn against Pakistan then all out, that would have concerned us.

Q: At the time, just sort of the personal feelings of those on the Indian Desk - did you feel that India was justified in what it was doing?

SMITH: Yes, in what it was doing in East Pakistan in a *Realpolitik* kind of way, India was playing a very hardheaded game and could get away with it and was justified.

Q: Did you find after this episode was over - you were there until '72 - did you feel a real lowering of relations or a hardening of relations?

SMITH: Yes, well I was not only there until 1972 but in 1972 went to New Delhi, so the answer is yes. I spent much of the three years I was in India, from '72 to '75, explaining the *Enterprise*. It produced a very difficult time in our relationship.

Q: Was there anything else that you were dealing with during the '70-72 period that you think we ought to talk about?

SMITH: One thing happened during that conflict that may have had an effect on down the line, and that was that, in looking at the flow of military equipment, we looked - I learned personally, not only at military sales but also at commercial sales of items on the munitions list. And I remember that Chris Van Hollen was very embarrassed at one point, went up to testify, and he knew about FMS [Foreign Military Sales], but he hadn't looked at commercial sales. And there were some commercial sales going on to Pakistan, so we had to cut those off, obviously, and we also looked at some things going on to India that were spare parts for, for instance, Super Constellations that we believed were being used for marine reconnaissance, which gets into a whole other area of commercial sales, cutoff of spare parts in times of tension, use of commercial items for military purposes. And I think that the Indians were probably already determined to, whenever possible, not be overly reliant on one supplier, probably for both military and commercial aircraft, for example. I don’t know how much notice they took of what they did, but if they did, it probably confirmed their policy, which later meant, of course, that they always bought both Boeing and Airbus and on the military side probably a variety of weapons systems.

Q: How about relations with the Soviets during this time? Was this a little early, or were they making overtures to the Soviets?

SMITH: Well, they already had an established relationship with the Soviet Union. You need to look at the exact year. An Indo-Soviet treaty was signed. I believe it was in this period. I've always interpreted it as guaranteeing Soviet neutrality or better in times of conflict. Some people have put much more emphasis on the Soviet support than I think is warranted because I think India was fairly self-reliant, but I think it was very reassuring

to India to have in the back pocket this treaty with the Soviet Union of neutrality or better in time of conflict. That was important and something that, when added to the Soviet military supply relationship with India, to the Soviet position on Kashmir (of vetoing things that India didn't like on Kashmir) was very useful. I don't remember the exact details of the Security Council consideration of the India-Pakistan War of 1971, but I do remember that the Soviets took the Indian side and prevented any resolution from being adopted in the Security Council which would have demanded cease-fire and withdrawal before India achieved its objectives.

Q: Were you on the Desk when we opened relations - Kissinger's secret mission and Nixon going to China? Was that while you were there?

SMITH: Yes.

Q: Did that seem, from your vantage point, did that one catch us by surprise and, two, did that have any effect on our relationship?

SMITH: Well, it certainly caught me by surprise on the Desk. And I think that it did have a long-term impact on our relationship, but the biggest single thing, again, was the *Enterprise*, and that was related to it all. Of course, our relationship with India about China had always been very complex, that we had supported India in the Sino-Indian War, provided India with some materiel, but not as much as they wanted, and had had some cooperative relationships in other areas with India vis-à-vis China which were quite significant.

Q: Well, you left the Desk in '72 and off, what, to New Delhi?

SMITH: To New Delhi.

Q: To '75.

SMITH: Right.

Q: What was your job?

SMITH: In the Political Section in New Delhi at that time, there was a position which I like to call India and her Neighbors: it was India's relationships with the countries of South Asia, which I managed to add a little bit on Kashmir to, but basically, it was India-Pakistan, and a little bit on India-Nepal, India-Sri Lanka, and India-Bangladesh.

Q: Was there any development while you were on the Desk with Sri Lanka or Nepal?

SMITH: I don't remember anything in specific while I was on the Desk. I do have some impressions of India's relationships with those countries, but I don't remember anything specific on the Desk.

Q: Well, what's your impression of relationship with...

SMITH: Well, particularly with Nepal. It has been a very complex relationship over the years, and Nepal has a terrible inferiority complex as far as India is concerned, feels very... Well, India *has* been very heavy-handed with Nepal, and Nepal reacts - let's put it that way. I may have mentioned this earlier - when India put the king back on the throne in 1951, an Indian second secretary participated in Nepalese cabinet meetings. That Indian second secretary, I think he was, was Krishna Rasgotra, who, when I was on the India Desk in Washington, was their DCM - later was their foreign secretary, some years later - and was ambassador to Nepal, in fact, at one point. Just the idea of sending this person back to Nepal who had such a relationship there gives an idea of the nature of that dynamic between India and Nepal. India had very definite objectives with Nepal. Indian intervention in Sikkim in 1972-73-74 (I forget the exact year.), where India went into a country - it wasn't an independent country - to an entity whose status was uncertain and, essentially, deposed the ruler because of the Nepalese-speaking majority there. But Nepal always saw that as, you know, potentially threatening, the kind of thing that India could do elsewhere. One of the key issues in the India-Nepal relationship was water. There had been some very good books written about this. When I was in Nepal, 1965-65, we learned about a very large potential hydroelectric scheme, which involved taking a river which has a large *S* in it and drilling a tunnel across - huge hydroelectric potential. I was some years later - and in fact I think it was in the early '80s - told that that project alone was as much as the total installed electric generating capacity in north India. But of course that power had to be sold to India, and that produced a very complex negotiation, with the Nepalese not wanting to be totally reliant on India for market and India not wanting to be reliant on Nepal as the source of this - as a result of which the project has never been done, although this is the one kind of project that could be tremendously beneficial for India *and* Nepal.

Q: Sri Lanka - did that raise anything on our radar in those days?

SMITH: No, Sri Lanka did not become... As far as India-Sri Lanka relations were concerned, there wasn't a great issue. That only began after 1983.

Q: That was when the Tamil -

SMITH: That was when that really began, but before that period, in '72-75, I went to Colombo and didn't see anything particular to comment on. There had been historic issues there. Indian Tamils - not just the Sri Lankan Tamils, but the Indian Tamils - historic issue, but nothing big.

Q: When you were in New Delhi, was Keating still the ambassador?

SMITH: Keating was the ambassador when I arrived. Moynihan came while I was there and left while I was there, and Saxbe arrived. So I served under three ambassadors while I was there.

Q: Keating later went on to -

SMITH: Israel.

Q: - Israel, got there just in time, I guess, for the October War of '73, didn't he; but what was the feeling about Keating at that point? I've heard people say that he was getting to be an old man and really wasn't that plugged in, in a way - or not? Or did you have that feeling?

SMITH: I've served under a lot of ambassadors in New Delhi, and I was only there briefly while Keating was there. I don't remember that he was terribly engaged, but with a few exceptions, a lot of the ambassadors there were not terribly engaged. He had had a difficult time during the India-Pakistan War. He had a very difficult last meeting with Mrs. Gandhi. She sort of fidgeted, answered the telephone, and gave very short answers, didn't really engage at all. I don't remember whether other people were walking in and out of the room, but it would have been consistent with what I remember hearing about the conversation. And that, of course, was after the *Enterprise* and the war, so you can understand maybe why it happened that way.

Q: How was the embassy when you arrived there in '72? Were they feeling sort of at odds with Washington and all, would you say?

SMITH: At odds with Washington and demoralized, and something else was going on, because of course we had had an enormous mission in India during the 1960s. You had the military buildup after the '62 war. We'd had a military mission there. Then you had the very large AID and U.S. agriculture activities there during the '60s, as we provided large amounts of aid, particularly food aid, PL-480 - very large AID mission - and all of this was winding down. I should get the figures for you. My wife tells of going to her first American women's club meeting when she was there and there being 200 people, and when she left there were 30. It's that kind of enormously... Peace Corps was on the way out. In fact, as I mentioned before, it was declining before the India-Pakistan War, and that was sort of the final nail in the coffin. The reason it was declining before the war was explained to me by a retired Indian state official, the father of the wife of a colleague in the Indian Foreign Ministry. And this retired state official said to me, "You know, when the Peace Corps was bringing BA generalists with enthusiasm, that was fine; what we were getting was enthusiasm. When they started trying to send us technically trained people, you know, we have lots of technically trained people." So the Peace Corps was already declining for a variety of reasons, and the war stopped it.

AID was already declining, and dwindled to almost nothing after that period, that three-year period. The military mission was already much smaller and by the time I was there was down to one or two or three people. So the nature of our relationship had already begun to change, and the war just brought it down to a very different relationship from the kind it had been in the 1960s.

Q: You were watching India's relations with its near neighbors. With Pakistan by half

and all, did you see a changed India as far as its attitudes toward neighbors, or was this of secondary interest to the Indian government?

SMITH: Well, certainly as far as Pakistan is concerned. Pakistan was and is the main issue for India, and there was, is, a hard line there in the Indian government, which I think after the 19- (end of tape)

Q: Yes, you were saying the main concern in India-

SMITH: - was Pakistan. It's always been true that the way ahead in the Indian Foreign Ministry is to be tough on Pakistan. You aren't going to get ahead by broaching compromises on Pakistan. And I think after the 1971 War that was reinforced. The Simla agreement at the end of the 1971 War, in July of 1972, was as far as India was concerned a tremendous step forward because it basically said India-Pakistan issues shall be resolved bilaterally. And in the negotiation of that, Bhutto had refused some language which would have even more firmly established the Indian point of view, but that much he accepted, and that pretty much did establish the Indian point of view on that. So it was a period where India had won a war, it felt, could be fairly firm with Pakistan. The '65 War had not gone nearly as well with India. It was fought to a stalemate. The '71 War had gone fairly well. The Indians were proud of their success, at their secularism. They would always point out that their Army chief during the time of the Bangladesh War was a Parsi. The Indian Air Force chief, as I recall, was a Christian. The handover was to a Sikh. There was quite a religious variety in the Indian military. However, there was a lot of focus internally, within India, in this period because Mrs. Gandhi had certainly won the 1971 election, which occurred just before the war. She'd had an overwhelming victory in the 1971 election. We always thought that those populist issues that she'd succeeded at before - the privy purses, the bank nationalization - had had a major effect. The Bangladesh War reinforced her position. But then she began to have trouble. And there's been a lot written recently, of course, about the 1973 nuclear explosion and how one reason for the timing of that may have been problems she had domestically.

Q: How were your contacts with the Indian Foreign Ministry?

SMITH: Yes, I had good relations with the Indian Foreign Ministry. We did a lot with them socially. We actually made fairly good friends there. There was a group in the Indian Foreign Ministry that were of similar age. Many of them come into the Indian Foreign Service together, so they all knew each other, and we got to know them quite well. We had good relations. They probably all thought I worked for the CIA because I was so active, but no, we had very good relations, relations that we've kept up over the years afterwards.

Q: So this almost... "anti-Americanism" is probably not the right term, but coldness towards America didn't particularly rub off in the officialdom.

SMITH: You had to work at it, but if you worked at it, it was okay. And my approach was always not only to work with those officials that I had to know but also people who

were interested in these issues outside of the Foreign Ministry, which would include professors, newspaper columnists, people like that. And in many cases, they were of that same age group, perhaps had gone to the same universities as the people in the Foreign Ministry. It was a pleasant time in that sense. As I said, it took work, but it was possible. Sometimes, some things weren't possible. I was never able to visit Sikkim, and I was told basically that I wasn't going to be able to visit Sikkim because they were too suspicious of me.

Q: What about the other confrontational relationship that you probably had to deal with, and that is with our embassy in Islamabad. There must have been a counterpart who dealt with Pakistan-Indian relationships. How did that work?

SMITH: I don't remember that as being a particularly confrontational time. I visited Pakistan once or twice during that period, visited all of the neighboring countries, in fact - except China - during that period. I don't remember it being a particularly tense relationship. I was trying to think back about it, and I just don't remember it being that bad, although I'm sure that we did disagree about these key issues of, usually, arms supply.

Q: Did the hand of Henry Kissinger weigh pretty heavily, did you feel, on our relations, from your vantage point, or not?

SMITH: Yes, they did, and we never really recovered from the dispatch of the *Enterprise*. Of course, during two of the three years I was there, Moynihan was the ambassador, and Moynihan had an access in Washington which was very useful. And I think, you know, if anybody could get a point across in Washington, he probably could.

Q: How did you explain the Enterprise *to your Indian colleagues?*

SMITH: I explained it very much in the lines I mentioned earlier, that they should see this as part of our relationship with China. They should recognize that even though the Indian intent during this period may have been very clear to Indians, to deal with East Pakistan and call it finished, it wasn't necessarily clear to others on the outside - but also to explain, to get in some of the details of... The *Enterprise* really had just barely got into the Indian Ocean.

Q: And it wasn't that big a deal, either, in a way.

SMITH: That's right. But I do think that it... Well, and perhaps even today, it is still a factor in our relations.

Q: What was your impression of Ambassador Moynihan?

SMITH: Well, actually, for about three months, I was his staff assistant and was offered the job on a longer-term basis, and instead I really... The job in the Political Section had been one I had been after for a long time and would like to return to it. He was an

ambassador who could deal with those Indian politicians and officials of the London School of Economics background and otherwise, could deal with them on an equal footing because of his own intellectual background. It was fascinating to watch him work the issues in Washington, in many cases, to write a telegram, then go back to Washington to negotiate the response. It was fascinating to watch him in his dealings with the press, because this was a period in which within India he had very low visibility. He only gave one press conference while he was there, and that was just before he left. And he was asked a question about Diego Garcia. This is probably in his book. He quipped that he didn't know why India was getting so worked up about the Indian Ocean. "It's only a chance of history that it was called the Indian Ocean. It could have been called the Madagascar Sea." But he did spend a lot of time with the American press. We noticed that... He wrote his own telegrams, I should back up and say. He was somebody who would... I remember learning as an undergraduate in college that Woodrow Wilson had a portable typewriter and used to sit there in the White House and type things. Well, Moynihan had a portable electric typewriter in his office, and he worked sort of ten to two and four to eight. He would sit there in the evening and write these long cables. Sometimes they'd be about a meeting he'd had. Sometimes they'd be about an issue. And sometimes they would appear in the *New York Times* within a couple of days.

Q: Well, I'm sure, with his background, if it was good enough for the State Department, it was good enough to go off to the-

SMITH: The one that I remember the most was one he did about the return of the South Building to the Indian government. The South Building had been constructed with PL-480 funds for the use of AID. AID was shrinking dramatically, had no use for this building, which was in the southern part of New Delhi, and had decided to turn it back to the Indian government as provided for in the original agreement on the use of PL-480 funds. And at the last minute AID Washington had second thoughts, and he sent back this blistering cable that talked about great empires building these enormous buildings in their period of decline, which he called an "edifice complex." But of course, he always says that his biggest achievement, the one for which he will always be remembered, is his ending the rupee problem.

Q: Yes, would you explain what it was?

SMITH: Yes, let me say that Moynihan was somebody who would jump into an issue and work on it. Sometimes he would only work on it briefly. In fact, we often thought that he was ideally suited to be a senator. But in this case, he worked the issue thoroughly through to the end. The issue concerned this enormous quantity of Indian rupees we'd accumulated by selling wheat during the 1960s to India for rupees in those two years of drought. The rupees, a very small percentage we could use for our administration, but most of them could only be used by joint agreement and, in fact, were piling up faster than we were spending them - the interest on them was piling up faster than we were spending - and the amount was enormous. I think it was something like more than the total amount of money in circulation in India. The Indian press and public opinion saw this as a threat to economic stability in India, although in fact it couldn't be used without

the approval of the government of India. In economic terms it didn't mean anything, but in political terms it meant a great deal. So Moynihan negotiated an agreement under which we turned back two-thirds of the rupees, and he handed over a check of that amount to the Indian government, the largest check ever written. At the time, he thought that we had saved enough to continue our educational and cultural programs, our scientific research programs (which were funded with rupees), through the end of the century. He was a few years off. The money ran out sooner than that, but the concept was to take a major political problem the heart of which was this infinite amount of rupees and turn it into a finite issue that would end in a certain amount of years, which he succeeded in doing.

I sometimes had an impression that after that and after the Kissinger visit (the details of which I don't remember much of now but that would have been in 1974), he sort of lost interest. So he left and was replaced by Saxbe.

Q: I take it then that Moynihan did not fall into... I won't call it "the trap," but certainly the pattern that a number of our ambassadors have, of coming to India and becoming so entranced with it that their objectivity is at least seriously in question as far as people who deal with Indian affairs back in Washington or even on their own staff are concerned.

SMITH: I certainly don't think he was perceived in Washington the way Chester Bowles was seen. Chester Bowles was seen as a total apologist for India, and Moynihan was not that. He was on occasion -

Q: Galbraith a bit, too.

SMITH: Yes, but Moynihan was certainly critical of individual Indians. I can remember some very, very critical cables that he wrote. I think to get a full impression of this you need to go back and review the telegrams of the time, which now should be available.

Q: Did you get any feel for the Moynihan-Indira Gandhi relationship?

SMITH: I don't recall. I probably did, but I don't recall. It was better than the Keating relationship, definitely, but I don't recall that it was particularly warm. I could be wrong.

Q: I can't think of anything; I'm just thinking that Mrs. Gandhi didn't take fools lightly, and I don't think Moynihan did either. They may have sat there and had self-satisfied smirks on their face in each other's company, but-

SMITH: If you've done one of these with Dave Schneider - he was DCM - he would have a much better recollection.

Q: Oh, the nuclear explosion - did that sort of change things as far as the relationships, how we viewed India at the time?

SMITH: I think it definitely did. I must admit, I've recently been reading articles about this, so I'm not sure what I remember myself and what I read in the articles, but before that we had had a relationship with the Indian atomic energy establishment, which ended abruptly with that. We cut off all contacts - as to the Canadians, from whose heavy water reactor the plutonium raw material may have come. I think the Indians were surprised, probably, by our reaction. The Indian explanation of this as a peaceful nuclear explosion was seen widely as an example of typical Indian posturing. Indians, Indian diplomats, have always had a troubled relationship with Americans and many Westerners, and this was an area which was a particular issue, I think, because it was just so transparent.

Q: Yes, were there any other problems or issues during this '72 to '75 period?

SMITH: There probably were, but I'm not sure that I remember them. I did manage to get up to Kashmir a couple of times. We were still a bit careful about how we traveled to Kashmir, but I did get up there a couple of times on vacations and managed to call on the governor and other officials whom I knew - from Washington, in fact. I also managed to travel around the southern part of the country a fair amount, doing speaking for USIS. And the latter was during the Watergate period. The Indian interest in Watergate was considerable. It was not like the situation in Europe, where they didn't really understand it - France, "*affaire des plombiers.*" The Indians related to it in an interesting way, because here is a prescient who is being accused of abusing his office, of elements of "imperial presidency," and ultimately has to resign. And in India they have a leader who is being accused of abusing power, later more than at that time but already at that time, being challenged in the court about various things involving election practices, is removing chief ministers around the country; so the Indians followed it very closely, and I often thought that they related to it in the sense that, Gee, they can do that in the United States, maybe we can do that here.

Q: It's interesting, isn't it, because I know the European - I was in Greece at the time, and there was no real understanding of this. I mean, "Everybody does this, and what's the big deal?"

SMITH: It was always difficult in India, because with the parliamentary system, they didn't understand our system, so in talking about it, you had to do some basic Civics 101 to explain the American system. But they were very interested in it. And of course the Indians have always had journalists in Washington. There has been a group of Indian correspondents in Washington, so they were getting a lot of reporting about it. There's a considerable amount of reporting in the Indian press on international things, and a fair amount on the United States.

Q: How do we view the Kashmir problem? It really goes back to '48, doesn't it? I mean, essentially a done deal, with a lot of squabbling but probably little is going to change there?

SMITH: Well, I think that after the 1971 War, we did, that the 1971 War brought an end to a U.S. policy which had initially been one of supporting a plebiscite and later had been

one of trying to work out agreements. In 1963, after the Sino-Indian War in particular, we tried to broker an agreement between India and Pakistan, even suggesting dividing Kashmir - deals there. But in 1971, with the Simla agreement, which says "issues between the two countries shall be resolved bilaterally," I was one who advocated, no, let them do it. Third parties can be available, but they said they're going to do it bilaterally, and the easy way for the United States to handle the problem in both countries is to say Simla. And later on, in 1982, I advocated that line as well.

Q: Were we still trying to get in there, felt we could make our good offices?

SMITH: In Kashmir?

Q: Yes.

SMITH: Not after '71. Up until '71, yes, but after '71, we backed off. I certainly favored our backing off, and I think we did back off.

Q: Well, then, in '75, where did you go?

SMITH: I spent a year at the Council on Foreign Relations.

Q: '75-76.

SMITH: That's right.

Q: What type of an assignment was this?

SMITH: Well, there is a State Department fellow at the Council on Foreign Relations, a one year assignment up there. In addition, the Council on Foreign Relations has a program of foreign affairs fellows for younger professors, government officials, State Department officers. I had applied under the latter and was assigned there by the State Department under the former. So I, in fact, was sort of both.

Q: What did you do?

SMITH: Well, I had developed a project to look at U.S.-Soviet competition in Third World countries and spent a fair amount of time researching that, came away with the conclusion that there was actually a lot less competition than people thought. I hadn't realized until I really got down to it how little the Soviets were actually doing, how little they could deliver, how their economic aid was virtually nonexistent, how the only thing that they could deliver was military assistance in a few locations, but their economic aid - I mean this pattern of Soviet announcements of huge amounts of aid and then delivering next to nothing was one that was repeated time after time after time around the world.

Q: Usually one monumental building or something like that.

SMITH: Yes.

Q: Yes, that's very interesting. What was your impression of the role of the Council on Foreign Relations? Was it a holding area for those who were out of power to come back in, or a training ground?

SMITH: Yes, all of the above. Certainly, there were a lot of people there who had been prominent or who would again be prominent, the revolving door aspect of it. There was a conscious effort, particularly later but somewhat when I was there, of bringing younger people in who later became prominent. They have every year a State Department fellow and two military fellows. One of the military fellows when I was there was Colonel McPeak, who later went on to be chief of staff of the Air Force, and the Army fellow who was there was Gene Dewey, with whom I'm now up at Carlisle, who later went on to be number two in UNHCR. And every year they have a journalistic fellow who's there, too.

Q: Did you find that what you were... You wrote this paper, which really should have been the sort of thing INR would be doing, and all that. Were you able to insert it into the system, to say, "Hey, fellows, look at what's really happening?"

SMITH: No, I never got as far as drawing all of the policy conclusions that would come from that, and really, the Council is interested in the policy conclusions. And in fact, I wasn't there as long as I originally expected because my next assignment required some French language training and I came down to Washington for French language training, so I was only there about nine months.

Q: '76 - French language - to where?

SMITH: To Bangui, as deputy chief of mission. I was interested in -

Q: Bangui being the capital of -

SMITH: The Central African Republic.

Q: And you were there from when to when?

SMITH: '76 to '78.

Q: Was our friend Bokassa there?

SMITH: I was going to say, Bokassa was president when I arrived and emperor when I left.

Q: Ah, then you were there with Tony Quainton.

SMITH: Yes, I was his DCM.

Q: I had a nice long interview with Tony. I'd like to get your... What was your impression of the Central African Republic when you arrived?

SMITH: Well, this was our first time in a former French colony, and our experience had been very much in former British colonies up until then, having served in, well, three plus Nepal, which of course had its main relationship with the UK. So it was quite a... The nature of former French colonialism is very different from the nature of former British colonialism, and it took a lot of adjusting. I mean the French cultural imperialism and even more so in some ways than India, the Francophone African view of the United States comes by way of Paris, came by way of Paris, anyway. To back up a bit, later, when I was traveling some years later, I had an opportunity to be at a luncheon with Houphouët-Boigny.

Q: The president of the Ivory Coast.

SMITH: The Ivory Coast. And the person I was with didn't speak French - I was a bag-carrier - so I had an opportunity to have some conversation in French separately. And I asked Houphouët about the French and the British, as colonial masters, and he said, "Well, you know, it's as if there are two masters and each of them has a dog, and one is very rich, but he makes the dog sleep outside, but the other is poor and the dog sleeps in the bedroom." It was very clear which he... Houphouët, who had been a senator in France before independence, where he thought... and in Bangui we could see elements of very much assimilated Central Africans there, or Africans. The economic relationship was particularly striking, that the French had maintained an economic relationship in a way that the UK had not, after it gave up its colonies, and had maintained a control through the economic relationship. The Central African franc, being issued for all of he Central African countries, was pegged to the French franc, 50 to 1, and the Central African Republic could not print money. The French had a veto in the bank on printing the money. So when it came time to pay the troops, if the government didn't have the money, it couldn't just print it, it had to get a loan. To get a loan, really, it had to go to France. So the French could decide, well, do we want a coup or not? Pay the troops or not? It gave them tremendous influence.

Q: When you went out there, what did you see as American interests in the Central African Republic?

SMITH: Fairly small - some trade interests. There, in fact, was an American company trading in diamonds there. Some human rights interests, some humanitarian interests. I don't recall any deep security interests, although of course that was a period of U.S.-Soviet competition, and we were trying to keep those votes and those countries on our side to the extent possible.

Q: You mentioned human rights - because you were there by '77, when the Carter Administration came in. What sort of issues were human rights issues there?

SMITH: Well, Bokassa himself became a human rights issue and became a human rights

issue while I was there but even more so after I left, in the sense that he was extremely arbitrary, ran a very arbitrary system, and while I was there threw one American and one British journalist in jail, beat the British journalist before he threw him in jail, which certainly got everybody's attention - the fact that the British journalist was on his way to have dinner with me when he got thrown in jail. And later there was a case of a Peace Corps volunteer who I don't think he got beaten but got thrown in jail and got thrown out of the country, for just stopping in front of one of the emperor's houses and asking questions. It was a very arbitrary government, and it was only later that the mistreatment of the schoolchildren occurred, which became *the* major human rights issue and ultimately resulted in the French deposing Bokassa.

Q: Well, how did Tony Quainton use you as a DCM?

SMITH: We were very small. We had an ambassador, a DCM, a junior officer, a couple of others - an administrative officer. We had some AID projects, so I was very involved in self-help projects, AID projects in building a new chancery, which we succeeded in doing while I was there, political reporting, a little bit of everything.

Q: What was your impression of Bokassa while you were there?

SMITH: I think that we were always suspicious of him, but only as things went on did we come to know how arbitrary and irrational he was. And as we were trying to do some AID projects there, it became clear that the more we learned about Bokassa the more we realized that this was going to be difficult. His administration, Central Africans in general, were very suspicious of foreigners. We thought at first that this was a racial thing, but some of the African diplomats there also had trouble. It may have been particularly Central Africa - I mean, this was a country which had been very badly treated by the slave raiders. Slave trading in that country or raiding in that country continued into the 20th century, slave raiders coming down from the north.

Q: Sudan?

SMITH: There was a slave-raiding area in the northern part of the country which existed until 1911, 1914, and people could still remember. So that may have been an element. Bokassa's background in the French military may have been a background. But as it went on, we began, I think, to get a better appreciation of him. Tony Quainton has probably told you some of the stories about Bokassa.

Q: I'd like to hear them again, because-

SMITH: He was certainly cunning, and he went through this whole thing with Qadhafi.

Q: Could you talk about that?

SMITH: Qadhafi visited - I don't remember which year it was - well, it must have been in '76, before he became emperor, certainly before the coronation - '76 or early '77. The

huge display for him, some of it must have been particularly strange for a Muslim who considered himself a serous Muslim. All of the African women out there dancing and singing "*As-salaam 'aleikum,*" shaking-

Q: Essentially topless, weren't they, at that time?

SMITH: Well, no, they weren't topless, but they were shaking their bodies. He was there for a couple of days. I didn't go to the big dinner for him. Tony Quainton did. But the result of the visit was that Bokassa converted to Islam, and one or more of his ministers also. It was widely believed that there was a considerable under-the-table payment, of a million dollars or something, just for this conversion, plus a promise of various other things, including weapons. Of course, a few months later, he declared the empire, declared himself Bokassa *Klimin*, and he later told Tony Quainton (I was with him.) that the whole thing was planned - what did he say - "*Il est malin, mais je suis plus malin que lui*. [He is cunning, but I am more cunning than he is.]"

Q: Which means what?

SMITH: *Malin*.

Q: Malin?

SMITH: "Cunning." So he presented this, anyway, as something that he had planned, the whole thing of having Qadhafi visit, getting these payoffs, getting some arms, and then converting, and then delaying the empire, declaring himself Bokassa *Premier*, having a coronation mass.

Q: Yes, the Pope sent a representative.

SMITH: That's right. We did not send a special representative from Washington. It was interesting that the Chinese, the Americans, and the Russians, all used their local ambassadors, did not send special representatives.

Q: Well, the French went pretty far, didn't they, on this one?

SMITH: They did. The French obviously knew a lot more about Bokassa than we did. As I said, in the course of the two years I was there, we gradually got to know and understand him more, and I think the incident of the two journalists, the incident of the Peace Corps volunteer, and then some things we heard from the French after those - we really realized how arbitrary and irrational he was, and therefore we weren't surprised at what happened later, the killing of the schoolchildren, or Bokassa beat the schoolchildren to death, although that was farther than he had gone, that we knew about anyway. But he had beaten people. He did drink prodigious amounts of whiskey, and there was one incident with a Russian at the Soviet embassy where a busload of Soviet embassy staff member were going by his - he didn't call it his palace - his farm, about an hour south of the capital, and they were stopped at the checkpoint and they were taken in and

harangued. I don't think they were beaten, but treated very badly, detained and harangued and everything. But in the course of the hours that they were there, he drank a huge amount of scotch, and by the end of it he was maudlin, and they were the greatest friends.

Q: Was there cunning behind this irrational behavior, or was he cunning but also irrational?

SMITH: I think he was cunning but also irrational. He did have an addiction to liquor. He had no concept of dividing state funds and personal funds. And after the coronation we discovered that the cotton stabilization fund was empty, or almost empty. It had so much before and this much afterward. He was useful in some ways, in the sense that he was a friend of Mobutu. He supported Zaire in the problems it had in Shaba in '77-78. They were very much with the French in areas that were of concern to us; that was helpful. But clearly there was a large element of bad judgment on his part. He would go off to France for long periods, spend huge amounts of money, give away diamonds.

Q: Women, were there problems as well?

SMITH: There were always problems with women. I forget how many wives and children he had, but there were always stories of others.

Q: Yes. What about the Congo-Brazzaville? That was at that time still a Marxist régime which was very much in our bad books. Was there any particular connection with the Central African. It abuts onto it?

SMITH: I don't remember any particular connection. The only connection I remember is that the plane, the jet Air France-Air Afrique route went to Brazzaville and then to Bangui, so we occasionally saw people just because of that. Much of our contact was with Cameroon, which is adjoining. The AID mission which supported Bangui was located in Cameroon and for us was a big city.

Q: Any relatively high-level visits from the Department of State or elsewhere while you were there?

SMITH: We got very little visit, very little interest. I don't remember a congressional visit. There may have been one. I certainly don't remember one. Very little interest in Washington.

Q: Well, then, in '78, whither?

SMITH: In 1978, I returned to Washington to work on the Morocco Desk.

Q: And how long were you on that?

SMITH: Till 1980.

Q: What were the issues with Morocco in the '78-80 period?

SMITH: One of the biggest issues was, still is, the problem of the Spanish Sahara, the Western Sahara, and the Moroccan -

Q: Polisario movement.

SMITH: Yes, and the Moroccan incorporation of that, the attacks by the Polisario, the Algerian role, the question of U.S. arms sales to Morocco in that context. There was a huge issue of U.S. arms sales to Morocco, F-5 sales, as I recall - would we sell them, and how many would we sell them, what effect would that have on this dispute, what effect would it have on our relationship with Algeria?

Q: Who was our ambassador there at that time?

SMITH: Bob Anderson, then - I have to -

Q: Well, we can -

SMITH: No, no, because there was an important factor there.

Q: And then you say Dick Parker.

SMITH: Dick Parker. Dick Parker left, basically because, I always felt, the king saw Parker as somebody who knew too much about the country.

Q: That's what I've heard. The king seemed to like to have tame political ambassadors for the most part.

SMITH: That's right, and Parker was somebody who, of course, was an Arabist, had written a book on monuments. (End of tape)

Q: You say Parker had written a book?

SMITH: Yes, Dick Parker had written a book, a Baedeker type book on Islamic monuments in Morocco. He'd been, I believe, DCM there, knew the country extremely well, and I always felt that - you're right - the king much preferred pliable political appointees, and the king raised an objection to Parker. He did it in a meeting with a high-level representative from Washington - I don't remember who it was - but the ambassador was excluded from the meeting, and we learned about it from the interpreter. Parker left, and Angier Biddle Duke went in his place.

Q: What was our reading on the king by this time, who was Hassan?

SMITH: Well, there was an academic interpretation of him, a book, *Commander of the Faithful*, which I always considered quite accurate, that he ruled by smoke and mirrors.

He was somebody who manipulated the political system to retain his control and stay in power - quite effectively - and had for some years and has continued to do so.

Q: Did you find that there was a problem being on the Morocco Desk, because the Polisario movement seems to be sort of like the Biafran one and other ones where a certain amount of - oh, particularly in Congress, often in the congressional staff, there are people who sort of are friends of these rebel movements and all. Was this a problem for you?

SMITH: Steve Solarz was a problem, or Steve Solarz's staff. My recollection is that at that time, I'm fairly sure, North Africa and certainly this issue was included in the African Subcommittee of the House Foreign Affairs Committee, and Solarz therefore took a considerable interest in it and had somebody on his staff who followed it very closely and went out to the field, went to... I don't remember that he went to the Western Sahara. I do remember that he went to that part of Algeria where the Polisario headquarters was and objected strongly to the proposed F-5 sales to Morocco.

Q: How were you attributing this? I mean, what did you feel was causing this support of the Polisario side?

SMITH: I don't remember specifics at this point. I suppose it had to do in part with the fact that Morocco had pretty much sort of moved in and taken over. And there hadn't been a referendum; there hadn't been an opportunity for this area to make a choice, and I don't remember that the Moroccan legal case was all that strong.

Q: Outside of the F-5, which was at the time our standard fighter plane for export, where there any other... How did that come out? Did we finally get some there?

SMITH: I must admit I don't remember the details. I don't remember the details. I don't remember any other major issue while I was there. There was the broader issue of the relationship. The king visited while I was on the Desk. Here was a country that had been a historic ally. We'd had military bases there. We'd had a very close relationship, had been very useful to us in a variety of areas. Moroccan troops had gone to Zaire. Morocco had always been very middle-of-the-road as far as the Arab-Israel dispute had been concerned. So he was an extremely valuable ally. On the other hand, we weren't supporting him fully in his problem in the Western Sahara, and that created a lot of obvious friction.

Q: How about the Israeli connection? Did that come up at all while you were there?

SMITH: The fact that there were contacts between the Israelis and the Moroccans?

Q: Yes.

SMITH: I don't remember the history of those. As I recall, they were a fact at that point. I don't remember the details, though. Certainly there was a Jewish community in Morocco.

Q: Well, let's see, I guess in 1980 what did you do?

SMITH: I moved over to the Bureau of UN Political Affairs again to be one of the deputy directors.

Q: And you did that from 1980 to -

SMITH: - to '82.

Q: '82. Now I would imagine that was a rather stormy period, particularly with the Reagan Administration taking on.

SMITH: Well, particularly, I was working on... They divided the deputy directors. The other deputy director did the Middle East and disarmament issues, and I did Africa, Puerto Rico, Micronesia, and institutional issues. But the one that took up the most time was southern Africa - or South Africa and Namibia were the two issues, primarily. And that was an area where the arrival of the Reagan Administration turned us round 180 degrees. Again, I've been reading articles and books on that, so my impressions may be affected by those; but I certainly remember that the work of Don McHenry on Namibia in particular, the contact group - you know, very serious, thought progress had been made, and then the Reagan Administration came in and sort of changed the ground rules.

Q: For the better, for the worse?

SMITH: Well, as it turned out, the problem was solved, in a very complicated way. Whether it would have been solved otherwise I don't know. Certainly the South Africans were not on board for solving it the way the contact group had been trying to solve it. And the way the Reagan Administration, constructive engagement, did ultimately result in a solution. But it was quite a change.

Q: I would have thought that particularly right at the beginning - you arrived in 1980, the election took place, Reagan came on board, Jeane Kirkpatrick went to the United Nations - this represented, at least at the beginning, sort of the pretty far right of the Republican administration, because the UN had always been a focus. There had always been a sort of an anti-UN movement. Was there a feeling of discouragement or what?

SMITH: I think on the southern African issues there was, and also on other issues. Of course, she resurrected an effort that Moynihan had started to keep track of voting records, and I'm trying to remember whether this was later mandated by Congress or not, but when she resurrected it I don't think it had been - to start charting how countries vote in the UN compared to how we vote, which is a very complicated question and one where if you just look at numbers you don’t get much understanding. You have to look at what's behind them. She certainly resurrected that approach, and a very hard-headed one, of looking at the voting percentages of countries in the United Nations.

Q: Which was tied to our support, financial or otherwise, wasn't it? Or at least -

SMITH: No... Do you mean tied to our support of those countries?

Q: Yes.

SMITH: Yes, it could be, in that case, that's true.

Q: Because otherwise it wouldn't make much difference.

SMITH: No, she wanted it to become a factor in our relationship with those countries. And we began - I don't remember exactly what year - but that ultimately resulted in the publication of the lists of how countries are doing.

Q: Well, did you find a major change in the... You're basically the backup for the embassy at the United Nations in New York, aren't you? Did you find a major change when the new mission to the United Nations under Jeane Kirkpatrick came into operation?

SMITH: Yes, she moved people out. There were more political appointees. And again, on particular issues, there was a very wrenching change of direction.

Q: How did you all respond to this? Was it grumbling in the ranks?

SMITH: On the South African issues there was, yes, grumbling in the ranks. Of course, that wasn't just Jeane Kirkpatrick in New York; it was also Chet Crocker in Washington. So we were dealing with new leadership in New York, new leadership in the African Bureau, and they both together were changing the policy.

Q: What was your impression of Chet Crocker?

SMITH: Very convinced on his approach, certainly. But again, it's always hard to test whether it worked or not. Thinking specifically of Namibia, we did feel that it was undercutting the efforts, not only our, but the UN efforts on Namibia.

Q: Was money an issue at all during this time, paying UN dues, or did that come later?

SMITH: It came later. It was not, as I recall, an issue then, although we might have begun to cheat then, in the sense of - I forget what year it was when we began to pay our dues late, cheat in that sense. But the big issue came later.

Q: Did -

SMITH: It was always hard to get money.

Q: Well, international issues that you were dealing with - did you deal with UNESCO

[United Nations Economic, Social, and Cultural Organization] and those?

SMITH: Didn't deal with UNESCO. I dealt with Micronesia, dealt - to the extent that we got involved - with the Puerto Rican issue. There were some - I don't remember the details of them now - institutional issues: Security Council enlargement, things like that.

Q: The Puerto Rican issue - could you explain what the Puerto Rican issue was, and how we felt about it?

SMITH: Well, of course, the basic issue is a political issue within Puerto Rico and with - in the United States, and very hard for these two political processes to mesh in a way that will come to a decision. It's a question of statehood or commonwealth, and then some people want independence. In the UN, as I recall, it came up in the committee of 24, which was the anti-colonialism committee of the General Assembly, where we always had to have an effort to make our point that Puerto Rico, in the various referenda which had occurred, had clearly voted against independence and that this was not an issue for that committee.

Q: Well, this is just a finger in our eye, wasn't it, on the part of Cuba and some other countries?

SMITH: Yes, basically. It was not a major issue in the UN, but obviously one which had to be dealt with, and one in which we had a considerable... a good position.

Q: Yes, I mean, the referenda were there all the time.

SMITH: Yes, and I don't remember the details. I think we may have had some study groups go to Puerto Rico from the UN, from the Committee of 24. I don't even know whether that committee is still in existence.

Micronesia was an issue, because then we were grappling with the question of... Micronesia was, I think, the last issue before the Trusteeship Council, and we had to report to the Trusteeship Council every year on Micronesia, and it was a very complicated series of questions. Does it become independent as a whole, or in pieces? What kind of independence is it? Does some of it become U.S. territory? Very complicated questions where we ultimately prevailed in getting a system established where these countries are independent but with guidance and where, as I recall, we got it out of the Trusteeship Council.

Q: Did you find that it was a constant battle during this time with the Soviet Union on all these issues, from your perspective, or did they sort of keep out of something like Namibia and all?

SMITH: I don't remember. I must admit I don't remember.

Q: It probably wasn't much of an issue.

SMITH: Of course, the Soviet Union was active in Angola, and Angola was active in Namibia, supporting the Namibian... I'm sure that the Soviets were very vocal in supporting SWAPO, the Namibian independence organization.

Q: Well, in '82, whither?

SMITH: In early 1982, not in the normal rotation cycle, there was a sudden and unexpected vacancy in the job of political counselor in New Delhi, and they asked me to come to New Delhi.

Q: That sounds like kind of fun, wasn't it?

SMITH: Coming back to New Delhi, yes.

Q: You did that from '82 to when?

SMITH: '84.

Q: Why don't we cover this period, then I think -

SMITH: Okay, fine.

Q: What was India like coming back? I mean, you had left in, what, '75.

SMITH: Yes, came back in '82. Well, I used to tell people, "Well, I left in '75. Indira Gandhi was prime minister. I came back in 1982. Indira Gandhi's prime minister. *Plus ça change... [The more things change...]*" In fact, a lot had happened domestically in the meantime, in the sense that the Congress Party had lost an election in 1977, in fact had lost an election because of what began just weeks before I'd left in 1975, which was the Declaration of Emergency and the limitation of civil rights during that Emergency and the active, coercive, family planning program during that Emergency period. They'd lost the 1977 election. A coalition opposition government was in power that lasted fairly briefly. By the time I got back in '82, Mrs. Gandhi was back in power, and a lot of the same players. The relationship with Pakistan probably hadn't changed all that much.

Of course, the big even that had affected our relationship with Pakistan, and therefore our relationship with India, had been the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan. And that colored things a great deal during this period, in the sense that we - particularly under the Reagan Administration - had come out in full support of Pakistan. The Indians had opposed even the very limited package of support that Carter had proposed, and of course very much opposed the support to Pakistan which Reagan was providing.

Q: I would have thought the Indians would have not been happy about the Soviets moving into Afghanistan.

SMITH: They weren't happy, but they were even less happy about our relationship with Pakistan and our rearming of Pakistan. It varied, of course, from Indian to Indian, including some of their diplomats. They had very different view on what the Soviets had done. India, as I recall, had a somewhat ambivalent position on the whole thing, but they were definitely against what we were doing in support of Pakistan, because their line was basically, this is like the situation before 1965; Pakistan wants those weapons to use against us, not against the Russians, but against us.

Q: Who was your ambassador during this period?

SMITH: The whole time I was there it was Harry Barnes.

Q: Now Harry Barnes was a professional. How was he as ambassador?

SMITH: I had worked for Harry Barnes once before, when he was DCM in Kathmandu in 1964-65. Harry Barnes was very good to work for. He spoke Hindi. He wanted people in his embassy to speak Hindi. In fact, he insisted that I - or encouraged me to - have a month of brush-up Hindi before I came out. He encouraged everybody to get out, to travel. I often thought that his approach to India was very much that this was a country with which there was a lot we could do. There were a lot of areas of common interest. He wasn't sure quite which one was going to work, so he pushed on this broad range of issues, drove us crazy sometimes because there was an element of not setting priorities. But in retrospect, it was probably pushing on a broad range of issues to see which would work, and some of the ones worked which people did not expect to work, such as the beginning of a relationship in the defense area. He would go around to see the science advisor in the Ministry of Defense, and I accompanied him on several of these calls. We sort of entered by the back stairway, because the idea of the American ambassador calling on the Ministry of Defense was very strange, so we'd sort of come in the back way, get taken upstairs separately. But we were discussing sort of the beginning of a relationship in the high-tech area.

Q: Were we beginning to see an India that was beginning to connect to... You mentioned that they said they had a lot of people technically trained. I was wondering whether you were beginning to see India looking towards what was to become the computer age. They had a very talented population evidently?

SMITH: I think it was the beginning of the end for the India which had been created under Nehru, with all of the statist economic controls, the London School of Economics approach to economics. The former Indian ambassador in Washington, L. K. Jah had been brought back to dismantle many of the controls that he had put in place. This was something we saw a great deal of later, but it was beginning in that period, as I recall. Again, there are others who would remember that aspect of it better than I would

Q: Was Mrs. Gandhi's confrontation with the Sikhs taking place at that point?

SMITH: Yes, that occurred during that period, and I had some Sikh friends. One of them

had been the speaker of Parliament who had come to the United States on that Parliamentary delegation in 1970, a leader in the Congress Party in Punjab - just devastated by this. And her action in sending troops into the Golden Temple in Amritsar later led to terrible things, but certainly when I was there, the Sikh reaction to this was uniform, very, very negative.

Q: What brought about this confrontation?

SMITH: Well, there were a group of Sikhs who reportedly had received some support from Mrs. Gandhi or the Congress Party earlier on in a game of power politics or balancing factions within the state of Punjab, a group of Sikhs who wanted independence for a Sikh state - Kalistan - and they were not supported by the majority of the people of Punjab, but some of them did have weapons and they were killing people.

Q: And the Golden Temple, which is, well, the equivalent to a shrine in Jerusalem or the Kaaba in Mecca, wasn't it?

SMITH: For the Sikhs, yes.

Q: And why did she send troops in?

SMITH: Well, my recollection is that some of these militants were holed up in there, and she could have probably handled it differently, but she ended up sending troops in.

Q: I would have thought Amritsar would have had particular overtones, because wasn't this the place where the British -

SMITH: 1919.

Q: What was it, General... Anyway, it's a name -

SMITH: Jallianwala Bagh, yes.

Q: - mowed down a lot of people, and it's one of those climactic moments of Indian nationalism and all.

SMITH: That's right.

Q: And I would have thought that one would be a little careful about messing around down there.

SMITH: Yes, but on the other hand... Well, she certainly faced a problem, of these armed Sikhs - their arms, presumably, were coming through Pakistan - not supported by the majority of the Sikh population but very definitely undertaking terrorist acts in Punjab. And India has faced problems before, particularly in border areas and groups wanting independence, particularly in the northeast, and historically has dealt with those with a

combination of firmness and tact - very hard-nosed dealing with the counterinsurgency and then at some point negotiating - and has tended to adopt that approach elsewhere.

Q: Well, as political counselor, were you looking at India and looking not to glory in it but just to see that this was a state that could divide up? Were there fissures in India along religious lines or regional lines?

SMITH: I don't think that we were looking at it that way. It's a good question. Interestingly enough, it was a better question in the late 1950s, and by the 1980s very few people saw the likelihood of India breaking up. In the late 1950s, both Indians and foreign observers saw this as a real possibility. Jim Grant, who was later head of UNICEF, told me in Delhi once - he had served in our mission there in the AID mission in the late '50s. John Sherman Cooper, one of the ambassadors in that period, and he said that it was right after the creation of the linguistic states in India. That was done in 1957, so it must have been the '57-58 period. He said the ambassador drew his country team together and asked two questions: one, will India still be united in 10 years and, two, if it is united, will it still be a democracy? And the country team split fairly evenly on the first question and was fairly uniform on the second question that if it was still united it would *not* still be a democracy. And by 25 years later, if you had done the same thing, I don't think the country team would have felt that India was likely to split up, and would also have felt that democracy was extremely well-established there - parliamentary democracy in the sense of elections and the system that they had. So that was not something that we were looking at that much. In the case of the issue of Kalistan, I think we were convinced that the Indian government would prevail, partly because we didn't see great support for it within the Sikh community. It had arisen in part because of splits within the Sikh community. The Sikh community was very divided, but it wasn't largely supporting this.

Q: Was there a strong "old Indian hand" cadre that was working on India at this time in our own Foreign Service and all?

SMITH: Not that many old India hands left.

Q: I'm not talking about going way back, but I mean people who had been around a couple of tours and all that. In other words, was there a cadre or was it pretty much people coming in on excursion tours?

SMITH: Well, let's see. Marion Creekmore was the DCM. His background was not South Asia. Harry Barnes was the closest to an old India hand at that point. I was political counselor. I had served in both Pakistan and Nepal and previously in India. In the political section, my labor counselor was an old India hand. I don't remember who else we had there. Ernie Heck was there during that period, I think. She was an old India hand. So yes, we did have some.

Q: How were relations down south, the Tamil side and all?

SMITH: The problem began in that period, in the sense that it was 1983 when you had

the... I don't remember the exact sequence, but there was a killing, bodies were brought back in Colombo, riots in Colombo, a lot of killing of Tamils. It was a problem which had been going on for some years, and it suddenly became very clear the extent of alienation between the Tamil and the Singhalese community in those riots in the summer of 1983, which was what later led to the establishment of the guerilla groups and the current civil war that's going on there. But it was something that had its origins, many people think, in the policies of S. W. R. D. Bandaranaike in 1956, when he was first elected under a Sinhala-only policy, emphasizing the Singhalese language and culture and dividing the educational systems - because before that they had been educated together, and after that they were educated separately. So it goes back a long way, but it really bubbled to the surface in 1983.

Q: How did you find American relations with India by this time?

SMITH: Improved. Harry Barnes was working on them hard, and I don't remember the nature of our economic relationship in this particular period, but I do remember that he was working very hard on things like building a military relationship, a lot of very active personal diplomacy, quiet diplomacy - not only quiet, in the sense that with his Hindi language capability he had some public diplomacy as well. I accompanied him in October of 1982 on a trip to Kashmir, which may have been one of the first ones in some time by an American ambassador. It was a very good trip. Before we went, he said, "Grant, I'll only go to Kashmir if you tell me what to say about he Kashmir issue." And I said, "Mr. Ambassador, the answer is very easy. There's one word: Simla." And later, and I think Ron Spiers was in Pakistan at the time, and they later collaborated on a joint statement on the anniversary of Simla. I shouldn't say later; it must have been before. In the summer of 1982 they collaborated on a joint statement on the anniversary of Simla. That was a particular period of close coordination of the policies between the two ambassadors. It seems to me, in fact, that they each gave lectures at the other's defense colleges, so that Harry Barnes went over and lectured in Quetta and Ron Spiers came over and lectured at the National Defence College.

Q: Well, there are some times when political ambassadors make good sense, particularly if they're well connected, but in a case like this, to have two professionals, they're less likely to have their egos on the line and get, you know, caught up as being overly friendly to the country. They're more likely to see things in a little more objective sense. Would you say that, or is that a fair statement?

SMITH: I think so, and of course Harry had served in the area before and served in India before and knew Hindi, had ways of doing things that people hadn't thought of. At one point there was an American singer of south Indian classical music, and Harry had him give a concert at Roosevelt House and went through the government of India book and invited everybody with a south Indian name. And people came to that who had not been to the American ambassador's house ever before or for years, and wouldn't have come under any other circumstances. So it was brilliant.

Q: It was.

SMITH: It really was. And I think he had a kind of a relationship there that was extremely useful. I can't say that his relationship... You should talk to him about his relationship with Mrs. Gandhi, but he did have a good relationship with Mrs. Gandhi's advisors, the foreign minister, the foreign secretary, other secretary and minister level people around the government.

Q: As political counselor, obviously you were following the parties there. How did you see the Congress Party? Did you feel it was sort of running out its time? The usual over-corruption or over-cronyism, the whole thing? How did you see it?

SMITH: Again, I have some trouble distinguishing what I saw when, because I was back in India '88 to '91, but yes, we did at that point see that the Congress Party was winding down, in the sense that it had lost its monopoly, and Mrs. Gandhi's way of running the party was killing it by over-centralization, over-control, that the life was going out of the party.

Q: It's the usual thing that happens when a leader of personal magnetism has been in too long.

SMITH: Well, it wasn't just her; it was her family, because she had been in, she had been out, she had come back - she had come back with the help of her son, Sanjay Gandhi, her younger son, who had died in a plane crash before I got there in '82, as I recall. And then she was promoting Rajiv, who... You know, the joke that went around Delhi was that Sanjay was a good politician but a bad pilot, and Rajiv was a good pilot but... He was very personable, however, and he certainly, in certain situations, could put things across very well. Sanjay was probably part of the problem in running the Congress Party, and Rajiv was not able to reorganize, revitalize the party to bring it back. It's not clear if anybody can. The problem was that the Congress Party had been built as an independence party, as an umbrella independence party, and that aura continued for many years. They had the benefit until 1964 of Nehru being there, and then for many years Mrs. Gandhi, so it had a continuity of leadership which benefited it tremendously in winning elections, but organizationally it had a very difficult transition to make, which it didn't make very successfully.

Q: Well, then, is there any other issue that you think we should cover on India in this particular '82-84 period? Why don't we stop at this point, and we'll put at the end, you're leaving India in '84, and where are you going?

SMITH: I actually came back to the State Department to head the Office of Multinational Force and Observer Affairs in the Bureau of Near East and South Asian Affairs, which was the backstop for the Sinai force.

Q: Good, I'd like to talk about that next time.

SMITH: Yes, there had been a long-run issue of American ship visits. This was part of

the overall question of having some kind of a contact between our militaries, or contact on military defense issues. And there was a problem with ship visits. The Indian Navy was always very prickly about the U.S. Navy, since 1971 in particular, and we had not been able to have ship visits because the Indians had developed a questionnaire that you had to submit on ship visits which asked, "Has the ship called, or will it call, at a port not under the control of a littoral state" or something to that effect. It was a complicated bit of wording which really meant, "Has this ship been to or is it going to Diego Garcia," which was a base to which the Indians objected considerably. The U.S. Navy policy was never to say where the ship had been or where it was going, and therefore no U.S. naval ships were visiting, even thought we had a fair number of ships that were going through the area that weren't going to Diego Garcia. And we were turning ourselves inside out trying to come up with a formulation that would allow us to have some contact, because this was obviously an important area, and the fact that we had ships that weren't going to Diego Garcia, it seemed we ought to be able to make something of that. And we were wrestling with all of this language. I remember a very long telegram that we did that was convoluted, and Harry took it, and at the very end we added, "Of course, we could always just say no." And it came back, and the Navy finally accepted that, when we had a ship that wasn't going to Diego Garcia and hadn't been there, we'd just say "No." And it worked. That was the beginning of some minor contact between our navies, which in fact was beginning to bear fruit when we had the second atomic explosion last year.

Q: All right, we'll pick this up then in 1984, when you're off to multi-peacekeeping affairs. Great.

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It is June 9, 1999. Okay, Grant, to 1984.

SMITH: 1984, I returned from India to become director of the Office of Multinational Force and Observer Affairs in the Bureau of Near East and South Asian Affairs.

Q: Could you talk about where that fit in and what sort of things were you all up to? And then we'll talk about what you did, at that time.

SMITH: This was the force that was created as a result of the Egypt-Israel Peace Agreement, and the concept in the agreement had been that the UN would create a force, just as it had policed the cease-fire agreements between Egypt and Israel over the years, UNEF I and UNEF II, that the final peace would have a UN force. But at that time, the Arabs were very much opposed to the Peace Treaty, and the Soviets supported them, and so this was not something that would fly in the United Nations. We therefore took the lead to create a non-UN multinational peacekeeping force, to help with the implementation of the treaty. However, it's different from some other forces. Partly, of course, the background to it was the Sinai Observer Mission, which had been there before the treaty, which had provided technical early-warning reassurance to the Israelis, which had been a wholly U.S. operation. The force actually consists of two parts. One, which we could call in peacekeeping terms, an interposition force between the two side, which

consisted then and still consists, I think, of three battalions - one U.S., one Fijian, and one Colombian (I think it's still a Colombian battalion.) - plus support troops at headquarters, some of which are U.S. Then, in addition to that, that's the other part of the title, there are observers who are responsible for going out and visiting sites in the more distant parts of Sinai. The force is only in one of the zones of Sinai closest to Israel, and there are other zones where there are armament limitations under the treaty, and the observers are responsible for going out and checking in those areas, as well as in the area where the force is, that these armament limitations have not been exceeded. These observers are all Americans. Every team consists of one Foreign Service officer and one retired U.S. military. So in each team you have the combination of the diplomatic and military expertise, which means that we have to have a continuing supply of Foreign Service officers for that. The headquarters of the force is in Rome, with an American director general in charge over all. And then the force commander on the ground, in Sinai, is... Well, when I was there he was a Norwegian two-star general, as I recall, and various nationalities have - I think it's another Scandinavian now. And there are a variety of European and other countries that participate in the force, on the support troop side as well as, of course, the three battalions. It's unique among peacekeeping forces in the sense that it's paid for one-third by the U.S., one-third by Egypt, and one-third by Israel, which gives the beneficiary countries, if you want to call Egypt and Israel that, a stake in not having too large a force, because usually one or both of the beneficiary countries are going to want the largest force possible. But now since they're paying, that introduces an element of rationality into it.

Q: Was it working that way at that time, because it strikes me that we're paying a hell of a lot of money to Israel and Egypt in aid anyway?

SMITH: But that's a separate commitment and doesn't go directly for this. If they don't spend it on the force, they can use it for something else. It's fully fungible. No, there was even a case when I was there - I don't remember what the issue was; it had something to do with force size, as I recall - and the Israelis first reaction was, oh, you know, as big as possible, or don't cut, and then they thought about it and looked at the dollars and cents and came back and said, "Well, maybe you could do it this way." So it did have an effect. And the State Department office was originally much larger, had been responsible for setting up the force, basically, but by the time I got there, it was fully functional. It was on its second director general. The first one, of course, was Ray Hunt, who was assassinated in Rome. The second one was Peter Constable, who went out just as I was moving into the job. And things had become pretty routine, so it was a very small office, and we frankly weren't all that busy. And by the end of the year, I was able to get the office abolished, folded into the regional affairs office, and I took over as head of regional affairs. But during the year I was doing MFO [Multinational Force and Observers], most of what we were doing was... Of course, we had to recruit those Foreign Service officers to go out. We had a fair amount of support and assistance that we were involved in with the Force, both in the administrative sense and also dealing with the Army because the Army was providing services to the force for which they were submitting bills (or should have been submitting bills, but often the amounts were so small that it was difficult to get the army to even submit the bills), so we were in the

position of both paying for it but also getting reimbursed for certain things for it. I made a trip out to the Sinai. There's an annual meeting where I represented the United States. And at that annual meeting and subsequently more - it began very gradually - the Egyptians were pushing for the resolution of the Taba dispute.

Q: What dispute was that?

SMITH: This was a small piece that, at the time of the peace treaty, had been left in Israeli hands. There was a tourist hotel there, and there was a question of the final resolution of that. The head of the Egyptian delegation to the annual meeting of the MFO that I attended - I guess it was November of 1984 - was Nabil El-Arabi, who I recall was the legal advisor to the Egyptian foreign minister and had been Egyptian ambassador in New Delhi when I was there, so I knew him personally fairly well. And he pushed very hard for getting this process underway, and it was that effort which, several years later, resulted in the arbitration which Judge Sofer did which successfully resolved the issue. But the beginning of the resolution began there.

Q: You went out there, I guess, at one point and saw how they were operating. What did they do, particularly the Americans and the FSOs? How did they operate? This was in the '84-85 period.

SMITH: Well, I assume they're still operating. They had these periodic inspection missions by helicopter to visit sites, locations in the Sinai, to make sure that the Egyptians were not exceeding the force levels and equipment types that were specified in the treaty for that area. And they'd usually go there... It wasn't just flying over and looking down; it was getting off, meeting with the Egyptian officers, sitting and drinking coffee with them, talking about things. There were occasional disputes. I don't remember the details of any of them at this time, but there were occasional disputes about what was going on. And the head of the observer part of the Multinational Force and Observers is a Foreign Service officer, an FSO-1, who is both the head of the observer group and the political advisor to the force commander in the field. So when there are issues, he's the one who takes them and works them with the force commander, who then talks to the Egyptians and the Israelis, or perhaps the chief observer may talk directly to them. There were very few issues going on.

Q: I was going to say, early on - I've talked to some people who have been involved in this - it was pretty hard work, but I would imagine that by this time there weren't sort of the challenges, the pushes, the maneuverings, almost the macho *business, particularly... Apparently the Israelis were early on always wanting to see how far they could go and all that.*

SMITH: There were some issues. As I said, I don't remember the details of them at this point, but there were some issues about what was where and what it was. And of course we were involved. If it was a question of treaty interpretation, since we had provided the good offices for negotiating the treaty, our records of the people who were sitting in those meetings were very important, and I can remember one time going back to, I think it was,

Jock Covey, who pulled out a stenographic notebook and just went through his notes from a meeting to find out exactly how that issue had been handled in the negotiations, and that was important. I don't remember what the issue was, but I remember that was quite important to be able to go back and get that record of the negotiations. So you had the observers - we provided the observers - we provided a neutral negotiating record from our side, which was very important. And as I said, there were some issues on the Egyptian side when I was there, and as I recall - I don't remember if it was when I was there or just before I was there - on the Israeli side there was a question, too. It had to do on the Israeli side with a mortar that was larger than the size permitted in the treaty, because the treaty, unlike the cease-fire agreements... You may remember that the issue - we may have discussed this earlier - in 1967, when Nasser demanded the withdrawal of UNEF I and the UN picked up and left. Of course at that point, the force was only on the Egyptian side. That's the way the agreement had been drawn up. In the case of the peace treaty and the Sinai force, there's a narrow strip on the Israeli side that is here there is a limitation on Israeli armaments, so it isn't just on the Egyptian side, and the Israelis had, I think, put a 120 mm mortar, brought it into that area where they weren't supposed to - something like that. It may have been mortar mounted on an APC. There was that kind of issue that would come up. And the role of the Force was important, because each side was ready to assume the worst of the other, and the ability of the Force to verify exactly what the situation was and to get a resolve was extremely important. The confidence building - and this was the period of the "Cold Peace" - was a very important factor.

Q: Well, was there at the time you were doing this and in one guise or another dealing with this, from '84 to when?

SMITH: Just for a year, really, because in 1985 I became director of the Office of Regional Affairs, which coincidentally with that... No, because it became the Office of Regional and Multinational Force and Observer Affairs when I put the two offices together, and we had one expert who had been in the Office of Multinational Forces and Observer Affairs from the beginning, an outstanding liaison officer with the U.S. army, a civil service employee. He moved over to the Office of Regional Affairs then and took that whole portfolio with him. But in fact I didn't do that much in the Office of Regional Affairs. For one thing, there wasn't that much left to do, and for another thing, 1985 was the year of the hijackings, and I was only director of the Office of Regional Affairs for several months, and during that time I was very, very heavily occupied with the task forces on the TWA 847 hijacking, the *Achille Lauro* hijacking, and the Egypt Air hijacking, which took most of my time when I was there in the chair at the Office of Regional Affairs.

Q: Well, just before we leave the peacekeeping side, by this time, was this sort of almost a dead issue on both sides? I mean, we were there to make sure it didn't get out of control, but was there any perceived threat by either the Egyptians or the Israelis, of the other side wanting to do something?

SMITH: I don't remember much in that way, although remember, this was only five years after the treaty, so memories were still fresh, and there were elements on both sides

which... To begin with, the military always assumes the worst case, plus there were elements on each side which were arguing that these were the intentions of the other side. But you're right - it wasn't that much of an active issue. On the other hand, history was still so fresh that you couldn't think of withdrawing or reducing the size of the force. Now today, here we are 15 years later, and it's still there. I was just talking to somebody about it recently, and apparently the U.S. Army is saying that in the Sinai we have service troops doing things which today in today's army are done by contractors. But that was not an issue at that time. And it raises a very interesting problem, because of course to have contractors come in and do it would mean that the expense for the MFO would be much greater and the two sides would have to pay a portion of that expense.

Q: You know, at the time when most of us served in the military, we had kitchen police duty, and the cooks were military and all that. A lot of that has been contracted out on most bases.

SMITH: And that's the case in the Sinai, too. Even then that was all contracted out, but now in the military a lot of the logistics is being done by contractors, and that's the kind of thing the U.S. Army would like to have done.

Q: Well, then, you were still in Near East Asian affairs.

SMITH: Right, but I move over to the Office of Regional Affairs in the summer of 1985. I don't remember the month, but it was just before the first of the hijackings, but it was just before the TWA 847 hijacking.

Q: This, of course, at that time also included India and Pakistan and Nepal and Sri Lanka.

SMITH: That's right.

Q: Did they intrude much on you at that point?

SMITH: In the Office of Regional Affairs?

Q: Yes.

SMITH: I don't remember them as intruding very much.

Q: That's probably the answer.

SMITH: But I was only in the Office of Regional Affairs for about four or five months, because in November of 1985 I'd literally moved across the hall and became country director for India, because the India country director had gone off to be DCM in China.

Q: Well, now, you were saying you were dealing with hijackings.

SMITH: Yes.

Q: Could you explain what the hijackings were that caused -

SMITH: Well, there were two major ones and a third that was also quite significant and took time, but not quite as much from our standpoint. First of all, there was the TWA 847 hijacking, which was TWA's Flight 847 out of Cairo, which was hijacked and hopscotched all over the Middle East, back and forth between Algiers and Beirut. It ended up - I don't remember all the details - a very complicated negotiation with the passengers finally released but a couple of the passengers were killed. I think there still may be court cases pending on that. It was a very high-profile, long event. It was the basis of movies later on, this whole thing, and lots of interesting vignettes. But this meant, of course, we had a task force in the Operations Center, and the Operations Center by then had these whole areas set aside for task forces. It wasn't as it was in the case of the 1967 Israel War, where it was sort of a little room with a telephone next to the main Op Center. By then whole task force areas had been created, and in some cases some of the task forces we in fact took over two of the rooms. We had one for the main task force and another one for the consular part of the task force because there were significant consular issues involved. There were occasions when I was on one and my wife was on the other.

Q: Say on the TWA hijacking, were we considering the use of our troops at all to go in, or not?

SMITH: Well, we very much wanted to have that option available. There were press reports which, I think, affected the situation. At one point one of the networks broadcast that Delta Force was being readied or on the way, I don't remember which. And I think that that may have affected the situation. The plane was in Algiers once or twice, and of course that was a location where something might have been possible. It was very hard to imagine doing anything in Beirut by then. And as I recall, there were negotiations with the Algerians about either bringing in some advisors on how to deal with this or bringing in a force to do something. And I think the movie has the force arriving and the plane getting away just as the force arrives. It's always a difficult issue because our main view on this kind of thing is that the responsibility lies first of all with the government where this takes place, where it's physically located. In the case of Algeria, you did have a government. In the case of Lebanon, it was a little bit harder to imagine the Lebanese doing anything about it. And our first policy is always to emphasize it's their responsibility to offer assistance and try to carry that on to do something ourselves if necessary.

One of the other things that I remember learning in this - it was the first time I had participated in a task force in the CNN era.

Q: CNN being the international news network.

SMITH: Right. And the world watched CNN all the time, and I already mentioned how

this mention of Delta on the networks affected things. But CNN was very helpful also, because it was able to do some things that we weren't, and often had fast-breaking news, so it was on all the time. And when the sequence was that the plane ultimately was taken to Beirut, and the hostages were taken off the plane, and then there were long negotiations, and finally the hostages were to be turned over to the Red Cross and transported to Syria, where we would receive them. And CNN was there as the Red Cross was calling the role in Beirut, and we learned by watching that that three hostages were missing not only that, but who they were. There were the families watching, so CNN really played a role in that situation that for me was brand new. Since then there's a lot more, but that was my first exposure to it.

Q: What happened to the three passengers?

SMITH: As I recall, we said, hey, wait a minute - the deal's off if they aren't all there. And then they later showed up, so the group was complete. I served as the head of the task force on a lot of shifts, and running the task force was quite a job of building a team, you know, keeping records, making sure that everybody knew what was going on. And since the groups were inter-agency, you always had to deal to make sure that everybody was on the same wavelength and you didn't have groups that were going off on your own, like the FBI, which of course wanted to send its own people out and arrest everybody and bring them back to the United States.

Q: What about in earlier cases, you had problems I can think of with Nixon and Kissinger who sort of got caught up almost in the politics of the thing of trying to sound tough. You know, the political element sometimes says we won't deal with people - of course we always deal with people. Was there any problem at this time of people, either politicians or others, getting off the range as far as-

SMITH: I don't remember that. By then, of course, our terrorism policy was fairly well fixed, and everybody knew it. We don't negotiate with terrorists, but you do keep the lines of communication open with them. The terrorist cannot get the idea that he will benefit from his actions. That was the underlying thesis. Of course the office director of counter terrorism was there on the task force as well. They're very small, so they couldn't provide as many personnel as NEA could. As I recall, Bob Oakley was the director at the time. The one thing that happened, not in the case of the TWA 847 hijacking, but in the case of the *Achille Lauro* hijacking, which sort of gets at what you are talking about, the *Achille Lauro* - I forget all the details - ended up in Cairo.

Q: Could you explain what the Achille Lauro *was?*

SMITH: The *Achille Lauro* was an Italian cruise ship which was hijacked in the Mediterranean - I don't remember exactly where it was going from or to at that point - and at least one American was killed, Klinghoffer, in a wheelchair, and was killed and thrown overboard. It was sailing around. I can remember at one point calling up our DCM in Nicosia and saying in the middle of the night and telling him that it was headed his way and getting a resounding, *Oh, S - - t !* A lot of the time we weren't quite sure

where it was going, but it ended up in Cairo with the passengers released and the Egyptians taking charge of - *custody* may be wrong word - taking charge of the hijackers. And of course we put a tremendous amount of pressure on the Egyptians to either indict and try them there or turn them over to us. And I can remember at one point coming into the task force and finding April Glaspie on the phone with... Of course, these were all open lines. Although we could make classified calls, almost all the business was done on open lines because we didn't have "stews" a the time. It was much more complicated. And April Glaspie was on the open line talking to the ambassador or the DCM in Cairo.

Q: Nick Veliotes and Bob... I can't remember.

SMITH: I think it was Nick Veliotes... And just criticizing the Egyptians up one side and down the other, very carefully, very carefully, very slowly, very clear English. But the Egyptians ultimately let the hijackers, or at least the lead one or several of them, leave on a flight, which we forced down -

Q: At Sigonella, in Sicily.

SMITH: At Sigonella, in Sicily. And that was an Oliver North operation, and it was done without full coordination with the Italians. I assume you have tapes. I've talked to people who were in Rome at the time who tell that side of the story.

Q: Yes, but can you tell your side of the story?

SMITH: Well, we on the task force sort of had fuzzy information about what was going on because, of course, Ollie North was over there in the White House doing his thing, and first thing we knew, it had happened. The plane was on the ground, and the U.S. troops had surrounded it, and the Italians had surrounded the U.S. troops, as I recall, so you had quite a bit of a standoff, and a long period of negotiation, and then we went through exactly the same kind of thing with the Italians that we'd gone through with the Egyptians, and unsuccessfully, because the Italians released or allowed the chief hijacker to leave. And he left to Yugoslavia, where he disappeared. And again, I can remember calling up the DCM there in the middle of the night and getting a similar reaction when the chief hijacker had fled there. That was an example, though, of the White House grabbing the ball and doing something not fully coordinated that caused some trouble. And from what I hear, the problem was that the ambassador in Rome did not have an instruction to tell the Italians.

Q: It was Maxwell Rabb.

SMITH: Yes, and Len Baldyga, who was PAO there at the time, later told me that he had strongly urged the ambassador to go tell the Italians, and either he hadn't gotten it done in time or didn't feel that he had instructions. Anyway, it didn't happen right. And that was an example of something that happened, in forcing down the plane, and did not achieve its objectives because the chief hijacker was ultimately released.

Q: Well, then, in November '85 you moved over to be what?

SMITH: To be country director for India, Nepal, and Sri Lanka.

Q: And you were there from '85 to when?

SMITH: To '88. Two and a half years.

Q: How were relations with India?

SMITH: They were improving. We were working very hard on improving relations with India at that point. A lot of it was a follow-on to the efforts that had begun when I was there '82-84, when Harry Barnes had opened this door of tech transfer and military relations, and that was something that took a huge amount of our time. We had also worked... We had been very concerned about the problem of the Kalistan in India, the group of Sikhs who were demanding independence for the Punjab but unlike some situations did not appear to have the support of the overwhelming group of the population, that these were... They were involved in terrorism, I think. They'd killed Mrs. Gandhi. There were plots to kill some people here in the United States, and just before I took over, as I recall, we'd successfully put some of them in jail in the United States. We'd turned some others over to the Indians. So we had some real cooperation there on this issue.

Q: Were they considered responsible for a Canadian airliner that blew up in midair? I mean, there was some talk about that.

SMITH: Yes, I think that's right. I don't remember all the details. We were working very closely with the Indians there, and the cooperation was good. The Indians had put somebody in their embassy in Washington from their Intelligence Bureau in addition to the people that they'd always had from their... Their Intelligence Bureau is their internal intelligence operation. They have what they call their Research and Analysis Wing, which is their external. So by that time in Washington in their embassy they had both their external intelligence people plus this person from the Intelligence Bureau who was specifically tasked for cooperation on these issue.

Q: We had some Sikhs, or at least today a lot of the taxicabs are driven by Sikhs.

SMITH: No, we have a Sikh population in the United States. In fact, the Sikh population in the United States goes back to the turn of the century. They arrived in California at the turn of the century and are very prominent farmers in California, particularly in Yuba City.

Q: Oh, my goodness. Were we concerned about their ties?

SMITH: We were concerned about the ties of some of the Sikhs in the United States with this group, and as I said - again, I don't remember all the details, but there was at least

one court case in Louisiana, where we put some of them in jail for and attempt on the life of a visiting Indian minister or provincial minister, I forget which, and had cooperated with him on other cases. I can remember testifying on a deportation case, and getting... During that deportation case there was a death threat. I don't think it was against me. As I recall it was against the judge, but there were threats as a result.

Q: Did this spill over at all into the two other things that I can think of in India. One is the Kashmir thing. Did that affect you at all during this particular time?

SMITH: Kashmir was fairly quiet during this period. The current round of problems in Kashmir... Remember that in 1971, India and Pakistan signed the Simla Agreement, which ended the 1971 War and committed them to resolving problems bilaterally. And after that, you had about 18 years when Kashmir was fairly quiet. Things were going on in the state, but as an issue between India and Pakistan it was fairly quiet. It was not given much publicity in the Pakistan press in that period, much less than it had been in the '60s, and the change came about in '88-89, as a result of things that happened within the state, but during this period of '85-88 it was really quite quiet. There were problems between India and Pakistan, and there was a period in 1987 when there was a crisis between the two called the "Brass Tacks Crisis." Brass Tacks was the name of an exercise that the Indian Army was doing in the desert, the desert being near the Pakistan border. I think it was the largest exercise that they'd ever done. The Pakistanis saw this exercise, the massing of troops for this exercise as a threat in itself, and you had the beginning of a buildup, a mobilization on either side. It began to remind us of 1914. And this is actually in the public domain. There was a conference on this at the Stimson Center sort of in the '91-93 era, but there was a problem of this buildup. There was a problem of a very hard-nosed Indian Army chief of staff, who may have - in fact he was making a point by doing this. There was a problem of poor intelligence on each side. At one point during the exercise (and everybody knows this case; I was just discussing it last week), the Pakistanis in reaction to the exercise either took one of their armored divisions out of garrison or it didn't return to garrison when it was supposed to - I forget which - and the Indians didn't know where that division was. And they thought it was at a point which was very threatening near the Indian border. In fact, it wasn't there. It was back farther, protecting various axes of potential entrance. But you had the Indians thinking it was over here and reacting to that, so that the Pakistanis were reacting to the Indian exercise and the Indians are reacting to what they see as this Pakistani division moving to a place where it wasn't. We at the time - and I had an opportunity to go back and review the files on this some years later - were very low-key in our response. Herb Haggerty was the Pakistan country director. I was the Indian country director. We both had a good deal of confidence in the two sides' ability to manage this situation, because you don't have small governments there without a history of rational thinking, without structure, without procedures. All of this you had there, certainly on the Indian side, very democratic. Rajiv Gandhi was prime minister, and we were pretty confident that this was something that the two sides could manage themselves. So the U.S. public statements were very low key. We later learned that things in India were not quite as well managed as we though they were. In Pakistan, yes, they were fairly well managed, as I recall. Zia was still president there, and they were fairly well managed, but on the Indian side Rajiv was operating with

a bit of a kitchen cabinet, not coordinating fully within his own government.

Q: It's one of these things where somebody in NEA is saying, "Well, this is one we can keep our hands off this one?"

SMITH: Well, I'd have to go back and review the record. I had the impression hat NEA was preoccupied with other things. The deputy assistant secretary, and I'm not sure he was there all the time, was Robert Peck, and he was very much involved in Afghanistan, which of course was hot at that time. The principal deputy assistant secretary was Arnie Raphel, who did sign off on many of these things, but Herb and I pretty much did it ourselves. It was unlike the case in 1980, when you had the Gates Mission go out and everything. In this case, we were very low key. We did send messages, and we did go so far as to try and deal with the problem that India thought that the Pakistan division was where it wasn't. We didn't tell the Indians where it was, but we did tell them that it wasn't where they thought it was. So to the extent that we could influence the situation based on our own intelligence sources - national technical means, I think, is the correct term -

Q: We're really talking about overhead satellite -

SMITH: That's right, and so we were able to influence the situation. We couldn't provide them with pictures, but we could provide them with some oral statements that were somewhat reassuring. I think we heard from them at this conference that was held to look at this crisis that that did help defuse things, some of our statements, but we did that by messages out to our ambassadors - not by special missions - using the ambassadors on the ground. We had John Gunther Dean in New Delhi and Dean Hinton in Islamabad, two of the grand old men of American diplomacy, so it was handled, as I said, at a much lower level; and ultimately they talked to each other, and a military delegation came over from Pakistan, and they negotiated a phase-down.

Q: Were you and your colleagues at all concerned about the Indian government not being quite as professional as it might be at that time?

SMITH: No, we weren't. We didn't understand what was going on, and we only learned later what was going on and learned - I personally when I was there and then at this conference later heard - some of what was going on. This was a period when we were very taken with Rajiv Gandhi, who was very engaging and said the right things. But it was only, I think, later on that we began to realize that not only do you have to have somebody who says the right things, but he has to have control and he has to be able to accomplish things, be able to pull people together to do things. And Rajiv didn't always do that as well. He did tend to work through something of a kitchen cabinet, and that's the kind of thing that can cause problems.

Q: Well, what about the other problem that I would think you'd be concerned with, Sri Lanka and the Singhalese and all that? Was that-

SMITH: That was very active during the period, and I don't remember all the details of

what was going on. The big thing that I remember was the Rajiv-Jayawardene agreement, which I think again was in 1987, which we got a lot of criticism on, I personally got criticism on, because the U.S. government strongly supported that agreement. This was an agreement which provided for a framework for the solution of the problem, and we assumed that the Indians, particularly Rajiv Gandhi- (end of tape)

It had become clear by then that India, beginning under his mother, had training camps for Tamil militants in southern India and had very close ties. And there were a number of groups - I don't remember the details now of which groups - but it was closer to some than to others. But we assumed that Rajiv wouldn't sign this agreement, which as I recall provided for a way that the Tamils would get a fair amount of autonomy within Sri Lanka, unless he had the militants on board. As it turned out, he didn't, and of course India then sent in troops to try and deal with this, and with disaster, often referred to as India's Vietnam because the Tamil militants... Particularly the Tamil Tigers (LTTE) was and is an group that seemed unwilling and unable to compromise. Some of us thought that as it went on this was one of those militant groups that have been fighting for so long and of a particular kind of background that it really doesn't know anything else and doesn't have any other thing to do than to fight.

Q: Sort of like the IRA, some of them.

SMITH: Some of the parts of the IRA, I guess, are like that. And again, we thought that the Indians had made a deal, and they hadn't. Again, it may have been an example of poor coordination within the Indian government. I don't know. Actually, before the agreement, there was a situation where we were criticized because the Sri Lankans had surrounded Jaffna or cut Jaffna off, blockaded it, and it was running short of food - or at least the impression was that it was running short of food - and the Indian Red Cross tried to deliver food across the strait and was prevented by the Sri Lankan navy, and the Indians then did an air drop of food. And the Sri Lankans were very critical. But our position was rather nuanced that, yes, this was a bad thing, but on the other hand, there were human lives at stake here and humanitarian supplies were needed, because we were critical of the Sri Lankans for having stopped the Red Cross because we had the impression that this was a clean Red Cross operation. It was not an ICRC, but my recollection is that it was a fairly clean Red Cross operation.

Q: You mean by "clean" that -

SMITH: It only had food.

Q: Food, yes.

SMITH: It was an honest humanitarian effort. So in the case of Sri Lanka, the Sri Lankans were very unhappy with our position, which was based, again, on a misperception of what the Indians had done or their ability to sell the agreement to the Tamil militants.

Q: Were we looking at this thing in East-West conflict? Did that enter into it?

SMITH: No, it was not East-West. It was very much the kind of problem that you encounter today as you look at other parts of the world, that you had an ethnically, religiously, and linguistically separate group after independence within a country, and we were saying there ought to be a way that this can be handled within Sri Lanka. We were critical of both sides and trying to see a way out.

Q: This is an example of what is termed "conflict resolution." How were the Indian government and the Sri Lankan government responding to this? Butt out, or trying to get us on their side, or how were they doing?

SMITH: We weren't in a heavy-handed way trying to resolve this for them. We were giving them advice and commenting but not in an intrusive way. We were not providing major military assistance to the Sri Lankan government, and our attitude towards the Tigers later changed, but at that point, we certainly saw that the Sri Lankan government had a long ways to go in the sense of providing some sort of local autonomy, and my recollection is that the agreement went in that direction and seemed like a good thing, because this seemed to be the only way that it could be resolved within the context of Sri Lankan sovereignty.

Q: Did we feel while this was going on that the Sri Lankan government was being overly Sinhalese oriented, sort of dumping on the Tamils?

SMITH: Well, I think that that has been a perception of the Sinhalese government ever since 1956, when J. W. R. D. Bandaranaike won on the basis of a Sinhala only campaign and started the separate language tracks of schools and things like that. The government at that time was not from his party - it was the old UNP - but it had certainly affected Sri Lankan politics, and it was very hard for any Sinhalese politician to move out of that.

Q: What about Mrs. Gandhi and then by extension her son Rajiv, training Tamils? Was this for the local politics - I mean inside-Indian politics, or was this an aggression, or how was this going?

SMITH: The Indians, first of all, do have something of a Monroe Doctrine kind of approach to their area, that they think that they ought to be able to take the lead in resolving problems within the area. They were concerned about the Sri Lankan Tamils, although the Sri Lankan Tamils had been in Sri Lanka for hundreds of years. This is a very separate issues: there is a small group - not small group, a group - of Indian Tamils within Sri Lanka also, who were taken as estate laborers, for whom India has much more direct concerns. But the Sri Lankan Tamils have been there for hundreds of years, but they also have real ties across the strait with the Tamils in southern India. So yes, it was India's approach to its role in the region plus the factor of Tamil politics, because as the Congress Party has over the years lost its dominant tradition in Indian politics, it has become more reliant on coalitions with some of the state parties. And in the State of Tamil Nadu, there are two - now, anyway, and as I recall they were prominent by then -

state parties, which were feuding with each other but very assertively pro-Tamil. And the Congress party had decreased significantly in influence in the state of Tamil Nadu, of the DMK and the AIADMK, both of which have factored in recent problems, political problems in New Delhi.

Q: What was your take on Indian politics in this period, particularly as far as what we were concerned with? Were there any issues? I mean, we've talked about the conflicts, but how about trade or intellectual rights or support or what have you?

SMITH: Well, the big issue, which I alluded to at the beginning, between India and the United States had to do with our willingness to approve the sale to India of various high-tech items for military use or for non-military use. One of the big issues was supercomputers, where we had agreed to sell a supercomputer to India and we were working on the details, a supercomputer for medium-range weather forecast, and that sale ultimately did go through. There was a question of a sale of a second one. I don't remember all of them, but there were a lot of individual technology transfer cases - night-vision goggles. There was a complicated effort underway by Northrop to sell the jet that they'd sold overseas - the F-5.

Q: Oh, the old F-5, which kept being upgraded.

SMITH: Right. Northrop wanted to sell the F-5 line to India so India could use that as the basis for producing its own light combat aircraft. The Indians had been designing a light combat aircraft, and this seemed like a good marriage, but the Indians only wanted it if they could get various high-tech add-ons - like composite technology and things like that. A tremendous bout of negotiations. There had been an MOU [Memorandum of Understanding] on technology transfer negotiated just before I took over, and a lot of our work was focused on implementation of that. Many negotiating sessions with the Indians in Washington and New Delhi, many individual issues. There were complicated motives on both sides. The Indian scientists very much wanted this high-tech stuff. The Indians, I think, saw that they could offer this and set up a relationship with us based on this that would be something new - and in fact, they were right. This would be a very different kind of relationship from the kind of relationship we had with Pakistan, where we, of course, had just been selling them military equipment. We could have more of an economic-based, production-based type of agreement with India that would have a more long-term, fundamental nature to it - and again, not just in the military, because there were other things we were talking about, computers being the biggest one. And from our standpoint, it was an opportunity, again, to have a different kind of relationship and undercut the whole Indian relationship with the Soviets. The Indian relationship with the Soviets had been sort of based on three elements: the political support, particularly in the Security Council vis-à-vis Kashmir; the military assistance, or sales, I should say; and economic assistance - well, economic assistance had never been very important. And this was a way to get at the military side, by helping the Indians build their own military things rather than just buying the assembly rights from the Soviets. And I must say that this occupied a huge amount of our time. It's a little bit hard for me to remember exactly what happened when because, of course, I went from this job to DCM in Delhi, where the

same issues continued.

Q: Were the Indians monitoring what was happening in Afghanistan, both the fact that we were giving advanced equipment to the Mujahideen and what the Soviets were doing? I mean, was this just seen as a plus thing for them, as far as giving Pakistan trouble - or how was this viewed?

SMITH: Well, India has always interpreted many things in light of the India-Pakistan equation. And while India was unhappy about the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan - or at least some Indians were unhappy, because there were, again, differences there - openly unhappy, as the Reagan Administration came in and we began renewing our military assistance relationship with Pakistan, the Indians focused on that rather than on Afghanistan, and their general line was, "You've got this problem of Afghanistan, so you're selling high-tech F-16s to Pakistan? What's the relationship between F-16s to Pakistan and this counter-insurgency war that's going on in Afghanistan?" Their focus was very much on Pakistan.

Q: Were the Indians or were we seeing cracks in the Soviet Union at that time? Was this anything on our horizon, as far as-

SMITH: It certainly wasn't on mine, and I don't remember it being on Indians'. I personally remember going to something in 1990 and meeting a college roommate of mine who was a correspondent in Moscow, had been three times in Moscow as a correspondent, and he told me that the Soviet Union was coming apart, and I didn't believe him. So I certainly didn't perceive it, and I don't think the Indians perceived it as happening, and if they had, and as they were later, they would have been unhappy, because of course this was in some ways removing, further undermining those pillars of support.

Q: Well, it gave a counterweight.

SMITH: Right.

Q: We've talked about this before, but at this time, was there still sort of the almost innate hostility or suspicion of the United States that, one, we were uncouth barbarians and, two, whatever we did was wrong?

SMITH: Well, certainly the huge sale, or the new military assistance to Pakistan, had revived this point of view in India, yes. So from that standpoint it was a difficult period, although the tech transfer relationship was something that, with parts of the Indian government and also our position on Kalistan, was helping to offset that, although for Indians, as I think for most foreigners, understanding the U.S. political system is very difficult. And when you add a member of Congress who is openly supporting Kalistan-

Q: Who was that?

SMITH: Dan Burton - or when you had-

Q: He had a Sikh community.

SMITH: Yes... Well, no, actually, I don't think he does. There were others with a Sikh community. I don't think he does. I think it was more ideological. But then you had leading political figures - I think it was Bush - being photographed with Kalistan leaders occasionally. They would somehow pop up in a picture with him. Although the Indian government knew that we actually were cooperating quite closely on this, I'm not sure that that was the public perception.

Q: How did you work with the Indian embassy and how effective would you say it was? We're talking about this '85-88 period.

SMITH: We worked quite closely with the Indian embassy. I think we had good relationships with all sides, all elements, in the Indian embassy. The Indian embassy - and I don't know what the current situation is - but historically, by then, had always been a little bit prickly about level of access and meetings. So the ambassador would only meet with assistant secretary and above, and the DCM only wanted to meet with a deputy assistant secretary or above, which meant for me, as a country director, how do I have access to the DCM, who really should be my main interlocutor. We worked things out by quietly going off and having lunch periodically. Sometimes he'd buy lunch and sometimes I'd buy lunch. That got around that problem entirely, and I think we had a very good working relationship, with almost all levels of the Indian embassy.

Q: Did they understand the American political system? Some embassies really think that what you really have to do is deal with the Department of State, when really you certainly have Congress and you have the media and sometimes the White House to deal with, too.

SMITH: As I recall, my impression was that the Indians had over the years tried various approaches and none of them had succeeded. They tried focusing on Congress; they tried working with the media. The Indians at this time did not have a lobbyist. It was only some years later, I believe, that they finally hired a lobbyist. We encouraged them, said that they really needed that kind of an operation, whether they hired a lobbyist or... You know, some countries effectively do it through an organization of American citizens of the origin of that country. But there were several organizations of Indians in America, but they were very much focused on immigration issues and they really weren't very involved with the policy issues between the two countries. So I think they certainly understood how complex the situation was; on the other hand, they hadn't figured out how to work it. Some of the smaller countries were doing a better job.

Q: Yes, well, some countries seem to take to it.

SMITH: The Sri Lankan ambassador was very effective in this period, as the ambassador of a small country. The Nepalese ambassador - I'm not sure whether it was in this period or after this or before this - I remember had figured out how to work the system to get an

invitation for the king to come to the United States, working through one of the secretaries in the White House, as I recall. But these were people who managed to work the system. The Indians weren't doing as well, particularly on the PR and lobbying side. They could have used some professional help, but they really had an aversion to hiring a lobbyist.

Q: What about Diego Garcia which is - really, is it Indian?

SMITH: It's Indian, in the Ocean.

Q: And it's where we pre-positioned an awful lot of stuff which came in very handy a few years later during the -

SMITH: I don't remember it being particularly an issue at this time.

Q: Because the Indians sometimes have made issues about the Indian Ocean being our ocean and all that.

SMITH: I think I mentioned that when I was there with Harry Barnes we resolved a problem involving Diego Garcia, to allow U.S. ship visits to resume. I don't recall it being a particular issue during this period. It may have been.

Q: In this '85-88 period is there anything else we should discuss before we move on?

SMITH: Well, intellectual property rights I'm sure was an issue in this period, but it was more of an issue in the later period when I was in New Delhi. I must admit that I have a little bit of trouble remembering which was which, since one blends into the other, but this is a major problem for the Indians, still, although the creation of WTO [World Trade Organization] provides, I believe, a framework for resolving it. The big issue with the Indians is whether they grant patents for items or for processes. And they are only granting process patents, not patents for items - chemical - and it was basically a problem with chemical and pharmaceutical patents.

Q: Well, they basically wanted to produce their one, and it is a big cost. And it's something we deal with all over.

SMITH: Right, and I was a little bit ambivalent about it, in the sense that India does have a situation where basic medicines are available at reasonable cost, unlike Africa, where somebody may have to pay a month's salary for a series of shots of penicillin, where in India, basic medicine was really quite widely available and quite reasonable in price. On the other hand, because of this policy, the more advanced, more modern medicines were not available at all because pharmaceutical companies would not bring them in. So you had a situation which was good from some standpoints - in fact, if you took the "most-good-for-the-most-people," may have been the preferable situation, but also was a real problem. Our approach was to talk to the Indians about their interest, to try and persuade them that it was in their interest to change in this respect and to cite, of course, the

example of the Indian position on copyright and how they dealt with piracy on CD's and software and things like that, where their position was quite good - films - because they a stake, because the Indian film industry, of course, is the largest in the world, produces something like an average of two films a day, I think was the figure. So their laws and regulations there were quite good because they saw themselves as having a stake in that. On the other hand, in the case of the pharmaceutical and chemical industries (I think those were the main two that were affected), they didn't yet see that they had a stake in it. At least my approach to it was to try to persuade them that if they wanted to convert to world-class industries here with domestic R & D, they needed to come up with a better patent machine. And certainly towards the end of the time I was DCM there, we were beginning to make some progress there. We'd occasionally even get some of their pharmaceutical manufacturers to recognize that. Also we had, I can remember an American pharmaceutical manufacturer telling me that the U.S. firms could compete even without the patent protection because the Indian firms did such a poor job of selling and providing product information, whereas the American firms in India, as in the United States, had representatives who were going around to doctors with information, really explaining and pushing the product. The Indian firms never did that, so the American firms had tremendous brand recognition, which the Indians didn't have, and could maintain significant market share through that alone. So I thought we were making progress, but ultimately this has been resolved in the context of WTO, which is much easier for the Indians.

Q: That's the World Trade Organization, which is just established, really. It took over from the GATT and was just established in the last few years.

SMITH: That's right, but that provided what would have been a bilateral issue, I assume (I haven't been associated with it since '91), ultimately became rolled into the multilateral WTO negotiations and was resolved in that context.

Q: Well, you went out to India as DCM in 1988?

SMITH: Right.

Q: Who was your ambassador there?

SMITH: I served under three ambassadors there, but for the firs few months I was there it was John Gunther Dean, and then we had Jack Hubbard. They had somebody there in an interim appointment for 11 months. And then Bill Clark for the end.

Q: Bill Clark. Okay. Well, we'll pick this up in 1988, when you go out to be DCM to John Gunther Dean. Great.

SMITH: Okay, good. Thank you.

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Q: Today is August 5, 1999. Grant, you were in India as DCM?

SMITH: As DCM.

Q: From when to when?

SMITH: August, 1988, till the summer of 1991.

Q: Who was the ambassador?

SMITH: Well, we had three different ambassadors - John Gunther Dean when I arrived; Jack Hubbard for eleven months; and then Bill Clark.

Q: How did you get the job?

SMITH: I'd been country director, and I think probably if you look through, run a statistical analysis, you'll find that a fair number of times the country director becomes a DCM in a significant-sized country. And in fact, since I'd been working with John Gunther Dean as country director, it was sort of logical that I'd move on to be DCM.

Q: How did things work out between you and John Gunther Dean? He was a gentleman who's had about every assignment. He's had many major and very, very difficult assignments, including Cambodia at the time -

SMITH: I was only there for a couple of months when he was there. I arrived in August, as I recall, and he left in September or October, came back to the States, was here for a month or so, came back and sort of packed out, and left in November - would be my recollection. But there wasn't much overlap in the field, and if you want to talk to someone who was his DCM in the field, you ought to talk to Gordon Streehan, who was my predecessor in Delhi.

Q: Where is he now?

SMITH: He's retired. I believe he's at the Carter Center, along with another former DCM there, Craig Creekmore - and Harry Barnes.

Q: Yes, I've tried to get hold of them all to do something. There was some controversy about Dean. You don't want to talk about that. I have talked to John Gunther Dean, and he's obviously very, very bitter about this.

SMITH: Yes, he is.

Q: And I'm trying to do an oral history with him because it's -

SMITH: I would say that one thing was very clear that I can say very honestly - that he wasn't prepared for and hadn't accepted the idea of retirement. He's somebody who

expected to and wanted to continue to be in the traces - something we all have to reflect on - but he obviously took it very hard when Jack Hubbard's appointment was announced. I remember one day in Washington, before I came out, I was talking to Jack Hubbard, and John Gunther Dean came into the office and looked at Jack Hubbard and said, when I introduced him, "I know who you are. You're the one who wants my job."

Q: Who was Jack Hubbard, or who is Jack Hubbard - at that time?

SMITH: Jack Hubbard had been in the AID mission in India in the 1960s, as I recall. He's an educator. He had, as I recall, helped set up the agricultural universities. He had come back. His most recent incarnation before coming to India as ambassador had been as president of USC [University of Southern California].

Q: So a major figure.

SMITH: A major figure - major figure in southern California, and obviously knew the republican leadership, the Reagan leadership from southern California. But he had been to India, back and forth to India, maintained ties there. He was involved with the Indo-U.S. Subcommission on Education and Culture. He was a member of that, so he continued an association with India and was certainly very happy to come back, but didn't have much background in diplomacy.

Q: 1988, when you arrived in India - how would you state our relations were with India at that point?

SMITH: Well, as I said when we were doing the last segment, I have some trouble differentiating exactly what happened when, because I went from country director to DCM, and remembering exactly what the situation was. But this was a period when we were strengthening our relations with India. I think some people saw the whole period as trying to "wean India away from the Soviets," some people would say. I think a better way to describe it would be that India was beginning - and much more was done later - economic liberalization, which was sort of unleashing the Indian economic and entrepreneurial abilities so we were building a relationship in this period looking to the future, trying to have a relationship with India and have a relationship with Pakistan that was not determined by our relationship with the other. And in the case of India it had a lot to do with high-tech, the beginnings of some work with India on high-tech in the military area - not assistance, but sales - and a broadening and deepening of our relationship in general during this period. This was a time, when I arrived there in '88, of a Congress government, and it was Rajiv Gandhi.

Q: Who was the prime minister?

SMITH: Rajiv Gandhi at that time. Mrs. Gandhi was assassinated in '84. Rajiv was elected. He was prime minister when I arrived in '88. I think we still saw Rajiv Gandhi and Benazir in Pakistan as providing opportunity for these two countries to get on to a new generation, a new era. It turned out it didn't work that way. Both of them were

probably better politicians than they were leaders, but that was our view at the time. We'd had the Aditi exhibit here in 1985, as I recall. He'd come for that. He came to the United States again in 1987, arrived on the day, "Black Monday," when the stock market fell so much? That was the day he arrived on one of his visits. So there was certainly a better relationship, but as always in India, there are people who are very suspicious of the United States, who remember the past, who are looking for any reason to get at us.

Q: When you got there, you were country director, so you were intimately involved -

SMITH: Not only that, I had been political counselor until '84. I had been political counselor, country director, and back as DCM.

Q: Were you beginning to think of yourself as an Indian hand, somehow?

SMITH: Yes, actually, for my own career it probably would have been better to go somewhere else, not to be so closely associated with India, and I think that some people in Delhi, in the embassy, felt that there was micro-management of the Political Section coming from the front office, which was sort of hard to get away from because I knew the issues pretty well.

Q: But when you arrived there, being on the ground, did you sense any difference in sort of the attitude of the embassy and how things were going that what you had when you were political counselor or working from the Desk?

SMITH: Well, of course, I'd been out there a couple of time when I was on the Desk. I think that I did sense a better relationship. I'm not sure I can say a better relationship than was there in '82-84, but certainly a different relationship from what was there in the '70s when I'd been there. And there had been a gradual improvement, and there was the beginning of this economic liberalization. I can remember fairly soon after I arrived I spoke at a conference sponsored probably by the Chamber of Commerce on economic issues, and one of the other speakers was Abid Hussein, who had been a member or chairman of the planning commission and was later Indian ambassador here in the United States, and quite a proponent of liberalization. And he told me afterwards... Well, first of all, he spoke, and I still remember what he said, talking about liberalization. He said, "We have to open the windows. A few flies will come in, but we need the fresh air." And afterwards he came up to me, and he said, "Well, what you said was very good, but you really aren't enthusiastic enough." So you had the beginnings of this liberalization, which of course really took off in the '90s, and as a result there had been quite a change in India's international economic situation. If you look at India's reserves right now, it's in the billions of dollars. They're very comfortable, whereas in the '80s and certainly before that it was very close. It was a much dicier thing.

Q: Well, when you're talking about liberalization, we're really talking about opening up markets and people coming in -

SMITH: Well, you're talking both about that and about opening up the domestic

economy, because India had had an economy that was built by Nehru and the other leaders who had been educated at the London School of Economics, Fabian socialist influenced, very statist, many state corporation, many controls. The basic philosophy was that the government would license factories to produce *x*-number of refrigerators, and that would be all. Therefore, the economic competition in the country was to get the license. And you can imagine a lot of pressure and money exchanged hands in trying to get the license, but once you got the license you were home free. You didn't have to provide service or quality or anything, because this was all controlled, with the government deciding how many refrigerators should be produced. And they were beginning to liberalize this. In the late '80s or early '90s you saw the beginning of this. Bajaj, which is the maker of motor scooters, maybe the largest in the world, but you find their motor scooters in Southeast Asia, many places. They suddenly had to set up a marketing department, for the first time. And this was going on in other industries. The industrialists had to begin to worry about quality and service for the first time. You had young entrepreneurs coming up. You began to have young entrepreneurs coming back from the United States, who'd been here as engineers, scientists, setting up companies in India. You began to have... I saw it in the times when I was there, this having been the third or fourth time that I was there. When I was in India, back in the '50s and the Indian era in the '60s, every college student's main ambition was to become a member of the Indian administrative service or the Indian Foreign Service. That was the best thing to do. By the time I was there, in the early '80s, the objective was probably to join a large Indian company. But by the last time I was there, this last time, it was to *start up* a company, and I actually saw this going on and talking to students.

Q: I've never served in India, but I have pictures of it because at one point I served in Dhahran and I used to go over to Bahrain and see sort of the Indian Civil Service type thing working there, and I'd think of huge offices full of overhead fans or something and piled high with papers stitched together -

SMITH: The term "red tape" was invented there.

Q: -I mean, paper, paper, paper, and this was mostly civil servants who were doing these things. You're talking about one very big rice bowl that's getting broken, as far as government control over these things. Were you seeing this as a sort of a major battle within the Indian-

SMITH: It was a major battle, and actually, the person who started undoing it was one of the people who put the controls in place. I think I may have mentioned that before - L. K. Jah. But yes, there was a major conflict, and you would see it in Indian bureaucrats trying to retain control. You'd also see it in the state corporations, and you would hear them arguing, "Well, we can do it as well as anybody else." And the area where I think liberalization has been most difficult in India has been getting rid of those state corporations, particularly the ones that are money-losing operations. And this is not just India; it's been true in Latin America and other places around the world, one of the most difficult things to do. But in India, you always did have a private sector; there was never *just* a state sector. For instance, in steel, there was government steel, but there was also

private steel, and I think what 's happened recently is that you've had increasing willingness of the government to allow the private part of that to expand, and in many areas - computers being an example - the private sector is dominant, not the government. There may be some government corporations in there - I'm not sure whether there still are - but the private sector is dominant. During the same period you had the first linkup between Texas Instruments - getting permission to put a satellite dish into Bangalore and to begin using Indian programmers in India, rather than having them- (end of tape)

So you had the beginnings of the Indian software in this period. And of course now they're a dominant factor or a very important factor in international software.

Q: Did the embassy crank up to be quite aggressive in promotion of American investment there but American sales there with this opportunity, or did we... How did we work this, or was this really something that we said, "Here it is, fellows, come on in," and to the private sector?

SMITH: In most case, the American companies which were coming in, were coming in with an Indian partner. We were aggressive in some areas, where there was a case of government contracts - not always successfully. We were very aggressive... One of the biggest issues there, which was only been resolved and not completely resolved up to now, was intellectual property rights, and this was an area where we were, I think, tough and aggressive. It basically involves pharmaceuticals and some chemicals.

Q: And how about computer type things? That hadn't come yet?

SMITH: The Indians, on copyright, are okay, because the Indians are the world's largest producer of films, and they make something over 700 a year - two a day - and they realized very early that copyright protection was very much in their interests. And as I recall they quickly extended it to computer things as well. So copyright was not particularly and issue. What was an issue was this pharmaceuticals.

Q: Was that a philosophical difference? I know in some places the feeling is if this medicine protects people, and you charge big money for it, you are cheating humanity, really.

SMITH: It is a philosophical difference, and the Indians would make several arguments. We may have discussed some of this on the last tape, but one of the arguments was the one you made - that the Indians saw it important to have basic medicines widely available at a reasonable price. Now this is something that I'm sort of sympathetic about because serving in Francophone Africa, a shot of penicillin there when I was there was one month's salary for a lot of people, whereas in India, basic pharmaceuticals actually are quite reasonable. Another India argument was basically the "infant industry" argument: that they need this to get going, and other countries, including the United States, had only introduced product-patent production very late in the game. The issue is product-patent protection versus process-patent protection. The Indians provided process-patent protection but not product-patent protection on pharmaceuticals. However, we argued

that it was in the Indians' interest to go into product-patent protection because India itself was getting into the realm - it was developing things - and if it really wanted to have a strong pharmaceutical industry, in addition to having those high-tech more recent pharmaceuticals available in India (which had not been available in India because foreign companies had been unwilling to sell them there because of the patent protection issue, so if you need something that is fairly new, you can't get it in India), but we argued that the Indians should start providing product patent, because then they could develop their own R&D and really develop their pharmaceutical industry, not as a derivative but as a real industry. Of course, this has been resolved through the WTO.

Q: World Trade Organization.

SMITH: Right. This resolution was not bilateral between the U.S. and India, but multilateral in the WTO sense. I don't think the Indians have quite worked out all the details yet, but this was a major issue during the period I was there. It wasn't just pharmaceuticals; there were a few agricultural chemicals that were also an issue. And some American companies, as a result, just refused to have any dealings with India. FMC was an example, felt very strongly about it. And I couldn't argue with them. So we'd push very hard on this area. We also pushed very hard in trying to get American companies into the high-tech area with the government, particularly with the Indian military. The Indians were trying to develop a new light combat aircraft. Northrop with memoranda of understanding, and Northrop was working with them, with their issues of releasability of particular kinds of technology, composite technology in particular, and how far were we willing to go. And this was an issue with Washington, but it was also an issue in India because, obviously, they were foreign competitors here. But the big American companies, like Enron was beginning its work then, and others, often didn't need any particular American help. They were well established. A number of American companies had very good joint ventures there - Cummings Diesel, for example, has a longstanding agreement with a very fine Indian company, as I recall. Some American companies have very good arrangements with Tata. So there are some longstanding joint ventures there that are quite successful.

Q: Well, did you find at least at the ministerial level and all there was a tendency to try to get the companies to deal more with the European Union or something, I mean just a natural reaction against the United States?

SMITH: To some extent. Again, I think we touched on a little bit of this last time. But the Indians don't want to put all their eggs in one basket, so when it comes to buying aircraft or having licensing agreements in sensitive areas, they're going to want to deal with the Europeans and with the U.S., not separately. In some areas, the Europeans had a definite advantage because of their more lax laws and regulations on bribery. Our law on this is quite unique.

Q: It's getting more universal, I think.

SMITH: In fact, there were some major scandals in India over alleged bribe payments,

and one of my arguments with the Indian government used to be, “Gee, if you bought from the United States, you can be pretty sure that there haven't been any bribes because you know that an American company that bribes is going to get taken to court in the United States; whereas in France, French companies can *deduct* those - they're tax-deductible - not only they're legal, they're tax-deductible.” But just as we had some longstanding arrangements, obviously some European companies had longstanding arrangements in certain areas, plus, some of the Indian leaders, coming from... By then it was many years after Independence, 40 years after Independence, but you still had some leaders who had been educated in the UK and had a more European background. It varied from individual minister to individual minister, and of course the government changed several times when I was there, so we were dealing with different ministers on different occasions.

Q: By this time, the whole political spectrum - we've mentioned it before - it really was a democracy, wasn't it? I mean, with all its warts and all that. There were genuine elections.

SMITH: In India there are genuine elections, and if you judge the success of a former colony in the field of democracy by its ability to change government twice - not just once, but twice - India actually passed that, has more than passed that test, and while we were there that time, it changed several times. In fact, in this period, you saw the first Congress Party defeat - the big defeat was in 1977 - and there had been a gradual erosion of Congress Party power, and beginning by 1989, you saw the beginning of coalition governments, which is what you've had continuously since then.

Q: Did you find that the Political Section was able, had good contacts?

SMITH: Well, you'd always like them to have better contacts, but yes, I think that they had good contacts.

Q: It's a hard country to cover, isn't it, because of both the geography, and some of the parties are so ethnically or religiously oriented, or whatever you want to call it? Does that make a difference? That makes it more difficult to sort of understand.

SMITH: Perhaps. People are generally fairly accessible. There isn't a problem... The problem is more of manpower to do all of this than accessibility. We had, of course, if you went back to the '60s, we had had a larger political section. We had had political officers in all of our consulates. By this time I don't think we had political officers in any of our consulates left. Our consulate in Bombay was a consul general, and there was one political-economic officer, as I recall, and then basically consular. And Madras was similar. So we had very little political work being done in the consulates, except by the consuls general themselves.

Q: How did you find relations with the Foreign Ministry? Was it the Ministry of Foreign Affairs?

SMITH: Ministry of External Affairs.

Q: Ministry of External Affairs. Did you find that this was sort of the last bastion of the old India that you'd known and loved?

SMITH: Well, certainly, there were people of that kind there, and I had personal relationships with a lot of people in the Foreign Ministry going back for by then more than 15 years, which gave me an ability to call people up and do business on the phone, which I always consider the indicator of efficiency in dealing with the Foreign Ministry, the ability to be able to call up and do your business on the phone. And yes, I was to that point with a lot of people - again, personal relationships going back a long time with some of them. But yes, there were people like that who were in the Foreign Ministry and are still active there.

Q: I'm talking really about a visceral dislike of the United States and its policy, not of Americans. This '88-91 period is very interesting because the death-knell of the Soviet Union came about in this time. It didn't cease until '92, but the Wall came down in '89 and all this happened. How did this affect the Indians? How were they watching, because the Soviet Union had been their partner?

SMITH: I think that you really ought to ask the person who was there next, because I think the impact became much more evident after '91 or late in '91. Clearly the relationship with the Soviet Union had been important for India. It had been important, I would say, in three different areas. One was the Soviets' political support in the Security Council; secondly was the military supply relationship to the Soviet Union; and third was economic. Well, the economic relationship was not important by then. The military supply relationship continued, but the Indians had always wanted to manufacture themselves whenever they could, and of course, that was an opportunity for us to have a relationship that would be different from the traditional relationship we've had with developing countries where we've sold them end-items. In the case of India, this was an opportunity to have... And when I talked about "weaning them away" from the Soviets, you could do that by developing a relationship with them, helping them make their own military equipment so they wouldn't buy from the Soviets. And actually, that was much preferred on their part, so this was something they were already doing, and I think that as a result, the military part of the relationship with the Soviets had already become less important. But I think psychologically the breakup of the Soviet Union was important for them, and I think they can still count on Russia in the Security Council, probably, for the veto on Kashmir issues if necessary.

Q: What about the Indian Communist Party? Was that important? Where did that stand during this time?

SMITH: Well, the Indian Communist Party, of course, had split, and there were two Communist Party, or more, depending on how you counted, but two main Communist Party - the Communist Party of India and the Communist Party of India Marxist. That split had occurred in the early 1960s and was a well-established split. The Communists

participated in governments or, in one case, ran the government in various parts of India. It was very interesting to watch the Marxists, the CPIM, which was not allied with the Soviet Union, became the government in West Bengal. I don't remember exactly what year it was the government, but it was the government during this period. And they were obviously being corrupted by being in government, because suddenly they were getting interested in foreign investment and efficiency of government and various other things that we would say would be good. And of course, the CPIM and politicians in West Bengal in general, you often find if you look at the politicians that they are London-trained barristers; and that was true in the case of some of the CPIM also, I believe. The CPI, the pro-Moscow Communists, could always be relied on to be very critical of the United States.

Q: Did we have much contact with them?

SMITH: Oh, we used to go see them, talk to them. I can remember one time - and again, I don't remember whether this was in '84 or '88-89, I went around and called on the head of the CPIM. In fact, he was a historic figure. He'd been blowing up trains in India in the 1940s - you know, a real historic figure - and we sort of heard indirectly from their intelligence people that a few weeks later he said, "What was Grant Smith going over to CPIM headquarters for?" I'd done it very openly, intentionally, because he was a *fascinating* person to talk to. And when they had the government in West Bengal, our consul general in West Bengal talked to them. In fact, we had quite an interest in maintaining a dialogue with them. The CPI was a little bit more difficult, but yes, we talked to them.

Q: We've talked before about it, but during this time, the Tamil business, in dealing with sort of the ethnic groups in India in this period?

SMITH: Well, you had had by now the Congress Party was weak in all of the south, and you had state parties in leadership positions or coalition leadership positions in all of the states of the south. And in some of the states you'd have two state parties vying, Tamil Nadu being an example. But this was true in all of the states of the south, that the state-based, linguistically-based parties had become very significant. And that's part of the change in India that's taken place - the decline of the Congress Party, the increasing strength of these state-based parties in the south, the increase of the strength of really caste-based parties in the north. So it's quite different from the post-Independence period, when Congress was totally dominant. And there has been a steady erosion of Congress power.

Q: Sort of an overall question - we were helping militarily, and of course there's always the Pakistan-Indian issue, but was there any concern on our part about a movement for a greater India? I mean, India was always talking about exerting its influence in the Indian Ocean and all. Were we concerned, looking down the pike, India might become a real problem to us in Southeast Asia or South Asia?

SMITH: I don't think the U.S. government as a whole was, but when you asked questions

like that, you often had to ask, well, who is we and who is they? I think the U.S. Navy may have been somewhat concerned, and certainly perhaps groups in India were more active in these areas than others. However, in the last interview, we talked about India and Sri Lanka, and I don't remember all the details or the dates, but India had brokered this agreement in 1987, which we though could lead to an end of the Sri Lanka problem. In fact, it led to an Indian intervention in Sri Lanka, and Indian military force in Sri Lanka.

Q: When did they go in?

SMITH: I don't remember the exact dates.

Q: But I mean, which watch were you on? Were you on the Desk or were you-

SMITH: I don't remember whether it was late '87 or in '88. I don't remember the exact time, but what happened was that they got very badly burned. Sri Lanka was India's Vietnam, many people say. And you could talk to Indian officers coming back from Sri Lanka who were really in a state of shock - as we might have found some coming back from Vietnam - over going up to little old ladies who would blow up and blow them up, suicide bombers. So they went into Sri Lanka, they brokered the agreement thinking that... Rajiv was very full of himself, thinking that he could persuade the militants to abide by this agreement. That didn't work, and they went in with their military force to deal with the militants, and that didn't work either. And then they ultimately withdrew. That was, in a sense, they were probably less likely to try this kind of adventure in the future, even if they were building up their naval forces and their ability. And they do talk about force projection ability. But after Sri Lanka, the incentive for this kind of thing was somewhat less in India, I think.

Q: Was there any particular concern at this time about events in Burma, Indonesia, or any of those places?

SMITH: Not particularly.

Q: I mean the Indian concern. Were they talking about meddling?

SMITH: No, no, no. Their focus is Pakistan, China, the immediate area - Afghanistan - because this was the period where you had the Soviet withdrawal from Afghanistan, the fighting between the factions, the fall of Najib, and the fighting between the factions. Actually, there were differences of opinion within the Indian government about what was going to happen in Afghanistan, one group saying Najib would survive, another group saying he wouldn't survive. Of course they saw Afghanistan through the Pakistan prism, not through the Russian prism, as we did. The events that involved us with India that you may have heard - if you've interviewed Bill Clark, you've probably heard about this-

Q: Tom Stern interviewed him.

SMITH: - the Iran-Iraq War and the Indian position on the Iran-Iraq War, because for one thing, governments changed in India during this period so it made it very complicated, but India had a relationship with Iraq, as part of the nonaligned relationship. It had an economic and possibly some military relationship with Iraq - I forget the details. It had a large Indian community in the Gulf, so it had a concern there, an involvement. I remember that shortly after the invasion of Kuwait and before Desert Storm, the Indian foreign minister went off to Iraq and made some statements that were pretty bad as far as we were concerned. But in fact, when we went to them to try and move some supplies thorough India, some flights thorough India, we did get permission, and we were able to move a fair amount through India. So their position was - and it varied depending on which government was in power, as I said, governments change - but we were able to get their cooperation to a fair extent on transiting supplies, landing in India and going on.

Q: When did you leave in '91?

SMITH: The summer of '91, July probably.

Q: What we called the Gulf War was over by that time.

SMITH: That's right.

Q: When it was on - this would be January, February, March, I guess, of '91 - were the Indians as transfixed as other countries were by watching this war on TV and all?

SMITH: Yes, the Gulf War was the entry of CNN into India. CNN really didn't have much of a foothold before that, but just as everywhere else the Gulf War was a tremendous boost in CNN popularity, so in India. It really was an important step to getting CNN established and getting, I think, satellite systems in general established in India. A lot of people were watching it. It had quite an impact.

Q: Were you getting any reflections from the Indian military on this, because we're really beginning to talk about a whole different way of waging war, with smart weapons, and it was showing that, you know, the old how many tanks you have is more important than the type of munitions you have, and all.

SMITH: The Indian military were quite interested in the war, yes, and I can remember a seminar after the war when some of the Indians semi-governmental strategy community, which historically had been very critical of the United States over Pakistan, actually was fairly supportive of the United States over the Iraq War. This may have had something to do with religious elements. Pakistan's position on it... and military admiration, I think. After all, the army is the key military power in India, the senior service, and they were very admiring of the work of the U.S.

Q: What about Iran during that time? Was India's relationship with Iran an element you were at all interested in?

SMITH: We weren't, and I don't remember the details right now. India's relationship with Iran, again, is a factor of the India-Pakistan equation, and I don't remember at what stage it was at that point. I remember more about it right now because, with Iran supporting the anti-Taliban forces in Afghanistan, Pakistan supporting the Taliban forces, India is in the anti-Taliban camp and therefore has a common interest with Iran.

Q: How did you find, again in this '88-91 period, what were our interests in how India and Pakistan were getting along?

SMITH: I think in the last interview we discussed the 1987 crisis, the "Brass Tacks Crisis." There was another crisis in late 1989 or early '90 - I think it was early '90 - when the two sides had escalated. I don't remember the details of the escalation right now - I'd have to go back and review it - but I remember that we did send out Gates, who was then national security adviser... or CIA?

Q: Who was this?

SMITH: Gates. We had a senior high-level delegation, which we hadn't sent in 1987, we did send on this occasion, to talk to both sides. And I don't remember that it needed that much calming down, but his mission certainly reassured us.

Q: Were we at all considered at any time to be sort of an honest broker, or were we considered to be at this particular time more weighted towards Pakistan?

SMITH: The issue in which the U.S. was involved by now was the nuclear issue. There are always - and I don't remember the details - questions of whether we would sell a little bit of this or a little bit of that to Pakistan. But the key issue for this period was the nuclear issue and the question of U.S. certification. And of course we finally decided, in 1989, 1990, that we could not certify under the Prescott Amendment, and all U.S. assistance to Pakistan ended. The Indians sort of said, "Well, you should have done that a lot sooner. You didn't do that because of Afghanistan. It's about time. You let the Pakistanis get this far. You should have done more." But that was the main issue.

Now, of course, something else was happening that is now significant but at the time was not a factor between us and India and Pakistan. That was Kashmir. It was Kashmir, which had really become fairly quiet, and I can remember an American academic telling me - I think this was in 1988 - that there really wasn't much coverage in the Pakistani press of Kashmir. They didn't seem very interested in it. Of course, in 1989, you had the beginnings of what has been the problem in Kashmir for the last 10 years, which was for the first time an internal insurgency, because before, all of the problems had been really provoked from Pakistan. But this one, unlike the others, was an internal uprising, which the Pakistanis later took advantage of; but initially - a senior Indian official, I remember, I think then foreign secretary, saying to me, "This is 10 percent Pakistan and 90 percent India's doing," because India had done a very bad job of dealing with Kashmir within it's own internal political situation. I mean, it was-

Q: Heavy hand.

SMITH: A heavy hand, overturning governments, fixing elections, things like that. And the revolt in 1989 was the product of that bad handling by the Indian leadership. Mrs. Gandhi had had a lot to do with it back in her time, and it continued under successive governments. And I'd been there in 1982; I'd seen Farooq Abdullah, when he took over right after the death of Sheikh Abdullah, and everybody thought Farooq Abdullah was great. He drove his own Land Rover around, and people would come out in the streets to wave and cheer. So he had everything going for him, and they just screwed it up. They could have done a much better job. You had other factors at play there also, because you had Phillips Talbot, who was assistant secretary the 1960s, who had written his doctoral dissertation about Kashmir and went back 40 years later, '87 or '88, before the problems arose, and went back to the same village in the valley. And he commented that the two things that he noticed were, first of all, the increase in communications, just as you saw this other places, that what had been a very isolated village, even though it was in the valley, was tied in to the rest of the world and the rest of Kashmir; also the tremendous increase in the sense of being Muslim. Exactly why that had happened - we knew that the Iraqis and the Iranians had been training Mullahs who could have had an impact. But clearly, the bad Indian administration, bad handling, was a major factor here. So you had the riots in Kashmir, which Pakistan later took advantage of, and which has led to the current situation today, where suddenly Kashmir is back on the agenda, both between India and Pakistan and internationally, to some extent. And while we aren't mediating, we have more of a role than we have had for years.

Q: What about this problem with the Sikhs? How did that stand by this time?

SMITH: By this time... Of course, 1984 you had had the attack on the Golden Temple, and by the late '80s, early '90s, the Indians were containing the situation. Punjab was not quiet, but it was quieter. It was becoming quiet, and it has since become much quieter. You could go up to Punjab. My wife, who was in the Consular Section, an American Citizen Services officer went up to Punjab on American citizen service and visa fraud cases, although one time she was up there and she had expected to be able to go back to Delhi, but she couldn't get back and she asked the district commissioner where she should stay, and he said, "We can put you put you up here, but we're not sure about your bodyguard." And she said, "What bodyguard? I don't have any bodyguard," because people up there were still traveling with bodyguards. So it was better, but not yet good. Unlike Kashmir, though, Punjab had never had the widespread local support that you had for the riots in Kashmir. That was never there in Punjab, so it was much easier for the government to deal with. And in Punjab, the origin of the problem there, and I guess in many ways the solution to the problem there has been that there are many factions among the Sikhs, and it was playing on those factions that led to the problem, and they could also be manipulated to help solve the problem.

Q: When was Rajiv Gandhi assassinated? Was it during your time?

SMITH: It was in 1991 - I think May. It was hot weather.

Q: So it was just before you left, or shortly before you left.

SMITH: Yes, and Dan Quayle came out as our representative at the funeral, as I recall.

Q: The Vice-President.

SMITH: At very short notice. In some ways it's a lot easier to do a vice-presidential visit on 48 hours' notice rather than on four months' notice. You have to do everything quickly, and you do.

Q: You do it. How was this taken? I mean, how did we see this? Did we see this as a major disaster, or just another thing in developments internally in India?

SMITH: Well, it was a disaster, certainly. Probably you have to go back to that whole involvement in Sri Lanka to see why it happened, and the Indians had been involved in training the Tamil militants back before 1984. They had run training camps, so as was the case in Punjab, the government had something to do with the beginning of the problem. But then it had tried subsequently to try to fix the problem and not succeeded. And this was one of the militants or people connected with the militants who was retaliating against Rajiv. I'd have to go back and review things very carefully. I think that we were somewhat less enchanted with Rajiv at that point than we had been before, although after he lost the elections in 1989, we had had two brief coalition governments, and we were certainly interested in seeing a more secure, longer-term government, which a Congress victory in that election, as it turned out, ensured. They had a longer-term government after that. Some of the victory, of course, was a result of Rajiv's death.

Q: Did you still have the feeling that India was pretty low in the concern... You know, great things were happening. Not only was the Soviet Union beginning to fall apart - particularly the Eastern Bloc - but we had the Gulf War and all. And I assume that India, then as had been the case, as you mentioned before, was not very high up on our list of priorities as a government.

SMITH: I think that's correct. We had a lot of other things on our plate, and for certain Indians particularly had always been people who were nice to hate. They had provided us some support during the Gulf War but had not been a coalition partner.

Q: Were we trying to enlist them as a coalition partner?

SMITH: That was never in the cards. The most we could hope for, I think, was to have them take a strong independent position and let us transit. We did get some of what we wanted. We got some transit, and we occasionally got a strong position, but not as much as we wanted. Again, it depended, because you had different governments in power during that period and different positions with the different governments.

Q: Did Saddam Hussein have any particular following there in India? He's not a man

that... his actions-

SMITH: No, he did not have any following; however, there were some terrorist concerns as a result of the war, and we dealt with that by allowing voluntary departure. I forget whether it was just before or during the Gulf War. I think it was just before. It was very interesting because the offering of voluntary departure reduced friction or concerns within the American community, with the official American community, and I was personally very involved. I was actually chargé in the period just going up to the war because the ambassador was away, and I was very involved in dealing with the official community - town meetings and this kind of thing where you could see that going to them and saying, "Yes, there are security concerns, and any wives, or dependents, and nonessential personnel that want to can go back to the United States now." And only a handful - I think only four or so - took it, but it very much reduced the level of concern within the official community.

Q: Well, there were real concerns at the time that there were going to be Iraqi commando teams going all over the world, which was not a figment of imagination. Apparently we had some real problems, concerns, in the Philippines and other places.

SMITH: We had some information that there might be something in India, and of course, I was living in what had been Chester Bowles's house, not the one that later ambassadors lived in, Roosevelt House, which is on the compound and very secure. I was living in the old ambassadorial house, a wonderful old pre-Independence bungalow - with a low wall.

Q: By the time you left in '91, the Gulf War was over and the Soviets were really fading from the scene. Was there a new India emerging - from our point of view - as a world power, a minor one it might be?

SMITH: I think, on the economic side, as I said, we- (end of tape)

I was saying that by 1991, and much more so after I left, you saw the effect of economic liberalization on India's position as an independent country, certainly improving.

Q: What about China during this '88-91? Was China a factor from America's point of view, from your embassy's point of view? Was there concern?

SMITH: Of course, China, like the United States, in India - there was both bilateral relationship and a relationship with Pakistan, and China's relationship with India was very much affected by China's relationship with Pakistan. And I think that we as a country also, looking at China and South Asia, would look in part at that Chinese relationship with Pakistan. There certainly have been press reports of Chinese involvement in the Pakistani nuclear weapons program, and that has been an issue between us an China, both the Pakistani nuclear weapons and the Pakistani nuclear program, Chinese involvement. So that is an issue for us and the Indians, very definitely. On the other and, in a strictly bilateral sense, China and India - and I don't remember exactly what year what happened - have gradually improved their relationship, have

instituted confidence-building measures along their borders, have not moved to any kind of formal settlement, which for political reasons would be difficult in India and probably in China also, but have a much more secure *de facto* border between them. Now, at this point, they have communications between the commanders on either side and regular meetings and this sort of thing, so it is a much more stable situation on the ground, which has been happening gradually through the years. Some of it happened in small steps during this period.

Q: How about the nuclear issue in India during this period? Was this quiescent, or what?

SMITH: There was an issue for us. It was certainly a factor, both the nuclear issue and the missile issue, in this whole question of how far we would go with them on high tech. We were watching their test site in the Rajasthan desert very closely and concerned that they might test again. We were very concerned about their missile programs, crossover between their satellite and space-launch programs and their military missile programs - and of course connection of that to nuclear programs. The U.S. was involved with the initial Indian satellites. Ford Aerospace built them, so there was an involvement. The U.S. was involved with the initial Indian nuclear program. We helped them to build a nuclear power reactor, outside of Bombay, which last thing I knew was still operating, the only one of that generation of power reactors in the world, built by Westinghouse, that was still operating anywhere. All the other ones had been long since retired. Issues within the U.S. government on whether we should cooperate with them on nuclear reactor safety or not, whether we could legally and whether we should from a policy sense, because one could argue that even if you aren't going to cooperate with them any other place you should cooperate with them in this area. If your company built the damned thing, it's the only one left in the world, and it's very old by world standards, you should be willing to let our experts talk to their experts on this. I recall at one point - it may have been the '85-87 period - there was a plan to let Germany sell some spare parts from their decommissioned reactor of the same period to them. There were periodic reports that the Indians... There was a problem with pump seals, and they didn't have the right pump seals so they had to replace them more frequently than normal, which meant sending people in. A person might have to go in and then another person might have to go in because of the exposure in the amount of time that you could go in. I always thought that there was a good argument that this was an area where we should cooperate with them.

Q: In '91, what came about? Was there anything else that we should cover, do you think, in India, of any other issue?

SMITH: No, I think I've mentioned the governments which were changing while I was there and Rajiv Gandhi was defeated by a coalition headed by V. P. Singh, and then that fell and we had Chandrasekar in charge. And then you had the return of the Congress government. But I guess one of the things that I learned in that period, and I think others learned also, was that in India, certainly, you really couldn't judge a leader by how he'd been before he became a leader, because V. P. Singh, we had seen - and this is my personal view - as a young leader. He'd always been very impressive - we selected him

for an IVB program back in the early '70s, as I recall - and we thought was a leader who said the right things, and he seemed to be a consensus builder. When he became prime minister, it just didn't work. Chandrasekar, on the other hand, had always been somebody who was breaking up coalitions, a spoiler. He became prime minister, and he was actually quite a good leader, and from our standpoint also we saw this on questions involving overflights and access, flights going to the Gulf War. Chandrasekar was the one who was willing to do the necessary, take the risk. And it was very interesting to watch that happening. And again, I learned a lesson that how somebody has been before he becomes prime minister may not be a good indicator of how he's going to do as prime minister.

Q: Why did the ambassador who succeeded Dean last only about 11 months?

SMITH: That's a good question. His name had been submitted by the Reagan Administration. It had not been cleared with the Bush people, and he was not confirmed in the closing days of 1988. I don't remember the details of why he wasn't confirmed - whether it was something about him or some package - but there wasn't anything major about him that I remember. He was not confirmed, and the Reagan Administration gave him an interim appointment, and the Bush Administration did not resubmit his name. So he had a maximum of 12 months under the law. I suspect that the Senate, if it had not confirmed him initially, it would probably be even less inclined to do so after he'd been as an interim appointee, because they don't like interim appointments. So the Bush Administration named Bill Clark to replace him. As I recall, he arrived in early December of 1988 and left in November of 1989, and Bill Clark arrived a few weeks after that.

Q: I served with Bill in Seoul, and he's really an East Asian hand.

SMITH: Right.

Q: I mean, not really, just is *an East Asian hand, and to end up in India, which is a different sand pile -*

SMITH: He'd been basically offered what he wanted, and he asked for India. That's my understanding of it. But he certainly brought a lot of large-mission management background to Delhi and was very clear-sighted about some things that were good ideas, like selling off property we didn't need.

Q: Well, in '91, whither?

SMITH: In 1991, I came back to be principal deputy assistant secretary in the Bureau of International Narcotics Matters, under Mel Levitsky. I'd served with Mel in the Office of UN Political Affairs in 1980-82, and he needed a deputy; I was available, so he asked me to come back to be his principal deputy in international narcotics matters.

Q: You were there from '91 to when?

SMITH: I was there from '91 until '94. However, from '91 to the end of '93, I was principal deputy assistant secretary. Then in early '94, I sort of moved over. Somebody else became principal deputy assistant secretary, and I was working more on setting up the new crime function, because INM, which originally had been the Bureau of International Narcotics Matters, became the Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement.

Q: It became known as "Thugs and Drugs."

SMITH: Well, it had always been called that informally, but it became that formally. And I helped set up the law-enforcement side of it. There was a position that was vacant, and I helped set up that part of it as a deputy assistant secretary and went off to the UN Crime Commission a couple of times.

Q: Well, let's talk about the '91-93 period when you're sort of the war on international narcotics. What were you bringing to it, and how did you see our operation working at that time?

SMITH: What was I bringing to it personally?

Q: Yes.

SMITH: Actually, I didn't have any particular background in the narcotics field. I did have some limited knowledge of parts of it, particularly the South Asia part; but in the overall scheme of things, South Asia is a small portion of our problem, both as far as heroin production or origin is concerned, and heroin is a small portion of our overall problem, most of which is cocaine. So Latin America looms very large, and that was where I had to focus. In fact, I went on a field trip, within two weeks of arrival, to Colombia, Peru, and Bolivia. First day in the field on this job, got to Bogota, overnight in Bogota, and the appointments in the capital weren't available that day. They were for the next day, so they took me out in the field the very first day. We flew to the Amazon side of Columbia to look at coca growing and the counter-narcotics police there. We landed in a town that was real wild west - this was travel by fixed wing and then helicopter - and then the police helicopter went off to look at coca growing, and they saw some coca growing down there in a patch, and we went down and they showed it to me. I hadn't seen coca growing before. I pulled some of it up. They found a processing area adjacent. I don't know if you know, but coca processing involves highly volatile things like ether, and the simplest thing is just toss a match in and it burns, blows it up. And the police did that. And we got back in our helicopters. There were two helicopters; there was one I was in, and there was another one with a police escort. We took of first, and then they took off. As they were taking off, some shots were fired, and the next thing I know there is a machine gun in the door of the Huey next to me going *blat-blat-blat-blat* down on the ground. And I sort of accused them of setting this up as my introduction to the drug wars. I don't think they did. And of course, since then, at that time, coca growing in Colombia was a relatively minor thing. Colombia was the processing area, but the growing area was Peru and Bolivia. Since then, Colombia has become the major growing area, partly

because we've had success in eliminating or reducing the growing in Peru and Bolivia.

Q: How did we look upon this operation? In a way, I guess, the best indicator is the price of cocaine on the street, isn't it?

SMITH: The bureaucratic structure which works on this in the United States is very complicated, but I think the overall concept is - correctly so - you have to work on all parts of the picture, and part of the picture is consumption in the United States, and you need efforts to reduce consumption in the United States. Part of it is processing and transit. Part of it is the actual growing. And I guess you could say there is a fourth area, which is the whole money-laundering side of it. But the overall policy is that you need to go after all parts of this. Different administrations have differed about which emphasis goes on which part. The State Department's role here is that it has money for international counter-narcotics programs. It has money for that and is involved in working with other countries in coordinating policies in this area. I think that would be a correct way to put the State Department role. Our programs were much more focused on the cooperating with other countries on the production and processing and transit in those countries. In other words, in the time I was there, we had a program of about $150 million worldwide, and the majority of that was being spent in Colombia, Peru, and Bolivia, working with authorities there, police and others, to counter growing, processing, and transit within those countries, both programs of incentives for not growing or for growing other crops, alternate crops, and enforcement, working with the counter-narcotics police, establishing, supplying, and then working with the counter-narcotics police in those countries. But we didn't do case things. The DEA obviously did that, and Customs, and other parts of the U.S. law enforcement. We were much more working with these governments on policy and programs and funding those programs.

Q: How did you find the coordination? One always thinks of the State Department considering relations with a country, the DEA (Drug Enforcement Agency) wanting to charge in and do things. And then you've got the American military getting involved. I would think this would be a very difficult coordinating job.

SMITH: It was a difficult coordinating job in Washington. I can remember just enormous meetings in the Old Executive Office Building - you know, 80 people - because you had many different agencies and you had multiple office within those agencies that were involved in this. So these meetings became very large and unwieldy. There was always a question of who was in charge. We had interagency working groups, and at various points they were chaired by the NSC, by the Office of National Drug Control Policy and by the State Department, to get coordination. And it was very difficult, and very often you had these issues of where should our priorities be, and you also had very complicated funding issues, who was going to pay - this is what needs to be done, well, how are we going to fund that? Our resources were limited and, in fact, reduced in the period I was there. But the military didn't want us to tap into their resources necessarily. Obviously, when you're looking at a program that requires helicopters, one way to do it is to get some old Hueys and send them down to wherever, not take it out of the INM budget. There was always a question for the military, because a lot of what the military was doing

was working on the transit zone, on detection and interdiction, and that takes a lot of up-tempo time, and they were reluctant to use up-tempo for that.

So coordination in Washington was extremely complicated, plus you then you had coordination in the field. In fact, coordination in the field tends to be relatively easier because at least you have an ambassador who's in charge. But in places in the field, yes, you had the U.S. military, you had our operations, the INM operations, and I think the largest office we had was four officers, but we often had a lot of American contractors in these countries. INM at that time had something like the third or fourth largest air force in Latin America, because we had helicopters, we had spray planes, which is a souped up crop duster with a little bit of armor. It was called a Thrush, developed particularly for this program. I never rode in one. The kept asking me after lunch, and I knew that that was not something that you wanted to do. We had a couple of old transports flying from Lima over into the upper Huallaga Valley, which is where the coca is grown, to a base over there, and these were C-123s with jet-assisted take-off pods on the wings, but you had to go on oxygen over the hump, over the mountains, over the Andes, and I think when INM gave them up, these airplanes went into museums. We had some lighter, twin-Otter type aircraft, so we had an operational aspect to it as well.

Q: Looking at the different countries, Colombia - during the time you were dealing with this, what was our view of Colombia?

SMITH: Very mixed. This was a period where there are allegations of major politicians' involvement. Of course, you had the Medellín and Cali cartels, great efforts to get the Colombia government to, we hoped, extradite them, but at least arrest and prosecute them within Colombia. Fairly good cooperation from the Colombian government with the police on power programs - in other words, not going after specific criminals, which would be more DEA stuff, but the broader, counter-growing kind of programs - but still major transit into Colombia from Peru. That was the time when Colombia was the processing area and it was grown in Peru and Bolivia and transited to Colombia for processing.

Also during this period, you had the beginnings of opium cultivation in Colombia. The Colombian traffickers are good businessmen. They know that they've got a market. They see another product. They've got the marketing mechanism. They want to put a new product into their marketing mechanism, so they started promoting the growing of opium in Colombia. The Colombians did some experimenting. We had already discovered that roundup was very effective against-

Q: Roundup being-

SMITH: The chemical, what you use against poison ivy we had been using very successfully in a number of places, particularly in Guatemala, in spraying opium. The Colombians experimented and discovered it could also be used for spraying coca - this was done during that period - and convinced us. We had not thought that was possible. They convinced us if you did it in the right concentrations it was very effective against

coca, so we supported them in spraying against coca as well. But some of the other governments were not willing to spray. The Colombians were.

Q: What about Peru? How did we view them?

SMITH: Peru was very difficult to deal with. I don't remember all the details of this. Tony Quainton was our ambassador at the period. You probably have interviewed Tony. Peru was the major growing country. The major growing area was out in the upper Huallaga Valley. We had a base there, but it was very difficult to maintain, very exposed, and therefore subject to attack. Of course, you had the *Sendero luminoso* problem, which was rather separate, unlike Colombia, where the insurgents were being funded by taxes on coca growing. I don't think there was that tie, but there was a terrorist problem. We couldn't get permission to spray in Peru. It was not a very satisfactory arrangement. We ultimately closed the base we had built there and tried to conduct similar operations from elsewhere, but we weren't having much success. What later really had some success in Peru was when the Peruvian Air Force began working against those transit flights from Peru to Colombia, with some of our help. But the operation that we then had, we didn't feel we were getting very good cooperation and it was not very successful. In Bolivia we felt that we had much more cooperation.

Q: Well, in Peru was the problem, we felt, more because they were difficult to deal with, or they had been paid off by the drug producers?

SMITH: The former. They were difficult to deal with - differing prioritizes, different sense of how you go about this. In both Peru and Bolivia, at that time, cultivation was, if not expanding, if you succeeded in reducing it in one area, it would go to another area, and neither government was effectively preventing it moving to another area. And all those arguments that you made about hurting the poor peasants - well, those don't really apply when it's moving to a new area. So we had significant difference with governments in both countries, more so in Peru.

Q: Were you saying we viewed Bolivia as more responsive?

SMITH: Somewhat better. It has become better since then, certainly, but they were doing some successful tests on alternate crops. The problem in Bolivia, again, people, poor peasants, needed to grow coca for livelihood. In fact, the poor peasants who were growing coca were not traditional growers of coca. They had come from the high plateau and moved down because there was an opportunity there. I think that there was a greater sense of cooperation in Bolivia, but a great deal of frustration as well, and this problem of the government unwilling to prevent the spread into new areas.

Q: How did Mexico rate at this particular time?

SMITH: A mixed situation, as now. The relationship with Mexico was always very different in the sense that we did not have the kind of INP funded program there that we had elsewhere. They insisted on doing things themselves. Mexico, of course, is not part

of one of our areas under control of one of our CINCs, but we were working closely with the Mexican counter-narcotics police, transferring Hueys from the U.S. military, not through INM, but as I recall directly from the U.S. military. We did have a program there. As I recall, about the second year I was there the Mexicans told us they would do it all themselves but then later discovered that it was going to be expensive, and there was some real question about how they could do it. The Mexicans had a very active program of eradication of opium and marijuana, and their statistics were always very good on that - not as good as Guatemala's. Guatemala, while I was working on it, the intelligence community's estimate of Guatemalan production of opium fell to the point where it was something like 40 hectares, plus or minus 200 - in other words, the estimate was below their margin of confidence of what they could predict. But in Mexico, they did a great deal of eradication, and the major issues were much more trafficking and of high-level involvement and money-laundering, as they were now. But our relationship with Mexico is always very prickly. The question of extradition was very much there. Just before or just about the time I moved in, we had - remember - the abduction of the Mexican to the United States and trial in the United States. And that was a very sensitive issue with the Mexicans. We had a high-level bilateral commission with the Mexicans, one element of which is narcotics. We had regular narcotics meetings with the Mexicans, but the issue was always DEA and the extent of corruption within Mexico, different opinions about that. Another area where we cooperated with the Mexicans, but had to do it fairly carefully, was on Central America, because we and the Mexicans viewed Central America and the transit through Central America rather similarly, and this was something we could cooperate on, but the Central Americans didn't want to see this Mexican-U.S. cooperation coming down on them. We did meet with the Mexicans and discuss central America.

Q: What was the major success or lack of success? I always think of the street price of cocaine in Detroit or something like that. I mean, during these three years, how did you think the war was going?

SMITH: Well, measures of success are very difficult. We never had a firm handle on exactly how much was coming to the United States. If you used street prices, I think street price did not increase substantially. There were periods when it increased. In fact, there were periods when it increased so you could see there was a relationship between interdiction and price; but overall, you couldn't say that we were having a dent on price, simply because the supply was so great. Consumption did drop in the United States in this period. And that was probably as a result of our ad campaigns, the very intensive campaigns against the use of drugs, which had a significant impact on the casual users. The number of hard-core users didn't change as much, but the number of casual users did. The contribution of that - you know, how much, who contributed that - clearly the ONDC programs, C-Sap programs, had a major contribution to it; however, you can argue that if there had been unimpeded growing and unimpeded access to the United States, which there was not, the prices would have been even lower and there would have been even more consumption. It would have been much harder to have had the success with those ad campaigns that they did. And my own view is that you do have to have some of these other programs. The key to it may be to change the culture and thereby reduce

consumption, but you have to have these other campaigns because it's very hard, if the stuff is free or nearly free, to prevent consumption. And there have been countries - China is an example... China eradicated opium consumption, heroin consumption, right after the Communists took over. It reappeared along the transit routes from Burma to the Coast, from China to the Coast, and it's reappeared probably because truckers are getting paid in product. It's a supply driven consumption rather than a demand driven consumption, so you have to deal with both supply and demand issues.

Q: Did you notice any change when the Clinton Administration came in in January of '93?

SMITH: Yes, there was a skepticism about the interdiction programs and a determination to focus more on the anti-consumption efforts in the United States, which was probably good, but I certainly felt that you needed to continue the anti-interdiction efforts, and that was very difficult if funding was cut. That's when you got into these wranglings about getting additional resources from DOD.

Q: How did you find relations between your bureau and ARA and other areas? Did you find you were sort of getting in the way of other types of relationships?

SMITH: I think in ARA, the ambassadors were so involved in these programs, in those three countries in particular, that in most of those countries there was good cooperation. Certainly the people who were ambassadors in Colombia, Bolivia, Peru were actively engaged. We were actively engaged. When high-level delegations went down there, INM was included. I went down with Bernie Aronson at one point. In AF we were much less actively engaged. We did successfully refuse to certify Nigeria. I don't remember that being a major issue at that point with AF, because I think everybody had decided that the Nigerian régime was pretty bad and, in fact, this was one of the things we could do that was justified and really put the screws on them. But it's always a difficult call when you throw up your hands and say, this is terrible. In the case of Burma, which is according to U.S. statistics, the major producer of opium in the world and at that time the major source of heroin in the United States. There was always a contradiction between wanting to cooperate with them against drug trafficking and the human rights record of the Burmese government, which led to a problem. However, they were never very good in their cooperation in counter-narcotics. It could have been a much worse problem, but they never could offer very much. So that was not a black and white issue, as it might have been. But yes, there were problems in getting the bureaus, we thought, to put adequate emphasis on narcotics issues. We always had an issue with the military in some areas - not in Latin America, where the programs were very integrated. CINCPAC used to go to Thailand and meet with the Thai military and not say anything about narcotics, whereas that was a major issue as far as INM was concerned.

There was one other area where I personally got involved, which was India-Pakistan and legal growing of opium in India. India's the world's largest grower of legal opium, under an international régime, and we're the largest purchaser of legal opium from India. But there are always questions about controls, and there are questions about trafficking

between India and Pakistan. And with the South Asian bureau's blessing we got involved with trying to get India and Pakistan to cooperate in this area. And there was a meeting in 1994, I believe it was, in Vienna, one of the last meetings I went to, where we seemed to be making some success, because this was an area where you could argue that this was important for counter-narcotics work and also important because it was an area where India and Pakistan should cooperate. Even if they are so mad at each other in all the other areas, it's one area where they should be able to cooperate, and maybe it will build to other things.

Q: What about this development of the crime side? How did that come out? During your last year you were working on that.

SMITH: Well, it was a logical extension in some areas. We had already been very much involved in the counter-money laundering, and whether the money that's being laundered is narcotics money or other money it's a logical thing. There was reason to think that just as we were working not on cases but on general counter-narcotics policy with other governments, it would be useful to expand that to international crime. We had created a Dublin group to coordinate international counter-narcotics policy with the EU and Japan and Canada, the basic members - which we found very useful. We realized that in some parts of the world - the former Soviet Union and Eastern Europe being leading examples - narcotics were a part of a larger problem, the problem of organized crime, whereas in Latin America, as far as we were concerned, narcotics were the big part, and organized crime was narcotics. In Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union, organized crime was a lot of other things as well as counter-narcotics, and to have an international effort with U.S. involvement to counter organized crime, beyond just money-laundering, we thought would be useful. We had to think of what we were going to do, how that was going to translate, and we came up with some programs, and we also found that there were areas of U.S. interest that were falling between bureaucratic stools which this newly-formed bureau could pick up. An example of the first, something that specifically would be useful for the U.S. to do against international organized crime, where you could develop a program: trafficking in stolen vehicles, developing systems for vehicle identification numbers, registration, making sure that they're caught and returned. We had some initial success in Central America on that, and it’s an issue also with Eastern Europe. This is a logical thing that's directly in our interest and is a good example. An example of an area where the bureau got involved in other things because it was there - alien smuggling.

Q: Oh, yes.

SMITH: International policy against alien smuggling. I mentioned that I headed the U.S. delegation to the UN Crime Commission twice in 1994, and we made this a major issue, because this is something that actually is not illegal in a lot of countries, and laws had to be passed against alien smuggling, the kinds of things, and of course there was a major question of coordination within the U.S. government and with other governments on specific cases. You know, the ship shows up headed for Mexico and diverted to Guatemala, so you're working with the Mexicans, you're working with the Guatemalans,

the U.S. Coast Guard, the INS - everybody's involved, very complicated. This is beyond those that landed in New York or on the West Coast.

And the third area, which has become a major part of the work of this office, which was just beginning at that time, comes into what I'm working on now, which is the fact that when you had the peacekeeping operation, the troops go in - Haiti, Somalia - who's going to perform the police function when those troops go in?

Q: Oh, yes.

SMITH: The U.S. military sure doesn't want to do it, and the U.S. MPs aren't trained for that. They're trained for police work within the military. They aren't trained for crowd control and those kinds of things. You've got to have a fast-acting program to retrain the military of those countries and also the justice and penal systems. But the most immediate one has to focus on the police of those countries, to get that police function up and running in an honest way. And INM - INL - was working on that in Somalia - too little, too late because it was just getting started when we pulled out - worked on that in Haiti, where it had more success, has been a major factor in the Internet- (end of tape)

Q: Were we ahead of the game in this?

SMITH: We were ahead of other people.

Q: I mean other countries.

SMITH: We were ahead of other countries, but we weren't ahead of the game. And even now, you are seeing this in Kosovo, where NATO is complaining that the UN isn't acting fast enough to get the police on the ground. The problem is that, internationally and in the U.S., the military is ready to deploy. The military has police forces which can be [ready] to go somewhere else. The recent example of that, actually NATO has been fairly successful in Bosnia. They have an MUF - Multiple Uses Force? I forget what that's an acronym for, but it's the Italian Carabinieri, who do fit that.

Q: Well, of course, the Carabinieri are a military -

SMITH: They're military. They're trained. They're military officers doing police functions, and that's just what you need, and they're going to be in Kosovo also. We learned in Kosovo, and it took three years to get the Carabinieri into Bosnia. In Kosovo we were ready to get them in right away. It still wasn't soon enough, but its going to be a lot sooner than it was in Bosnia. But in addition to that, because that's a foreign police force coming in and providing an actual police function, you need to create a local force. And the creation of the local force is... Actually the Department of Justice has an organization called ISITAP which actually does it, but the policy and the funding is coming from INL.

Q: Were you running across, as you started to do this, the problem that had come up

before, that Congress didn't like to see strange foreign police forces because they might get involved in beating up their own citizens and that sort of thing?

SMITH: It's a question you should ask Bob Gelbard, because he was the one who was present at the negotiations on this. My impression was that Congress was willing to have it happen because is saw the need in Somalia and Haiti, which were the first two. There was a clear need for this, and it was different from the old training of police forces. It was creating a new honest force.

Q: It was inserting something in where there was chaos.

SMITH: And it wasn't dealing with an old force with a questionable human rights record. It was taking the old force and transforming it into something that would be acceptable, as far as we were concerned, both in a police and a human rights sense. So the purpose was very different, and there was Congressional support. But AID didn't want to touch it - is what I've heard.

Q: They'd been badly burned.

SMITH: They'd been very badly burned by that, so you end up with INL doing the coordination for the policy function, and ISITAP doing the implementation. It's a different function, but fits in well with the other things that INL is doing.

Q: Well, probably this is a good place to stop. So in '94, we left you where you were working on crime matters on this, and then where did you go?

SMITH: Well, the President checked the right box, and I was able to go into language training to go into Tajikistan.

Q: All right, so we'll pick this up in '94 in Tajikistan.

SMITH: Well, '95 in Tajikistan. I had a year of language training.

Q: Well, we'll talk about training, then.

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It is September 2, 1999. Grant, in the first place, how did you get your assignment as ambassador to Tajikistan?

SMITH: Well, it's a very complicated process, but it goes through the D Committee in the State Department and then over to the White House. And it went to the D Committee, as I recall, in probably June of '94, and then over to the White House, and it did it. It took a while to send everything over to the White House. It didn't go over right away, and it took some urging to get them to send over - there were two of us who wanted to have as much language training as possible before we went out, and we were then able to get a

Presidential decision in late August, as I recall, so that I was able to start Tajik in early September.

Q: Well, how did you get the appointment? Did you lobby for it? Did somebody come out to you?

SMITH: Can I say yes, all of the above? You have to do a fair amount of lobbying with the people who are on the D Committee, or their staff assistants, as the case may be. And people may talk about putting your name forward for several, and you need to state a preference, and it's always, Where do you want to go, where do your qualifications give you the strongest shot at going?

Q: Well, I assume when you're playing around with Central Asia, to a certain extent you don't feel the heat of political appointees dying to get in there that you might in some other place. Maybe I'm wrong.

SMITH: No, I think that's true, and it's also true, at least in '94, there weren't many established experts on Central Asia, so the people they were looking at to go to Central Asia were people who had experience in the former Soviet Union - specifically in the Soviet Union - or had experience in adjacent areas which were relevant. In my case it was South Asia. You know, a Turkic or Turkish speaking person would be a similar kind of thing.

Q: I assume probably in later times we're going to start coming up with congressional staff assistants who've got a master's degree in Central Asian studies and all of a sudden they want to be an ambassador. You'll start seeing there's more of an influx of staff assistants from Congress who end up as ambassadors.

SMITH: Yes, I can see that that might happen in the future, but as I say, in '94, this is not particularly an issue.

Q: Tell me about Tajikistan. Could you give us the location and the history of the place?

SMITH: It's directly north of Afghanistan, and in fact it was the easternmost part of Tajikistan that was closest to India, and in the 1890s, when the Russians and the British drew the map, they drew a tongue of Afghanistan that goes out and which separated Russia and British India. That's the Wakhan Corridor, and that part of what was then under Russian control is now Tajikistan. So this was the "Great Game" territory, and some adjacent areas. Parts of what is now Tajikistan were under Russian control in the late 19th century - the north and the far east - however, the major bulk of the south was part of the Emirate of Bukhara, which was a Russian protectorate but not under direct Russian control. When the Soviet Union was formed, I think it was in 1924 they created a Tajikistan Autonomous Republic, and then in 1929 it became a full Soviet republic, with the current boundaries. It's one of the cases where - and Stalin has been accused of doing this elsewhere - the boundaries were drawn in a way that there were major *irredenta* left on both sides. The centers for Tajik culture and population at that time were the cities of

Samarkand and Bukhara, which remain in Uzbekistan. But even today, those cities are Tajik-speaking. You go there, you can speak Tajik and get around quite well. There's no problem whatsoever. So they created a republic for the Tajik nationality, in the Soviet sense, but the two key centers of that nationality are not in it, plus of the current population of five and a half million, about a quarter of that is Uzbek. So there were significant concentrations of Uzbeks left within Tajikistan. And the area is 90-some percent mountains. The Pamirs are there. I guess its major natural resource is water, which means it has plenty of irrigation water for growing in the valleys and under the Soviets was a producer of cotton, with some of the highest yields in the former Soviet Union.

Q: Had the Soviets done what they had done in Afghanistan and other places, of sort of ruining the soil, or was there enough water so they didn't?

SMITH: It was a cotton monoculture with very heavy doses of fertilizer and pesticides; however, way down the line, there was plenty of water, so you hadn't had the kind of degradation that you had in the Aral Sea area. And since independence, since they haven't had any money to buy fertilizers and pesticides, that part of the situation has probably gotten better. Tajikistan has some minerals. They'd like to say that they have every mineral that's in the periodic table, which is probably true, but the problem is that either the way it is found or the location of it makes it very expensive to get out, and whether they have every mineral in the periodic table that can be profitably mined is an altogether different question. They do have some gold. They have significant deposits of silver. Uranium - they like to say that the uranium for the first Soviet bomb came from Tajikistan.

Q: When you arrived there in '94, was it -

SMITH: I was in language training. My wife and I were the only two people in the class. We began language training here at FSI in September of '94. We continued in language training through June of '95 and went out there in July of '95.

Q: And you were there from when to when?

SMITH: July of '95 to August of '98.

Q: Well, let's talk a bit about the language. How did you and your wife find the language, and what were you picking up from your instructors?

SMITH: Well, it's interesting how FSI came to teach Tajik, in the sense that FSI has on its permanent staff a Dari instructor - the language of Afghanistan - and there was great demand for learning Dari back in the late '70s and the '80s - much less demand now, since we have no embassy in Kabul. We have one position or two positions in Peshawar that are Dari-speaking, but not much demand for training people in Dari. So they asked the Dari instructor to teach Tajik. What they didn't know was that their Dari instructor was an ethnic Tajik, and Tajik was his mother tongue. So that worked out quite well. The

problem was that he knows Tajik of northern Afghanistan as it was when he grew up. There is the Tajik of Tajikistan. It's the same language, but being part of the Soviet Union, there are a lot of concepts which were translated from Russian into Tajik which really don't mean anything to somebody who doesn't know the Soviet Union and where that concept came from - the concept of "village economy" or even "collective farm." Or the Soviets, now the Russians, use tractors with tracks, like small Caterpillars, which they don't use in Afghanistan. And all these things, when you translate the Russian word or concept into Tajik, becomes something that was foreign to our Afghan-born Tajik language instructor.

Q: Before you went out there, what were you getting from the... It was in the European Bureau, wasn't it?

SMITH: Well, of course, by then, and totally now, the special assistant to the Secretary, Strobe Talbott then - actually it was Jim Collins by then - really acts and functions like an assistant secretary. So you really have an ESNIS bureau that isn't a bureau but functions like a bureau. That was true then, and it's true now. It shares the executive bureau functions with EUR. EUR/EX does the executive stuff, but for an operational sense, ESNIS is a separate bureau.

Q: As you were reading your way, going through the corridors, talking to people, what were you seeing as the situation in Tajikistan and American concerns there?

SMITH: Well, our major concern then, and it has continued, has been the civil war and, because of our interest in the region, that this be resolved. The civil war broke out in 1992. It was basically between groups with strong regional identities, although there were other overlays there, in the sense that one of the groups, primarily from the area to the east of Dushanbe, also was the most Muslim, and included the leadership of the opposition as it is now in the Islamic Renaissance Party. But there are other members of that opposition also. Then the other group, from the area south of Dushanbe and also from the northern part of the country has much more of a sort of old Communist association, although the Communist Party, which still exists, opposed the government on a number of points.

Q: Well, you got out to Dushanbe in what, the early summer of '95?

SMITH: Yes.

Q: Can you talk a bit about you and your wife living in Dushanbe?

SMITH: I think by then Dushanbe was the only place where the embassy and the living quarters were still in the hotel. That was the way it was, I believe, in all of the posts of the former Soviet Union when they were first opened. People came in and set up shop in a hotel, and you had an office in the hotel and you lived in the hotel. But this was, by then 1995, four years after independence, and in Dushanbe the embassy was still living and operating out of a hotel. This was the old Communist Party hotel, the Hotel October or

Oktoberskaya, where the embassy, by the time we got there, had the whole top floor. The top floor was divided up. About half of it was offices and American living quarters, and the other half was FSN offices. When we arrived, I think with one exception, the entire staff lived there. Essentially, officers were on one side of the corridor, and rooms were on the other side. I had an office that was about 9' by 12' maybe. Fairly small. The Chinese ambassador when he returned my call on him, sort of looked around the office and there was a pause, and he said, "This is a very small office for an ambassador." And across the hall I had a living room and a bedroom, and then we had a common officers' mess. We had a cook, and each of us had consumables where we'd contribute things for the officers' mess. We used to joke that the Soviet Union had to fall before we really found out about Communism, because that was essentially how we were living. However, very quickly we managed to get the staff out, and I think that within a year we had everybody but ourselves out of the hotel.

Q: A question I forgot to ask was how did Tajikistan leave the Soviet Union. I know about the same time I spent three weeks in Bishkek in Kyrgyzstan, and the Kyrgyz were sort of yanked squealing from the womb of the Soviet Union. They were getting more out of it than they were putting in, and it was very obvious that they weren't coming out particularly ahead on this. How about with the Tajiks?

SMITH: I think basically the same thing was true in the case of Tajikistan, that the Tajiks didn't want independence, and economics was one of the reasons, because Tajikistan, as Kyrgyzstan, was one of those republics, which, according to Soviet statistics, were a net drain on the center. The center financed a lot of things, and under Soviet times, they had things in Tajikistan which they wouldn't have had except for that support for Moscow. They had an Academy of Sciences. They had an opera, a ballet. Even at the district level they had cultural centers and did operas and plays, orchestra. So there was an infrastructure there that came from the center, that came with being a republic, an educational structure, that strictly on the basis of their own production they probably wouldn't have had.

Q: I'll go back to Bishkek, where there was a big helicopter factory, which they were trying to figure out what to do with because they were no longer making helicopters.

SMITH: That's true. They had in their economic system factories which were totally tied in to other parts of the Soviet Union, that would make one part for something, and unless they were integrated into that they had no reason to exist. They also had things which could only exist because of the peculiarities, or mainly existed because of peculiarities, of the Soviet economic system. One of the world's largest aluminum smelters is in Tajikistan, and it's there because of hydroelectric power. But all the raw materials have to come from the Ukraine or farther. And under the Soviet transportation pricing system, this made economic sense. However, after independence, when transportation costs became real costs, it suddenly became - depending on whose economics you use - marginally profitable or unprofitable. And it was totally integrated, and then being torn off or being put aside and having the economic system elsewhere collapse, it left Tajikistan and the other small countries in a very strange situation. They said to me that

the one person who had served as prime minister under both the opposition and then the current government, and that the reason he had been kept on in the position is that the prime minister position in Tajikistan, as in many other of the former Soviet republics, is an economic position. The reason he had been kept on was that he was the one who had the contacts and he could keep this system operating. He could call up people in other republics and cut deals. You know, we'll send you so many wagonloads of cotton or of aluminum in return for X, Y, or *Z,* because everything had degenerated to barter.

Q: Could you talk about dealing with the government there, on your part?

SMITH: Yes. First let me say that the ten months of learning Tajik were very well spent because the number of English-speakers among the senior level is very small. There are a younger cadre that know English, particularly those who've participated in one of our programs, like the Bradley Program, but at the government level very few, so you're working in Russian or Tajik. In the case of Tajikistan, they had always kept their language, and they felt very strongly about that language, and as early as 1989, although they didn't want to leave the Soviet Union, they did want to have their language, and they had a language law beginning in 1989 pressing the use of Tajik. So having studied Tajik I was able to do a lot of my business in Tajik, and in I kept working it, so by the time I left I could have private meetings in Tajik without an interpreter necessary. And since my predecessor had also been a non-Russian speaker-

Q: Who was that?

SMITH: Stan Escudero, a Farsi-speaker, mutually intelligible - we got a lot of credit for speaking the national language rather than Russian. The first independence day I was there, a big meeting, the whole government, the president gets up and gives his speech; the Russian ambassador gets up and gives his speech, how Russia will always support the government. Well, we can't say that - we're in a much more neutral position vis-à-vis the government of the opposition - but I get up and read the President's message in Tajik: I got as much applause as the Russian, because I'd done it in Tajik. And I think that in general, being able to work in Tajik was a tremendous advantage. There are people who even maintained that in some meetings, for some people the nature of the conversation would change depending on the language you were in, that the Russian tended to be a much more formal and set-piece kind of thing, and you couldn't have the -

Q: Well, I'm sure, because this was what you used when you dealt with officials.

SMITH: That's right. The Tajiks are a very hospitable people, and we even used to like to joke that they engaged in "hospitality terrorism." They would sort of kidnap you, and a five-minute cup of tea, if you were really pushy, you could get out in half an hour, but it usually involved a full meal and going on for hours. So you had to be very careful. There was not any problem in having direct relationships with the Tajiks. You didn't have to do everything through the government, and you didn't have the feeling that everything was controlled. You could invite people for dinner, get invited for dinner or tea, and move basically around as you would in another place - which we greatly appreciated. I'm not

sure I would have liked a totally controlled atmosphere. Kyrgyzstan is the same way.

Q: Say you'd go in and see government officials. Were they much interested in what the United States was about, and all? Did you feel you were playing much of a role there, or was it -

SMITH: Tremendous interest in the United States, some of it misplaced, in the sense that they seemed to think that we were going to replace Moscow and that money which used to come from Moscow would now come from the United States. Well, yes, we were going to provide, and are providing significant economic assistance, but it isn't the same way that it used to come from Moscow at all. Not much understanding of the United States. I'd often felt that the concept to understand a colony you have to understand the mother country, at least for the first few years after independence. In India the views of the Indian establishment about the United States were very much colored by the London School of Economics.

Q: The Fabian Socialists.

SMITH: In French-speaking Africa, when we were there, the views of the United States were very much those of France.

Q: And of the intellectuals.

SMITH: The French intellectuals. So there were certainly a fair number of people, even if they hadn't come up through the KGB, who had a Soviet view of the United States, just because they'd grown up in that education and that atmosphere. So there was a considerable amount of misunderstanding, which I think... I was skeptical of the Bradley Program when I went out, but I-

Q: Could you explain what the Bradley Program is?

SMITH: The Bradley Program... We had significant exchange programs with the former Soviet Union, the Bradley Program being the most different from what we've done elsewhere, in the sense that we were bringing high-school students, large numbers of them, over to spend a year in the United States. And this sort of goes against what I'd always thought about exchanges, which was you wanted to work at the graduate level and later, because that was when people were really established enough in their own country and could come over and appreciate the United States. But when you need to jumpstart a relationship, change the outlook, get a large number of people with a different point of view and have English, the Bradley program worked very well, because we did begin to get these youngsters who really knew quite a bit about the United States, and it was really very useful to get at this whole mindset.

Q: Yes, and also I would imagine the kids that came over would essentially belong to or be associated with those who were ruling the country, for the most part - I mean, just because their family would be aware of the program and all that.

SMITH: I suspect that was true a fair amount. We, of course, ran it trying to prevent that, so that it was strictly on the basis of merit, and we had a lot of complaints from people - "My son didn't get selected." There were some other programs that were much more that way. There was a sister cities program between the northern capital of the country and Lincoln, Nebraska, which had an element of exchanges there, and those tended to be focused on the elite.

SMITH: *Well, now, what were we doing there?*

SMITH: Well, our major objective, as I alluded earlier, in Tajikistan, has been to support the peace process there, to prevent Tajikistan from being a source of trouble in the region or a conduit for trouble in the region. And therefore, the best way to do that is to have the reconciliation process - the Kosovo War and Reconciliation Process - work, and we were working at a number of levels to achieve that. There was a UN-sponsored mediation going on, which had begun in '94, which we strongly supported. We were not one of the countries that were officially part of that. In other words, there were certain countries that were officially associated with it. We were not one of them, and the Russians probably would have objected to our official associations. On the other hand, we played a more active role than any of the countries that were directly associated with it, except for Russia and Iran, simply by whenever there was a meeting making sure that we had high-level representation in the corridors and able to influence. And our influence was through lobbying. Before there was a meeting, we would lobby both sides. Before, we would make public statements, sometimes quite specific, being critical of one side or the other, working closely with the United Nations on the whole mediation process and also with the Russians - obviously not with the Iranians, who were another major player. And as the process proceeded, in June of 1997, they finally had a peace agreement, or a group of peace agreements that had been negotiated over the previous few years and were finally put together in a package and the total package signed and approved in June of '97. We designed programs to support that, or supported programs which were supporting the peace process. We pushed the World Bank and the IMF to come in with some post-conflict credits. The World Bank, I think partly under our pressure, moved with surprising speed, and the IMF. The Bank and the IMF announced their credits within six months of the signing of the peace accords, which is light speed for them and much faster than they generally act. And we had a lot of programs of our own that supported this, both USIS programs - again, USIS has an advantage that it can move fairly quickly... In '97, we brought to the United States, for example, two groups of politicians to learn about political parties. In both groups you had both opposition and government. In fact, we had senior members of banned political parties included in these groups, with the government's knowledge. In 1998, we brought a group over called Religion and Democracy to look at how we deal with that issue in the United States, and I think it had a direct effect on the political process. The people who designed the program - I give them a lot of credit - took these Tajiks to Salt Lake City, which I would not have thought of, but it was a good idea.

Q: We're talking about the Mormon Church there.

SMITH: And that group came back. I think it opened up their thinking. One of the participants in it had been the head of the Islamic Renaissance Party before it was banned. He came back, and as he came back, there was a very difficult negotiation underway about the language in a political party's bill, and the government was trying to say that there can be no religious-based parties, which would have undercut the whole peace process. The negotiations on that were rigid. They were only looking at secularism or this kind of thing. And he came in with a different point of view and proposed a compromise that solved the problem. And I think that his experience in the United States had something to do with it. He didn't say do something about taxation, but what he did was to propose a solution which was that religious institutions shall not be used for political purposes - which solved the problem. So I think DARE, in our work with both sides, private quiet meetings with both sides, pressure, had some effect, and I think that our aid programs were able to have some effect.

Q: What were we doing with our aid programs?

SMITH: Well, of course, the Bank and the Fund we were major players with, and it was nice, we often got credit for what the Bank and the Fund did. I wasn't going to complain. We had had an aid program of some type there, but we were able, after the peace accords were signed, to begin looking for things that would specifically support the peace process. And the kind of things that we were able to do was to put money in programs which would provide employment for demobilized fighters, two specific projects in the main opposition area. They were not U.S.-direct programs. One was done by the Aga Khan Foundation, one was done by the UN. We put money into it, and we were the only ones who were putting money into those projects. I think that since then they've gotten some others, but we certainly led the way.

Q: I would have thought that dealing there would be quite difficult because, one, you have Iran, which had pretensions of becoming the great Islamic influence, and then you also had these very fundamental Afghans, who were still fighting a civil war, for one thing, and messing around there. And I would have though that these would be two very disturbing factors.

SMITH: They were, and the certainly influenced the security situation. The Iranians, for their own reasons, particularly in '95-97, were working closely with the Russians, each pushing its respective client in the direction of peace, because the Iranians, of course, were concerned about what was going on in Afghanistan, with the Taliban, and I think the Iranians recognized that a successful peace in Tajikistan would prevent the spread of what was going on in Afghanistan to the north. The Russians and the Iranians both knew that. And of course now you had this situation where the Russians and the Iranians are both helping to resupply the opposition to the Taliban through Tajikistan.

Q: What was the situation like in Dushanbe while you were there with the war on?

SMITH: In some ways it got worse while we were there, in the sense that the war itself

had been fought in 1992, and that's when there was fighting in Dushanbe and the area south of Dushanbe. When we arrived in Dushanbe, it was quiet from that standpoint. There were occasional killings related to the civil war, particularly of Russian servicemen, but there was no real fighting in the city. The fighting when we first arrived there was largely in the eastern part of the country, the Karategin Valley, which was about a hundred miles east of Dushanbe. There was a cease-fire achieved there in late '96, and that and the peace accords essentially led to the end of the fighting there. However, the process of implementing the peace accords brought tension closer to Dushanbe, so that we had a series of incidents near and in Dushanbe. Let's see if I can give the sequence here.

In August of 1997, there was fighting in the northern part of the city. The German ambassador was pinned down in his house for a day. This was the two parts of the government, which were fighting with each other, because what had happened at the end of the civil war - the civil war on the what became the government side had been fought largely by private armies. When that side won and became the government, they then incorporated those private armies in different parts of the government. And many of them then took on mafia-like crime controls, with geographic sectors. And the fighting in Dushanbe was between the Customs and the Ministry of Interior troops, basically over turf in the northern part of the city. So this is two parts of the government fighting. There was a significant amount of ordnance expended, very, very few casualties. At one point, I remember, we had a pre-scheduled call at what they called an "open university," and since it had associated with it some people who had significant positions in the opposition, we were there. We had lunch sitting outside in a grove of fruit trees. This was in the center of the city, watching the smoke come up from the northern part of the city. I was reminded of the French movie *Black and White in Color - La victoire en chantant* - the French *bouffes* watching the First World War in Africa. Then again, in late April of 1998, there was significant fighting in the city. No, wait a minute - I should back that up and say later on in 1997 there were explosions. There had been explosions, and those explosions intensified in September and October. They were largely seen to be designed to send a message, because they weren't killing people, but they were blowing up a kiosk or something like that. Then in November of '97, there was an incident, a kidnaping by a renegade group that had once been part of the opposition but was no longer part of the opposition. The same group which had taken some UN hostages in early '97 in November of '97 took two French people hostage, a Frenchman and his wife. He worked for the EU, and she had just gotten a contract with UNHCR, and they were kidnapped. He got away, but she was killed in the rescue attempt. This was in November of '97, and that was in and around Dushanbe. And then in April of '98, there was again significant fighting within the city, this time between the government, the Ministry of the Interior troops, and an opposition element, which was not far from Dushanbe. And I mentioned that with the peace accords, the friction had come closer to Dushanbe because that was the area where the government and the opposition were most interwoven, and it was hardest to have disarmament and cantonment of the opposition. In the East it wasn't very hard, because it was all opposition controlled. This was the front, the area of friction, and this was an opposition commander who was not totally under the opposition control and the Ministry of the Interior commander, who, as we'd heard in August, had a strong position in the

government and some very direct feelings, so that time there was very significant fighting in the eastern part of the city, including in the airport area.

Q: Could you talk about dealing with your staff, particularly the Americans, because at least my experience observing in my little time in Kyrgyzstan, there isn't a hell of a lot to do, and- (end of tape)

SMITH: I think we had good morale. In posts like Dushanbe you want to get people who want to come to begin with, and some members of the staff I or my DCM had recruited directly. And you need people who are self-sufficient or who can make a life for themselves in this kind of a situation, and we had some of them - people who just thrive on this kind of a situation. We had one member of the staff who, when she was looking for another assignment, wanted something like this. She wanted to go to Sarajevo. This was in '96. There is an international community there. There's a UN community, both the UN peacekeepers, or UN observers, and the staff of the UN mission there, plus UNDP, plus a lot of NGOs - OSCE. So there is an international community. It does become difficult when there's a security situation and you have to stay home. There's not just a night-time curfew but an all-time curfew. But the Tajiks, in response to the security situation in Dushanbe, when we arrived and I think the whole time we were there, had stopped having their weddings and other celebrations in the evenings and were having them all in the afternoon. So again, in the middle of these incidents in Dushanbe city you may have a wedding going on in the hotel with lots of music and dancing. And the Tajiks liked their music and dancing.

Q: What was the government? Who were the major personalities, and how did you deal with them?

SMITH: Well, the president, when I was there and still the president, Rakhmonov, who had been a *kolkhoz* chairman before independence -

Q: This is a collective farm.

SMITH: Yes, and was sort of chosen to be president, first speaker and then president, by the commanders of these private armies. He was not one himself. He was a compromise, chosen to be that, so he had to deal by negotiation with them. He did not have a huge army of his own. I saw him periodically, not the kind of sort of weekly or monthly post relationship that we had in some places. Much more frequent meetings with the foreign minister, the foreign affairs advisor to the president, the prime minister, the other economic ministers. And later on, when we had a commission of national reconciliation in Dushanbe, with opposition government members, with both sides who were members of that commission, and we had points to make on issues of the national reconciliation and implementation of the peace accords, we were able to lobby with all concerned on those. I could usually get an appointment on fairly short notice. We had a senior FSN... First of all, I should say we had some exceptionally competent Foreign Service nationals, some of the best I've encountered anywhere in my Foreign Service career. And some of the women - one of them had been an official in the Council of Ministers before

independence and brought over with her just an enormous number of relationships and access to people in the government. She also, very soon after her arrival, arranged that we get one of these government telephones. You can dial anybody else in the government with three digits, and they answer that phone because it's the government phone, it's not an outside line. So we had one, and the Russian embassy had one. She had it on her desk, but when I wanted to get a hold of somebody, I could go in and use that phone. She'd get him on the line, and I'd talk to him in Tajik, either to arrange a meeting, deal with some problem, make a démarche sometimes - but it was extremely useful. And I always like to say that in diplomacy you can save a tremendous amount of time if you can establish the relationships so that you can do some of your business on the telephone. And this was a case where between the language and this phone - and the relationships - we were able to do some of that. It was very useful.

Q: What was the role in your relationship with the Russian ambassador?

SMITH: Well, first of all, the Russian embassy was downstairs. The Russian embassy had the whole third floor of the hotel; we had the fourth floor. And this produced a sense of cohabitation, I suppose you'd call it. It probably didn't exist anywhere else in the world. In 1992, when the embassy was closed - evacuated - the Russian ambassador arranged for some Russian APCs to take the embassy staff to the airport. And those APCs came under fire on the way back, and there were some casualties.

Q: APCs are armored personnel carriers.

SMITH: Right. "BTRs" in the Russian sense. So we had a particular relationship. The Russian ambassador when I arrived there, Sinkievich, pretty much an old Cold Warrior - heavy into alcohol, and if you've done an interview with Peter Galbraith, you will hear more about him because he went from Dushanbe to Zagreb, and I was talking to Peter about him last weekend.

Q: I'm working on Peter.

SMITH: It was a fairly formal relationship except when we got together and consumed quantities of vodka. But his successor, Bielov, a much younger, much less (at least on the surface) of a Cold Warrior, much more of a person who clearly was there doing a job, didn't posture as much, and we obviously disagreed with them, but we had some common interests, particularly on the security side, because of the location of the embassy. And sometime he'd enlist our support, sometimes we'd enlist their support on security issues, and of course in the background of all that you can imagine that our security office (and I'm sure their security office) were paranoid about this locationship question. In other words, that they were just downstairs from us, and we were just upstairs from them.

Q: What -

SMITH: The Russians lived in their embassy, and they were not moving out. The Russian

ambassador finally moved out about the last six months that we were there, and he was the first person in their embassy to move out. Everybody else was still living in the hotel.

Q: Did they have Russian flight from Tajikistan?

SMITH: No. You are really asking about the Russian community or the Russian presence. Well, of course, the biggest part of the Russian presence was military. When the Soviet Union broke up, they left the 201st Motorized Rifle Division in Dushanbe as a Russian division. In some other places the units became part of the local forces. In the case of Tajikistan, this is still a Russian division, which is there as part of the peacekeeping force, but which doesn't function as we would think a peacekeeping force would functions. It's more of a presence. Plus Russian border troops. Now Russian border forces in Tajikistan are 80 or 90 percent Tajik. When they have a draft, some of the draftees go into the Tajik army, some of them go into the Tajik Ministry of the Interior, some of them go to the Russian border forces. But the command and control of those border forces is in Moscow, and not the Russian Ministry of Defense, not the Russian Ministry [of Interior] - a separate entity. So you had roughly at some point I think it was the figure they were quoting was about 20,000, although by the time I left it was significantly less than that, Russian border forces - plus a motorized rifle division - each with separate lines of command and control to Moscow, separate from the Russian embassy. The Russian community itself, other than this, had dropped dramatically from pre-independence to post-independence. In Tajikistan the Russian community was always one of the smallest in the former Soviet Union. The figure I heard from the Russian ambassador was that before independence it was 450,000, which is nine percent - that's about right. After independence it had dropped to 70,000, and most of those were pensioners, particularly sad cases. So this was roughly the Russian community there. And you were asking about flights -

Q: I noticed in Kyrgyzstan the Russians were the entrepreneurs. They were running boot shops and things of this nature, whereas the Kyrgyz were going into government offices with briefcases. But really, the Russians, those that were left, were kind of running the underpinnings of living in the country.

SMITH: In Tajikistan there were some Russian businessmen left, but of course, Tajikistan had always had a bazaar community, and even under the Soviets they'd had very active markets. And they continued that.

Q: Well, the Kyrgyz were horse people, and the -

SMITH: The Tajiks were settled. Now of the Central Asians, the Tajiks and the Uzbeks were their Sarts, which were the settled ones; and the Kyrgyz and the Kazakhs and the Turkomen were all the nomads. And that was the key distinction before the Soviets, anyway. The Russian community in Tajikistan was an awful lot of technical people, experts in certain fields. With the breakup of the Soviet Union - I think this was true everywhere - a portion of Aeroflot's planes were given to the country, which then set up its own airline, and that airline then provided the connections to Moscow. The only

flights out of the country were to the former Soviet Union. There were occasions when there were flights beyond them. The flights were to Moscow, one a week to Bishkek, and sometimes one a week to Ashgabat.

Q: How Muslim in truth was Tajikistan? Again, I go back to Kyrgyzstan. It was technically Muslim, but I would suspect that just from all accounts it really was non-believing.

SMITH: Well, in a cultural sense, the Tajiks were very Muslim. They had done a good job of retaining their language and their festivals and traditions. By the time I left, the last meeting of Parliament that I attended was totally in Tajik. They had all of their festivals, many of which had been repressed during the Soviet period and even the non-religious traditional festivals had been repressed. On the other hand, AID sponsored a public survey, one of the questions of which was how many times a day do you pray? I think only two percent played five times a day. It was a very low number, in any case. So these are people who think of themselves as Muslim, but much more in a cultural way than in a strictly religious way. But it does vary with parts of the country, and there are some fairly serious Muslims, particularly among the opposition.

Q: In this sort of same light, what about the spillover from Afghanistan, where things got very religious there? I was wondering.

SMITH: Well, the Taliban were far too fundamentalist for even the opposition - at least that's my view. There were some differences of opinion within the opposition about the Taliban, but certainly you would hear the opposition saying things like, "Well, we'll still need some Russian troops on the border because of the situation in Afghanistan." The fundamentalism of the Taliban is basically not fundamentalism... Well, it is the way of life of very religious rural Afghanistan, whereas many of the Tajik opposition leaders, although they may have come originally from rural Tajikistan, were in fact literate in Russian as well as Tajik and comparatively well educated. I mean, Tajikistan is a country with over 90 percent literacy - like the rest of the former Soviet Union.

Q: What about the role of women?

SMITH: That was one of the things, of course, that the Soviets had brought. The women had thrown off their *burqas*, their veils, in the early Soviet period and had a significant role, some of that achieved by quotas. And to some extent, at the end of the Soviet system, the number of women in high places was declining. There was still a woman minister of education. There were some women in other significant positions, but there were very few in parliament, and there were some reports that education of women was dropping, sometimes because of religious influence, sometimes for economic reasons. There were a couple of areas under opposition controls where there were reports of women being made to wear head scarves, there was one area where the UN was told not to hire women - but not nearly as far as it had gone in Afghanistan. Women were still going to school, and there were not separate schools for women. The opposition leaders were saying that women have a role in our society. It's quite different from Afghanistan

in that sense.

Q: What was your impression of the interest of the United States in these countries? Would Central Asian ambassadors get together and say, "Nobody pays attention to us?" Or how did you feel about this? I'm talking from the American-

SMITH: Well, Central Asian ambassadors did get together periodically - on our own. And I think the first two times we did it on our own, and the third time somebody came out from Washington. But the first two times it was totally on our own. I think we got a fair amount of attention. I personally didn't have many complaints, because when you have a civil war or a former civil war, you can get the press statement when you need it. You may not get the high-level appointments, but they may not be appropriate anyway because of the nature of the government. But you can get the press statement, and when you have an aid project that you can really make an argument for as supporting the peace process, you can get the money for that. In November of 1997, in Vienna, I sat down with the deputy from ESNIS-C, which is the part of ESNIS that coordinates our assistance.

Q: ESNIS is that division of the Department that does basically -

SMITH: The newly independent states. And ESNIS-C is the one that oversees the assistance which we provide the newly independent states; and most of that goes through AID, but not all of it. And we just sat down and we wrote the aid budget for Tajikistan to get the money that I felt we needed for these projects which supported the peace process. We had an AID representative in that meeting, but the three of us just sat down, and we wrote it in Vienna.

Q: What was the rationale for the United States being concerned about he peace process in a place way in the middle of Central Asia?

SMITH: The rationale was not specifically about Tajikistan but about the effect of what was going on in Tajikistan and what effect that could have elsewhere. The threat of this conflict, particularly with the Islamic fundamentalist aspects of it, spilling over into the neighboring part of Central Asia was quite a concern. And right now, you may have noticed that recent articles about the problem in Kyrgyzstan - well, these are people who were in Tajikistan. They were Uzbeks who were in Tajikistan and trying to go back to Uzbekistan and were caught trying to traverse Kyrgyzstan and took some hostages and had a standoff there. That's a small-scale example. But a real concern that if this is not successfully solved you will have a spread of the problem to elsewhere in the former Soviet Union. And of course, the way we would phrase it was that our objective is to see Tajikistan successful as an independent, economically viable, and democratic state. That says a lot of different things, but it also says that the Soviet Union won't be reestablished in a different guise in this part of Central Asia, which just has to be another thing at the back of our minds.

Q: By the time you left there, did you feel that Tajiki spirit or something had taken hold - it was no longer a possibility of a recreation of the Soviet Union, as far as this Central

Asian country was concerned?

SMITH: There certainly were people in Tajikistan still who looked back to life in the Soviet Union as having been better, and therefore would have liked to return to it. However, for the same reason that they were interested in it, the Russians were not interested - in the sense that to have that better life required a transfer of resources from Moscow, and that was the last thing that the Russians wanted to do. However, on the other side, certainly the institution of a successful independent government of Tajikistan had been much more established by the time I left, and with all of the equities that various players get in that kind of thing.

Q: And a new generation was growing up, I suppose. What about a feeling of "We want Samarkand and Bukhara," and that sort of thing? Was there a feeling of -

SMITH: This is something that observers like to toss out and the Uzbeks like to mention as a potential source of problem. You didn't really hear very much of that. Occasionally, there would be some reference to it in a statement often used - Uzbekistan and Tajikistan sort of needling each other, Uzbekistan president Karimov would say something like, "The president of Tajikistan shouldn't forget who put him on the throne, since Uzbekistan had helped the current government win the civil war, and the president of Tajikistan then replied something that, you know, "We might have to reconsider our policy on various things." But not very much discussion of that. There are certainly stellar links, particularly to Samarkand - there are groups in Tajikistan who are known in Samarkand, who just go back and forth to Samarkand. There are some people there who do feel strongly about this issue, one of whom was on a commission of national reconciliation, and the Uzbek community saw his presence there as a potential problem.

Q: How about ties - is there a lot of travel back and forth?

SMITH: With Uzbekistan?

Q: Between Uzbekistan and-

SMITH: A lot of travel, but it's very hard, because the Uzbeks are very tough at the border, and it's a constant source of friction with the Tajiks. It's very hard to get across that border.

Q: Why?

SMITH: Well, the Uzbeks say it's because they're concerned with narcotics flows and things like that. In fact, I think that it's because Pakistan, after having helped the government win in 1992, has never been happy about its degree of influence over the government and has therefore, in various ways, periodically done things to remind the government of the Uzbek strength, either by controlling the border, cutting off gas supplies - things like that. There are no air flights between Tajikistan and Uzbekistan.

Q: Really? Were there still signs of the old Soviet almost 'shakedown' system of roadblocks with police? If you try to travel around, they'd stop you, and if you weren't an official car or something, a little money would change hands and that sort of thing?

SMITH: That's right. Their idea of control was roadblocks. And roadblocks, in many or most cases, were in fact revenue-raising operations, and some of them very explicitly so.

Q: Well, by the time you left there, Grant, in your impression, wither Tajikistan and, by inference, that whole area?

SMITH: I've actually written article that appeared in *Central Asian Survey*, the last number, which gave my opinion about the peace process. In fact, the peace process in Tajikistan, compared to some other peace processes, had been relatively successful, and certainly one of the lowest-cost ones around. Success per dollars was quite high there. On the other hand, the peace process has been late, behind schedule, and parts of it have not yet really been implemented. It's hard to know whether they're going to succeed in really implementing it. Right now the parliamentary elections, which were supposed to have happened last year and now are supposed to happen early next year - the year 2000, which will be, really, a year and a half behind schedule - and that will be probably the best test of whether it's going to happen. They had made significant success. The fighting stopped for the most part. The refugees came home from Afghanistan. The opposition got in the government. The opposition leaders' families are in Dushanbe. On the other hand, they haven't done everything else that they were supposed to. The demobilization of opposition fighters really hasn't been successful. And there is a significant problem that there are some elements that are left out of the peace process, that were never part of the peace process. And the way to engage those, we always argued, was to have early fair elections. Those elections haven't occurred yet, and it isn't clear that when they occur they're going to be timely enough or run fairly enough to really give those elements that were left out a sense of participation. Plus, some of those elements are significantly armed, and you have this whole problem of spoilers or obstructionists. Some of them have significant interests, probably criminal or trafficking drugs, that would mean that for them it's hard to show that peace is enough of an incentive because they're doing quite well under the current system. You know, in Angola, you have diamonds and oil, and it's very hard to persuade the two sides that they're going to gain more by reconciling. In Tajikistan, it's narcotics, with some individual obstructionists that can be a major problem. But it has got along a lot farther than people would have expected four or five years ago, and you have the opposition functioning in the government now.

Q: So it had not reverted, as some of the ones did, to essentially Soviet style, one big boss taking over.

SMITH: There are some people who see the government operating that way, because Rakhmonov is very much in charge, in the old sense. He has compromised with the opposition on various issues, and the real question is going to be how it's going to work out after these next parliamentary elections - how the parliamentary elections are going to work and how it's going to work out. The security situation is a continuing concern. Some

of these obstructionists have private armies, and they were responsible for the fighting in April-May of 1998; and again in December of 1998, there was a shootout in the center of town in front of the headquarters of the Commission of National Reconciliation. This time two opposition group, and it sounds like the Wild West, except that now they're using AK-47s, and three people were killed. Still there are parts of the country where there are roads it isn't safe to use. As a matter of fact, the road from Dushanbe to the east is still closed. There's one, I'd say, obstructionist leader out there. There were four members of the UN mission who were murdered out there in July of '98, and probably by somebody under the control of this particular obstructionist leader. So it continues to be a dangerous place. Operations at the embassy there were suspended after I left. The reason was, I think, that there had been a continuing security concern because of this Wild West atmosphere. You can imagine Washington getting reports of fighting in the northern part of the city, fighting in the eastern part of the city, incidents sometimes involving Americans (although none were killed), plus some information that there were some specific threats, that people may have been looking at us specifically. There was a *Washington Times* article, oh, maybe a year and a half ago that summarized a lot of this stuff. So there had been this ongoing security concern about Dushanbe, and beginning in September of '97, I was riding around all the time in an armored car with a security detail of one American and six or seven armed Tajiks from our own embassy guard force whom DS [Diplomatic Security] had trained. So that was the background. Then in July of 1998, first you had the attacks on our embassies in East Africa from Bin Laden, who is there in Afghanistan; and then in August of 1998 we attack his camp, and we knew that some of the opposition fighters had been trained in those camps. We felt that they might feel a little bit sentimental. So there was considerable security concern after the attacks in East Africa and our retaliation. We were still on the top floor of the hotel. We didn't have an independent site. We had begun work on an embassy building, but it wasn't going to have two things. First of all, the first stage was going to be a temporary building, which was not hardened at all, and secondly, it didn't have quite sufficient setbacks. It was in the center of town. And they decided to suspend operations of the embassy. So right now you have the Foreign Service nationals working out of what had been our house. We gave up the top floor of the hotel completely. They are working out of what had been our house. The ambassador, my successor, is located in Almaty and comes down a couple of times a month, stays in what had been the guest wing of the house, and does his business for a few days and goes back. Other members of the staff come down periodically as well.

Q: What about narcotics?

SMITH: Yes. When I was doing the narcotics job, I always used to explain to people that every time we had seen a transit country, we had seen that there were two threats to that country because of the transit of narcotics through the country. One was consumption, because sooner or later you began to get consumption in every transit country. And secondly, the influence of the trafficking organizations on the government could in the most extreme result in a government that was totally controlled by the trafficking organizations. And in the case of Tajikistan, we saw both of these going on. First of all, according to our statistics, Afghanistan is the second largest producer of opium in the world. According to the UN statistics, it's the first largest, larger than Burma. (we say it's

smaller than Burma). The major growing regions are down close to the Afghan border, near Kandahar in the Helmand region, but some is grown in the north, a smaller crop is grown in the north in the Badakhshan province of Afghanistan, adjacent to Tajikistan, and when I arrived, there was a significant flow of opium from Badakhshan, Afghanistan, to Badakhshan in Tajikistan, almost entirely in the form of opium. We did some calculations, and you know you could - I'll try to remember the statistics now, but I think we figured out that - these could be off significantly, but - if they produced 50 tons of opium in Badakhshan, Afghanistan, some of that was consumed there, but say 40 tons came through Tajikistan. Each kilo you got a profit of $500. I think that works out to something like $20 million profit for transiting Tajikistan. That was at that time mostly - meaning 90 percent, were the estimates I heard - going through the eastern part of Tajikistan, the Gorno-Badakhshan Province there, on a road or other routes, up into Osh in Kyrgyzstan. I remember when I first arrived I heard there was a Mercedes dealer in Osh. Well, you can imagine what that Mercedes dealer is getting his money from.

By the time I left, the trade had changed significantly, with probably 50 percent of the flow across into the western part of the country and a significant portion of that in heroin, not in the form of opium. We never were very sure about whether there were labs in Badakhshan, Afghanistan, but surely some, if not all, of that heroin was coming from the areas farther to the south, now in fact controlled by the Taliban. So you had a very different situation. You had not just opium but heroin, with much higher value, much more addictive, and trafficking organizations tend to be much stronger. And most of this as coming through the western part of the country, up to Dushanbe and then going off from there, and with some of those private armies on the government side involved in that traffic. We had people, not Americans, from one delegation who had been down along the border and said you'd see these Tajik border forces down there. The individual soldiers might not even have shoes, but the person in charge might have a Mercedes or a BMW in his garage. Again, you can draw your own conclusions. On the other hand, at least parts of the opposition in the eastern part of the country, had been and probably still were involved in trafficking through that area, with essentially what were private armies on their side.

Q: I would have thought this would be the place where DEA would be trying to establish a presence. Was that in the cards?

SMITH: Well, first of all, DEA focuses on places with a direct relationship with the United States, where it can make cases about traffic to the United States. Everything which was going out of Tajikistan was, I think, almost all going to Moscow. And certainly the pure opium, the raw opium, was for consumption in Moscow. There was no market in the United States for opium. So DEA's direct interest was somewhat less than it would be, let's say, in Thailand or even Pakistan or Afghanistan. We tried to get DEA to visit on a lot of occasions, unsuccessfully, to come in and give a basic narcotics course. DEA tends to like to do things where there are five-star hotels, and we didn't have any, so we didn't succeed in getting DEA. We did get Customs to come in and give a course. Our focus was much more on getting the UN to take the lead and support the UN. But even there we had a lot of trouble. The UNDCP did put together a project in the eastern part of

the country. It was very slow getting started, and we put money into it, to control that road going up to Osh or to provide added controls on that road going up to Osh. But even more than that, it needed an integrated country-wide program. You needed international support for that. We had UNDCP sort of ready to do it, but they move extremely slowly, and getting them to visit-

Q: UNDCP-

SMITH: UN International Drug Control Program, based in Vienna. But it was very hard to get them engaged there. The Tajiks had created an anti-narcotics commission headed by somebody who was quite good, whom we brought to the United States at one point. But getting the UNDCP engaged to do things was very difficult. We were able to do some small things.

Q: Well, you left there in '98. Since we're in '99, I take it you came back here?

SMITH: Yes, I have been - still am - at the Peacekeeping Institute at the Army War College in Carlisle. The Peacekeeping Institute is a think tank which represents the peacekeeping issue within the U.S. Army and the U.S. Army's views on it outside.

Q: Well, could we talk just a bit about that, because this, in a way, seems to be a major role now for the Army, isn't it? Or do they see it that way?

SMITH: They see it that way. They are not entirely sure they like it because they feel that their major mission is fighting and winning wars, and peacekeeping without the added resources that they think are necessary detracts from that major mission - that the units that do peacekeeping have to be trained for that and then, when they're finished, retrained to bring them up to levels where they're ready for ordinary kind of warfare. They're concerned that the equipment they need for peacekeeping is different from the equipment they need for fighting wars.

Q: Do you find, though, that you're seeing a sort of a new breed of officer, a certain percentage, who are engaged in this, seeing this as one of the major functions, such as field artillery officer or cavalry officer - that the peacekeeping officer with languages, interpersonal skills, this type of thing, is the wave of the future? Are you seeing a new breed?

SMITH: Well, there certainly are officers who've served in Haiti and Bosnia who have hands-on experience who are now rising to the top, General Shinseki being an example; however, the specialists of the kind you mentioned would be from their Civil Affairs, and they have not expanded. There have been recommendations to do it, but as of yet I don't think they've significantly expanded their civil affairs cadre, which means that since that's mostly reserved, a very small active duty group, that those people are being worked very, very hard. There hasn't been an effort to really expand, to improve their capabilities on that side. The peacekeeping institute, you could say, is part of that, in the sense that it is running seminars on peacekeeping issues for discussion within the Army, doing

education, participating in exercises, advising on preparation and training of units to do peacekeeping.

Q: Well, I was just wondering. I mean you look at the Department of State and the Department of Defense. Right now we're living through the Bosnia-Kosovo experience, but I would think that this would be almost the wave of the future, and I was wondering, do you feel that there's a cadre being built up both in the Army and in the State Department who are going to be able to deal with this?

SMITH: Well, certainly in the Army there is a group that has hands-on experience now, and I was out at Fort Leavenworth earlier this year, where they run the Command and General Staff College, and they said that the percentage of officers who come in there who have hands-on experience has really risen to around 25 percent. So it affects the way these games go. And the seminars that the peacekeeping- (end of tape)

-the Peacekeeping Institute runs. The first one, I understand, was extremely basic peacekeeping. The last one I attended, in June, was a discussion of exit strategy, what needs to be accomplished before you can leave and how do you accomplish that. This was a fairly sophisticated argument, and most of the Army personnel there were people who had a lot of hand-on experience, but there were some there who didn't, which was good too because they were being introduced into these missions. Of course, the Army isn't the only part of the U.S. military establishment with equities on peacekeeping. The Marine Corps also-

Q: The Marine Corps, yes, as well as the Navy and the Air Force.

SMITH: - but the Marine Corps has a lot of interest, experience - Somalia being the-

Q: Yes, they go back to Nicaragua...

SMITH: Yes. They see themselves as a force that goes in but only for a brief period. They see themselves as much shorter-term than the Army. But they're much less ambivalent about it than the Army is. Because this is part of their mission, they don't have all of those conflicting issues that the Army does. They, in fact, say that they find that peacekeeping is excellent for individual and small unit training, as opposed to large exercises. But the lower down impact is very positive on training.

Q: Well, I guess we might stop at this point.

SMITH: Okay.

Q: And I thank you very much.

End of Interview