

## Interview with Charles Stuart Kennedy

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

CHARLES STUART KENNEDY

Interviewer: Brandon Grove

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This is an oral history interview with Charles Stuart Kennedy at the Lauinger Library in Georgetown University on the afternoon of September 4th, 1996. I am Brandon Grove, a former Foreign Service officer and colleague of Stu's.

*Q: Stu, I know that you have written your memoirs. Tell me whether you've published them, where they might be available, and what they contain.*

KENNEDY: Well, Brandon, regarding my memoirs, I went through a fallow period in the Foreign Service as we often do. I didn't have a real job so I sat down and started to jot down my life story with the idea of producing something for the kids. This is in the early 1980s, and I kept at it for a couple of years, writing on yellow pads, about five pages a day, double spaced in hand written form. Eventually I put it on computer, and now I have it, and it's something like 33 chapters. Every once in a while I add a little something when a new grandchild is born or something happens that I think might be interesting. It is really designed for my children, but at the same time I'm interested in history think of the attic value. You know, somebody finds old papers stuck up in the attic. Here are the reminiscences of a minor government official dealing with foreign affairs in the latter part of the Twentieth Century, which might be of some interest to the historian of the Twenty

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Fourth Century. So I've told the kids to make them available, and I suppose at some point I will add excerpts to the oral history collection.

*Q: That's what I was going to suggest, Stu, that you either append the memoirs as a whole, or excerpts from them to this interview because I think they would provide interesting depth. What I would like to do in the course of our talk is to focus on three areas. I want to talk about your Foreign Service career, and to have some of your insights into the Foreign Service. I'd like to explore your interest in history, and the records of history. And finally, I hope to have from you some information about the origins of the oral history program itself, how it's going, what your problems and successes have been.*

Let me start, therefore, early in your life. I note that you were born in Chicago, that you have two degrees in history, a Bachelor's from Williams College, which was an honors in history, and your graduate work at Boston University in the same field.

Were your parents particularly interested, or involved, in history? Perhaps teaching, or the profession of diplomacy?

KENNEDY: No. My mother was a great reader, but not particularly in history. My father was a lumber salesman; he got hit by the depression. My parents separated when I was quite young. I lived in California for a while. I have two half brothers who are ten years older, they are twins. I think they read a little, we always had a lot of books around thanks to my mother, and she read a lot, but history wasn't her interest. I think there are such things as history chromosomes. I've always been interested in history, but I originally picked it up in good part through historical novels and movies. It was a good time when I grew up, I was born in 1928. I always have been a great movie goer. There are a lot of movies in the '30s that were based on history, lousy history, but at least it was history, Clive in India, the romance of the British empire, the cowboys against the Indians, the three musketeers. There were a lot of good historical novels at the time, Kenneth Roberts, R. L. Stevenson, and so on. The movies and novels fascinated me. There wasn't the

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interference of TV on a daily basis or books such as those of Stephen King focused just on horror. I think this immersion in historical fiction helped because I was essentially raised as an only child, and I wasn't always fighting, or playing with my siblings as I notice my children and my grandchildren do. They seem to be much more absorbed in that sibling business than I was, and the TV didn't fill up my non-sibling time. Whatever it was, I got a great deal of pleasure out of history which I would read for fun even when I was in high school. We moved to Annapolis in 1939 and lived there for about ten years, and I had access to the Naval Academy Library because my brother was a Naval officer. I used to read regimental histories. The Naval Academy Library in those days wasn't a very fancy one, but it had a lot of good solid history and particularly military history, which I've always fancied. But diplomacy never caught my attention, except the dealings of the Borgias and their ilk.

*Q: What was your field of specialization when you reached college and were at Williams. And what was your thesis on at Williams?*

KENNEDY: My grandfather was a German-American, born in Wisconsin, but related to what was known in those days as the 48ers. These are the people who left Germany after the failed revolution of 1848. And my grandfather's sister, I think, married Carl Schurz, who was a well known German liberal who came to the United States, became a Civil War general, and Secretary of the Interior, a liberal within the Republican party. My grandfather died the year I was born, so I never knew him, but I was fascinated by his career. He started out as a second Lieutenant in 1862 in a Wisconsin regiment, fought at Chancellorsville, and they were badly beaten. He was at Gettysburg on the first day, he was wounded and captured, but when Lee retreated he left my grandfather and a few thousand other wounded Union people behind, and then his regiment was switched from the army of the Potomac to Grant's army fighting the battle of Chattanooga. When Grant took over the Army of the Potomac, my grandfather's outfit was with Sherman in the West. He rose to be a lieutenant colonel in Sherman's army...the battle of the Atlanta campaign, the march to the seas, the Carolinas, and all that. This history fascinated me,

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so my field was really the Civil War. I read everything. My honors thesis at Williams, was "Union Operations Against the Confederate Coast," which dealt with what then passed for amphibious operations against Hatteras Inlet of the attacks on New Orleans, Galveston, Mobile, and Charleston. It was an area of the war that wasn't particularly explored at that time. Not too long ago I visited the site of Fort Fisher in North Carolina, which was the last Confederate fortress to fall, and I had a section on that. I talked to the docent who was taking us around, and he said there wasn't much written about that type of operation. I sent him a copy of my honors thesis written in 1950. He's using it as part of the reading material for docents. It's not very good history but it was fun writing it.

*Q: Well, that's a very satisfying thing to have happen. Tell me when you went to Boston University, what did you specialize in there, and what was your Master's thesis about?*

KENNEDY: I had been four years in the Air Force. I was an enlisted man. I went into the Air Force right after the Korean War started, I came in in August of 1950. I was discharged in July of 1954. I didn't really know what the hell to do, but I had the GI Bill. I went over to Harvard naturally and asked about a Master's program because it seemed like it would be a good way to spend some time, and Harvard had all the prestige. The receptionist there said, "Do you have a maggie," and I wasn't sure what a maggie was, and I asked politely what about a maggie. She told me "a magna cum laude, we don't take anyone without a magna cum laude." I said, "Well, I'm sorry, I don't have a maggie." Thank God for that receptionist because I went over to Boston University. I later found out at Harvard that they didn't really turn out Master's, they turned out Ph.D's, and I might have ended up in one of those endless programs of taking eight years to get a Ph.D. It just wasn't my bag. But I went over to Boston University and found out that I could get a Master's degree without any particular trouble in one year, and I didn't need a maggie. I was a cummie, I was cum laude, but I wasn't magna cum laude. It turned me a little off Harvard since that time.

*Q: What was your thesis?*

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KENNEDY: I didn't do a thesis. I took a series of courses there, and a couple of seminars, and then I took some comprehensive exams; that's the way they did it at B.U..

*Q: You were born in Chicago, you grew up partly in California, partly in Annapolis. You were caught up in the Korean War, really at its outset in 1950. You spent four years in the military. Then you went back to school, again in history. How did you view your future? What did you think you were going to do with your studies in history?*

KENNEDY: I really was under the impression that I would probably teach history in a boys prep school. I'd gone to a boys' prep school, it was what I knew. I wasn't enthused about it. The main thing was I liked history, but I never had that great thirst to sit down and do the Harvard thing where I'd learn more and more about less and less. It just didn't appeal to me. I was thinking vaguely of being a school teacher. When I was in the Air Force, as an enlisted man for four years, I lived in the barracks and ate in the mess hall, and in a way it was not a very responsible life, you were kind of free and easy. I had read the memoirs of Joseph Grew Turbulent Era, a two volume work as part of my rather omnivorous reading. And gee, this diplomacy sounded like fun, so I took the Foreign Service exam in 1953 at Frankfurt. I'd obviously been exposed at Williams to the field of diplomacy. One of my professors was Joseph Johnson who later helped to establish the United Nations. I hadn't realized what an important figure he was until after he died. Unfortunately, he lived in the area and I never interviewed him. I'm kicking myself for that. So I was aware of the Foreign Service, but I'd always assumed that it was out of my class. I did not come from a very fancy family. Neither my mother nor my father were college graduates, and we'd had money and then lost it during the depression, but it wasn't big bucks. I thought you had to be a little more socially acceptable to get into the Foreign Service, but just for the hell of it I took the three and a half day exam, and passed it, barely.

*Q: Let me ask you about your military service, because you were in Korea, Japan, Germany — that's quite broad coverage. What effect did that have on your thinking. Do*

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*you think it made you more of an internationalist, more conscious of the rest of the world? And perhaps, therefore, more predisposed to a career that would take you abroad?*

KENNEDY: Oh, absolutely. When I enlisted in the Air Force you can imagine things were pretty much in turmoil. We'd dismantled our army and all of a sudden we were putting it back together again. I tried the Air Force with the idea of being an officer and no idea of what to do. And when the sergeant who was assigning us asked, "What do you want to do?" I thought, "Well, maybe I'd like to be a military policeman," because I've always been kind of a nice guy. I thought maybe if I learned to hit people on the head with a club, it might be good for my soul, make me a little tougher. When asked if I had any language training I told the sergeant that I had taken three years of Latin, three years of French, and two years of Spanish in prep school. I said, "But sergeant, I did terribly." He said, "That don't make no difference, you're going to the Army language school," and I did, where I took Russian. When I went to Korea, in 1952 I sat on a radio set and monitored the Soviet air force that was fighting the American air force. It's still something not talked about very much, but we were fighting a full scale air war against the Soviets. I was in Japan only for a while where I was doing the same monitoring, and then I went to Germany because I came back to the U.S., my mother was ill, and then they sent me off to Germany. So I was monitoring Soviet air force radio nets in Germany.

There was nothing more fun than being a young service man in Japan and Germany. Korea was a little something different. But I must say we lived in a relatively repressed time. For one thing sex was a lot more fun in those days, and a lot easier but I can't say I made any great study of anything. But I was absorbing things in Korea, Japan and Germany all the time which I think I drew on in later years of understanding the immediate post-war world.

*Q: Let me pursue that for a minute. Some people feel that their service in the military, particularly in the Korean War, made a lasting impression on them in many ways. That they were able to draw on this period for its experiences, for the maturing that it provided,*

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*for the knowledge of other places, and the close working relationships, if I can put it that way, between your colleagues and the others in your military unit. Do you see any residue in yourself now of your military experiences? Things that have lingered on and changed you?*

KENNEDY: Oh, absolutely. I was a young kid with not much wealth but I had a fairly good education. I went to public schools in California but when I came east, I went to, in those days, a prestigious prep school called Kent up in Connecticut. I was sort of on a scholarship. We got a very solid education, and something that could be considered a little bit precious, I think, because we were in sort of an isolated world. Then I went on to what now is considered about the top liberal arts small college, Williams, and spent four years there. And again, this was somewhat an isolated world of people who were damn smart for the most part, and this rubbed off. Also there was a residue from World War II because I started Williams in 1946 and our class was something like 75% vets. So rather than the vets coming down to my level, I grew up to their level. So by the time I graduated from college, I was thinking like a vet because these were the guys around me who had been in the war. You know, you had to at least put on the facade of being somewhat older than you were. These were very serious people, they played hard, but they also studied hard and you absorbed this with a class through drinking sessions, through dating, the whole thing.

So that when I went into the service. It never occurred to me to duck it, by the way. I was in a National Guard Unit, which never was called up, the 26th Division of Massachusetts National Guard. Unlike a certain vice president, we had some time ago. I quit the National Guard and joined the Air Force. It just never occurred to me to sit around and wait. It wasn't that I was a war lover. It was just what you did. I had a brother in the Navy, and my other brother had been in the Navy too, but I didn't like the idea of being cooped up on a ship, and I had bad eyes and couldn't be an officer, and I thought I could be an officer in the Air Force. But then I went off to the language school. So during almost the whole four

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years I was with other language specialists, and these were by necessity sort of an elite crew. They were mostly college graduates.

One of the great benefits I got was learning to be part of a big thing. You didn't screw around in a military organization, you understood that you were part of an organization and you were supposed to do certain things. You might gripe, but you did it. The other thing was, I think most of us came out as an enlisted man, with a great deal of respect for many of the master sergeants, they were the people who kept that whole organization running. They weren't as well educated as we were, but you learned that there was a lot to them. I found this particularly valuable later on, respecting people who weren't my educated equal. When I was a consular officer I was continually dealing with people who had rather humble backgrounds, particularly in education, but I could see they were very capable, often more capable than yours truly. The other thing I learned was don't fight too much in a large organization. Learn how to manipulate it or how to survive. I think these are things most of us absorbed. I don't think that your normal bright young college type coming into the Foreign Service today has learned these lessons.

*Q: You took the Foreign Service exam in Boston, or Cambridge.*

KENNEDY: No, I took it in Frankfurt, Germany.

*Q: What year was that?*

KENNEDY: 1953.

*Q: And you actually came into the Foreign Service in 1955. To what extent was that a function of your not having been released from the service on the one hand, and having to wait for the clearance process, and the Board of Examiners to do its very time consuming thing on the other. A lot of people have noted that a year and more would elapse in which they would have to wait between the time they'd taken the exam and actually entered the Service. Did that happen to you?*



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KENNEDY: Well, it did, but it wasn't that so much. In the first place as far as clearance, I had a top secret clearance when I left the Air Force because that's the type of work we were doing. They had what they called the A-100 course which is the basic officer training course. In July 5th, 1955 I entered along with Dick Murphy, Holsey Handyside, Herb Okun, and some 15 others. We were Class One of the A-100 course because there had been a hiatus for some years mainly because of Senator Joseph McCarthy and the Neanderthals in the Senate who were giving the Foreign Service and the State Department a very difficult time. So the small number of people who had been hired for the few years prior to that, were sort of thrown in as replacements, there wasn't any training, they just went out to their posts. So our class got special treatment. We were kind of trotted around when I came in in July of '55 because it was "we're back in business now" in the Department of State, showing these new officers off. We even had a spread in the New York Times magazine on us.

I really hadn't thought I would actually go into the Foreign Service, it seemed remote and too exclusive. While I was getting my Master's degree at Boston University, I sat next to a young lady in Russian history class whom I married and we're now into our 42nd year. She thought she was marrying a school teacher.

*Q: Has she enjoyed her career?*

KENNEDY: Oh, yes, very much so. We draw on it all the time.

*Q: How would you characterize the training that you received at the A-100 course? Did you find a situation reversed? Namely, that while at Williams you had been the young fellow in the presence of a majority of veterans. Did you see yourself in the A-100 course as the older veteran yourself, a veteran of the Korean War, with a lot of younger people in the class, who were either women or who were fresh out of college?*

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KENNEDY: Not really. This class, some of the people had been waiting three or four years. It was all male. The only what could constitute a minority in our class was Sam Lee who was of Chinese ancestry from Hawaii. But all the rest of us were white, male; two or three were non-vets, all the rest of us had been in the service. As a matter of fact, when we had to get up and make a little announcement about what we had done, I got up and mentioned one of the air groups I had served in Japan, and another guy got up, Bill Hennebry, said, "You know, I was personnel officer in that group."

*Q: You came into the Foreign Service with certain expectations. You must have had a sense of the kind of career you thought you had chosen. Do you recall what those expectations were? And do you remember how good the fit was between what you imagined a Foreign Service career to be, and the way it in fact became for you?*

KENNEDY: You know, this is a question I ask all the time in my interviews. I feel embarrassed. I'm not sure I can give a very good response. But let's put it this way. I was really excited about the fact that I was here. In a way I looked around at the other people, and I had always thought Foreign Service officers were a special breed apart. Well, these were regular guys. Although I often felt, and I never lost that feeling when I was in the Foreign Service, that some day somebody might point at me and say, "Who are you, and why are you doing this? You're out of your class." I think again it was the military experience. I mean, okay, so we're at war, so what do we do? And you kind of go on and do things one step at a time. I think there was an overriding feeling that the United States really had a role to play in the world, almost a missionary role. It wasn't as though we were fire-eyed and messianic, that we would out and change the world. But there was a nasty force out there, the communists, and most of us had experienced it. They were the enemy to me quite literally during the Korean War. So I felt we really had something to do. I thought we were on the right course.

I was terribly upset about the McCarthy period. And I'm not sure, Brandon, how you feel about this, but as I followed things I think of two traumas in domestic politics during my

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formative years. One was the MacArthur dismissal. I was in the Air Force and I remember sitting in the barracks hearing about this. Some people thought how can Truman dare dismiss this guy. I can tell you from the enlisted point of view, and listening to MacArthur talk to Congress, I thought, "God, what an old windbag. Damn good he's out!"

There was also the McCarthy time, and particularly Alger Hiss. His case really bothered me, because he was what I would call, one of us. He'd gone to a good school. He had sort of the same education I'd had, and probably from a better educated family than mine, Quakers. After it was over I was convinced "The son of a bitch had lied." He was a spy, and he let our side down. I can't say how this affected my career, but I always held something in reserve about the attacks on the liberals, because while I often consider myself a liberal in foreign policy and other matters, the fact was that there could be sons of bitches who let our side down, and who were spies or committed to the communist cause. So that had an effect. But the McCarthy thing was pervasive. I think we were called the silent generation, and I think with reason.

*Q: It's customary to start a career in the consular function. You're one of many officers who have specialized in consular affairs, and ridden to the very top of that area of specialization. You started off in Frankfurt, and then you went to Dhahran, both your assignments as a vice consul. What caused you to make consular affairs your specialty?*

KENNEDY: Let me go back to the A-100 course. At one point somebody came in, some big wheel in the State Department, and looked at our class of about 25, and said, "How many want to be ambassadors?" And I was about the last to raise my hand, because all of a sudden it occurred to me, "I'm not sure what a consul general does, but a consul general in Bermuda sounds kind of nice," sand and surf. Anyway, when I came into the Foreign Service, I picked up the usual corridor things. Okay, you have to do consular work, and you're expected to do it early on, but to get ahead you've got become a political officer. I don't think we even talked about people being economic officers, and I'd gotten a D — in economics which decided me in college that I'd better not go into that.

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I started out in the Refugee Relief Program. It was a huge thing in Frankfurt. At first I was just processing papers. I wasn't even seeing applicants. These were people who had been refugees from World War II and from the Communist Bloc. It was a very sad history lesson.

I'll tell you, in 1996 I'm drawing on my time in the Refugee Relief Program to understand the turmoil in Eastern Europe and elsewhere. The Refugee Relief Program was designed to empty the camps that had been left over from World War II. First there had been the Displaced Persons Program, then the Refugee Relief Program came later. I might mention a little cynical note about this. I later learned that the program was mainly designed to help get more Italians into the United States than were allowed, and for political reasons. DiGasperi, the Prime Minister of Italy, had asked President Eisenhower if he could do something, and I think Emmanuel Celler, from a district in New York with a lot of Italians, was a strong backer of the program. So they came up with the Refugee Relief Program, which is doing actually a good thing of helping empty these camps. But Italians were one of the major beneficiaries. And you can imagine how many Italian refugees there were in Italy in the 1950s.

*Q: Did it surprise you to see the mix between government policies and operations in the executive branch, and the concerns and pressures of the Congress?*

KENNEDY: No. But I'd been an enlisted man in the Air Force, I keep coming back to this. But you develop a kind of practical perspective, you understand that the most important person is not your commanding officer, it's the supply sergeant, or whoever hands out leave passes. I had a strong respect for the power of Congress, not in the field of ethics, but in the field of power in government. I never felt impelled to fight that aspect of our system.

In Frankfurt I recall sitting down with my colleagues to work on statistics. We had to report on a monthly basis where things were, because there was a lot of pressure on us to

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get refugees into the U.S. We'd make up statistics that would pass all the problems and bottlenecks on to the Public Health Service, and the Immigration Service. Which stood me in good stead when I later looked at pacification program in Vietnam and anywhere else where statistics are used to point out progress. Granted there is a certain amount of cynicism, but the point is, the Refugee Program worked in a very rough manner, and it didn't bother me that it was pretty sloppy, what with Italian refugees and cooked up statistics. I'm not an idealist.

But back to my other point about the Refugee Relief Program, it was a real lesson in European history. The Program had all sorts of people; you had Kalmucks, who were a Soviet tribal group that under Stalin, ended up around the Crimean peninsula, although they were really from somewhere else but they'd been transferred there, and many of them had left with the German armies and ended up in Germany at the end of the war. And many of them went to New Jersey. But you had the White Russians, you had Poles, you had Yugoslavs, Serbs, Croats, and Bosnians, and the Bulgarians as well as East Germans. Each group was against other groups in the refugee camps. They were accusing other groups or within their own groups of being either communists or Nazis or both, and it really didn't make any sense. It was a real mess. But the point was, as young officers, we were having to deal with this mess, and try to figure it out, and reach rational conclusions. I think the Foreign Service is very good at this type activity for the most part, because we didn't get upset if we were lied to, or if we found out problems. I think the Immigration Service tended to look a little harder on these people. Immigration officers were sent abroad to help us screen the people. We were trying to figure out, okay, these people had been through a very difficult war, and they'd had to make their way the best they can, and let's try to make it as easy as possible to get them into the United States. So we were practical people dealing with people in a practical way with a difficult law. So you might say we were result oriented, but we were also learning about all these European squabbles which became so apparent after the fall of the Soviet Union some thirty five years later.

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*Q: How did you progress from Frankfurt to Dhahran in Saudi Arabia?*

KENNEDY: Just a normal assignment. I had also done citizenship work in Frankfurt, and I was at one time the baby birth officer, registering over 300 babies a month by our military, including one child of my own. It was just a regular assignment. This was 1958. Africa was beginning to come up on the horizon, and I thought, "Gee, wouldn't it be fun to go to Africa." So I asked to go to Nigeria, to Kano, I think, we were talking about opening a post there and I thought I would be ahead of curve, so I applied for Africa. Africa was in the Bureau of Near Eastern and African Affairs. I think the personnel officer, threw a dart at Nigeria and hit Saudi Arabia instead. Anyway, off we went.

*Q: You then came back to Washington. Again, that's a normal career progression, and you worked in the Bureau of Intelligence and Research, INR. What did you do there?*

KENNEDY: Well, I had African affairs, the Horn of Africa. I was drawing on the fact that we'd had an Eritrean houseboy in Dhahran which was my only connection with Africa. I read as much as I could into the Horn of Africa, Somalia, Ethiopian history, most of the books were pretty dated. As soon as I arrived there was a false report of a coup, and who was going to succeed Haile Selassie, and I found myself...this was 1961... trying to figure out who was going to succeed Haile Selassie. People had been trying to predict that since 1914 when Haile Selassie became the regent. I wasn't particularly well suited for this. There wasn't much interest in the Horn of Africa, and the desk officer couldn't care less. He'd served in Ethiopia or Somalia and knew the territory, and I didn't.

*Q: Let me pick up on your remark that the desk officer "couldn't care less." What was the relationship between the work of INR, and the work of the geographic bureaus? In what ways was INR able to contribute in useful ways to what the bureaus were doing in their day to day management of America's relations in that part of the world?*

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KENNEDY: You know, as I look on it, I can't see that there was much at all. The CIA was running an encyclopedic collection of knowledge about every country, political leaders, geography. This was one of the things we were doing. There didn't seem to be much of a connection between INR and Department of State operations. At least I didn't feel any connection.

*Q: What effect did that have on the morale in INR?*

KENNEDY: Oh, we were a bunch of young officers. We were learning our trade, and most of us went off somewhere, but I can't recall us taking it very seriously. For one thing, there wasn't much happening in Africa. Of course there were things happening in Africa, you had the Congo business, and Owen Roberts was dealing with that and he had served there so he was listened to. The people who were dealing with Algeria were involved; this was a time when Algeria was beginning to bust loose. The Horn of Africa was quiet, and for me it was almost a blank period.

*Q: When you were in the Air Force you studied Russian. What other languages did you study?*

KENNEDY: In the Air Force, just Russian.

*Q: So you learned Russian in the Air Force.*

KENNEDY: Moderate Russian.

*Q: You had German language training in connection with your assignment in Frankfurt. I presume you didn't have Arabic training before you went to Saudi Arabia. I say this because suddenly there you are in Serbo-Croatian language training. Did you ask for this, or was that something that the assignment system said you should do because they had it in mind that you would serve, as it turned out, in Belgrade.*

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KENNEDY: I asked for it. In fact, I got out of INR early. I think I mentioned it was a blank period. I was all set to go to Africa, and be an Africanist. And when I got looking at Africa...this was in 1961-62, I wasn't impressed. When I was in Germany, my wife and I had been given a book called *Black Lamb and Grey Falcon* by Rebecca West which is a magnificent study of Yugoslavia, done in the late 1930s. We were so fascinated with it that we took our little Volkswagen and spent two weeks batting around in Yugoslavia in about '57. Not many tourists were there then. My wife had studied some Russian, and the Slavic culture appealed to her, as it did to me. So I started using my contacts I'd see in the Department of State cafeteria, and people in personnel to see if I could get out of the African mode. I asked for Serbian training, and got it.

*Q: You had some nine months, I think.*

KENNEDY: Ten months.

*Q: ...of training in that language at the Foreign Service Institute.*

KENNEDY: In the garage.

*Q: In the garage at Arlington Hall. What did you think of that training in terms of providing you not just the structure of a language, but the cultural environment in which that language is spoken? Did you feel that there was a good marriage between all of the grammar you had to master, and learning the vocabulary, and the cultural, the historical circumstances of what was then called Yugoslavia.*

KENNEDY: We had a problem, but in a way it was maybe a blessing. There were two brothers-in-law teaching us. One was named Dragan Popovic, the other was Janko Jankovic. They came from a small village called Sabac. They both had been officers in the Royal Yugoslav Army, and were Serbs par excellence. They each took a group of language students and normally they would take these through the whole ten months. We were driven to distraction by the man we had, Dragan Popovic. He was a big burly Serb,



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and would spend most of his time castigating Tito. And having had my ten days vacation in Yugoslavia, I mentioned some words that I had heard there, and he told me, "Those words don't exist," because they hadn't existed when he was there. At one point we even had a little rebellion in our class, I think there were about four of us, one was Larry Eagleburger who later became Secretary of State for a while. And David Anderson, and David and Larry both became ambassadors to Yugoslavia, myself and another student. We couldn't stand it. We were in a small, windowless room, and cooped Popovic, our protests were reluctantly heard and we finally got switched around. So in a way it wasn't good. But I think we all absorbed the mindset of a Serb nationalist. The pig-headedness, the inability to understand the big picture, or anything else, which in some ways served one in good stead later on. It's like being stuck with the club bore for ten months. We didn't get much in the way of area studies. Whatever we got, we got through our own reading, I think.

*Q: You went to Belgrade, and you spent nearly five years there. This again, is normal after some shorter assignments in the beginning of a career. You begin to hit your long stride. You were very much in the Balkans. You were there at a complicated time, even though the stability that Tito provided was well known. In the countries around you, Czechoslovakia and Hungary, there were upheavals. You lived in the shadow of Soviet influence. Tell me about that. Tell me particularly about your sense of the tremendously diverse nature of the ethnic entities that made up what was then called Yugoslavia. The hatreds, did you feel those? Were they totally beneath the surface? Were you astonished, for instance, to see the violence that has emerged over the past several years, and now that the Yugoslav republic no longer exists and the Cold War is over.*

KENNEDY: It's sort of yes, and no. I won't say that the hatreds and what has developed were that apparent. Obviously, they didn't like each other, and my feeling is that the dissolution of Yugoslavia doesn't surprise me, but the violence, the venom of this in a way surprised me because it didn't have to happen. I think it's a case of bad political leadership.

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*Q: On whose part?*

KENNEDY: You had an unholy alliance of the head of the Serbian side, Milosevic, and on the Croatian side, Tudjman. Tudjman probably felt more anti-Serb than Milosevic felt anti-Croat. I think Milosevic was more an opportunist. He played the nationalist card without maybe feeling it as much in his bones as others, but I don't know the man. When you were in Yugoslavia you could tell that Serbs and Croats didn't get along well together. The Macedonians and Montenegrins were looked down upon. The Bosnians didn't seem to play much of a role. As a matter of fact, in a way I don't think we thought of Bosnia as really being a separate entity. We just assumed that Bosnians would fall into either the Croatian, or Serbian camps. There were those Muslims who were rather inoffensive people who didn't fit into the Albanian minority which were in Macedonia and Kosovo area, but weren't particularly prominent. I don't think we thought about them very much. But every once in a while you'd run across something. I remember one of my local employees, a Serbian, a very nice lady, and we got a letter which was in Croatian and they used different words for the months. I asked, "What are the names of the months in Croatian?" And she looked at me indignantly and said, "I didn't learn that sort of thing." It struck me as being a little bit silly.

We felt that Tito was holding things together. In the first place, there was always the Soviet threat, and this is what really held things together. Nobody in their right mind wanted to see Yugoslavia split up, including the Yugoslavs because if they split up, the Soviets might come in. And the Soviets were the devil incarnate. I think that was the ambience in which we were working.

*Q: How outspoken was criticism of the Soviet Union and Soviet leaders on the part of Yugoslavs to the extent you were able to pick it up while you were in Belgrade? Were you conscience that Yugoslavia was indeed a horse of another color in the stable of Eastern European countries?*

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KENNEDY: Oh, absolutely. I don't think there was any doubt in any Yugoslavs' mind that the enemy lay to the east, not to the west. Now, what they did with this is another matter. There were people who were very much in bed with the Communist Party. That's where their livelihood came from, but it was their own Communist Party. In a way the Soviet Union didn't play a real role there, outside of the fact that it was the Soviet Union in a sense gave the pressure to make the whole thing hold together.

*Q: What was your sense of the warmth of the relationship between the United States and Yugoslavia?*

KENNEDY: Pretty good. Most Yugoslavs knew. So many of them had relatives in the United States. We had a lot of pensioners there. Many of them had helped American pilots escape during the war. When the times were really difficult, when Stalin was really putting on the pressure in the late '40s, the United States came out with some help. I remember our ambassador, Burke Elbrick, mentioning that Tito telling him privately, "You know, one of the most stabilizing influences in this whole area is the American Sixth Fleet in the Mediterranean."

*Q: Here we are in 1996, and for the past several years, quite a few years in fact, there has been terrible ethnic violence in the former Yugoslav republic. As you look at the scenes of this violence on television, you recognize that so much of it is carried out by quite young people. Young men, perhaps even their late teens, certainly a great many of them in their twenties, these are driven people. Does that surprise you? Does that suggest that in the seemingly quiet and more unified times for Yugoslavia in the privacy of various kitchens, the old flames of hatred were being fanned in the very young and all they needed was a chance to erupt?*

KENNEDY: Well, having lived also for four years in Greece, I saw how the Greeks learned from their mothers' milk how awful the Turks were. The Balkans were a nursery ground of ancient hatreds. Was it 1359, or whatever it was, when the Ottomans beat the Serbs

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in the battle of Kosovo? That's like yesterday. Yes. I got from the Serbs something you don't hear much now, but the town of Galena was a place in World War II where the Croatians, led by the Franciscan fathers! burned Orthodox churches full of Serbs. And the Bosnian Muslims did unspeakable things to Serbs too. Tito was sitting on this. It's very hard, Brandon, to look at this, and look at these people that you know and like and not help feeling that these people are too smart to do this. How can they be so stupid as to get into this? These are really nice people. I have an awful feeling that this is the way a lot of Jews felt about the Germans when they were in Germany before the Holocaust and did not try to get out. You just get the right combination of nasty leadership. It bothers me because I think this can happen elsewhere. I think in the United States you could get something going against the blacks, or maybe against the Mexicans, or something like that. You can stoke up these things. You need good leadership that won't let this thing get out of hand. And the problem is that the political process sometimes brings people who are essentially opportunists.

*Q: Are you saying that Tito should have done more to obviously groom a successor? So that when he finally died there would be someone with a decent chance...*

KENNEDY: Yes. I think that Tito did make a terrible mistake in order to preserve his continuity and not being challenged in his later stages. He did not allow for the development of a succession the way Franco in Spain did. Somebody who might have been more moderate than he was, but who could have nurtured the Yugoslav body politic into allowing for a more forgiving group of politicians to come up to lead. That was a terrible disservice on his part.

*Q: Was this something that an American ambassador might have been able to talk to him about very privately?*

KENNEDY: No, I don't think so. Tito kept his own council. I think as he got older he got more paranoia. It was not of the Stalin type. I wasn't there at that time. When I was there

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Tito was still at the height of his powers. But from what I gather he just wouldn't allow much reform. If he didn't initiate it, it wasn't going to be done.

*Q: Under which ambassadors did you serve in Belgrade?*

KENNEDY: I started under George Kennan, and then had Burke Elbrick. One is always learning in the Foreign Service, and I have to say that I had a great deal of respect for George Kennan.

*Q: Tell me about him as an ambassador.*

KENNEDY: Well, looking at him from my perspective, I was the chief of his consular section. We would see each other almost every day. I would go to his staff meetings, and every time he would go around his country team asking the chiefs by their first names, about things and then when he go to me he would say, "What's new in the consular section?" He never really learned my name. He would enter the embassy every day and the consular section was only two steps down from the entryway, but he never poked his head in there. After a lot of negotiating, I got him to come to the consular section once in the year we served together, for a Christmas party. He was a delightful person, but he didn't strike me as a very well rounded ambassador.

*Q: In what sense?*

KENNEDY: Well, after all, consular problems were major components of his mission. We had cases with Americans in trouble. I wasn't asking for him to do something all the time, but he just didn't pay any attention to it at all. The other thing was, from time to time I'd have a visa problem, particularly dealing with the Communists. We had people we wanted to go to the United States, and everybody was somewhat tainted with communism who was anybody in Yugoslavia. We were sort of cutting through and trying to find ways to get people in without turning it into a big case. He would hear about one of these things, and say, "I'll call Bobby Kennedy." Bobby Kennedy being the Attorney General at the time.

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Well, I would have to sort of dissuade him from calling Bobby Kennedy, because Bobby Kennedy probably wouldn't have gotten anything done and you just wasted ammunition.

And the other thing that bothered me. I didn't deal with it at the time, but I was getting this from people in the political and economic sections. There was, I think, a Kennedy round of negotiations on tariffs, or something. I'm not sure of the exact details of this. But Kennedy was having a hard time getting this through, and one of the things that happened was, to make sure that the extreme rights of the Republican Party and the Democratic Party were on board so we withdrew most favored nation status from Yugoslavia. I was told by those who were following it, "Don't worry. The President has got to make an announcement before the process of withdrawing starts, then you've got to give it a year. It's just not going to happen. But this is just a little raw meat for these Neanderthals in the right wing of our political process to make them feel happy for them Tito was that tin horned dictator, he was a commie, and that sort of thing. George Kennan, from what I could see, and from what I was getting from others, never saw this. He said, "How can they do this to me?" He would call the President, and he really seemed to be advocating that the President should get on a train, and travel a la Wilson for the League of Nations around the United States to do battle on this issue. And as pragmatist, myself, and my feeling was shared by many, that Kennan didn't really understand the American system very well. He thought things should be much more perfect. That always diminished Kennan in my view, and the fact that he got himself declared persona non grata from Moscow didn't have to happen. So professionally I never was one of his great admirers, but I am a great admirer of him as an intellectual, with reservations about some of his stands.

*Q: When you say he didn't understand the American system, let me probe you a little bit. Are you talking about the relationship between the executive and the congress? Are you talking about the kind of politics that you described a few minutes ago, give it some time, some of this is posturing, etc. What aspects of the American system do you think that George Kennan wasn't getting right?*

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KENNEDY: I think that he felt that the system should be perfect, and that if there was something in foreign policy that made good sense, and the most-favored nations status for Yugoslavia made absolute sense, there was no reason to have any debate or conflict over the issue. It was a blip in our relations, and this is where a good ambassador, I think, would have been able to explain it, "Tito, don't worry. This is local politics. We'll take care of it." He didn't feel comfortable with the American political system. He's an elitist. This is the way it should be, the United States is a leader, and we shouldn't have to go through this nonsense. This is fine, but we do go through this nonsense. And a good American ambassador has to understand the system, and know how to play it and explain it to his hosts. Otherwise he is not effective.

To give you a little example that comes up much later, but is an example of his approach, when I started this oral history program, I thought, "Gee, it would be a good idea to get a letter saying how wonderful this program would be from George Kennan." It would be something I could flash around. So I sent him a letter saying "I was chief of your consular section for a year, and this is what I'm doing, and I plan to interview people. Could you comment on the value of the project?" It took a long time and I finally got a very short letter from him which in essence said, well, the project would only be good if you interviewed just a few of the right people — it was phrased differently, but that's what he meant. To me that's George Kennan. I don't want to knock him, I'm just talking about my reflections on this man. As I say I'm not a great admirer.

*Q: Let me get back to George Kennan, Ambassador in Belgrade. Who was his DCM?*

KENNEDY: I can't remember his name right now.

*Q: My question to you then, Stu, would be quite simply how the DCM played his role within the embassy, and as a manager of the embassy, given an ambassador who, according to your account, was rather aloof and distant from his staff, and occupied with rather larger thoughts much of the time.*

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KENNEDY: His first name was Lyle, I can't think of the last name. Later, Eric Kocher took over. You know it's funny, again going back on this and this is terrible for somebody who claims to be an oral historian, I'm not sure I remember things that well. My impression is this: that I really didn't have a hell of a lot to do with the DCM. I kept the DCM more or less informed, but I sort of gloried in the fact that I ran my section the way I wanted it, and I didn't want to have the DCM or ambassador mucking around in my area. We had extremely bright people there. It's the best embassy I've ever been in. I spent five years running that consular section. It wasn't as though I was off to one side because we were all doing things socially, receptions and the whole works.

*Q: Let me stay on George Kennan. He was by then certainly one of our best known diplomats. He was a historian of note already. Was it his style in dealing with the senior staff, and you were part of his senior staff, or the staff as a whole since it was not a very big embassy, to take time out and at the equivalent of a country team meeting — the country team concept had just been put into place by that time — and share the long view and the large picture with his colleagues? Did he like to have sessions in which he philosophized about present day Yugoslavia, and where it tended, and Yugoslavia in the larger picture of Soviet influence in Eastern Europe?*

KENNEDY: I can not remember details, but yes, he did. I think there was a good solid sharing of his thoughts this way. I do recall that we were there during the 1962 October missile crisis where it looked like we might be going to war with the Soviet Union, and his calling together everybody, including, I believe, the wives, and explaining the situation. We weren't quite sure whether we would be seeing rockets going both ways over us or not. It was a tense time, and I remember his basically calming people down by trying to explain how things were going. But I can't remember the details.

*Q: What were the circumstances of George Kennan's departure?*



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KENNEDY: He didn't stay very long. I don't think he was comfortable as ambassador again. I think he expected to play a larger role in the Kennedy administration. I think he had been specifically asked by Kennedy, and Kennan was one of the stars of Kennedy's constellation. John Kenneth Galbraith going to India, and Edward Reischauer going to Japan. Kennedy was putting on a very fine display of reaching into the best and the brightest of the United States, and sending them off. But then Kennedy was basically an American politician. I'm not sure these people got the attention they thought they would be getting. Yugoslavia in those days was a rather an important place because it was the rebel communist country. It was also one of the five major participants in the non-aligned pact: the other being Nkrumah in Ghana, Sukarno in Indonesia, Nehru in India and Nasser in Egypt. This was a fairly important bloc. But my guess is, Kennan just found he wasn't doing that much. He wanted to get on to writing, and go back to the intellectual environment he found at Princeton. And I think also he was somewhat disillusioned because his role wasn't that important. And on this most favored nation thing, he wasn't being listened to.

*Q: Who were the other ambassadors you served under in Belgrade?*

KENNEDY: Burke Elbrick, for whom I had the greatest respect for. He was a real professional.

*Q: He succeeded George Kennan.*

KENNEDY: Yes, he did after somewhat of a hiatus. Elbrick didn't seem to take things as personally. You had the feeling that he was running the show, and he was a professional. He didn't have a touchy ego.

*Q: Those two were the ones you served under?*

KENNEDY: Yes.

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*Q: Your position as head of the consular section probably put you in contact with more Yugoslavs than anybody else in the entire embassy was likely to see. What was your sense of the effectiveness of the outreach of George Kennan, and then Burke Elbrick as ambassadors? Their ability to touch Yugoslav society, their influence within the government of Yugoslavia?*

KENNEDY: I have a hard time coming up with a good answer to that because I wasn't that conversant with they did vis a vis the Yugoslav government. The Yugoslav government wasn't terribly responsive on most things. I just don't have a great feel for this. I suspect that Kennan's reputation gave him more clout with Tito, particularly as a former ambassador to the Soviet Union. So I think when Kennan spoke, Tito would listen more than probably to Elbrick. I'm not sure Kennan was saying the right things. I'm just not sure. With Elbrick, he was more a workman-like ambassador. And the society was not one where you got out and glad-handed a lot of people, and moved around. These were more apparatchiks with whom we were dealing.

*Q: Did you have the feeling that the embassy in terms of its objectives was doing as much as the U.S. could usefully, and reasonably, expect to accomplish in the relationship with Yugoslavia at that time?*

KENNEDY: I do. I think we were trying to keep this relationship front and center and understandable in the United States. The Yugoslavs knew what they wanted. They liked the United States, we didn't have to sell the United States. Our real problem was back in Washington to let people understand that this was an important relationship. It was helping in its own way of undermining what Ronald Reagan would later term, "the evil empire of the Soviet Union", by allowing this maverick to exist in a communist form. We had a lot of laws, and a mindset that anything communist was just beyond the pale, absolutely bad. My job every day was how to circumvent our restrictive regulations for dealing with communist countries regarding visas, or social security benefits, or something of that nature. And I think all of us were plugging away on this. We were also trying to understand

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the Yugoslav system. I think we reported down at the county level on what was happening, mainly through reading papers as you do in most countries. We could travel anywhere, and we could get out and talk to the people. We did a lot of traveling and we'd go talk to Communist Party headquarters, and factory places also on trips I would pick up hitchhikers and chat with them.

*Q: What would you tell these people?*

KENNEDY: We'd answer questions about America. Have you ever tried in a foreign language to explain the American educational system? We've got state, and local, and private, and religious. Try to explain this. It was a willing audience. There was nobody against us. We really in many ways didn't have a great problem. They also knew they didn't want the damned Russians coming in there again. During World War II the Russians had liberated part of the country by raping and pillaging, and the Yugoslavs didn't want that again.

*Q: Were you serving in Belgrade with Larry Eagleburger and Brent Scowcroft?*

KENNEDY: Brent Scowcroft wasn't there when I was there.

*Q: Who was the military attach#? I thought it was Bent Scowcroft.*

KENNEDY: It could have been, I just don't remember.

*Q: Bent may well have been with him when Larry was the ambassador. I think you're right. Was Larry there?*

KENNEDY: When I was there, sure. He was two or three years in the economic section. At one point when Larry left they asked me if I wanted to take his job, and he was number three in the economic section, and I was number one in the consular section. And that's probably a turning point in my career because up until then I was just doing the consular job. But then I realized how much fun I was having, and how much responsibility I was

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having, and I said to hell with this. I don't want to just report, I liked to get things done, and as consular officer you got things done.

*Q: Larry Eagleburger is the only Foreign Service officer with a full career within our Service to emerge as Secretary of State. Did you have the impression when you were working with Larry in Belgrade that here was a future Secretary of State?*

KENNEDY: No. Larry was one of the bright young guys. My hobby is war games on a board, and I used to beat him more often than not at war games. But Larry was obviously very bright. I remember when Nelson Rockefeller came through and Larry was made his control officer. I think Rockefeller was out of government at that time, and Larry so impressed him that he offered him a job. But Larry didn't take it. But no, Larry is an impressive person. He has very strong opinions, he expresses them well, and I think this makes him an effective officer. None of us thought anybody was going to be Secretary of State coming from Foreign Service ranks. But Larry was clearly in line to be an ambassador. Two other people who served me there were Jim Lowenstein and David Anderson, both of them became ambassadors. They were very good, it was a very top notch crew we had there.

*Q: Leaving Belgrade you were assigned to the Bureau of Personnel in the State Department. What were your responsibilities there?*

KENNEDY: I was what was called a CMO, career management officer. Personnel work was very interesting at the time. Personnel waxes and wanes with its relationship to the bureaus, the geographic bureaus particularly. At that time, this was '67 to '69, it was going through an enhancement. They wanted to manage personnel, to establish good career paths, to hire the right people. By the way, I was sort of surprised at this time because all of a sudden — I had been going at a rather pedestrian pace of promotion — and all of a sudden just before I left Yugoslavia I got promoted to FSO-3, which was the colonel level. Which is, for a consular officer, almost unheard of. It wasn't me, it was just the system that

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decided it better do something about these consular types. So I had more rank than I had expected to at that particular stage of my career. I was working with Lauren Lawrence, known as Lorry, on the consular side. Our job was to get the right people, to help make recommendations for assignments, to monitor a bit who came into the consular service. The consular service was not like the political or economic cones. People were coming in from outside the FSO ranks. Often we would be getting bright secretaries, or couriers, or communicators, but some were moving to the consular ranks because they were problems in their regular jobs and it was a way of getting rid of them.

*Q: The so-called Mustang Program.*

KENNEDY: And with the support of the Bureau of Consular Affairs, Barbara Watson was running it at the time, we were told to begin to get tough, and that certainly fit our proclivities, both Lorry's and mine because the consular service had become a dumping ground, it had been for a long time. You had a secretary who couldn't get along with people, but the ambassador didn't have the guts to get her fired, so he'd say, why don't you make her a personnel officer, or a consular officer, two jobs where she'd be dealing with people all the time. But this was the state of management within the Foreign Service up until then. There would be couriers who were tired of flying. I remember talking to one courier trying to get an idea of where he was coming from. And I said, "What do you do? You fly a lot, what do you read?" thinking how does he educate himself. He said, "I'm pretty tired when I'm on those planes, so I don't read much." Obviously, there was no intellectual interest there, and they were going to bring him into the consular service. And I think our concern was that we had been bringing in people who really had no potential for growth as Foreign Service officers in at the very lowest ranks, making them vice consuls, and allowing them to work in large visa mills, or places where they could survive.

*Q: And you tried to change that?*

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KENNEDY: We tried to change that because the real problem was that as they stayed in the Service, they would eventually get promoted to the mid-career, about the captain or major level, using military ranks, the old O-5 level. And then they would be supervising young hot shot Foreign Service officers. These limited consular officers would poison the well, because the better young FSOs would avoid serving with such people. And also the limited officers would not be very good consular officers because they didn't have the interest to understand the bigger picture when they were administering laws. They could be very rigorous in applying the law but they didn't have the sense of understanding of when to give, and how to use the law in a particular country. These people are dangerous.

*Q: How did you try to change this state of affairs, and to what extent do you think you succeeded?*

KENNEDY: Well, the times were with us. It wasn't us. We were the right people for doing it because we were with the program, and we felt strongly about the consular service as a consular service. I must say that over the years there aren't too many people who'd think about various aspects of the Foreign Service as a profession, at least I haven't found many. They think about the job, about policy, but not really thinking about it as a profession and how to improve it.

*Q: Even in those days.*

KENNEDY: Even in those days. But we did, and we had backing. You didn't need much. Nobody was fighting it too hard except for the ambassadors or assistant secretaries who wanted to dump a secretary. We would interview, and say no, and we could document it because almost invariably the person wasn't very well qualified. It's just that nobody had ever bothered to do this before.

But the other thing that we were doing was, and I can't remember who devised this system, but every new officer who came to our office between assignments, this was for

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mid-career officers of all cones, we would have a consultation. Then we would draft up a career projection of what they might hope, with training included. Each prediction was based on a normal set of assignments, including training and some broadening positions, more or less fitted to what the officer was interested in doing and his or her background. The idea was, this was really in a pre-computer age, to take a look and see, alright this is what the person wants, this is what they can reasonably expect to get. And let's project it out, and look at whom are we hiring, what are the demands of the service, and does it make sense? Is there a fit? It wasn't just consular officers, it was all people in the Personnel system. The idea was to make optimum projections, and I think maybe today it might be more interesting to do it. They were trying to create some sort of statistical base to figure hiring, training and assignment practices, which there never has been.

*Q: Who was the Director General of the Foreign Service at that time?*

KENNEDY: John Steeves, I think.

*Q: Was this an initiative that came from the top?*

KENNEDY: Maybe it was from the Crockett era. There was an attempt by William Crockett, and people who subscribed to his ideas of trying to manage the Department of State, particularly the Foreign Service.

*Q: How would you describe the integrity of the personnel system at that time? It's often been criticized for functioning very well within 90% of its work, but that in a crucial 10% people at the top of the Department make their own choices, ambassadors make their own calls. The system is circumvented by these special needs, or perceived requirements, of people much senior to those who manage the personnel structure.*

KENNEDY: Maybe the 90%-10% thing is not a bad percentage. If you can get that, it's not bad. There's no point in having an absolutely rigid system. We'd note that we have got to

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do something about poor old George, so and so has a child he has to take care of, or let's try to save so and so's marriage. There were a lot of considerations.

*Q: A more humane Foreign Service, is that what you're saying, than it is now?*

KENNEDY: I think so, yes. For one thing, people who got assigned, some would scream and yell, but most saluted and went where they were told to go, and often were delighted to find out that the job they thought was awful really was pretty damn good. Because you can't tell on the face of being the administrative officer, as a second tour officer in a small African embassy sounds like, oh, my God, I want to be a political officer. But yet, they were learning skills that would stand them in wonderful stead later on. Consular officers in a third tour found they were managing for the first time. Some people were dead ended that way. You have the dual problem, you've got to get the jobs filled. And you're trying to do something for the person. And of course, it was helped by the fact that there was discipline. If they didn't like an assignment, remember the Vietnam War was cranking up, they could resign. I remember sitting at a panel meeting, somebody would resign, they'd write a ten page letter saying how much they hated the Vietnam war, and they weren't going to support it. And somebody would get up and say, "We have a resignation, I think we can go through pro forma accepting it, does anyone want to listen to this paper?" and he'd hold it up and let it fall with a thunk, and we'd mutter, "Let him go". We weren't being vindictive, it was just that there was no point into our listening to the reasons, unless it was something that would concern personnel such as living conditions, personality conflicts or the like.

*Q: Typically, how much say did an individual have in his or her next assignment? There was no bidding process of the kind we know today.*

KENNEDY: No. They would make requests, on what we called the April Fool's sheet because they were due on the 1st of April. You'd list three posts, or three geographic areas where you'd like to go. We tried to meet it, but we would look for qualifications



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and openings. There wasn't a lot of negotiation. If somebody really objected, I think we'd go back and take another look. But then there's the other side of it. We got to know our stable. I had about 300 people, I read their efficiency reports, and we would talk about the people we were responsible for, and a good number of them we'd met and interviewed. I recall one time someone came up and said, "Look, the consul just had a nervous breakdown running the consular section in Jamaica." It was a big job, it was a hard job but also a good job for upward and onward movement. And I had just interviewed someone who I think was number four in the consular section in Mexico City, Nancy Ostrander. Nancy had very good efficiency reports, and she was feeling kind of submerged where she was. ARA said, "We've got to have somebody in a hurry." And I volunteered, "Why don't we get Nancy Ostrander, she's very good, and she can be transferred out of Mexico, she wants out." Now, we didn't go through the bidding process, and in a way it probably was unfair to Joe Smith, or somebody I didn't know. But it was a way we could identify people who were particularly impressive. She went there, later she moved up in the Service and did very well as ambassador to Suriname. The accusation is made that it's the old boy network, and most of the time it wasn't. It was honest people trying to honestly do what you could for the person, and for the system. It wasn't almost a legal process as it is now. It's easy for somebody who is out of the Service now to look at what's happened, and shake their jowls and say how awful it was. But at the time I think it was quite a fair process.

Now, that said, my experience has been that I don't know what the real answer is. The promotion system, I think, for the most part is quite good. I've served on a promotion panel.

*Q: What period are you speaking of now, Stu?*

KENNEDY: Well, we're talking about way later in 1981-82. I served on promotion panels, and I've observed over the years, it seems to work. But the critical thing is the assignment, and if you're in a place that has a crises, or a place that has a high profile,

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where you've got a good rating officer, somebody who can write you up, and make you look extraordinary. That probably plays more of a role than it should.

*Q: Here you are in personnel, it's 1969, and you're off to Saigon. You get to Saigon and you spend about a year and a half there. Tell me how the assignment came about. And then tell me why it lasted a year and a half, but presumably it would have been for a longer period.*

KENNEDY: No, it was an unaccompanied tour in Saigon, during the war it was for a year and half.

*Q: Then simply tell me, if you would, how that assignment came about. Did you ask for it?*

KENNEDY: Yes. My problem is, I'm curious, and to use a Civil War phrase of people who hadn't been in battle, would be asked if they'd "seen the elephant". I kind of wanted to see the elephant. Don't ask me why, I'd seen the Korean War. I thought we were probably doing the right thing in Vietnam, but I wasn't strong one way or the other on the policy, but this is where the action was, and I think like many of us I wanted to see it. Also, I felt I was at a crucial time in my career. Today many of your chiefs of consular sections are called consul general. In those days there were very few like that, London, Paris, Mexico City and maybe one or two other, and I was too low ranking for those posts. So it was about the only O-3 job that I could get, and have the title consul general. I knew how the system worked, once a consul general, it would be very difficult to make me a non-consul general the next time around. So my volunteering was both for career and wanting to see the elephant.

*Q: What were your responsibilities in Saigon?*

KENNEDY: I ran the consular section for the whole country. In Danang they had what was called a consular extension, or something like that. It was run by Terry McNamara. It was technical part of the consul general's operation. I wrote his efficiency report although he

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was really a political officer. In Saigon we had a huge passport operation because we had about 500,000 American soldiers in Vietnam at the time, and they were entitled to a week or ten days R&R, rest and relaxation, out of the country. Some of them went to places where they didn't need passports, but others went to Australia, Singapore, Thailand, or some other place where they needed a passport. So we issued these passports which were maybe only good for a week, but we had to turn these out, and obviously had to turn them out in a great hurry. So this was one big operation.

Another task was visas because Americans were marrying Vietnamese girls. So we got involved in that. At the time I was there it was after the 1968 Tet Offensive which had really ravaged the country. By the time I was in Vietnam the war was going quite well. Things in a much better state than they were before or after. We had young Americans GIs who had met girls during their tour in Vietnam coming back on leave, or as civilians to get married, so we had a big visa load. I'll never forget one time when I got a letter from, at that time Senator Mike Mansfield, complaining. He said, "My constituent says that you aren't allowing his wife who went back to Vietnam for a visit, to return to America." Well, we called the young lady in, and said, "What's the problem?" Well, the problem became very obvious. The American had taken her back home to Great Falls, Montana and she was there when the winter started. She thought, "oh, oh, this is pretty cold up here", and wanted to get out of the icebox. She said she wanted to go home for Tet, the holiday in January, and did so. It was nice and warm, and she was with her family, and she didn't want to go back to Great Falls, Montana, and kept writing her husband saying, "the embassy won't let me come". Well, this wasn't true.

Another task was, of course, the protection and welfare of Americans. And as you have during any wartime, you got a lot of American civilians and others who hang around the war — they're with the PX, selling insurance, enjoying Oriental sex life and doing this and that, and there are an awful lot of con artists, or sort of quasi crooks who were there trying to make a big buck, and leach off the military, as well as quite legitimate business people.

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*Q: You're speaking of Americans.*

KENNEDY: Americans, yes, and they'd get in jail, so we'd try to get them out and get them home. As a matter of fact, I was running sort of an underground railroad with the collusion of the Vietnamese government. The Vietnamese really didn't care for having all these Americans in jail, but many of them had committed crimes. From time to time I would have an American who had been arrested for some crime, but not yet tried, appear in my office just off the street, and say, "They let me go, they took my passport, but they say I have to come back for trial when they call me." And with a straight face, would say, "All right, what we can do is this, we can issue a limited passport. We can fix it up for you to get on an American ship, and go back to the United States. But you have to be sure to come back for your trial." And off they would go. This happened again, and again. Our prisoners were put in Chiwa prison for a while which wasn't much fun, and they were kind of left alone. We'd send them combat rations to eat. Then at a certain point, the Vietnamese would be let out on probation and we'd move them on their way.

*Q: The living was fast and loose. What did it feel like to be in Saigon.*

KENNEDY: The first night I was there I was taken to a reception. As we were driving through Saigon I was wide-eyed, it was a hot steamy place, oriental as all hell and it was fascinating. All of sudden there was a big boom, and everybody said, that must be a rocket. Apparently a rather large rocket had hit very close to where we were, but we went on to the reception. Well, this is my first night there, and I thought, my God. Everybody was a little bit casual and I felt like I was in an old British movie, with everybody having a stiff upper lip. It turned out to be the closest I'd ever be to a rocket. This one was a big rocket; and most of the time they were small rockets, and they didn't hit near where we were. I thought this was going to be the daily life, but it wasn't. After a while you'd listen to the news in the morning, and they'd say rockets fell in this district, or that district. I lived

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in the third district, the embassy was in the first district, and if they didn't fall on either of those two places, it was like hearing about a thunder shower off in Canada.

There was a real problem for FSOs in Saigon. We were paid regular dollars, and we had a PX economy, but if you wanted to live outside or go to restaurants you had to buy piasters. And piasters cost three times the black market rate. And since I was the chairman of the Irregular Practices Committee which dealt with putting American black marketeers in their place, I really didn't feel like I could indulge in the black market. But most of the American newsmen, contractors and others bought their money on the black market which meant that I was living at a much poorer level than most of my civilian counterparts. Most of us in the embassy were following procedure, but we could live on the PX economy.

*Q: Who was your ambassador at the time?*

KENNEDY: Ellsworth Bunker.

*Q: What was it like to work for him? How concerned was he with the consular work?*

KENNEDY: Not at all. It was fair enough, he had a lot on his plate. There was a deputy ambassador, Sam Berger, who had been ambassador to Korea and he would give me any help I wanted. He wasn't terribly interested in my work, and again, I kind of tend to run consular things on my own. I prefer it that way, unless I've got a real problem and I had very few problems that I couldn't take care of. I would go over for dinner at Ambassador Bunker's place from time to time but he was busy being pro-consul in Vietnam. Our military commander was Creighton Abrams. The war was going well. I dealt an awful lot with the American military, and often I had to translate things for them, how to get things done in a foreign political environment. They didn't quite understand the niceties of civilian law, American and Vietnamese, which sometimes I had to explain to them.

*Q: Stu, you're talking about the work of a diplomat and work of the people in the military as these two intersect, which they did so dramatically in Saigon, and in other places as well.*

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*Your years in the Air Force — did they prepare you, did they help you in understanding the military, in knowing where the military was coming from, as you dealt so frequently with persons in our military?*

KENNEDY: Oh, absolutely. Also, you've got to remember I grew up as a kid and teenager in Annapolis, and I was absorbed into the Navy culture, so I'd already known and appreciated it, and military history was my bag in things I read. Also I had been an enlisted man for four years. To give an example: I was chairman of the Irregular Practices Committee, and the provost marshal's office would bring American civilians before us who were caught black marketeering. The provost office wouldn't arrest them but they would threaten to take away all military privileges from Americans civilians working in the country. The civilians could appeal this to the Irregular Practices Committee. The point being that if you had your American military privileges taken away, if you were a civilian, you were essentially unable to work. This included news people, they couldn't get on helicopters, or bases. The same was true for civilian contractors. So it was a big deal. An officer would present a case of what they found. You've probably heard the old saw, military justice is an oxymoron. In a way it was true. This is a big organization and they're trying to deal with the problem, but evidence sometimes was just not very good against somebody. I remember having one person, he was a Filipino on contract, and one of the things we were looking at was checks because this is how you bought black market piasters. They were sent to India by money changers, and it was against Vietnamese law. The provost's office had a check, and it showed a date and place. The defense pretty conclusively proved that the man was out of the country; and this wasn't his signature, something like Jesus Romaro, and there are a lot of Jesus Romaros. Anyway, this obviously wasn't the guy. But the Provost Marshal was saying, "Well, I know he's up to something."

When I was in the military I understood that you're up against a big monster, the military machine, and you treat it with a great deal of care because it can really do nasty things to you if you get on its wrong side. I can understand some of the attitudes of a black in a ghetto would have towards the police. You view authority with a certain amount of

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suspicion. Well, this helped to confirm some of my suspicions. I have a great deal of regard for the military, but I certainly felt strongly that you had to watch this monster, and try to make it dispense fair justice.

*Q: Did you feel that the military people you dealt with had a special affinity for you when they recognized that you had spent four years of your life, not only in the military, but in the Korean War?*

KENNEDY: Yes. This is something you can always play. They were officers, I'd been an enlisted man. These are two different worlds, even though I later achieved a relative high rank — I've always had this thing, if you're a military officer you're on the other side, you're a little bit the enemy. I understood where they were coming from, but I think it was helpful to be able to put myself into the position of somebody who was coming up against this organization and having to deal with it. We could sit there and talk about war. I was just having an interview yesterday with Chas Freeman who was our ambassador in Saudi Arabia during the Persian Gulf War, and he was saying that he was astounded at the ignorance of the newspaper corps that he had to meet almost every day in Saudi Arabia, something like 1600 newspaper news people. Because they were mostly from the Vietnam generation of people who had been able to duck the war, they had no military experience, had disdain for the military, and were pretty ignorant about the military matters. They didn't know the right questions to ask, they didn't know the terminology. They were so busy being cynical that they lost the good stories. And I think our generation had the military, so we have both respect for it and also some cautions. We understand it as we would a member of our family.

*Q: This is 1969, and much more was to happen in Vietnam for the United States. Did you have any intimations that this was an endeavor going sour? That this was indeed about to be a catastrophe for the United States?*

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KENNEDY: I wish I could say I did. If you talk to people, as I have who were out in the provinces, the province advisors, I think they were more aware of some of the problems, particularly the corruption. I think in a way it was the corruption of the government that undermined the whole thing, which I think still exists today which is undermining the Communist government. No, the war was going pretty well. The Tet offensive had pretty well destroyed the indigenous Viet Cong. The war was later lost by the South Vietnamese to the regular North Vietnamese army, not to the Viet Cong. I saw a government that was kind of working. It was working as well probably as the United States government had worked during our Civil War. They had an active parliament, a semi-autonomous judiciary. These were the people I dealt with. I saw an economy that was not doing too badly.

My main concern at the time was, I thought the Americans were way too committed to doing everything. I am talking about both the military and civilian sides. The Vietnamese were able to say, okay, you Americans go ahead and do it. We were beginning to draw down our forces, and there was some concern. I thought South Vietnam stood a good chance of making it. You know I had served in Korea, and I'd seen how devastated Korea was, and yet Korea was beginning to be quite a promising country in the 1960s. It was just beginning to turn around. So I was comparing Vietnam to it, and I thought Vietnam probably at that point a better army than the Koreans had when we were there in the '50s. But I think a real problem was that geography wasn't very kind to Vietnam. It had a huge border which could be penetrated anywhere, and also a lot of jungle. Whereas in Korea you had the 38th Parallel, period.

*Q: How conscious were you during your stay in Saigon of the protests in the United States against the war?*

KENNEDY: I just didn't have the feel for it that my wife was getting. My wife who was picking up a teacher's certificate and a Bachelor's degree at Maryland University, and I learned on home leave not to get in arguments about the war because she was getting it hot and heavy from all the student protests. I just kept my head down. We would see



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the protests on TV in Saigon, but tend to dismiss it as a bunch of kids who didn't want to get drafted, and didn't realize its divisiveness and what it was doing to our society. Something that did concern me was that just by signing passports I saw where these kids were coming from who were getting passports, and they weren't getting them from New Rochelle, or Chevy Chase, or Winnetka, or Shaker Heights. In other words they were not from the fancier suburbs. These were kids from small towns, or the inner cities, and it was very apparent that this was a poor man's war. We had sort of an oddity. I had working for me a corporal in the army who was getting a Master's degree in English at Harvard, and he was doing passports for me because they didn't know quite what to do with him. I think the Johnson administration allowed the intellectual class, the wealthier class, to opt out of the war, making it much easier to run the draft. There were all those college deferments.

*Q: And still this was a time when Martin Luther King and Robert Kennedy had been assassinated, and when the Democratic convention in Chicago had become a scene of violence and national disgrace. Do I hear you saying that did not seem to touch very immediately upon how people in Saigon working at our embassy felt about their work and their objectives?*

KENNEDY: This had all happened about a year or so before, in '68, that horrible year. I was in Washington at the time. From my perspective, without looking at it in any great depth, I thought we were doing something good in the war and it was something important, otherwise I don't think I would have gone there. I looked upon the demonstrations as being by a bunch of spoiled kids. I voted for Hubert Humphrey, and but I later voted for Nixon over McGovern. I was not very sympathetic to this protesting group although I consider myself more on the liberal side of the spectrum.

In Saigon we would get CBS and NBC news and you'd see these newsmen reporting from the city and they all seemed to get it wrong, or they always seemed to put a downer on things. Where I would see progress, they wouldn't. I remember there was one commentator, a young guy called Bruce Morton, He would report something or other and

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then at the end of his bit would show Vietnamese walking down a street or the like and say “look at the people here and see how solemn they are, who knows what they are thinking?”. Well, hell, I knew what they were thinking as well as anybody else did. The Vietnamese going about their ordinary life which wasn't that bad at that time. I don't say the life was very good, but the point was it wasn't as though this was a seething mass ready to revolt. I had very little respect for the news media. I thought they were doing us a disservice, and I thought they were basically opposed to what we were doing. I won't call them traitors, I don't want to sound like a right wing conservative, but I don't think they did a good job. Maybe we shouldn't have been there, and I thought our role should have been much less, but I don't think we were well served by the news media.

*Q: Are you saying their reporting was often slanted?*

KENNEDY: Oh, yes. I think it was slanted to make it to appeal to the people who wished the whole thing would go away.

*Q: We have reached the end of our first taping session by concluding a discussion of your service as consul general in Saigon. When we meet again we'll begin with your next assignment which was as consul general in Athens.*

KENNEDY: I like to tell one interesting anecdote. While I was there they had a dredge in the Mekong River, like a big barge but it's a dredge in the middle of the Mekong Delta. The captain of the dredge, I don't think he could have sailed across the Potomac River, but he was called the captain.

*Q: He was an American?*

KENNEDY: Yes, he shot and killed his first mate. I guess they had been together too long, I don't know why he shot him, but he did. He turned himself in and was arrested. Some bright lawyer in the Army said, “Ha-ha, this was a crime on the high seas,” because the Mekong River is very wide at that point and it was navigable, “so we'll treat it as

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a crime on the high seas, and we'll take him in our jail." The Vietnamese said, "With pleasure," and off he went to the U.S. Army Long Bin jail. The case was referred back to the Pentagon. Well the Pentagon lawyers took a look at this, a long look like lawyers do and six months later came back and said, "Hell, this isn't a high seas thing. He's a murderer and he should be in the jurisdiction of the Vietnamese." So the Army tried to turn him over to the Vietnamese, and the Vietnamese said, "No, no, no. You thought it was a crime on the high seas, and we think it was too, and it's not our jurisdiction." So the Army lawyers came to me and asked, "What are we going to do?" The upshot was that I eventually handed a passport over to this guy, who was really very subdued. He was not a professional murderer. The American military legal people ranted and raved, "You can't turn this murderer loose." And I said, "What are you going to do? The Vietnamese aren't going to take him. Yes, I'm going to turn him loose." Anyway, that was one of the interesting moments, I won't call it the lighter side, but a vignette of how things were done there. It was a wild and wooly place.

KENNEDY: This is election day, Tuesday, November 5th, 1996. To continue with me and Brandon Grove. Brandon do you want to pick it up now and I'll see if you're recording.

*Q: All right, Stu. We concluded with your service as consul general in Vietnam, '69 to '70, and we're going to talk now about your work in Athens as consul general there from 1970 to 1974. You started off in Frankfurt, then you went to Dhahran, and then to Belgrade, and then to Saigon. How come Athens?*

KENNEDY: It was a fairly big consular job, and you know how you belong to a bureau of one type or another, and I belonged not to a geographical bureau, but to a functional bureau. My rank and experience was appropriate to the job. Also, I think, at least from the consular side, it was, okay, this guy has been in Saigon during the war, and he's done his duty and Athens is a just reward. As we'll get into it, Athens was more difficult in many ways than Saigon because of the political situation there.

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*Q: Can I pause a moment, because you make an interesting point. Do you conclude that the skills you acquire in your specialized field of consular work are pretty much equally translatable to any portion of the globe at any particular time?*

KENNEDY: Frankly, yes. There's always the language problem. But as you know, Brandon, it's difficult to combine technical skills and language ability. Greek is a very difficult language, it ranks pretty far up the line as do Vietnamese, Japanese, and others. So in the best of all worlds you'd have a Greek speaker in the job. But, irrespective of that, basically in the functional bureaus, I only know the consular bureau, but one's reputation, and reputation is built one's work, is a major factor in assignment. If you goof up too much, if you cause too many problems you will be kept away from supervisory jobs. In consular work, the Bureau expects a certain knowledge of consular matters, but also of ability to manage and to work within a foreign situation. I think this is how the consular bureau functions. If somebody is a Spanish speaker, if they're a Spanish speaker with consular expertise they're thrown into what I would term the black hole of Latin America, and never emerge again. This is being unfair, but it's sort of the reputation it had, but other than a Latin American specialist, as a consular officer you're somewhat transferable around the globe.

*Q: By the time you were sent to Athens as consul general, you'd been in the Foreign Service for 15 years. Do you think the training you received in the consular function was adequate to your needs and professional development at that point in your career?*

KENNEDY: Well, training is the wrong word, experience.

*Q: I was talking about formal training at the Foreign Service Institute.*

KENNEDY: The only formal training I'd had since I left the A-100 course, other than the languages, was one week in what they called the mid-career course, which I found very good. I can't remember when I took it, I think it must have been just before I went to

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Saigon. That course exposed me to the thinking of people in other specialties, particularly those in the political cone. As a consular officer I was used to dealing with problems, and we were given problems to discuss and solve in the mid-career course. Most consular problems have to be taken care of right away. You can't mull it over and write about it. You say yes or no and do what you have to do. I found that the problems that were presented by the mid-career course were mostly ones dealing with people. The political officers didn't seem to make the decisions very quickly or easily. I mean they would see all sides. Most of the problems were, do you fire somebody?, do you get rid of them?, or do you do something of that nature? I may have been a bit blithe about our theoretical firing. This is the consular approach, rather than see all sides and then wait. In a way this training for me was very helpful because I realized, maybe the consular outlook was somewhat different than that of Foreign Service officers in other specialties.

*Q: So what you're saying, Stu, 15 years in the Foreign Service, you had the basic training for junior officers, the A-100 course, and then a one week mid-career course, and no specialized training in the functions of consular work.*

KENNEDY: That's exactly right. I think we've gotten much more sensitive over the years and there are many more courses, such as how to negotiate, how to work in the Washington bureaucracy. We rely too much on our officers picking up what they need to know on the job.

*Q: Let's get on to the political situation in Athens, and your experiences there as the senior person in consular affairs. How would you describe that situation? What were your biggest problems? But first of all, who was the ambassador at the time you began your tour in Athens?*

KENNEDY: Henry Tasca had a mixed reputation. He was known as a hard taskmaster. He had befriended Richard Nixon when Richard Nixon was out in the wilderness when Tasca was ambassador to Morocco, and this was in a way his reward. Colleagues told me,

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"Oh boy, you've got a real problem going out there." Frankly I didn't. I found Henry Tasca, from my perspective, a good boss. He left me alone. I had one spot of trouble, and he backed me up...which we can get to at another point. He had a difficult wife, an Italian wife who was very demanding, and went through, I think, over 100 servants at the residency and this caused all sorts of turmoil. Her being Italian, and trying to treat the Greeks like real servants, and the Greeks don't take kindly to the Italians. "We beat the hell out of you during the war, and don't try that on me." It wasn't a good mix.

I might mention the political situation. The political situation was really difficult, and it had very strong reverberations in the consular side. On April 22, 1967 a group of colonels had a coup, led by a man named Papadopoulos, his number two was a colonel named Patakos. These colonels were anathema, using a good Greek word, to the academic, the liberal community in the United States, as they should have been. I make no bones about it. Greeks are a difficult people. They might have invented democracy, but they're not very good at it. The real problem was for us was, do you play ball with these people, or do you put them at arm's length? Most of the European countries, Germany, France and England, kept them pretty much at arm's length. We didn't, but, of course, the other countries had the luxury of they didn't have much stake. We did because Greece is a key player in NATO, against the Soviets. It's really more their real estate than their army. We had a major communications center near Athens, and also on Crete. There was a NATO bombing range we used, and we had a home porting. The fleet used to come in there quite a bit, and we had artillery outfits armed with nuclear weapons up along the border. So we had a real stake in it, so we could not afford to throw them into the outer darkness. The other European countries could posture about how they would not have much to do with the colonels while they depended on us to keep Greece from becoming a loose cannon.

*Q: Tell me about, to the extent that you are comfortable doing so, about the role of our intelligence agencies in Athens. By all accounts this was a particularly deep involvement on the part of both the CIA representatives, and DIA, the Defense Intelligence Agency.*

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KENNEDY: This was my only solid exposure to this. I wasn't reading most of the political reporting done by the embassy and the CIA. In the consular section, we would have people coming in off the streets, Greek-Americans, and we would be picking up stories about the Greek military police beating up people. It wasn't awful, I mean really awful compared to most other totalitarian countries, but it wasn't good. This was not a benign dictatorship. I would report what I'd heard at country team meetings. Our CIA station chief would immediately chime in and say, "Well, that's not quite the report we get and we know this didn't happen." Well, the problem was the CIA station chief was in bed with the guys who were beating up the Greeks, and sometimes Greek-Americans. To my mind it was too close a relationship. On the Defense Intelligence Agency you had the same problem where we had a superfluity, in my belief, of Greek-American military officers, they spoke Greek. But the problem is, as with most immigrant groups, and I think the Greek-Americans tend to be very conservative. They're 110% American, but at the same time they're also 110% Greek, and much more comfortable with the right than the left. Most come out of peasant stock and from the countryside when they were in Greece, or their parents were. So they were comfortable with the military, and power, and they can talk the language, and the military was running the country. I think this was a danger.

My predecessor, as consul general there, was a man named Pete Peterson, whose family name probably was Patropolos. He spoke fluent Greek. By chance he had been a neighbor of Patakos, who was number two in the regime. So he was the principal contact there. This was one of those fortuitous things, but at the same time Pete Peterson was a very strong supporter of the colonels, they promoted themselves to generals thereafter. I found that local politics was even translating into visa matters. It was a very complicated political situation in Greece after the war. The communists were mean sons of bitches, and they would come into a village and you either joined them or they'd shoot you, and they kidnapped thousands of children and sent them off to the east bloc as hostages to be trained there. So people up in these little villages were really under the gun, what do you

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do? Do you stand up and get shot, lose your kids, or join up. There was a lot of collusion. This was during the Greek civil war, from about 1944 up to 1950 or so.

But anyway, when it came time to issue visas to these people in the 1960s and 70s, many of them had to say, or it turned out, yes, they were somewhat very marginally involved with the Greek communist movement in their villages. Well, we'd had advisory opinions from the visa office, and you could make allowances for this. But Pete Peterson would make no allowances. This was very much the hard nosed, first generation Greek American. Much more rigid, and much more less understanding. "My family didn't do this, so why should they?" So I found myself sort of getting us in line with what I consider practical thinking as far as whom we would exclude because of communist activities, and whom we would not. It was a real wrench changing this around. This is how this political relationship intruded into normal consular operations.

*Q: Tell me about the spot of trouble you referred to earlier. What was that?*

KENNEDY: I have to tell a little story. My wife has always been interested in French, and French culture, and the Comedie Francaise was coming to Piraeus, the port city of Athens. She said she would love to see that. And I said, "That's fine dear, maybe you can find somebody to go with you." So she went with a couple in the consular section who spoke fluent French, and were also great Francophiles. She parked the car outside a hotel in Piraeus near the auditorium. It had a license plate on it, it was a Chevy, which identified it as an American embassy car, a diplomatic plate. After the performance when my wife got in the car she put the key in the engine and turned it on when a bomb went off. It was a little bomb, but it was not a little-little bomb. It had been placed on top of a tire of the rear wheel, so when the bomb went off it was in an enclosed place and it blew open the wheel well, and spewed parts into the trunk. The woman who was with Ellen happened to be on the side of the car and got a little nick on her ankle.

*Q: Was your wife injured?*



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KENNEDY: No, my wife wasn't injured. It was outside a hotel, and they called the police. My wife called me and immediately said, "Oh, darling something happened, but I want to tell you I'm all right, there was a bomb in the car." Well, my normal instinct as a good male was, okay, my wife's talking and I wanted to find out what the hell happened to the car. But my brother's wife had been hit by a trolley car one time, and he made the mistake of asking about the car before he asked about her. And I had learned from this experience, so I said, "Are you all right darling?" "Oh, yes, I'm fine." And then, "How about the car?" Anyway, the car was all right except for the hole in it.

I might as well finish off the story. The police came and they were looking around, and the police said, "We think it's all right now. You can drive the car." To show her it was all right they tried to turn on the engine. Well, they weren't used to an American car, and they tried and tried, and made everybody stand back, and finally my wife said, "Let me do it." So all the police stood around while she turned the key on, and it started.

The police eventually found the person who had put the bomb in the car; it was a pediatrician who had gone to Harvard Medical School. In true, from my biased point of view, Greek fashion, to protest, he didn't pick on the Greeks allied to the colonels, he picked on the Americans. I found the Greeks difficult because they tend to blame everything on another person.

*Q: Did they blame all this on Harvard?*

KENNEDY: Well, the Greek pediatrician, Harvard trained...he set the bomb off in an American car. The pediatrician, by the way, treated American children. This was his odd way of protesting.

*Q: What was his motive?*

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KENNEDY: Raise general hell, and show the Americans the Greeks didn't like what we were doing in Greece in support of the colonels, I think.

*Q: Do you think he intended to kill anyone?*

KENNEDY: No, I don't think so. But it was dangerous, it could have hurt somebody if they'd been in the wrong place, or it had fallen off, something could have happened. Anyway, they found him and put him in jail and some Americans came to see me, and were protesting the putting in jail of this man. They had no idea why he was put in jail. So I explained to them he was not an American citizen, these were some people from Harvard, or from Cambridge, Massachusetts. I explained the situation and they were going on about how awful it was. And I said, "I have a personal interest in this. The son of a bitch put a bomb in my car when my wife was using it." But they still went on at great length paying no attention to what I said; they were talking about appeals, and somehow or another at some point I said, "You've got to remember that Greek justice is basically Balkan justice, and it's a little different than it is in the United States." There was an article that appeared in the Christian Science Monitor a week or two later, saying the U.S. consul defends regime. And "He said Greek justice is Balkan justice." Well, they didn't give a damn what else had been said, but concentrated on the fact I had linked Greece to the Balkans. It was in the headlines. "We're not Balkans," was in all the Greek papers. In a way they were able to get out the story against the colonels through my words. I spent a couple of bad days while the Greeks were fulminating over this particular phrase. And Henry Tasca stood by me, and it went away. So I give him credit for this, he didn't run scared.

*Q: When you finished in Athens you did get a year of training at the Senior Seminar. How would you describe that year in terms of its value to you professionally?*

KENNEDY: It was a good solid year. The emphasis was to look at the United States, not on foreign policy. One of the sights that I will never forget, was going through the heart of

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Detroit, and it looked like a bombed out city. There were these relatively solidly houses that had been burned down by arsonists, by people who after the pipes and other fixtures.

*Q: This was in the aftermath of race riots.*

KENNEDY: It was after the aftermath of race riots, but it was a continuing thing. The city administration had sort of given up in certain parts of it, so people were burning the houses down, either the fun of it, or to get the nails or lead pipes, or what have you, copper pipes, something like that. It was very discouraging. I was not impressed by how Detroit was facing the problem, in a way it was an exposure to the racial problem up close. I was not impressed with the way the black community was responding on this. However, I think another thing I was impressed with was, the competence, the dedication and difficulties of a lot of state and municipal governments dealing with all sorts of problems that they were exposed to. So I think it was a good year.

You had a project for the seminar, and my project was self-made. I looked at the role of foreign consuls in the United States. On our seminar trips I would slip away from time to time to talk to the consuls and see how they operated, and what were their difficulties. I wanted to see the other side of the moon, how foreign consuls worked in the United States. I thought their major problem would be communications. Because the Polish consul in Chicago who had to deal with all of California and Alaska, and parts in between, and there are a lot of Poles out there. But their main problem was that they felt they weren't getting fair parking at airports, and places around the city. There was also a security problem for some, particularly the Turks, the National Armenian Army had killed the Turkish consul general in Los Angeles, and there'd been attacks on Turks in Boston too. Security was a major problem for the Iranians, which was the Shah's government at that time. The consulate had been attacked in Chicago by Iranian students protesting the Shah's government.

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I wrote a paper for the seminar, and then I had an article for the Foreign Service Journal based on the study. I got some feedback from this. And as far as I know when you go to the State Department library, if you look up foreign consuls in the United States, my article is the sole reference, and foreign consuls have been operating in the United States since about 1778.

*Q: Did you find then that spending nine months in this fashion at this point of your career was beneficial to you in terms of your professional development?*

KENNEDY: Yes. I think particularly as a consular officer it was particularly good because I deal at the municipal and state level in different countries, much more than say a political officer does. I'm talking to policemen, and governors, and this sort of thing, and it gave me a better feel for local government in general. I could relate more easily to my contacts in local governments abroad. In doing my oral history interviews, I'm not sure of its benefits to political and economic officers, it would be nice if you could give those officers both the Senior Seminar and a War College, because the War College helps you develop good contacts in the military, and so much of our work is in conjunction with the military that I think this is important. But a good reporting officer should have a solid look at his own government at the local and state level.

*Q: When you left the Seminar you went to the Board of Examiners, was that an assignment you had requested?*

KENNEDY: Well, I didn't have an assignment and I wanted to stay a little while in the United States. As a senior consular officer, there were probably four or five jobs in the Bureau of Consular Affairs, and they were all full. There was not a very good system for finding jobs for us when we came out of the Senior Seminar. There was a lot of talk of how "you were top priority", which was a bunch of personnel nonsense. Anyway, I found it a fascinating time with the Board of Examiners because the exams during that time — they've changed now — three of us would sit down with the candidates for about an

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hour, a little more than an hour, and question applicants. They were bright people. You had a chance to probe, and you could direct your questions, very good training for oral historians.

One thing I have to say is that I was not swept off my feet by the applicants. These were people who had done extremely well in college, but when push came to shove, none of us really felt like giving them more than about B grade.

*Q: Let me ask you about problems which we are now very conscious of, and that's the balance within the Foreign Service, of women and minorities to reflect in a general way the make up of our country as a whole. Were you conscious in those years on the Board of Examiners, which is '75 to '76, of that need? And if you were, did the Board take specific steps to break out of the white male cast of the Foreign Service as it pretty much existed up until then?*

KENNEDY: With the women, it really wasn't a problem. I have two daughters and I've always felt women had gotten up to that point a raw deal. And there was no particular problem seeing them as potential FSOs. They were as bright, if not brighter than the men. My particular thrust, when I was questioning, was one, I wanted any applicant to have a damn good knowledge of American history. I don't think you can represent the United States unless you know American history and have some feel for your own country. And the other one was, how good were they at problem solving. I felt that what made a good consular officer, would probably make a good political officer too. This combination of knowing your own country, and being able to deal with problems. Women were as good as men in those areas. So, yes, we probably gave a little extra push to women. When we interviewed women, there was always a woman on the panel. The woman panel member tended to be a little tougher on her sex than the men.

*Q: Why?*

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KENNEDY: Our lady team member made it, and by God a female candidate is not going to get a free ride just because she's a woman. It wasn't to the exclusion of women, but it was not as though they were advocates of women. They were asking the same questions.

With the minorities you really had a problem. And when we're talking about minorities we're really talking about the blacks. It was a time, and I suspect it's still true, that the academic records which we would see in those days — you don't see them now — the academic records of black applicants who came before us, I think had been puffed up in the universities.

*Q: What basis do you have for saying that?*

KENNEDY: On their performance. The majority that we saw were not that impressive as compared to the whites with comparable records. There just wasn't the depth. I don't think there's anything innate, or anything like that, I don't it was the luck of the draw. It was the marketplace. You had a group that had been deprived for centuries that was just coming out into the competitive world, this was a group that was being given special attention. But there was not the family or cultural structure that pushed for good education in the then black community, with major exceptions. So those that rose to the top, and we're looking at an elite, hell, they can get three times as much of a starting salary in business, as they could in the Foreign Service. I don't think the black leaders, or potential leaders would opt for international affairs, there was still so much to be done within the black community that they would go into the political world. There were other priorities for the top people, either helping their people or getting better money. So I don't think we were getting the top people.

*Q: Did the Foreign Service at that time through its Board of Examiners make special efforts to try to bring in more minorities?*

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KENNEDY: Yes, they were really working at it hard. We knew what we were supposed to do, and I know that we weren't sitting down and saying, no, no, no, and being obstructionists. But at the same time we were not to give special credit in the calculations of hiring. I think the threshold was lower. I think most of us too had seen people who had been brought into the Foreign Service, who weren't as competitive. There wasn't much done in the Foreign Service in those days once we hired somebody, that was sort of, well okay, sink or swim. I think there's more work done on it now, which is right.

*Q: You've alluded before of a lack of training in your own experience.*

KENNEDY: Oh, absolutely.

*Q: Well, from there you moved on as consul general to Seoul in South Korea, again a major shift in continents, and language and cultural environment. As in your service in Germany, you were involved in a country in which there was a large U.S. military presence. How would you describe your chief concerns at the embassy, also vis-a-vis the military community? And when you arrived who was our ambassador?*

KENNEDY: Our ambassador was Richard Sneider, a Japanese expert, very hard nosed, tough, good ambassador. I had great admiration for him dealing with a difficult government. Again, this was Park Chung Hee who had really been the architect of the rise of Korea as an economic and military power, which we strongly applauded. At the same time, it was military rule. It wasn't as bad as the Greeks under the colonels. The Koreans didn't have as much opposition within the country. There was something about having 40-50 North Korean divisions thirty miles away in the north who could be in Seoul within a day or two that tended to focus on ones mind on the military problem, and not on the human rights problem. But we were trying to do something about this, it was the beginning of the Carter administration. Again, I played somewhat the same role I did in Greece about telling them of problems. I don't think Sneider was overly sympathetic to this. He had major problems and human rights fell down a bit in priority despite the Carter

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administration emphasis on it, and rightly so. You could not destabilize that government, it was too dangerous. You had to have them work it out themselves with every push and shove that we could do, but we could not walk away from there. Because if Korea went, Japan would be in jeopardy, and particularly this was during the aftermath of the Vietnam war, and all over Asia our allies were looking to see if we were steady presence in that area. So there were military concerns. We had a very strong American missionary group there with whom I had some contact. Most were strong human rights advocates, and they put pressure through American newspapers, and through their congressmen on the embassy. It was a difficult time for the ambassador.

*Q: Were there any particular difficulties in your relationship with our military? I assume we had a status of forces agreement. But people do get arrested. There are problems that arise. Was this a large dimension of your consular concerns? By this, I mean the relationship with the military to Korean law, or not?*

KENNEDY: No, not really because the military there took care of those problems. Unlike Germany, you didn't have a large number of American hangers-on selling cars, insurance, to the military. In Germany back in '55 these business people were often pretty sleazy and would get in trouble, and they weren't covered by the military so they were the consul's baby. In Korea it was a much more stable American community. My big problems with both the military and just in general were two. One was processing marriages. We had a role in this, and intertwined was a major consular problem there, visa fraud. And this was big stuff.

*Q: Do you want to expand on that?*

KENNEDY: Sure. When I arrived there I was concerned. I knew visas were avidly sought after by Koreans, and the society at that time, and it remains so today, was one where money passes hands in order to get something. You paid for services received whether it was governmental or not. So it seemed inconceivable to me that we didn't have a major



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corruption problem with visas. However, I checked and there had never been any type of major investigation or scandal. I was particularly worried about the officers because the Koreans are not adverse to using presents, sex, in order to get what they want. They used women as currency in almost the same way that we would use coupons. If you want something, you get it, and many of our congressmen fell afoul of this. So at one point I went to a consular conference for East Asia in Bangkok. Barbara Watson, whom I knew and respected was the head of consular affairs again in the Department of State, was there. I said, "I would like to see something done. I don't see smoke or fire, but there's got to be something, we're too complacent." We had a security officer who was not very aggressive. So she had the security officer changed, and sent out a new one named Lee — I can't remember his first name right now — who said, "All right, let's do something." So he started sting operations, and various things. Anyway, he uncovered a major visa fraud system within the consular section, and about half the people there were fired. No Americans were involved. I had been concerned because when I arrived another officer in the section, who left shortly after I appeared, was a shopper, and he knew all sorts of people, and they used to come in and say to me, "Won't you come out to my shop?" Well, luckily I'm not a shopper, my wife is not a shopper. There were questionable visas that had been issued before my time. I don't want to accuse anybody of anything, but I think it just was too cozy. A consular officer really has to stay above it, and not get involved in any place where favors could be done. You can't always avoid it, but it is best to keep a distance. Anyway a major fraud ring was uncovered. And just about the time we were doing this, I found out maybe five or six years later, another big fraud ring was starting just as we were closing down the other fraud operation. This second operation was done with forged petitions for visa preferences. It took the sharp eye of a consular officer some years later who uncovered it.

*Q: Did the Foreign Service inspectors not play some role in uncovering this? After all, they would visit a post in those days perhaps every three years. Did they manage to come and go in Seoul without uncovering this kind of fraud?*

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KENNEDY: Really this has to be generated within a post, or there has to be something — inspectors are just not in a position to uncover fraud, they are only at a place a short time. Korea was what we would call a corrupt society. Visas are very important, and once in the United States you are home free. That was the equation that led me to ask for a hard look at the situation.

The other side of the fraud problem which we couldn't do much about was the arranged marriage by GIs to Korean women. Many of these were bought and paid for, and the women would disappear once they got into the United States. There was a rather large prostitution cum massage parlor type organization. The Immigration Service couldn't do much about this. The GI would say, "I'm in love" and he was stationed there, and you couldn't really stop him from so-called marrying a girl, and he gets a payment. He was probably getting out of the Army, and she'd disappear into the woodwork in the United States. And we couldn't really challenge that. We'd point it out to the U.S. military, but their hands were tied.

*Q: Your final assignment overseas was as consul general in Naples. How did you get assigned to Naples?*

KENNEDY: I think it was really because I was a consular officer and within the Foreign Service most of the major consulates general had gone to people who were essentially political officers, or maybe knew somebody, or something of this nature. Assignments to some of the major consulates general more rewards, than not. If Joe could not get an embassy he would be offered a ConGen job as second prize. Consular officers had been excluded from the beginning from getting these posts. In the early 1970s it had been agreed upon, with Barbara Watson's strong support, to have certain posts named as posts reserved for consular officers to be in charge. So as a consular officer I was given Naples. It was really to keep the consular flag flying in some of these posts, to give some room for consular officers to feel they could move their way up to some of the better places.

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*Q: In your career, with the exception of your first post in Frankfurt, you have been in places of a good deal of tension, cultural stress, and sometimes danger. I refer, for instance, to your service in Dhahran, Belgrade, Saigon, Athens, Seoul. What was it like to be in Naples?*

KENNEDY: In a way it was a little difficult for me. I was in my fifties at the time, I was trying to learn Italian, I'm not a great linguist, and there isn't much English there, so I would be hanging on by my fingernails sometimes in conversations, and once they felt I understood Italian, they'd often start speaking faster and I had only a tenuous hold on the thread of conversation. They would start moving into the Neapolitan dialect, which was a mixture of Arabic, and Spanish. So it would have been much better if I had really known Italian well. But that said and done, I'm not sure it made a hell of a lot of difference. In Italy, everything is centered in Rome. So from the political side, I reported what was going on. But the main thing that we were doing was supporting the Navy, which had several military bases there, and overseeing the immigration program, which in the old days had been huge but was now almost dormant.

And then, of course, I got involved in the mother of all consular problems. I had a major earthquake in my area in November 1980. It was centered near Naples and killed about 1200 people, about a couple hundred in the Naples area and the rest in the villages in the mountains in Southern Italy. The U.S. military and AID came in to help. For this I was well suited, I knew what to do and how to do it. It's handy to have a consular problem as your main task when you are a trained consular officer.

*Q: Was there a large loss of American life?*

KENNEDY: No, no Americans were lost. We were concerned because there were a lot of Italian-Americans, particularly in the hills. When Italian Americans say, "we came from Naples" its not really correct. Hardly anyone ever emigrated from Naples, like Berlin, nobody leaves the city. But they went through Naples, and they were from the outlying

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villages. It was a lot easier to say, "I was from Naples," than some small place nobody ever heard of.

*Q: When you returned to Washington, you became a liaison officer to the Immigration and Naturalization Service. Tell me about that job. What did it entail?*

KENNEDY: When I came out of Naples, I was basically a placement problem. The only jobs on the consular side that they could fit me into would be the head of the passport office, the head of the citizenship office, or the head of the visa office, and those weren't open. So, what do you do with Stu Kennedy? It was an idea of Diego Asencio, as the head of consular affairs in those days, that there should be more cooperation with INS, which made eminent sense. I went over to INS, but this was early in the Reagan administration. The people there, Allen Nelson and a group of political appointees, mainly from California, were in charge. They were nice people but they had no particular connect with the professionals in the Immigration Service. They were kind of sitting there, they had their ideas, but no real agenda. INS has never been a functional organization. Mainly because I don't think the majority of American people in Congress wanted it to work too well because it would mean kicking out a lot of people. The public always wanted us to be tougher on illegal immigrants, but don't hurt Jose or Maria. So it doesn't function well, and this was an organization that didn't hardly use me. I tried and maybe I could have done maybe better but in retrospect probably not.

*Q: Were you the first person in that position?*

KENNEDY: The first and only. The other thing was, the attitude of the professionals in the Immigration Service itself. Some of the men told me quite frankly, "We're always worried about the State Department, because we feel like country bumpkins up against you city slickers," and all that. As a consular officer I didn't feel that way. I highly appreciated what they were trying to do, it is a very difficult job. The immigration service was getting very

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little support. But this was the perspective, so there wasn't much interest in dealing with me.

*Q: We've just finished talking about the Immigration and Naturalization Service.*

KENNEDY: I just want to add one thing about this because it leads into the next phase. While I was there, I was underemployed, which is hardly the term. I was practically unemployed, because the State Department had no real way to use me. I would pass on things, and do what I could but I found I really had no particular contact either with the political leadership or professionals in INS. There wasn't much contact between the political leadership of INS and its officers. And with the Immigration Service officers, as I said, there was sort of a cultural thing where they shied away from me. They were doing things their own way, and they thought we were trying to put something over on them, which we weren't. In the Consular Bureau we wanted to make the system gel. If they had a readable visa, we could read it with our readable passports, it didn't work that way at that time. We tried to get a joint readable visa/passport system, but with no interest on the part of INS.

So while I was with INS, I had an awful lot of time on my hands. I had two projects in mind. I had gone at one point to a funeral of a man for whom I had great admiration, Burke Elbrick. He was my ambassador in Yugoslavia. I realized how many stories he had told us in Belgrade about things he did as a junior officer, and what he had done throughout his career, and I thought, "Gee, somebody really should have gotten those stories on the record." I thought maybe somebody better start doing something about it. I started to see the glimmers of an oral history program.

The other project was that I've always been interested in history and I thought nobody has ever written about the consular service. In a way it was a search for my professional roots. So as I read American history anytime I ran across references to consuls, American or

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otherwise, I'd note them down. And I thought, maybe I can get the Department of State to start a history of the consular service as a historical series.

*Q: This is while you were still working at Immigration and Naturalization, is that right?*

KENNEDY: Yes.

*Q: And from there you went to the Office of the Historian. Did you ask to go there?*

KENNEDY: I'll tell you what happened, a new Assistant Secretary for Consular Affairs, Joan Clark came in. She asked about how the liaison was going? And I said it wasn't going anywhere. She said, "Let's terminate it." Diego Asencio had a bigger vision but it didn't work out, the idea was good. Joan didn't think in these terms. She's a very good bureaucrat. The arrangement was canceled, and I was left again at loose ends. My wife was going to the university to get a Master's in linguistics to teach English as a foreign language. She had kind of had it with the Foreign Service, and did not want to go overseas again. As I think many people in our career do at a certain point — you run out of steam, or the wife runs out of steam. I was really thinking about where do I go from here? So I talked to the Department of State historian, Bill Slany, and told him about my idea of preparing for what I thought might be a major project for a history of the United States consular service. And he thought it was a good idea, and I think at that time there was still some money around. So I was seconded to the Office of the Historian to start doing it. I started my research, and among other things I went through page by page the condensed version of the Encyclopedia of American biography. I got very good. Anytime the word consul appeared in one of those closely printed pages, I could probably zero in on it. It took me a couple of weeks, but I found an awful lot of people who had ended up as consular officers, including Fiorello La Guardia, and the father of Jenny Churchill, Nathaniel Hawthorne, and the man who wrote *The Heathen Chinese*, Bret Harte. There were many others.

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*Q: This is pre-Rogers Act of 1926.*

KENNEDY: Oh yes. I was looking at the early history, not to try to bring it up to date. I thought it would be a good idea for consular officers to understand where they came from. Most diplomats can look back to some of the diplomats — Benjamin Franklin, Francis Adams, Joseph Grew, and others, but on the consular side there isn't anything. So I thought it would be a good idea to do this for serving consuls, and also for the historical record. I worked on the project but unfortunately there wasn't money to do this. So I tucked my notes aside and did a few odds and ends of things for the historians, and I retired in early '85.

*Q: Is that to say you were not encouraged very much to go ahead with an independent study, under the aegis of the Office of the Historian, of the consular function?*

KENNEDY: I think sometimes the Office of the Historian is a misnomer. It has one basic product, and that is the Foreign Relations series. And that really is not a history, it's culling out important cables and dispatches to create these volumes, a magnificent series that has been going since the 1860s. That's what they do plus spot jobs for let's say, the consulate general in Naples finds its up against its 200th anniversary, and could we have a brief history of that, or how many times has the Secretary of State visited Ouagadougou, or what have you. I envisioned the Historian's office doing something such as the history of the Army in World War II which the Army History Center did.

*Q: As you look back over 30 years in the Foreign Service, what connection, if any, do you see between a knowledge of history, and its effect on the conduct of diplomacy?*

KENNEDY: I think that one is certainly a much more effective Foreign Service officer and diplomat if you understand your own country and where it's come from. I saw this as a great lack, for example, in George Kennan. As I mentioned before, he really did not appreciate the political system of the United States. He understood Russian history

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very well, and thought that somehow we should have a much more perfect response to its challenges than our country can possibly give. I used to love to read the old files when I would go to a new post. Now we destroy them too quickly. I found that if you read through the files you got a real feel for the country and the consular problems that might occur. I'd read books about the country of assignment, so I would understand where my counterparts were coming from. I really feel that if you're going to work within a foreign environment, you've got to understand it. But this is mostly self-generated. I had good training both in prep school and in college, as I mentioned, but after that it was all on my own.

I always describe the State Department as a historical institution. There isn't much interest in our history which I think is a major flaw.

*Q: You mean in our own history as a nation? Or do you mean in history of various other parts of the world?*

KENNEDY: I think particularly in our own history. I think we are doing a much better job now, from what I gather, in area studies of other countries. The FSI gives good reading list as well as lectures, so you can pursue your own studies at post as well as at the FSI. But I don't think there's much emphasis on understanding of the history of the United States, the Department of State, or our diplomatic practices.

*Q: At the Foreign Service Institute?*

KENNEDY: At the Foreign Service Institute. It looks like they have a much better way now of letting somebody read their way into a country, but it's self-generated. Most of the time, however, we deal with the problem at hand and have little time for understanding the roots of a problem. This something you learn on your own, and most of our officers do not have that inclination. I think we suffer from this.



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*Q: In your 30 years in the Foreign Service, you have spanned much of the period of the Cold War. If it's possible to answer this kind of question, let me ask you the following: to what extent is it your sense that the U.S. government was managing its foreign relations, and shaping and controlling events with which it had to deal, and to what extent was our government reacting, or scrambling to respond to the major events of the time?*

KENNEDY: I think to a certain extent, the proof of the pie is in the pudding. The fact is, we came out of the Cold War as the only superpower. It was obviously a mixture of both reacting, and taking the initiative in world events. But I think our very basic policy, which was formed quite early on, a restored Germany, a restored Japan, but weld them into a community that would keep them from emerging as a threat to others. We're talking about NATO, we're talking about keeping Japan from having to rearm. This basic policy has been a fantastic success. All the other ifs, ands, and buts are very much secondary. This, to my mind, has been a constant in our policy, and I think historically its proven itself to be absolutely correct. The other basic policy was to keep the Soviet Union from taking over Europe and Japan, which they never came close to doing.

*Q: Do you put George Kennan's concept of containment in that same category?*

KENNEDY: There is a lot of arguing by the revisionist historians who want to prove that the United States was the villain of the piece, but the Soviet Union was a real threat, and I don't think in any way we could have found common ground with it. We had to stop them and we did by containment it that means keeping them from setting up communist regimes throughout the world. The ones they did so do turned into real disasters. Now, it's a different matter, a more difficult world. But at the time, I think we had to meet the Soviets head on. There are some times and places where I think our policy is driven by domestic politics, especially in the Middle East as regards Israel. It has not been a success, but that is the price one pays for a democracy, and our vital interests have not been too damaged.

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*Q: As you look back on your experiences in the Foreign Service which span 1955 to 1985, how would you describe the role of the Foreign Service in the conduct of our policy. What difference has it made to the conduct of our diplomacy?*

KENNEDY: I think its made a tremendous difference. You can't extract the Foreign Service from how we conduct our foreign policy. Political leaders come and go. But the Foreign Service is always the underlying force that guides our policy and keeping it from getting too far away from reality. And tells them what can and can't be done and how to do it, plus proposing initiatives.

*Q: Tell who?*

KENNEDY: Our political leaders, our political masters. There are swings back and forth along the political spectrum, but the compass seems to point in more or less the same general direction, because that's where the role of the United States should be. With all its aberrations, and sometimes mismanagement, I think the Foreign Service has served the United States splendidly, a very effective professional group, sometimes mal-used.

*Q: Some political people have accused the Foreign Service of having its own agenda. Do you think that's a fair thing to say?*

KENNEDY: I think from a politician's point of view, yes. It has its agenda which is basically the agenda of what's good for the United States, and what role can it play, and what it can't play. I think often the politician tends to see some things in simplistic terms. Sometimes they're right.

*Q: The politicians?*

KENNEDY: Yes. For example, I think the human rights effort, particularly under the Carter administration, really did help change the political map of the world to some extent. Human rights has always been there, but the Carter administration gave it more emphasis, and

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made it more effective. But usually as new administrations come in, the politicians say they are going to do this and that, usually telling other countries what to do, and how to do it. Well, other countries have their own agenda, and you can't do that. The Foreign Service often points out what you can and what you can't do, and try and make what the politicians want to do practical. It is not always appreciated by the political leadership.

*Q: By can, and can't do, is the yardstick here feasibility, or the likelihood of success in what someone is trying to accomplish?*

KENNEDY: Feasibility, or success, or the likelihood, I mean they're both the same in a way. What you can do, and is it worth expending political capital on? This is where I often have questions about how we work within the Middle East, because I think we spent an awful lot of political capital on something that wasn't going to work out too well.

*Q: Are you saying that more as a private citizen than as a Foreign Service officer, or as a Foreign Service officer did you feel comfortable in judging the spending of political capital?*

KENNEDY: Well, I think you want to make sure what you really want to do, and not just to satisfy a political pressure group. I feel the same way about the Greeks and Cypriots and the Irish. These are areas where, because of political pressures in the United States, politicians respond to them and sometimes what we do is not really overly helpful. But, I accept that. This is part of the political game, and I think this is where the Foreign Service keeps us from getting too far off track. We can talk about what we are going to do, but we're not going to solve the Palestinian problem, we're not going to solve Northern Irish problem, we're not going to solve the Greek-Turkish problem, the Bosnia problem, etc. We can help, but eventually those people are going to have to settle their own problems, we can act as an honest broker. I think we should help, but we better make sure we're honest on both sides, than one side or the other.

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*Q: This is the 6th of December, and we are at the point in Stuart Kennedy's oral history where we will begin to talk about the oral history program itself.*

Stu, tell me about the origins of this program. How was the need for the oral history program felt and determined, how did it get started?

KENNEDY: As I mentioned before the funeral of one of our esteemed ambassadors, Burke Elbrick, got me to thinking about an oral history program. At first it wasn't very well thought out, but it seemed like such a good idea. Nobody was pushing me. The idea of a diplomatic oral history was not unique on my part. I find very disturbing that there is so little interest by our organization in trying to figure out what we've done before, or what we might have done before.

*Q: By our organization, what do you mean?*

KENNEDY: The State Department and the Foreign Service. We're an ad hoc organization, what's on the agenda today? I'll develop that theme later as we go along. The idea of an American diplomatic oral history program is nothing unique. There had been other proposals for doing it, but they'd all died aborning. And I think the reason they all died was they depended on official administrative support, and then people started thinking about a declassification, and who will do this and that, turning it into an organizational, administrative problem which kills it. I didn't worry too much about the procedure and wrote up a proposal, but then didn't quite know where to go with it. But I went around and started talking colleagues at DACOR, and other places, but not getting much support until I ran across Victor Wolf.

*Q: About when was this?*

KENNEDY: This would be about '83, I think. I was still at INS. Victor immediately saw the possibilities, and its value.

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*Q: Who is Victor Wolf?*

KENNEDY: Victor Wolf was a retired Foreign Service officer, who had served in Iran, Germany — West and East Germany, Poland, Denmark and the Philippines, mainly as a consular officer. When I met him he was employed part time by the Department of State screening visa applications of Iranians who wanted to be refugee status.

In a way it's interesting that both the people got involved and saw the value of this, both came from the consular world which was off to one side, not involved you might say in Foreign Service terms, a term I abhor, "substantive" work, who had never been particularly involved in policy. We just thought it was something that should be done.

*Q: Throughout this interview, you've made it very evident that you are not only a trained historian, but that history and the flow of events interest you greatly. Would you say that Victor Wolf, never mind what his specialty in the Foreign Service was, had the same sort of intellectual bent?*

KENNEDY: Oh, absolutely. Victor and I were differing personalities, and in some ways we were quite unlike, but in this particular regard we really melded, and there was no problem. We were doing this jointly. So we started putting our proposal out, it's the usual thing, you run through a whole series of drafts. And then we started flogging it around to different people who might have some interest. One was Sam Gammon, a retired Foreign Service officer, but had a doctorate in history and was executive director of the American History Association, who thought it had possibilities but made some excellent suggestions. I went over to the National Archives and talked to the diplomatic historians there, a branch which has now been dissolved.

*Q: What did they tell you?*

KENNEDY: Essentially they said, "The idea has merit, but nobody is going to sit and listen to tapes." My idea was, you know, tapes only cost about \$1.50, they are not very

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expensive. The Archives people said, "You've got to get them transcribed. That means money." The point was well taken. Nobody has the time to listen to tapes, and you can go through paper so much faster than you can go through the recorded voice. The time difference is tremendous. We realized that this is not going to be something with just two guys with a tape recorder running around talking to retired Foreign Service people. We had to have an organization to support us.

I was getting ready to retire but I wanted to hang on for another year or two for pension reasons. And I was assigned to run the consular section in Hong Kong, but my wife didn't want to go. She was getting her Master's degree in linguistics, and I wasn't too excited about going. I had been talking to the historian of the State Department, Bill Slany, and I had proposed that I help him set up a program to do a history of the consular service of the State Department. It had never been done. He thought it was a good idea and so I got myself seconded to him for a year. In that position I was also a little closer to the historical apparatus of the Department of State, and while I was working on this preparation for history of the consular service, I was also peddling my own idea of an oral history. I didn't get much of a response from the Historian's office. They had proposed such a program earlier but it didn't get anywhere. I think there are solid reasons why it didn't get anywhere.

*Q: Do you think the problem of declassification was one of those reasons?*

KENNEDY: That was a very major one. Another one would be whom do you interview? You know, if you're within a hierarchy, you've got to interview the top dogs, who are usually political people who are in and out in rather quickly. It's harder to get farther down into the working guts of the organization. The other problem with the State Department doing an official oral history program is that unlike almost any other organization in the government, any criticism of American foreign policies, immediately ends up by being criticism of an administration, and of the President. Not that the policies are really that sensitive, but they're almost that sexy, so whatever we did in the Middle East, and if someone interviewed pointed out something that he or she thought was wrong, could end

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up in the newspapers. If you were in the Department of Commerce and said something of the same nature, I'm not sure that anybody would give a damn.

I also think there's something genetically anti-oral history within the State Department. This is my own analysis.

*Q: What you've really told us so far is how you felt the need for this kind of a record, and the conclusion you reached early on that the process of oral interviews couldn't be put into place, couldn't succeed, within government. That it had to be outside of government. What did you do then?*

KENNEDY: By this time Vic and I had sort of honed our idea, it wasn't really a proposal.

*Q: You were both retired now?*

KENNEDY: I was not retired at the time, I was within six months of retirement. I retired in February 1985, so we're talking about 1984 when I was working with Vic on this. We had been talking to people and leaving drafts of this proposal around. We talked to Don Ritchie, in the Senate Historian's office, who had been the president of the Oral History Association. He was quite enthusiastic. He gave us a lot of good ideas, by this time we were getting down to professionals who were telling us how you should plan and organize a program.

At one point, through people we'd talked to, Peter Hill of George Washington University, heard about us, and I'd say this was in the spring of 1984. He talked to us and made a proposal. He thought it was a good idea. Peter Hill was the Diplomatic Historian, the only diplomatic historian at that time at George Washington University, although he specialized in the Napoleonic period which is not a very fertile field for oral historians in the latter part of the Twentieth Century. George Washington was the host to the annual SHAFR conference that year. SHAFR is the Society of Historians of American Foreign Relations.

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*Q: George Washington University.*

KENNEDY: Was the host of this, it's a national organization. And these would be the diplomatic historians. They came every June to some place, often to Washington because many of them did research in the archives. So about every other year it would be in Washington. And Peter said, "Why don't we see if we can set up a panel?" Sam Gammon, who had had a long career in the Foreign Service and served as an ambassador, had a historian's Ph.D. and was executive director of the American History Association, agreed to chair the panel. This would be in June of 1984, and it was more or less to test the waters. Many of the participants, diplomatic historians, came to our panel and asked a lot of questions. There was real interest.

*Q: During the conference?*

KENNEDY: This was during the conference. It was a scheduled meeting. It was one of these things where you have 20 different presentations in different rooms. So it depends on how many people want to go hear you. This is where mainly young Ph.D. candidates trot their stuff. There was really great interest. Peter Hill was there, and using that as a tool he went to his History Department and said, "Why don't we support this?" And the History Department, being a little bit conservative, was not quite sure but I believe Peter Hill persuaded the members to go ahead.

And the long and the short of it is, we were made part of George Washington University. We had a three year contract, if you want to call it, it was called the Foreign Service History Center. We were given \$10,000. We were given no salary at all. This was going to be done on our time.

*Q: That is to say, you received no salary.*

KENNEDY: We received no salary, but we were given \$10,000 to help with expenses.



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*Q: By the University.*

KENNEDY: By the University, an office and office supplies, to see what we could do. Victor and I thought, that the idea was so exciting, and there were so many people who had been involved in foreign affairs, not just those in the Foreign Service, but political ambassadors, who paid out great sums of money in order to be nominated and become ambassadors, that they would be happy to contribute. This presumption, of course, turned out to be absolutely false, or at least we were unable to raise any money. But we had great expectations.

One sort of amusing sideline to this was, were our titles. What will we call ourselves? Victor and myself, both of us had Master's degrees but not doctorates.

*Q: Always a good Foreign Service question.*

KENNEDY: In the academic world it's even more important. I think we suggested we call ourselves the directors of the Foreign Service Center. Well, somebody in the History Department was adamant that you had to be a Ph.D. and a faculty member to be a director of a Center. So we played with other titles. Victor suggested a British title, which isn't used much here, managing director. That was fine for them. I guess managing sounds like you're sort of in administrative clerk. So that didn't upset the Ph.D. Mafia by being called managing director. So we became managing directors of the Foreign Service History Center. And we set about, to raise money, and to raise interest in the program. We didn't get into doing much about interviewing for a while. I think there was a little bit of stage fright there, to really that. You have to gear yourself up to interview. It's a little bit like getting out and making speeches.

*Q: I'd like to pursue that a little later. Let me ask you, at this juncture, whom did you see as your angels financially? In other words, whom did you think of as potential sources of significant revenue. You've mentioned former ambassadors, and even former political*

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*ambassadors who might have greater resources to put into something like this. At the same time whom did you see as your audiences, the consumers of your product? For whom did you think you would be doing these histories. Who would be the users?*

KENNEDY: Let me first say, besides the ambassadors, we were very naive, we thought there are all these foundations out there — the Pew, the MacArthur, the Ford, etc., we thought these people will certainly see the value of such a program, and they will jump in to help us. All this proved to be absolutely abortive. We saw the wealthy political ambassadors as our angels. As our audience, we thought that diplomatic historians particularly, but also people who were writing about foreign affairs would be interested in hearing how foreign affairs was done in reality, rather than theory. That the personal experiences would be of such interest that anybody who is teaching diplomatic history, writing about American foreign relations, including newspaper people and all, would immediately be entranced with this idea. There's a glimmer of truth there, but not much. I think one has to look at the potential audience. You have to inform that audience, and make them come to your table, because they're not that entranced with the idea. Which was a surprise to us.

*Q: Would you include university students? Graduate students, faculty, Foreign Service people on active duty, others in government, as part of your audience?*

KENNEDY: Yes, oh absolutely. We also saw this as a way for the active people in the Foreign Service to learn what has gone on before, and to learn by these experiences, and to have a better background for their work. I think we thought that once we got going that everybody would spring in, and think it such a splendid idea that they would rush to sup at our table. It didn't happen that way, and we shouldn't have been surprised.

*Q: Go ahead. You're in the early stages of trying to raise funds.*

KENNEDY: I retired around the 2nd of February 1985, and moved over to George Washington University. We started sending out proposals, and trying to sound out our

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support community. One of the things we thought was that if you are part of a university (even unpaid) it will send us off to people and institutions who will just be delighted to give us a lot of money. Again, this didn't work out. All the University did was to say, you go out and find the money, and whatever you get we'll take 15%. And they were not about to have us mess around with some of the big foundations because they were trying to get hospital wings, or chairs, so in a way it was more of an inhibitor than a help.

*Q: That's a common problem.*

KENNEDY: We were too small potatoes. We really needed probably about \$50,000 a year, and we thought we would only take a small percentage of that for us because we'd have our pensions, and the rest would go for transcribing and some travel.

*Q: Did that ever occur? That you were able to benefit financially from the program?*

KENNEDY: Not really, no. I can get into finances later on. But let's stay with the George Washington period, which lasted three years. We never got any money from George Washington. We got a little money from the Cox Foundation for a program which we developed, which I'll explain in a minute. And that was it.

In December of 1985 while we were still in this testing out period. I had started one interview with Douglas MacArthur, Vic Wolf had interviewed me, and I'd interviewed Vic Wolf, just to get our feet wet. Vic was unfortunately killed when he was crossing the street, and was hit by a truck, killed instantly. It was quite a blow and I thought "that's the end of the program" because Vic had more interest in the administrative-financial side than I did. But I persevered. The only program that we got going in that first year was called, The Foreign Affairs Resource Listing. We sent out questionnaires to about 4,000 retired Foreign Service officers, asking when, where they served, types of jobs they had, would they be interested in doing an oral history, or interviewing for us, or acting as volunteers. Because right from the beginning we saw this as being an organization which would depend on volunteers. And out of the 4,000 we sent out, we got approximately 1,000

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replies, which is really quite good. This was very encouraging. We did this with money that was given to us by the Cox Foundation. We hired a woman to put these into a early computerized form so if you wanted to know about Colombia, you could tickle the keys and it would tell who served in Colombia, when, and what they were doing there.

We thought there would be a great call on this. That historians would want to deal with people rather than papers and books. This, of course, was not the case. And it was never used very much. I think it's unfortunate, because we thought that once we had this people would flock to us, saying "give me somebody who dealt with the Panama Canal negotiations", or what have you. There was hardly a nibble. It did serve the program well later as I started interviewing because this gave me lists of people who served where, and who was interested. So the Foreign Affairs Resource Listing did help in the oral history interviewing process. I think Vic and I got about maybe \$600 each out of that. That was almost the total income we got, Vic got it in one year, and I got it three years.

An organization started over at the Foreign Service Institute which we hadn't heard about before. We read about it in State Magazine, and we thought, we're dead. It was something called The Association for Diplomatic Studies, started by Dick Parker, and some other officers. They were going to a little bit like the Naval Institute, or Friends of the War College. They were going to raise money and help the Foreign Service Institute. Among other things mentioned the association might do, sort of as a last item, it would look for exhibits with the idea of setting up a Foreign Service museum and do some oral histories. Of course, you were very familiar with this, Brandon, when this happened, but we had no inkling of this. We were thinking in terms of our hierarchy in the Foreign Service. Here were two retired consular officers of no great distinction, and here was an outfit with a bunch of ambassadors running it, and they were going to do oral histories. And as I say, we both looked at each other, "We're dead." But we persevered, and I did talk to Dick Parker on that, I think after Vic had been killed. The oral history proposal had been sort of an aside, maybe you can add to that. Do you remember? Were you around?

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*Q: That was before my time. That was about two years before I became the director of the Foreign Service Institute. The ADST already existed, but Dick Parker was still the president.*

KENNEDY: From what I gathered from Dick Parker, the oral history was thrown in without much thought to it. They realized this was a whole different game. So they felt, "Why don't we contract this out? Here we've got these guys who say they're doing this." I keep using "we" and "I", but it was about the time Vic was killed. So I did a series of about 18 oral histories for the Association for Diplomatic Studies, with the idea that I would also keep these for the George Washington library. I think I was paid \$300 apiece.

*Q: To get them transcribed.*

KENNEDY: No, I was paid \$300 for doing the interview and the Association paid for the transcription. Whom do we interview at the beginning? We had a very sensible plan, anybody who had been a chief of mission, a Foreign Service officer born before 1917. And within a relatively short time, we either got to those who were still alive and who wanted to be interviewed and were in the Washington, D.C. area. That was our first cohort. After that, as we got more and more into this, it was still heavily focused on people who had been chiefs of mission, mainly because these were the more successful people we thought, but also, frankly, I had the feeling that as we went out and tried to solicit money, the more people whose title was ambassador, it would be more attractive to those who didn't know the territory and would be impressed enough as to our seriousness.

For three years I worked for George Washington University, and I found there was really no real interest there in our program. The interest that had been sparked waned very quickly.

*Q: What did you do then?*

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KENNEDY: I was interviewing. At the same time, to back track a little. While I was in the Historian's Office, the idea was to develop a study of the consular service. It died. It was the first cut in budget negotiations, I think, within the State Department. So it didn't go anywhere. But I'd already done quite a bit of research. I paced myself, two days I wrote a history of the consular service; and almost three days I worked on oral history for about a year. I eventually produced a book which was greatly unread, called, *The American Consul: The United States Consular Service from 1775 to 1914*.

*Q: It was not unread at FSI.*

KENNEDY: I produced my book. But on the oral history side I started interviewing. My first really long interview, and I must say I went into it with great trepidation, was with Douglas MacArthur II.

*Q: Not an easy candidate, if I may say so.*

KENNEDY: He's not an easy candidate at all. He was known as a very difficult ambassador. But one of the things I discovered, I found hardly any of these tough guys, or tough gals, by reputation, once you get them into the oral history mold, it's a whole different thing. They are working with you, and they want to get their story out.

*Q: Are they little pussy cats?*

KENNEDY: They're pussy cats in a way. You have to be careful. I remember asking Ambassador MacArthur, "What instructions did you have when you went out to Japan?" He looked me in the eye, and said, "I was sent there as President Eisenhower's ambassador. I did not have instructions." Which was quite right. He had been number three or four man in the Department of State, he'd been political advisor during the war to General Eisenhower, and he was part of the ruling junta in the State Department at the time under John Foster Dulles. So he wasn't being instructed. But that was the only

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time, most of the time he was really very forthcoming as much as anybody is these oral histories.

I also did another one, one of the dragon ladies of the State Department, Francis Knight, who had been head of the passport office for about 30 years. It wasn't a very satisfactory interview. She later went non compos mentis, and she was very close to that at the time, so I didn't get much. I had steel myself to go to some of these places. But I found I really enjoyed the process.

*Q: While we're on this tack, what makes a good interview from the standpoint of what you are looking for in an oral history?*

KENNEDY: The best interviews are ones where one, there's obviously some chemistry between the interviewer and the interviewee. And I think that with those of us in the Foreign Service, it works well. I think it's much better than the normal graduate student or researcher out of the academic world talking to diplomats, because I think we develop rapport, we've also have our own stature, sot that we are talking on a level plane. I was in for 30 years, and I'd risen to the rank of minister counselor. So I've been around the block. Most of all I am really interested. But to make a good interview really requires not only interest, but also detail.

*Q: Do you find people prepared usually for their interviews? Do they tend to have notes before them?*

KENNEDY: A few do. Most are not prepared, and I think some are surprised by the fact that I'm not letting them skip over their high school years, or when they were vice consul in London. I try to get them to talk about consular stories. And I must say, my early interviews were usually one session in which I would cover a career and dwell rather heavily on the latter part of the career. And also, I would not push for detail. How you go about things? What did you do? And somebody says, "Well, we had the coup, and then of course we did all the usual things, reporting." Now I'll say, "What do you mean? How did you go about

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doing the usual things during a coup?" Many of these things I let slip early on. I think one gets more keyed to the outlook of someone who doesn't know the territory. We want to make sure that a researcher in 2100 does not have to look up obscure references, or try to imagine what our Foreign Service lingo means. For one thing, one interview builds on another. I've done now over 400 of these interviews, so I've got really tremendous knowledge of American foreign policy over the past 50 years.

*Q: Does that not cause you to be cross-selective in your questions? That is to say, a subject comes up and you can remember that 200 interviews ago somebody else was involved in the same subject, and you therefore jump into it to try and draw out a different perspective on whatever that topic might be.*

KENNEDY: One thing is, I don't have a particular agenda. I don't think most of us doing this do. We're not trying to prove the Foreign Service and the State Department are splendid. And also we're not trying to get to the media's obsession of, "Tell us how things went wrong." We try as much as is possible to ask relatively neutral questions. There are sometimes when you can't have neutral questions. I'll say to somebody who served under Douglas MacArthur, "I heard he was a real difficult person," or Mrs. MacArthur who was considered one of the dragons of the Foreign Service, a very difficult wife, who was the daughter of Vice President Barkley. "How was it serving under them? Did you have problems?" Sometimes you get good stories, and sometimes people say, "Well, I didn't have problems." So the more I know, obviously, the more questions I can ask. But the idea for the most part is to get the person to talk, and some are more open than others. It's not necessarily some people are more secretive. I think some people are less expansive just by disposition. I found, for example, if you really want a good story teller, get a Texan with an Irish background. You ask one of those something and you get a twinkle in the eye, and they sort of wiggle their behinds in the chair, and say, "Well, that reminds me when I did so and so," and out it comes. I try, and even early on, try to keep in mind my experience in writing a book on the American consul. If you can get somebody to say something interesting, a little story or something, that makes things much more vivid and more useful,



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than somebody reciting our policy in Nigeria at the time he or she was there was to protect American interests, and go down the party line. If you do this you do not get them to talk about what were the problems, what were the difficulties, how did they find dealing with the government.

*Q: So what you're looking for ideally, is a blend between the historical record that you're trying to add to on the one hand, and the personality, character, quirks of the person being interviewed on the other. Is that a fair thing to say?*

KENNEDY: Well, I think they're more intertwined, because of the personality quirks of the person being interviewed. How they dealt with others can give an idea of what the historical record is. For example, something today is very obscure, but at the time there was a raging debate over Biafra. This was a rebel province of Nigeria, and we had true Biafra believers in the Department of State, and particularly in Congress, and the National Security Council. Biafra was a major focus of interest at the time, this was in the 1970s sometime. There were a lot of personalities involved in our policy towards Nigeria. Within the Department we had officers resigning over this, there were clashes of personalities, and disciplinary actions, and appeals, and the whole thing. So I love to get a hold of the people who were involved at that time, and get them to talk about it. Because I think they are a part of the historical record.

*Q: That's interesting. Let me take you back now to George Washington University where you were sitting in your managing directorship. You didn't stay there all that long. Why did you move? And how did the move occur?*

KENNEDY: It was pretty obvious. One, I was not raising any money, and my \$10,000 was running out. I was using this for transcribing. I had not developed a cadre of interviewers that I had expected to develop, and I can't tell you how many lunches I had at the university cafeteria with retired Foreign Service people who were interested in the program. They would come and we would have a lunch, and we would talk about the

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program, and I would give my pitch “would you be interested in helping?” I wasn't asking for money, I was asking them for the time to do some interviewing. “I'll get back to you,” would be the response and little happened. Within George Washington, obviously there wasn't much interest. Peter Hill had moved to a different job, and I wasn't getting much support from the history department or the political science department. And also, I wasn't producing an awful lot of interviews. It takes a long time to build this up. There was a three year contract, and it never occurred to me to try to stay on because I just knew it wasn't going anywhere. And the only real work I'd been doing was with the Association for Diplomatic Studies. So I talked to Dick Parker, and I said, “Dick, can we maybe join forces? Can I become part of your organization?” He thought about it, and then he thought it would be a good idea. We talked to George Washington University, the head of the School. I can't think of what it's called now, but the School of International Relations had more or less taken over the program, Micky East was the dean of it, and he saw no problem with our leaving without rancor.

*Q: The Elliot School of International Affairs.*

KENNEDY: Yes, it hadn't been called that name at that time, and became that just about the time I left. I might add that when Vic Wolf and I were looking for a place to go, obviously we went over to Georgetown University and talked to David Newsom, who at that time was the head of the School of Foreign Service. And he was very nice to us, but there was no interest in what we were planning. With universities, when they start looking at a new program, they're looking at what sort of money can you bring in. Fair enough, they have their budgets to meet, and also we were not part of any organization. Most organizations such as ours, start when Ambassador Money Bags dies. His widow says, “Oh, he just loved being an ambassador for two and half years in the Bahamas, and he'd always been interested in oral history. So I want to leave some money from the Money Bags Foundation to set up a diplomatic oral history program at your university”.

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That's how these things usually get started. You get a pile of money, and then you get a couple of people to organize it. We started the other way around, which is not the way to go about these things. Anyway, when I talked to Dick Parker, he had some contact, not with the School of Foreign Service, but with the Lauinger Library, where as this interview is taking place. So there was interest. Dick talked to them, and we reached an agreement for five years, this was in '88, with the Lauinger Library that we would be given a small room in the library where I could conduct my interviews and carry on my work. Anything we produced would go into their special collections, as well as to the Association for Diplomatic Studies, and wherever else we might to do it.

*Q: And this was approximately when?*

KENNEDY: This was in 1988. I think it started in June of 1988. The library was pretty relaxed about the whole thing. They weren't going to pay us, but they would give us some administrative support, and charge us for telephones, and things of that nature, long distance calls. For duplication, xeroxing, which is a major expense they would charge us half the rate they charged students. So with that agreement the organization was in place. If you recall, shortly after that I think we had fifty interviews, which we gave to the Foreign Service library.

*Q: Indeed, as in my capacity as the director at the time, I was the person who received them.*

KENNEDY: So at that point, it took off, but very, very slowly.

*Q: You're now in excess of 1,100 interviews, is that correct?*

KENNEDY: Those are interviews in process. We're close to about 800 completed interviews, and there are other ones hovering about which would bring it up to about 1100. I still had not found the equivalent to Victor Wolf, but I did begin to get some help from people. I had not been well plugged into the Foreign Service establishment. I'd always

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tried to serve abroad, I'd never served long in Washington. I'd served in Washington in sort of minor capacities, in Personnel, or INR, Board of Examiners, so I did not have a wide group of people to talk to. But as I started doing these interviews, people began to know more about the program, and particularly with Dick Parker involvement there, we had people like Tully Torbert, who had been ambassador to Somalia, Bulgaria, got interested and started doing some interviews for us. A few other people started doing interviews for our program like Tom Stern and Tom Dunnigan. We had been using a transcribing service, called Tecnitype, which is really excellent, but they were a professional organization. They gave us a good rate, but it was costing too much. And so we started trying to have both volunteers do a little transcribing for free, but also our retired Foreign Service secretaries, and some retired Foreign Service officers, and friends heard about this, would transcribe our tapes at home at a much more leisurely rate at a considerably reduced fee. In fact, when I started in 1988, we were paying \$75.00 a tape hour, which was a good professional rate. It's much more than that now. But today, in 1996, we're paying \$45.00 a taped hour, but with our people who are doing this at home; they enjoy doing it, pick up some spare money, and they're not under the pressure that the professionals are. And the tape product probably isn't quite as good. Perhaps the typewritten copy is not quite as good, but we always send the transcript to the person who was interviewed to hopefully not only edit it, but maybe add to it. Also by using transcribers who either were in the Foreign Service themselves or are related to someone who was, they know the vocabulary and setting better than someone who is just hearing words on tape.

*Q: We were talking about the interview process. Tell me some more about how that works. Is it largely a matter of your approaching people and asking them? Have others come to you? How have you selected the people who will do the interviews?*

KENNEDY: The people I interview?

*Q: Initially, people you interview.*

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KENNEDY: After we did that initial former chiefs of mission, born before 1917.

*Q: Just chiefs of mission? It wasn't clear to me when you said that.*

KENNEDY: Yes, and then we do a career interview. But we tended to backload or, however, you want to put it. We were interviewing them mainly about the time they were ambassadors. This was early on. As the process proceeded, pretty soon people would say, "Oh, you really should talk to so and so." And after a while I learned to relax, and say sure. These would be people maybe who had been Mr. France as a civil servant for 30 years. Or somebody who had not gone terribly far in the Service, or had been a deputy chief of mission in a number of places, but had served in interesting places at interesting times. I pretty soon realized that almost everybody has got not only a great number of stories, but a lot of insights. We're talking about intelligent people.

*Q: And you sort of got a check on the ambassadors. If you limited yourself to chiefs of mission, you would have a skewed perspective. Here you can talk to the DCMs, you have other views of people at other levels within an organization like an embassy.*

KENNEDY: Oh, absolutely. And also, I discovered something that I consider very important. And that is the fact that people who were junior officers particularly, or staff members in the Department of State, or served down in the lower ranks, but particularly overseas, often got out in the countryside a lot more, had rather vivid stories to tell about what the situation was there, how things worked. I think all of us who reach senior ranks know that the young officers particularly get out and around a lot more than when you become more senior, because you're pretty well trapped in official circles. Even if you travel, you're still in somewhat of a cocoon. Whereas your young officers are taking off and getting out into the bush, or dealing with students, or consular officers are seeing a wide mix of people. Often they have quite a different perspective of how the embassy was run, what our policy was, from their experiences. So even if somebody may have had a very distinguished career as a chief of mission, I found often their duty as a young or middle

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grade officer was as important for the historical record, as when they were in charge of a post, or in Washington of bureau.

I approach, and I encourage people who are doing interviewing, to approach everybody to milk the person for as much as they can, including sometimes areas early on, such as their wartime experiences. Because probably nobody else will ever interview them. And if they have some interesting wartime experience, what the hell. I feel I wear not only a diplomatic historian's hat, but a historian's hat. These are all self designated terms, I'm not a historian, I have no Ph.D. so I am not one of the club. But I still feel there is a responsibility to get it on the record if somebody did something of interest, maybe some social history, when they were younger before entering the Foreign Service. For example, I was interviewing Bill Lehfeldt, and he comes from a valley around Bakersfield, California. He told how his parents came from German farming stock, they were Lutheran, or Brethren, one of these protestant faiths which was very strong. They had had a lot of Japanese friends who were farmers, too, in this particular community, and when the Japanese internment came, they took over the farms, and kept them up and when the Japanese came back, they turned them back to the Japanese in as good shape as when they left. This is not a story you hear much. Most Californians did the equivalent of looting the Japanese when they were interned. But this was a vignette of another side of the American experience, so I had him talk a bit about that. I wasn't going to let that little piece of social history go unrecorded.

*Q: Let me ask you about the breadth of these interviews. Have they extended to people at the staff level, that is to say communicators, secretaries, even diplomatic couriers, people in the administrative service of the State Department. Have they extended to USIA, and AID, and the military?*

KENNEDY: It's a broad thing. Let me deal with what we call the staff, communicators, secretaries, couriers. I've dipped into that group a couple of times. It frankly hasn't been very successful. And this may be because it's our world, that of the FSOs, and their world, that of the staff, and we think differently. I do not find much in the way of insights as to

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personalities, perhaps the secretaries who were asked about their bosses were being overly discreet.

*Q: There may be a reluctance...*

KENNEDY: ...a reluctance there. But I find a lot of attention paid to quarters, living amenities.

*Q: That's significant too though.*

KENNEDY: Oh, it's significant. Whereas when I talk to an officer, I say, "What was the political situation?" and get a long account. When I would ask somebody who was on the staff, the few I've done, and I didn't get much. In a way there are different motivations. It does seem to show there is not much of a connect between what is happening in a particular country, and the work the staff is doing.

*Q: Connect between what and what?*

KENNEDY: A connect between the political turmoil, or maybe there isn't even turmoil. I mean, the political and economic life that's going out which almost all of us who are Foreign Service officers, find very engaging and were able to talk about it at some length. And those who are maybe sending off our telegrams, those who are typing up the stuff, or who are serving in a minor administrative capacity — because I do talk to people who administer at the officer level. They do their job, but you don't get much of a feeling of real interest in it, or being able to develop it. This probably is true in any office, if you're dealing in ads in an ad agency, the people who may be doing more the administrative type work, do a fine job, but really don't have what I consider intellectual curiosity to know more about it. I think that's what maybe separates the officers from the staff.

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*Q: Well, of course, there are many exceptions to that. It may be for the purposes of the oral history program they often have not been engaged in ways that would lead to contributions of the kind that you were seeking for the program. Is that a fair thing to say?*

KENNEDY: Absolutely fair, because I think part of the problem is, that maybe I don't know the right type of questions to ask, and my interest is not in the social life of the post. I get a little of this but I just don't think this is as much of interest for what I consider our audience. We do have some pretty good accounts of some people of how things were at a post, particularly those where they were almost dysfunctional, or you had some real characters running the place.

*Q: What do you mean by, mostly social?*

KENNEDY: Well, I met princess so and so, and then we went to so and so's place where we met some fabulously wealthy person. This often is some of our political ambassadors who were in for a short time. This aspect seems to be quite important to some people. There are other political ambassadors who are as professional as the best of the FSOs, and there isn't any of this social business, except as it pertains to furthering the mission. Some people, and I think this is true even of some FSOs too, are focused on what I consider the social perks. It may be the social perks in many ways contribute as much to the furtherance of our foreign policy, and they know the ruling junta, or they're within the ruling groups and they can get some little bits of information, or something like this. Or maybe, hell it doesn't make any difference anyway and why don't they have fun and a good social life. I don't know, but for me I find myself not very turned on by this.

*Q: What about people from other agencies? I mentioned USIA, AID. Did you ever interview anybody from CIA? Some people in the Service have started off at CIA perhaps, and left that organization early on. How do you fold in the military? How broad is your base?*



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KENNEDY: We make the base as broad as we can. It's called the Foreign Affairs Oral History Program, not the Foreign Service Oral History Program. I should mention again, that at the same time Vic Wolf and I were starting this an organization called the USIA Alumni Association with Lou Schmidt and Earl Wilson, who were working on an oral history program which they were doing. They'd received some money from USIA, and they were doing it as volunteers. So they started almost at the same time we did, and to begin with were producing more than we were. We quickly reached an agreement where we would meld everything they had into our collection, which we did with great pleasure. They had much more success in getting interviewers, mainly to the perseverance of Lou Schmidt. Maybe the USIA was more used to this, particularly from the cultural side.

*Q: The notion of communication may have come to them more naturally.*

KENNEDY: I think so. I think I have mentioned again and again the lack of real interest in history on the part of the Foreign Service officer.

*Q: You found that different with USIA people?*

KENNEDY: They had really a better organization. After Lou Schmidt, who was getting on in years, left, it hasn't picked up at the same pace as previously, but it continues. The USIA group left quite a contribution. They had a lot with Voice of America, and USIA was really out in the field in Vietnam.

Well, Brandon, as I was saying, there were other groups. We very quickly made the determination, there was no point in making this just the Foreign Service. We would do political appointees, and we knew there were a lot of people involved in the American foreign affairs process, who were not Foreign Service. Foreign Service is sort of the constant, but obviously USIA, which I've never really thought as being different from the Foreign Service anyway, was right on the team. I've done a good number of USIA interviews just because people would be available, or they became ambassadors, or had

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moved from a USIA position to another in the Department of State. They're just part of the process.

With CIA, I have picked up a number of people who've been in the CIA for a while, and then moved over. They're are some whom I've interviewed, I'm still not sure that they weren't on the CIA payroll the whole damn time. Sometimes their service and they're telling me what they did doesn't quite parse, but what the hell, I may be only picking up half of what they did. It doesn't bother me. I have tried, and just within the last few months I've talked to the CIA historian, and they're beginning an oral history project. But it will be classified. They have an unclassified one which they've contracted out on the OSS. It's interesting because it's being done right here at Georgetown, or at least it's under the auspices of Georgetown, and the people who have been contracted are two German historians. I don't know what happens when they get to some of the nasty details of how the Germans dealt with the OSS people they caught.

*Q: What Allen Dulles was doing in Switzerland.*

KENNEDY: Yes, but also, particularly towards the end of the war, there was some rather nasty occasions for the OSS of people who were taken out and shot right out of hand.

*Q: Anyway, USAID, Peace Corps...*

KENNEDY: Let me continue with CIA part. One of the things that I do deal with is the role of the CIA. I would like to interview CIA people because I think, and I've told CIA historian and others, that I feel it's sometimes an unfair presentation of the CIA in our records. A standard question, when you were in country X, what was your impression of the CIA, and how did it operate? Sometimes you'd get, "Oh, the CIA didn't do anything," or, "I didn't get anything from them." In fact, the majority of times you just get almost a blank look. There does not seem to have been much of a connect between the operations of the CIA, and people in the field.

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*Q: You are generalizing now, and you just made an important comment. From your experience in several hundred interviews, or much more than that...*

KENNEDY: About 400 interviews.

*Q: I just wanted to make that point.*

KENNEDY: I think what you have is, one, the CIA has got its human resources abroad that it uses for its reports. Obviously you don't want to let anybody know about them in the field because this would jeopardize them. In most countries there's no great danger to the person, except it'll just discredit them in their own country. But often their sources are pretty much the same damn ones that our political and economic officers are working over anyway. So what they gather really didn't add an awful lot to the picture in a country. Maybe back in Washington the information that is gathered from clandestine sources is put to good use, particularly in dealing with the more difficult countries, we're talking mainly about the Soviet Union and its bloc, there's information but that's so tightly held it only goes up at the very highest level. There does not seem to be, with major exceptions, a great connect between the CIA and the Foreign Service operating in the field. This is my impression. My only experience, and I think I mentioned this before, was in Greece where I felt our CIA was too much in bed with the Greek military police who were part of ruling junta there, and I thought they did a disservice.

*Q: What about the military?*

KENNEDY: The military, yes. I go after military attaches, MAAG people not as much but earlier this week I interviewed Stanley Donovan who was a lieutenant general. Stanley Donovan was our man in Spain. He helped set up the bases. He was part of JUSMAAG, not an attach#, an Air Force officer, and dealing with the Spanish government. He was there as the military commander when we accidentally dropped four hydrogen bombs on Spain. General Donovan and the ambassador and his staff went for a swim to show

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the Spanish public and press that the water was safe. We have an interview with our air attach# in Israel during the 1967 war. I've interviewed the man who was the air attach# in Czechoslovakia during the '68 Prague Spring, who later became the ambassador to Czechoslovakia. And a man who ran all military attaches out of the Pentagon, but also was military attach# in Portugal.

*Q: What about Peace Corps, USAID?*

KENNEDY: For the Peace Corps?, not much except people who've been in Peace Corps, I really haven't worked with them much. There is some sort of oral history program with the Peace Corps and it's just a field that I haven't gotten into, but no problem with doing it. U.S. AID was hanging for a long time. Again, I was as concerned about the Foreign Service view of AID which is often rather jaundiced. I felt that AID should have its perspective on the record. I've tried to get a program going, and when Steve Low became president of the Association for Diplomatic Studies and Training he made it a priority. We got Haven North who had been the director of their planning organization to run it. Incidentally, Vic Wolf and I went to Haven when we were first getting our oral history program going to see if we could get some support from AID but with no success. Now, Haven, as a retired person has started a very ambitious program of doing about 120 interviews in the next three years. It's the one program we have a little government money for. Haven has been working very hard on it and it is coming along nicely. So AID is going to be well represented in this program.

I've interviewed one Senator, Senator Mac Mathias, who was a Republican on the Foreign Relations Committee. I'm interviewing Stephen Solarz, a Democrat who was the House Foreign Relations committee, now retired, a very major figure in Far Eastern and African affairs particularly. I've interviewed a couple of Congressional staff members. We haven't concentrated on them, but we do have a smattering.

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*Q: Am I right in thinking that there is a separate program for women ambassadors, spouses, and that an oral history collection is being developed by women?*

KENNEDY: There are a couple. Shortly after we got started along with USIA, Jewell Fenzi and several other women, spouses of Foreign Service officers, started the Foreign Service Wives, I think it became the Spouse Program, and we shared ideas about how to interview. I think Jewell's major motivation was to turn out a book which became a very good one called *Married to the Foreign Service*. The program has sort of fallen off. They did a good number of interviews. Here is where one becomes aware of how well the Foreign Service women can put together organizations. They've been doing this all their lives overseas. And Vic Wolf and I, and then me, in trying to put together something have never been able to do it as well as they did; they had a good number of women who were interviewing, and they were transcribing, they were going out raising money, and doing quite well, thank you. While Vic and I were sort of floundering around. Again, the focus of the spouse program is different, and it's one that I never could get overly engaged with, but this is probably me. I didn't ask, "How was life at the post?" and "How did you raise your children?"

*Q: Those are important aspects.*

KENNEDY: Absolutely. I'll make another point here while it comes up. I find normally, not always, when I interview a male officer and they say, "Then I got married." I seldom say, "Where did you meet her, and what did she think about the Foreign Service?" I very quickly move to, "What was our policy with such and such a country?" not "What the hell did your wife think about going to Ouagadougou?" I might ask that question, but normally it doesn't move that way unless sometimes an officer will go into some detail, and I will encourage them to do that. But when I'm interviewing a woman officer, I often find out whom she dated as a young girl, her romantic life, more about her parents, and when she got into the Foreign Service, how she maybe met her husband, and much more about the family life. It's not a theme which I discourage, but it's just different and I suppose as a guy

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I just don't talk normally about the family. But women officers they seem to wear two hats rather comfortably, the family and the profession. I for example have been interviewing Ambassador Elinor Constable, she's an economic officer of great prominence, and who has told me in great detail about how she dealt with things like the tariff negotiations. She really makes economic issues come alive. Yet she gives a solid account of her life with Peter Constable who also was an ambassador. I don't want to denigrate women because I get as much from them as I do from the men except there is another side. In other words, they portray a fuller life and I chalk this up to the natural male reluctance to ask too much about the family life. We just don't talk that way.

*Q: As you look at the oral history program so far, you know it better than any other living person, what gaps do you see in what you've got? Where are the black holes to which one should pay more attention, and try to capture information about before too many more years go by?*

KENNEDY: I think I tend to concentrate more at the working level. I would consider the working level to be people from deputy assistant secretary or ambassadors down, rather than to talking to Secretaries of State, deputy secretaries of State, heads of the NSC. These people usually end up writing their memoirs, they're hard to get to, and I'm really more interested in you might say, the guts of the machine as opposed to those at the top. These would be very good people to be interviewed, but my concentration is on those who were important but likely to be ignored by history.

*Q: I meant substantively. For instance, do you think there's enough on Vietnam? Do you think there's enough on economic issues? That can be a weak spot in Foreign Service expertise and skills. Do you think there's enough on global issues? Do you think there's enough on the problems of management that are truly the important problems of management in this collection?*

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KENNEDY: I'd say management probably needs more done on it, although we tried. We've had some very good interviews, for example, by Tom Stern who is from the management side, with Bill Crockett, and Idar Rimestad, and some others about running the State Department. The day before yesterday Ray Ewing who is doing some interviews for us was talking to Perry Linder who comes out of the administrative side. So we don't ignore it, but maybe more could be done. I have to say that on the economic side, I think we do fairly well. I'm speaking as somebody who got a D — in economics in my one year of it at Williams College. We make a real effort, I certainly do, to get people. I've had some rather solid interviews with Mike Smith, Jules Katz, both of whom are very much on the economic negotiating side. including international negotiations, trade representation. I'll tell you one gap, we should do some more about. That is the Department of Commerce. I'm making a note to myself right now, I've tried calling the Department of Commerce early on to see if they would be interested in the program because I really need somebody within the Department of Commerce, or formerly in the Department, retired, to run it. I look upon these as separate programs. We have developed a couple of other programs which I should have mentioned. One is the labor program with Morris Weiss, started that, of interviewing labor attaches, its called Labor Diplomacy. And they have produced 50 or more interviews so far. One of our problems with the women's program, the Foreign Service Spouse program, is that the transcripts were put in a different computer format, and we need somebody to bring it together.

You did mention women ambassadors, an excellent program has been done by Ann Morin, and it started again about the time I did. In a way, I really talk about me getting this thing off. My particular bit of this I did, but almost at the same time you had the wives program, the USIA program, and the women ambassadors program being done by others, and we were all talking to each other, and we're all going along on parallel courses. It wasn't until later that we melded together. Ann Morin interviewed 30 or 40 women ambassadors and put together a book, I think called *Her Excellency*, which used her oral histories. It is an excellent study.

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*Q: Who published it?*

KENNEDY: Twayne Publishing Company. But Ann did it all out of her and her husband's, who is a retired Foreign Service, Lonny Morin, own money, it was a tremendous effort. We are getting their contributions and melding it into our collection too.

There's obviously CIA, but there's a real problem with CIA, and we've talked to them, the security problem is one and I realize it, so it's a problem.

*Q: Commerce, Labor, Agriculture.*

KENNEDY: Agriculture, we have a program.

*Q: Treasury attaches?*

KENNEDY: And we don't have a Treasury program.

*Q: Talk a little bit about the Association for Diplomatic Studies to which you've referred several times.*

KENNEDY: The Association was started by Dick Parker, and his idea was mainly to give an impetus to the FSI to give it some support, an organization which could receive contributions from outside sources that the State Department normally could not accept. An excellent idea. I've always subscribed to the idea that particularly that there should be more input from the financial world, or the outside world, into helping the Foreign Service Institute enhance its studies there. We have a new campus, and should decorate it a la the Naval Academy, and West Point. I grew up in the Naval Academy, so I see what each class does and the contributions they could make. So I think it's important to have an organization which could help enhance the campus with items which have a meaning. For example, suppose that Venezuela has a bad earthquake and the United States gives aid through the efforts of our embassy in Caracas. Afterwards Venezuela wants to give the



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U.S. something to show its gratitude, as did Japan in the 1920s with the cherry trees on the tidal basin. The FSI campus could be a place to put some sort of monument, and the Association could accept the gift on behalf of the FSI.

I think it's criminal that we don't have a Foreign Service museum, whatever you want to call it, Foreign Affairs, Diplomatic Museum or something like that. I think something could be done. Our Association serves as a focus for getting something of this nature off the ground. Things are beginning to move on examining such a museum. I just wanted to say that this vision of Dick Parker, Walter Smith who helped him at the time, has really been very important. Tom Boyatt came in as president following Dick, and made his contribution in sustaining the Association, and right now Steven Low has been shepherding it through some major changes both in its work, such as starting a publishing program, a fellows program, an intern program, moving the museum into the early planning stage and getting us pointed towards a better financial status. The Association is running up to some extent the same problems that Vic Wolf and I found initially. It's not easy to get money for diplomatic matters. I would think it would be a natural, but I think we're beginning to crack into this. I know, Brandon, you're working on that. I think the long term picture for the Association is really sound, and good because I think eventually we will institutionalize our organization, and become something which will attract foundation money or legacy money, to support the oral history program, the museum, and to gain academic support. Without the Association none of this would take place, but it has not been an easy task. We don't have the strength of an alumni that people who bond the way they do at West Point, in the Naval Academy, and the Air Force Academy or from one of the ivy league colleges.

*Q: Within the Foreign Service? You don't think the A-100 course is a bonding?*

KENNEDY: My group has never met again. Some do, some don't, ours didn't and we have never met as a group since we parted the FSI in September 1955. It's the difference between three months and four years of being together. The military goes to great lengths

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to make that bonding which is very important. We don't. I think though it is something we should all work on.

*Q: Let's look ahead. Where would you like to be three or four years from now in this oral history program? You've brought this a tremendous distance, and you deserve enormous credit for what has been accomplished. Where would you like to be three or four years from now?*

KENNEDY: Three or four years from now one, I hope that we will have sufficient money and fund raising so that we are kicking through enough to support the oral history program. Right now, about \$50,000 a year will keep it at its present level without having to scramble for money from the Association.

*Q: What you're getting now is about \$35,000 a year that you can count on, is that not correct?*

KENNEDY: Yes, for the oral history program. I might add that although both Steve Low and I put in executive hours, which means a lot of hours into what we are doing. We are both part-time people, and I'll mention it here because this will give a bench mark, I get \$18,000 a year for this. Sometimes I get a little unhappy when I go interview my colleagues who are pulling down executive salaries. But I feel that I am doing the work of the Lord, and this is great compensation, but there are times when I would like to be able to afford to take a trip to China.

Where I would like to see this would be to have adequate financial support for whoever is doing this. And to have a full-time staff of somebody who could help organize it. Because it's a complicated business, and it needs somebody equivalent to an office manager because we've got interviews to set up, we've got transcripts that are coming back that have to be edited, we have to put them into final form. It's a whole production process, and there are a lot of balls in the air, and it needs more attention that we probably give it now. I think things sort of get lost sometimes. That's on the nuts and bolts side. We also could

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use some money to go out beyond the Beltway and do some interviews of people who had significant Foreign Service careers or were political appointees. New York City is a nesting place for some very interesting people whom we can't afford to reach now.

I'd like to see maybe one or two retired Foreign Service officers as part-time interviewers who are getting paid. We need volunteers, but I think we need a little more inducement so we can get the production up. I see no lowering of the importance of what we're doing. I might add here that when I first started this program, in my acute political sense, I figured well this about 1983-'84, that the United States has certainly reached its apogee as to influence in the world, and that pretty soon we will just become another power along with the Soviet Union, Brazil, and Japan, the European Economic Union, so we will be just one of many. So what I was trying to do was catch the group of people who were involved in American diplomacy at the time when the U.S. was the predominant influence in the world. Well, a funny thing happened...

*Q: In about 1989.*

KENNEDY: The Soviet Union collapsed, Japan has picked up no particular interest or influence in foreign affairs, the European Union does not seem to have much leadership capacity. Whatever is the cause, the United States is not one of two superpowers, it is the superpower. We're talking about world influence. So American diplomats are very important. So for the foreseeable future, the Foreign Service and others involved, foreign affairs are going to be important within the world. I don't see any reason to say, "Well, now we've done our task and we can rest. We've interviewed those people who were involved in the role of the United States when it was really important in the Cold War era." What is happening now is just as important what we're doing before the collapse of the Soviet Union within the world context. I don't see any falling off. I'd like to see it continue. We need more of an outreach to get our collection out beyond the Beltway and become more useful to scholars everywhere. We're ready within the next few months of putting all of our current collection onto a CD-ROM, (Read Only Memory). The technology by the time

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this particular oral history is typed up, and gets out into the collection, probably will have changed. Anyway, what we're doing is, we are putting the finished product into a system that can be read by computers in libraries around the world. Eventually, we may get this on whatever the Internet is called in later times. Technology is exploding.

We need some help within our organization to work on getting the information that we're developing, experiences and all, to serving Foreign Service officers, and to others who are involved in foreign affairs, so they can get a look at what happened before, and use the experiences of those who have trod the path before to make their own plans. There was an excellent book that came out that I highly recommend to anybody because in a way its timeless, done by Richard Neustadt and Ernest May, called *Thinking in Time*, which is the use of history for decision-making.

*Q: I've read it.*

KENNEDY: It's often neglected by decision makers, but it should be essential reading. You look at what was done before, and then do not make the same mistakes. How you use the past to make decisions in the present. So you're not making false analogies. I hope that what we're doing with our oral histories can be made available, and used in one way or another in an easy format for those who are now on active duty. We are doing one thing right now I might mention because it's quite interesting, and I hope will be useful. We have interns. We've had maybe about 20 or more interns, only a few at a time who have been working for us. They are unpaid, graduate students from universities around the area, who come in and take from our interviews, and take extracts say from transcripts of people who served in Pakistan, or dealt with Pakistan back in Washington. They take these excerpts and put them into what we call a country collection series, such as one on Pakistan. We've done almost 30 of these country collections so far. One of the problems is to continue to update them. These are not static as we keep entering new transcripts into our collection. The idea is how to get these country collections out to the researcher, and how to get them to people serving in the foreign affairs establishment.

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*Q: Don't you have a real difficulty in indexing, and cross indexing this vast amount of information. There are places, there are people, there are events, and they are dealt with in different kinds of ways in the various interviews you have. How do you capture? How do you label the information that you have gathered in ways that permit the person who wants to access this collection to reach into everything about Pakistan at a particular time? Or everything about George Kennan?*

KENNEDY: Right now we're not doing a very good job, but we're doing the best we can with our limited means. What we do is, we have what we call a finders' guide and you can see that so and so served in Pakistan from 1963 to 1967 then they can look up that person. But now, if somebody was dealing with Pakistan from our embassy in New Delhi, you wouldn't get the reference in our finders' guide.

*Q: What about somebody working on the Pakistani relationship in Washington?*

KENNEDY: You'd get that if you looked at the NEA Bureau, and it might say Pakistani affairs. Or you could look at all the NEA people. That's the way it is today. Maybe in six months time when we get the CD-ROM completed it can do a quick search; it's almost instantaneous. You can write Pakistan, and every time the name Pakistan comes up it will list maybe 6,000 hits on Pakistan. But then you can go to each one in the CD and get the text around it to see if it looks interesting.

*Q: So electronically your cross-indexing will be solved by this method.*

KENNEDY: Well, we hope. It means researchers have got to do some work, but yes, it will be. George Kennan will be easy, every time Kennan comes up you can be sure that it's George. Kennedy is the more difficult thing because they'll get me, and they'll get President Kennedy, and they'll get other Kennedys.

*Q: Well, you're both interesting, Stu.*

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KENNEDY: Well a person who is interested in the presidency of John F. Kennedy does not want to get Charles Stuart Kennedy, or Richard Kennedy, both of whom will be in the file. When I started this collection I always had the idea sometime in our problems would be solved by that great computer in the sky. The technology wasn't there, but I knew that something would be developed sometime that you'd be able to do easy retrieval of what you wanted. Well, that great computer in the sky now is both the CD and the Internet, and it may be something completely different in a few years, but essentially you can get into our collection quite easily. I think one of the very important aspects of our collection is, that unlike other oral history collection, there are some excellent ones in Columbia University, Princeton, and Yale, but almost all of them were done in the '50s, '60s, and '70s before the computer and word processor came along. They're not a digital form. Almost everything we have is digital. You can manipulate our collection any way you want.

I see our product going to our two audiences, researchers and serving FSOs, but the main thing is to make it more accessible. I hope we can get some people to use the collection to begin to produce books, articles, or what have you, using it for any purpose they want. Perhaps on discrimination in the Foreign Service, how to conduct economic negotiations, and how we dealt with Chile in the 1970s, to get real life excerpts, which I think makes all of us much more readable, than rather stolid essays on how things work.

Another oral history project that I would like to see, and that is one focused on African-Americans and Hispanics in the Department of State and the Foreign Service. I have been trolling to get someone, it would almost have to be an African American or a Hispanic (or better one for each group) to do the interviews-they would have a better rapport. While I would like to have some personal detail on how it was being a minority in the Department of State, I would like to make sure that it was not exclusively focused on that aspect. If it were, it would be a great disservice to those interviewed. Everyone has some personal baggage they carry around, being a minority, a single parent, medical problems, that impacts on their work, but we don't want to forget that everyone in the Department of State

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and Foreign Service is carrying on a job, and we want to document what that job was. I have talked to some women who have been interviewed by other programs, not one of ours, and they complain that there was little interest in what they were doing, it was too much “what was it like being a woman?” in a particular situation. So far I have had no luck in finding someone or someones to carry on a minority interviewing program.

*Q: Stu, you're a historian by training, and by inclination. You have read and created some 800 oral histories. These fit into a chapter by and large which was the Cold War period in United States and in global affairs. Are there any conclusions about the Foreign Service, or diplomacy, or even the process of history that come to your mind with the unique, and I really mean unique, knowledge that you have having all of these oral histories available to you, having read all of these differing insights?*

KENNEDY: The first thing that strikes me is, it's a glorious history. The United States started with really a very small Foreign Service, we're talking about the 1930s, we played no real role in the world. Just like our Army which was 17th in the world, I think, in the 1930s. American diplomats sprang into the world picture in the middle of World War II, and we haven't looked back since. The people interviewed are those who helped put together a policy that maintained the struggle against a really nasty force, the communists in the Soviet bloc. I can't think of any other term than this. It was a pernicious principle, and the people supporting it were out to subject everyone. I really subscribe to the fact that we were the forces of good, albeit with all sorts of imperfections. But essentially, this is the story of the men and women who fought the good fight. The Foreign Service, and others, were right in the forefront during very dangerous times. It was not easy, but we came out successful. So I think in a way it's a glorious story.

I am disturbed by something. A question I always ask is, “After you were in such and such very difficult position. Your embassy was besieged, or you had these very difficult negotiations in such a country, or you were in great danger. When you came back to Washington, what was the reaction there?” And almost invariably nobody ever talked to

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the person involved about his or her experience, to find out in detail what happened and what might be learned from it. In other words, we're an ad hoc organization. Right now we've gone through the Gulf War — not too long ago — the Persian Gulf War against Iraq, and there were diplomatic victories, and diplomatic failures, as well as military ones; as far as I know the Department of State has never looked at them. I think the Foreign Service as an organization, the Department of State as an organization, really we as an organization can't claim to be professionals if we just deal with the problems as they come, and not look at how we dealt with them in the past, and where we made mistakes, and where things were well done, where things weren't well done. I'm not talking about finding blame which seems to be the concern, but thinking how we can do something better. So I am very disturbed by the fact that after momentous things have happened, including such a thing as Vietnam. I mean, almost half our Foreign Service, certainly a third of our Foreign Service at one time or another dealt with Vietnam, either on the ground, or in Washington, or from other posts. It was not just a military action, but also very much a Foreign Service one, including Foreign Service officers out in the field doing things, country building, nation building. We have never as a profession said, "Let's take a look at what we did in Vietnam, and figure out what worked, what didn't work, how we can do it better." For God's sake, with the military, this is part of their training. They're professionals. They say, "Should we have gone by the left flank, should we have gone by the right flank, should we have used armor, air, what were the consequences?" We don't approach it that way. So I find this a terrible failing. This was also true in the Gulf War. I've just been talking to our ambassador to Saudi Arabia who was sitting at Norman Schwarzkopf, our general's side, they kept asking Washington, "How do you want to end the war? What terms do you want?" No terms came out, and as far as I know there has been no reconstruction of what went right, what went wrong in the Gulf War.

*Q: On the diplomatic side.*

KENNEDY: On the diplomatic side, and again and again you come up with the question I always ask, and I sort of wince when I get the answer, "After you went through this ordeal



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in getting yourself out of, say, Somalia when your embassy had to be evacuated, who debriefed you, talked to you, who was interested?" The answer is, nobody, outside of making sure your allowances were not overly generous, or something like that. It's a lack of professionalism, and I think it's a great lack.

The other concern I have is how the working level gets left out of decision making. Again, from what I gather, and I'm talking about somebody who is interviewing and has not been part of the process, but when things get really sticky, all of a sudden we've got to decide what to do in Bosnia, or what to do in Somalia, or what to do in Iraq, or what have you, there is a tendency in Washington for the decision-making to narrow down to the movers and shakers in Washington, the farther up, and the higher the decision, the less interest there is for drawing on experience in the field. The embassy may be biased, and there may be problems in not wanting to encourage action that might upset the country in which the Americans are stationed, but they often can tell you, "you can't get from point A to point B", or "this plan just isn't going to work". But some very bright people in Washington, including Foreign Service people, take over the process and their major concerns are, how will this play in Congress?, how will this play in the media?, how can we get out allies to support us?, and who will pay for it? Those seem to be the major considerations, and not, will this work because of the unique circumstances in country A and country B. Sometimes field experience is valued such as when you had somebody like Llewellyn Thompson who during the missile crisis of October '62 had the ambassador to the soviet Union was part of the president's team. He may have been a critical element in preventing a war between the USSR and the US. But often it's very bright people who know very little about the real circumstances who run the show. So it's the lack of translation of field experience to be used by policy makers. When you strip everything away, the main thing we have in the Foreign Service is Brandon Grove being able to say, "Here's the way the Africans feel about this, or this is the terrain there, or you have to consider our treaty obligations." And you make judgments based on experience, not by looking at a big map and saying, "Well, we can run something here or there." If we will it, obviously these benighted Africans will

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do what we want, or benighted Serbs, or what have you. The world does not work that way and some of our bright movers and shakers are remarkably unsophisticated. I think this malaise of the expertise of the Foreign Service is a major lack on our part.

*Q: Would you say there's room for both kinds of thinking? That the Washington decision-maker does have to take into account? Congressional, media, budget aspects. But to do so to the exclusion of what the field can provide, the knowledge of the people on the ground is where a big part of the mistake lies.*

KENNEDY: Absolutely. It's not either or, it's just one part of the equation, and sometimes the field is prejudiced. It does not necessarily have to be the field, but it can be the country director, I mean, that's what the State Department really has, knowledge of the place, how will that work, how will it play in a country, all part of the equation. But I think there's a tendency to brush expertise aside because sometimes the answers are not what you want.

Just one other thing that's more at the working level. Having not been a Washington operator, and not having served as a staff assistant, or served on a desk, and avoided Washington assignments, and gotten through the ones I was stuck with by gritting my teeth, and figuring how to volunteer to get the hell out of Washington, including going to Vietnam, I realize that for somebody in the Foreign Service career, they should really go after the Foreign Service assignments in places such as staff assistants to some of the major figures within the State Department, country desks, the equivalent. Its is where you network, you get known, and I realize now after having retired from the Foreign Service, I realize where I went wrong, although I did what I liked to do, and have no regrets. But I realize if you want to build a good career, you've really got to work in Washington because this is where you make or break yourself.

*Q: Stu, on behalf of the organization which you yourself head, I want to thank you for a most interesting interview.*

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KENNEDY: I thank you Brandon.

End of interview