

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

WILLIAM BROOKS

Interviewed by: Charles Stuart Kennedy
Initial Interview Date: September 20, 2005
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INTERVIEW

[Note: This interview was not edited by Mr. Brooks.]

Q: When and where were you born, Bill?

BROOKS: I was born in Detroit, Michigan, in 1950.

Q: Talk a little about your family, on your father's side, on your mother's side.

BROOKS: Okay, my father's father, as I knew him, lived on a farm in Wisconsin. My understanding of the family history is that he actually was not born and raised there but he acquired the farm during the Depression as a hedge against lack of employment. My mother actually grew up in a fairly wealthy family. My grandfather was one of the creators of the Kelvinator company. She was a debutante. They had a nice home in Detroit, Michigan, and had a summer home in another part of the state. They met at the University of Wisconsin, where my mother got a degree in business. My father never graduated. I don't know if World War II interfered or not.

Q: Did he go into the service?

BROOKS: He did. He was a Marine in World War II and served in the Pacific.

Q: Where did you grow up?

BROOKS: I grew up in Detroit, Michigan.

Q: What part of Detroit?

BROOKS: If anybody reading this, hearing this, knows Detroit, Michigan, I was in the Redford High School district, sort of between Evergreen and Lasher, Huber and Engle.

Q: What was the neighborhood like?

BROOKS: It was very middle or maybe even lower-middle class, although the homes were rather new, post-World War II construction. I can remember that a lot of people didn't have driveways and had them installed subsequently and the curbs were put in later on. It was a modest house, especially for a family of five.

Q: You went to school through the Detroit system?

BROOKS: I did. I went to Burt Elementary School, well kindergarten actually, through ninth grade. Didn't have a junior high school when I started there, it went just to eighth grade, but they added the ninth grade. So, kindergarten through ninth grade were spent at Burt, then to Redford High School.

Q: How'd you find school?

BROOKS: I was a good student and so I enjoyed it and did well.

Q: Was there any particular subjects that you particularly enjoyed?

BROOKS: I enjoyed the social studies and when I got to high school it became economics, current affairs, whatever. I think I enjoyed, in high school not so much science, but before high school I enjoyed science. I enjoyed reading a lot of science people.

Q: What about reading? Were you much of a reader?

BROOKS: Yes, I did read, I read a lot of books. I read a lot of war stories but I recall reading I think every one of the Black Stallion books and there was also another author, Wade Decker, who wrote about a fictional baseball team and had a different book for every position on the team.

Q: I remember this type of book and there are a lot of boy's books about so and so at Harvard, so and so at Princeton and all of that, football stories; a great time for boys' stories. You had what, three brothers and two sisters?

BROOKS: Three brothers, one sister.

Q: Were you all destined for college?

BROOKS: My sister went to college, the University of Michigan, and graduated in four years. My brother followed her to Michigan, took a year, went to Arizona State, came back and graduated, probably took five years, I think. The next two were not dedicated students, in high school certainly. The one brother, the one closest to me, spent a little time at Ferris State University, then was drafted, went to Vietnam, and never finished college. The other brother, four years older than me, went to Ferris State, transferred to Western Michigan University, Wayne State University, and finally got a degree. The thing that motivated him after high school, I think, was the fact that he got married fairly early and had a child fairly early, a great big motivator. He got a degree in teaching, went into the air force when the draft was imposed, and eventually got a master's degree in guidance and counseling and then after the service he got an MBA. So he's done quite well.

Q: Where were you pointed? Did you assume you'd go to school, higher education?

BROOKS: I did and the older brother and sister were certainly the example for me. I did get a job after high school, summertimes, to make money for school. I got a job in a factory, just knew somebody working in the personnel department there, and if there was ever any doubt in my mind why I was going to college, that summer in the factory showed me why.

Q: What were you doing in the factory?

BROOKS: I was filling in for people who didn't show up for their shift, basically, so every night they'd send me to some different department to do something different.

Q: In Detroit, there were two big movements going on. One was the racial tensions there and the other one of course was the union movement. Did either of these affect you?

BROOKS: My father was very antiunion, for reasons that I'm not completely sure of, but I think he felt excluded from some area that he wanted to work in and couldn't get into, I think. He was so antiunion that he would not buy a Roosevelt stamp because he thought that Roosevelt was responsible for the unions gaining the power that they had. As far as race goes, the neighborhood that I grew up in was very white, exclusively white. The first colored person that I ever met was the mailman. Burt School, kindergarten through ninth grade, did not have a single black student. We had a black shop teacher, no problems there. I went to high school, a very large high school, and by the time I graduated I think maybe there were three students of color. They were such a small minority that they were a curiosity and some people reached out to them to get to know them and there were no problems. Now, that high school is almost exclusively black. I can't recall hearing of any problems at my high school in the years that transition took place. My parents certainly were very conservative but I don't recall them ever saying a derogatory thing or using a derogatory term for any person, any race, any religion, any ethnic background. The first time I heard a Polish joke I had to scratch my head and say, "What is it about a Polish person that makes it funny?" I didn't have a clue. Now, I was aware, 1967, that there were riots in the city and that was a very disturbing time and yet I was pretty isolated from most of that.

Q: Then where'd you go to university?

BROOKS: The University of Michigan.

Q: And you did it, what, for four years?

BROOKS: Yes.

Q: So it would be what?

BROOKS: 1968 'til 1972.

Q: How did the Vietnam War play?

BROOKS: There was a lot of protest on campus during the years that I was there and I remember my roommate was bused to Washington, DC, and demonstrated there. Having grown up in a very conservative household, my attitude, as a freshman and sophomore ... Sophomore year was when the draft was instituted for the first time, the first national draft lottery, and I was number 35, which was not a good number. My thinking as a

sophomore was that — I was deferred until graduation — after graduation summer I'll join the air force, learn to fly, and become a pilot. By the time I was a senior my state of mind had changed considerably and I actually tried very hard to avoid the draft and was ultimately unsuccessful.

Q: At Michigan, did you have a major?

BROOKS: I didn't actually have a major because part of the student unrest at the time wasn't just the war and other things like that. We were protesting — not that I did directly but I was a beneficiary, I guess — things like distribution requirements and language requirements for being too restrictive, and in a compromise the university decided to offer a bachelor of general studies and I took them up on it. So that was my degree: bachelor of general studies. Now, the only requirement is that you take a certain number of high-level courses. You can't take all "introduction to something or other" for four years. I took all of the courses, probably, that any history or political science major would take.

Q: Quickly, back to your father. What business was he in?

BROOKS: That's a very difficult question to answer because he did a lot of different things. A lot of them were sort of around the entertainment industry but at various times, he worked in front of a camera, doing commercial work, primarily. I actually, as a small child, got involved a little bit in some of that commercial work. When I was a senior in high school he was the spokesman for a local bank who appeared on a local travel show. The moderator of the show, every time they broke for a commercial, would say, "Now a word from Mark Brooks, First Federal Savings." But he also worked behind the camera as a stagehand and makeup artist and he worked for a while for a makeup company. He did a lot of public speaking, self-improvement kind of speaking to various groups. And at the end, before he died, he was teaching, doing adult education, out at Rosedale College in Michigan and General Motors Institute.

Q: While you were taking this general bachelor's degree, did foreign affairs or diplomacy cross your radar at all?

BROOKS: Generally I was taking courses — again, history and political science, including international politics — that revealed my interest. However, one of the reasons I chose a bachelor's of general studies was to get away from the language requirement. I took Spanish my first year there and I did all right, I got a B in it, but just didn't really want to pursue it. But one of the deepest, sort of life-altering experiences in my young life was in my junior or senior year. My sister, who had moved with her husband to Brussels for his job, had begged and pleaded with me to come and visit her, which I didn't really didn't want to do, but I gave in to her. So I went and I spent three weeks in Brussels during that time and together we went to Paris, Amsterdam, Cologne, and Normandy. She lived outside of Brussels, kind of interesting, very, very close to where I lived when I served in Brussels, Waterloo. There's a monument there on the Battle of Waterloo, and I read a lot about the history. It was life-changing, as I said. The culture

and the politics and the history of Europe just fascinated me. Whereas I probably never would have considered a career in the Foreign Service, didn't even know what it was, I was very receptive to the idea some years later when it became an opportunity.

Q: But by the time you graduated from university in '72, the Foreign Service hadn't entered your thought process?

BROOKS: No, I recall when I was a freshman or a junior one of the college political science professors saying that he was the campus contact for the Foreign Service and if anybody was interested in the Foreign Service they should come and see him. I went out of that thinking, "What? What the heck is that? Foreign Service?" I had no idea.

Q: Well then, '72 you graduate and you've got number 35 in the draft.

BROOKS: So I was drafted and went into the army. Two years. I went to Fort Knox for basic training. They decided they needed food inspectors so they sent me to Fort Sheridan to food-inspection specialist school, which was part of the U.S. Army Veterinary Corps. I spent the next couple of years in various packing houses in Chicago and Detroit, looking at meat that was going to go to the commissary or the mess hall.

Q: Did it change your attitude towards meat and food and all that?

BROOKS: You know, one of my brothers worked for a while in a grocery store grinding ground beef all day and decided that he didn't want to eat another hamburger. I saw places where they made sausages and saw a lot of people without fingers, including one guy who told me quite seriously that his fingers ended up in the sausage that went to the G.I.'s. They said, there was some point about making sausages — "witness making sausages, you never eat them again," something like that — but it didn't change me very much. I'm still an eater.

Q: After two years, 1974, what?

BROOKS: I went to law school, Wayne State University in Detroit.

Q: Were you married by this time or not?

BROOKS: No, I met my wife during law school and it was soon after law school that we got married.

Q: I take it when you go to law school, that's pretty much it. Three years?

BROOKS: Three years in law school, yes.

Q: And that pretty much consumes you, doesn't it?

BROOKS: It's a lot of work and it's a real grind and many times during those three years I thought to myself, "If I can just think of something else I wanted to do with my life I'd jump at the chance." And it was in fact, I think, during my last year in law school that I looked on the bulletin board and saw a little card that said something about a Foreign Service exam. By then I must have figured out what the Foreign Service was, and I went ahead and took the exam. I passed the written exam and I took the oral exam and did not pass the first time. I had to go through the process a second time to get in. By that time I had graduated law school and went down to Washington for my first job.

Q: What was your first job?

BROOKS: It was with the U.S. Customs Service, in the office of regulations and rulings, as an attorney adviser.

Q: Doesn't sound very exciting.

BROOKS: I wouldn't say that it was exciting. Before I joined the Foreign Service, I actually was involuntarily transferred to the Department of Commerce in a government reorganization and over in the Commerce Department it was basically the office that does countervailing duties and antidumping. Now here we're really talking about a pretty narrow, arcane part of the law, and I think if I had spent my career there I probably would have gone crazy. When I received word that I had passed the orals the second time I jumped at the chance to get out of there.

Q: You recall any of the questions they asked on either the first or second oral exam?

BROOKS: Yeah, I think I do remember some of the questions. Somebody asked me a question about the Laffer curve.

Q: What is the Laffer curve?

BROOKS: It was a curve, designed by the economist Laffer, that's supposed to show the correlation between inflation and unemployment. Somebody asked me a question about an author that I didn't know the answer to. I don't remember who it is at the moment. Most of my reading up to that point and since that point has been nonfiction and so I always was worried about the questions about literature and things like that.

Q: You were dealing with a specialized tariff business. When did you come into the Foreign Service?

BROOKS: 1980, in August.

Q: Let's just talk a bit about your A-100 course. Would you describe it a bit?

BROOKS: Well, there were, as I recall, 36 people in the course. I believe at least a third of them were lawyers. Varied background of the others — I remember one guy was, at

the time, the youngest Foreign Service officer; he was just out of undergraduate school. Then we had a couple of mid-level people coming in. Women were fairly well represented and there were minorities as well. A female African-American became the first ambassador from our class.

Q: Did you find this A-100 course well suited for adults? There's been a lot of talk about adult training and all.

BROOKS: Yeah, I think so. I certainly don't remember thinking otherwise at the time. It was a good introduction to the kinds of things that we would be dealing with during our careers. It was easy duty because basically we sat in a classroom or took field trips for six weeks. It was exciting, it was exhilarating.

Q: How did you feel you fit in? Some people, when they came into the A-100, thought, oh, boy, these are people different, a different breed than I am or something. I felt this way when I came in.

BROOKS: Well, there was a difference between me and many of them in that I was already here in Washington working for the government, just basically changing jobs. Being married was ... Well, some of them were married, many of them were younger and single. A lot of them were coming into Washington from various places in the country and living in temporary quarters near the Foreign Service Institute (FSI), a lot of them socializing after hours. So they were getting to know each other better than I was getting to know them because I'd go home to my wife at the end of the day. But having said that, I got along well with the members of my A-100 class. I'm still in contact with many of them. We're actually talking about a reunion in the near future. I don't remember feeling that I didn't belong or that I wasn't like the others in any way.

Q: You'd already been part of the Washington milieu really, as opposed to somebody coming from completely outside. As you talked to Foreign Service types, did you start thinking of where you wanted to go? You wanted something exotic, you said.

BROOKS: By exotic, I think I was most interested in Asia, Japan or China, at the time. I didn't have any language background or any particular specialty in the area, but someplace I always wanted to go.

Q: So what happened?

BROOKS: Well, in A-100, the bidding process is a little bit different than afterwards. There were 36 of us and they had 36 jobs to fill. They gave us the list and they said, "Tell us your five favorites." The conventional wisdom was you had little chance of getting your number-one choice and my wife said, "You remember when I agreed that we would do this Foreign Service thing, you said I could make up the first wish list." I scratched my head and said, "No, I don't remember making that promise," but banking on the conventional wisdom, I let her make out the first wish list and she picked the five safest, least exotic places — number one being Toronto, which is closer to where we came from

in Detroit than we're living here in Washington, D.C. And of course we got our number-one choice, Toronto.

Q: So you went to Toronto, this was '80-'82 or so?

BROOKS: '80, yeah, it was an 18-month tour.

Q: Toronto, consulate general, and what were you doing there?

BROOKS: I was a consular officer, vice consul. I spent six months, approximately, doing nonimmigrant visas, six months doing immigrant visas, and six months doing citizen services.

Q: You must have been hit with an awful lot of people, basically foreigners transiting through Toronto in order to get to the United States.

BROOKS: Indeed. Canada is a little bit different than a lot of posts. If you go to Mexico or the Philippines or China, which are certainly visa mills, you do have a profile of nationals who have pretty much the same background, the same story, kind of thing. In Toronto, when you're doing nonimmigrant visas, Canadians don't need them. You never see a Canadian. You see people from all sorts of different countries, many of them part of the British Commonwealth, but you see people from China and you see people from Jamaica and you see people from India. It's quite a diverse group of people.

Q: Well, how did you... I mean Jamaica, say, or India, there's quite a waiting list, and so our officers in those countries get very discriminating about whom they'll give a tourist visa to but here you are where you are. What would you do?

BROOKS: Well, the first question, the threshold question they have to answer satisfactorily, is, "Why are you applying here and not at home?" We mark passports. If they had applied at home and been denied, I'd look at the passport and that certainly was a big strike against them. But if they'd not been turned down at home and they had a decent story that we could verify, it was certainly not impossible to get a visa.

Q: But you'd find you had a pretty high refusal rate?

BROOKS: Yes. It was a job that I dreaded going into and I guess in retrospect I'd say it wasn't as bad as I thought it would be, although it was a grind. Certainly, hours and hours of interviewing people and saying no to people is not what I want to do. Part of my nature, I'd much rather help people and make them happy than say, "No, I'm sorry."

Q: Looking back on it, though, in a way, did it harden you a bit or get you to understand different cultures or what?

BROOKS: Yes, I think I did a good job, my reviews say I did a good job. I was pretty firm, firmer than maybe I thought I could be. Certainly it introduced me to a lot of

different people. I said it was a grind and gets you down mentally but each day you meet somebody who's an interesting and pleasant person to talk to and that sort of picks you up.

Q: Who was your consul general there?

BROOKS: Fred Smith. During the entire time, I think.

Q: What was he like?

BROOKS: Well, he was fine. I had nothing to compare him to at the time and didn't have that much contact with him on a daily basis.

Q: With citizenship services, what were your problems?

BROOKS: Canada being very close to the United States, a lot of Americans live up there. A lot of Americans get arrested; so, visiting people in jail.

Q: What were common causes?

BROOKS: It was everything from driving under the influence (DUI) to rape and murder.

Q: Did you have any problem with the Canadian authorities?

BROOKS: No, no major problems with the Canadian authorities. They pretty much knew the drill. It had been established long before I arrived. On consular visits, you'd go in and, if it's an initial arrest, you go in with a form, certain questions you needed the answers to. Do they want us to contact a family member? Do they want us to recommend a lawyer, etc. We also periodically visited people who'd been sentenced up there and were in long-term. Just go in and see how they're doing.

Q: How were they doing?

BROOKS: It varied. One person was a complete mental case and interviewing him was not a very productive experience. Some people know they did something wrong, they're serving their time, they're anxious to get out, but they're in a fairly good frame of mind. Other people, maybe more career criminals, are somewhat hostile. It didn't come out at me, fortunately, but hostile attitudes towards authorities in general.

Q: I would think, just sort of by hearsay, that the Canadian jails around there or prisons probably would be better than the American ones in Detroit and all.

BROOKS: I think that's probably a fair generalization, although I think there's a perception that Canadians are a little more ... Well, Canadians are more liberal in their attitudes towards the United States and you'd think that would apply towards criminals as well, but you encounter some harsh attitudes among the guards and prison authorities.

Q: How did you find living in Canada at the time?

BROOKS: Toronto was very nice. Just referring back to my description of how we ended up in Toronto, when I first learned that we were going to Toronto I was, frankly, disappointed, in a major way. It was not why I joined the Foreign Service. It turned out, I think, in retrospect, to be a very good way to break my wife into the Foreign Service, to have her family not so far away. Toronto's a great city. We enjoyed living there for 18 months. My first son was born in Toronto. And so I look back on it fondly.

Q: In the old Foreign Service ... I've interviewed people such as Douglas MacArthur II, who later on went on to have quite a distinguished career, but he described, in the '30s, our people were generally sent to Canadian posts, or perhaps to Mexico, as a first assignment before they did anything. This is where they got their training, and then they went back to Washington for some time before they were sent out to other places. So it's not a bad idea.

BROOKS: Our second tour was Khartoum, and that was a little different.

Q: Let's stick to Toronto for a minute. Did you run across Canadians looking at everything we did sort of critically and all? Was this a factor?

BROOKS: Yeah, and even before we got to Toronto. My wife took a little break down to Florida by herself but happened to hook up with a Canadian couple and then we met them up in Toronto. And they would slip sometimes, and they would say something. They'd be in the middle of a conversation, forgetting who they were talking to, and they would be about to say something like "the Americans," realize that they were talking to Americans, and stop. They have attitudes toward us that are a little different than how we view ourselves.

Q: Was it pleasant living there?

BROOKS: Yes, it was, very nice.

Q: Then how did you get your next lovely post of Khartoum?

BROOKS: Being young and naïve, actually it was not a summer transfer, so in between the transfer cycle there were not a lot of jobs available. It was hard to make up a bid list of what was available that was long enough to meet the requirements. I put Khartoum down as a bid and in the narrative section of the cable described why I didn't think, with a young child, etc., it was a very good place for us and would rather have one of these other jobs I'd bid on. I'm sure the career development officer (CDO) looked and said, "Khartoum! Somebody bid on Khartoum!" I was done!

Q: Did you get any sort of training or briefing before you went out there?

BROOKS: A two-week-long area studies course before I went out to Khartoum.

Q: Oh, yeah, that certainly made you ready! Had you qualified in a language by this point?

BROOKS: The first thing that I did out of A-100 was ... I came in with no language and they sent me to French for 26 weeks. I came out of French with a (level) 3/3.

Q: Did you use that at all in Toronto?

BROOKS: Only if I forced myself to. If somebody from Paris happened to apply for a visa, I could do the interview in French.

Q: You went out to Khartoum and you were there from when to when?

BROOKS: We arrived in February or March of 1981 and were there until about May of '83.

Q: What was Khartoum like?

BROOKS: I think I'm getting my years wrong. I think it was '83 until '85.

Q: '83 until '85.

BROOKS: What was Khartoum like? Well, it's very hot. It's very dry. I think the last 18 months we were there it did not rain a drop. It was sort of the height of the Ethiopian Sahel drought in Africa. There were not a lot of amenities; there were not a lot of diversions. My wife hated the place, didn't like the sort of Middle Eastern attitude toward women at all, flouted the dress codes, unfortunately, and wasn't very happy. But to me, professionally, it was a fascinating, interesting place to be. I think she would have to agree with me: there were a lot of great stories from our two years in Khartoum that we pull out and tell again and again. But it sort of ruined her for any other hardship type of posting for the rest of my career.

Q: Who was the ambassador then?

BROOKS: It was Hume Horan at the end. There was another person at the beginning whose name escapes me.

Q: What was the political situation we got out there in '83?

BROOKS: In '83, Jaafar Nimeiri was the president of Sudan and had been, I think, at the time, the longest-ruling leader on the continent of Africa. Seventeen years was his total before he was deposed, which was right near the end of my tour. He was considered ... that guy changed his mind and changed his hats regularly, but at the time he was a very

good friend of the United States. It was a Soviet Union period in Somalia, Ethiopia, and there were sort of revolving-chair alliances going on.

Q: Particularly, was that around the time when the Soviets stopped being the great friend of Somalia and went to Ethiopia and we moved from Ethiopia to Somalia?

BROOKS: Exactly.

Q: That was the Horn of Africa and Sudan sort of got swept up into that.

BROOKS: That's right, and as I said we considered Nimeiri a friend at the time, although he had been a socialist, almost a communist, previously in his career. Before I left he became a fundamental Muslim, an Islamicist. We had the largest Agency for International Development (AID) mission in Africa at the time.

Q: What was your job?

BROOKS: I went there to be an economic officer. Because of need I spent some time initially as chief of the consular section, but eventually got up to the econ section and was econ/commercial officer.

Q: At that time what was the situation between north and the south, the Muslims versus both the Christian and animists, sort of Arabs versus blacks?

BROOKS: There had been a civil war previously and there was a reconciliation. When I arrived things were pretty good, but things started to heat up again before I left. Part of the reason was Nimeiri decided to have a government of Islamic fundamentalists and started imposing Sharia law on anybody, whether you were Muslim or not. That didn't sit well in the south at all. So the civil war started to break out again.

Q: What was our ... I'm sure at the embassy and talking to others and all ... How did you view the leader's switching back and forth? How did we view it? Was he basically a political opportunist or man of flighty ideas or what?

BROOKS: I think that the word "mercurial" certainly would apply to him, but I think "opportunist" is certainly correct. Whatever he needed to do politically to stay in power is what he would do and he apparently was very astute at that. As I said, he had been in power a long time. That was his goal and he did whatever he needed to do to achieve it.

Q: The incident happened some time ago, the murder of Curt Moore and Cleo Noel, who were assassinated there in Khartoum a decade or so before. Was that still hanging over? Was that sort of a folk memory within the embassy?

BROOKS: I was certainly aware of it. It wasn't something that hung in the air, I wouldn't say necessarily, although we certainly realized it wasn't necessarily the safest place to be. There was some demonstrating and rioting while we were there. I can remember we were

all evacuated from the embassy one day and sent to our homes. It wasn't very long after I left that a communicator was shot and killed.

Q: Was Qadhafi sending his squads around? Was he a menace or what?

BROOKS: He was certainly considered a menace. There actually was an incident where a plane appeared in the sky one day, dropped some bombs near the radio station in Omdurman, which was across the river from Khartoum, and then disappeared again. The best we could figure out, those were Russian-made planes, but they must have come from Libya. He went into Chad while we were there and we brought in some C-5s.

Q: Our biggest cargo planes.

BROOKS: Right, and some fighter planes to supply forces in Chad and to protect Khartoum.

Q: This was the time known as the Toyota Wars or something? There were pickup Toyotas with machine guns mounted on them bouncing across the desert.

BROOKS: Yes, I guess so, in Chad.

Q: Were you able to get down into the South?

BROOKS: For the most part when I was there, at least toward the end, trips to the South were prohibited without special permission. The ambassador may have gone down there, to the capital in the South. I did some traveling south of Khartoum and to the west and the east but not to what was considered the South.

Q: This year, particularly, there's a series of sort of ethnic cleansings in an area called Darfur, very much in the forefront of the news. That's to the west. Now, was that at all an area of interest when you were there?

BROOKS: It was an area of some interest. I made a trip to Darfur. Its capital is Al-Fashir. I went out there and visited primarily as an economic officer. I was looking for economic activity and maybe even opportunities for U.S. companies out there, although those were few and far between. But at the time it was more, I think, considered as sort of a barrier. The concern was Libya, and if you look at the map you can see the intersection of Egypt, Libya, and Sudan. If there were to be an invasion from Libya it would basically come from the direction that's northern Darfur.

Q: Did Egypt play much of a role?

BROOKS: At the time, there was talk about a unification of Egypt and Sudan. Government officials would meet to talk about joint projects and things like that, but I don't think it was very realistic and in the end turned out to be more mirage than anything else.

Q: Did we have military exercises at all with the Sudanese?

BROOKS: As I said, we brought in C-5s and fighter planes at various times. We did have a military — I'm trying to think of the proper names or their titles in the embassy ... Defense attaché and military assistance.

Q: Okay, it's a MAG, a military assistance group.

BROOKS: Yeah, and then there was an incident where some Western hostages were taken down south and we helped them plan a rescue operation, which was a bit of a fiasco.

Q: What happened?

BROOKS: They shot up the place where the hostages were being kept and they miraculously escaped with their lives, but more by luck than by skill.

Q: What were the economics that we were interested in within Sudan at that time?

BROOKS: They had a huge debt at the time and basically we wanted them, more than anything else, to get out from under the debt and be stable because we considered them a strategic ally, at the time. The interest was that they didn't collapse. There is a little bit of oil in Sudan. It wasn't a huge — it's not a huge deposit. We were aware of it there. Chevron was working there but I can't say, unlike with Saudi Arabia or other places in the Middle East, that it was a governing interest. They produced very little else of interest to us.

Q: What about things like wheat and other things like that. Was there much agriculture?

BROOKS: They grow some wheat. They are the world's largest producer of gum arabic, which is produced by the acacia tree. They grow some sheep but they mostly traded regionally, not to us. There's an irrigated farm south of Khartoum, Gezira is what it's called, which is the largest irrigated farm in the world. The British are largely responsible for its being there.

Q: Of course, you were there during a particular drought, which must have had a stultifying effect on them. How about cotton?

BROOKS: Yes, they do grow cotton.

Q: The major port was Port Sudan. Was there much activity there, as we were interested?

BROOKS: I made a trip to Port Sudan once, actually. I was on my way to a resort on the Red Sea but spent a little bit of time in Port Sudan, not looking at it from an economic

officer's standpoint. Our stuff came in through Port Sudan, like you imported a car or household goods or something like that. It's a very inefficient port. My car arrived in Khartoum sitting atop a truck, with whatever bags of cargo. They had put it on top of these bags of whatever it was with a forklift and they had trouble getting the car off when they got to Khartoum. So, as I said, not a very modern port and not very efficient.

Q: Were there any American companies sort of sniffing around or looking?

BROOKS: The oil companies, to be sure. I don't remember anybody else in a big way. We had a few companies in Khartoum. There was a Khartoum international fair. I, as a commercial officer, helped organize the American participation and basically solicited money for our booth. Caterpillar, for example, was a company that was there. I'm trying to remember who else. I mentioned Chevron previously and the other names just aren't coming to me at the moment.

Q: Were we actively pushing anything there or were we more going through the motions, would you say?

BROOKS: We didn't ... For example, I don't think we had a big human rights agenda with them. Basically it was a strategic alliance. We didn't necessarily like them. When Nimeiri decided to go Islamic, that didn't appeal to us at all. We had a few Americans arrested for alcohol infractions. They banned our import of alcohol, which was important to us. I think I would have to characterize the relationship as one of strategic convenience.

Q: On the oil side, was there sort of the feeling that maybe somewhere there was a big oil deposit, or was it pretty well accepted that this was not going to be a major player?

BROOKS: It was viewed, I think, as something that was important for Sudan's development, for their economic health and wellbeing, but as far as being a major supplier on the world market, no.

Q: I understand that in areas where the oil was being developed, it was sort of located in what we call the South, the rebellion area, and was the government sort of taking it over as their own enclave?

BROOKS: It was certainly an issue as to how the oil revenues would be shared and initially the government was not disposed to share them much at all, but as the Southerners forced the issue, the negotiations began.

Q: How was Hume Horan as ambassador?

BROOKS: You may know him or maybe you don't know him.

Q: I do know him.

BROOKS: He certainly was one of our best Arabists. In fact, I've heard it said that he speaks Arabic so well that many less educated Arabs have trouble understanding. He's sort of an idealized ambassador, I think. He's very portly, he's very polite and it was very good.

Q: What was social life like there?

BROOKS: It was a bit grim; as I mentioned previously, not a lot of diversions. One of my highlights, every week, Friday being a day off in a Muslim country, was a softball game organized through the embassy. We'd go out and we'd play two nine-inning games with various people going in and out of the lineup. That was what I liked to do. Some people played bridge. I wasn't a bridge player. People got together sometimes to play Trivial Pursuit. The Marine Ball was considered a highlight of the season. I had a hard time understanding why, exactly. The Marine House showed movies. People had occasional parties. There was a play-reading group in which my wife and I participated. Minimal stage motion, but with scripts in hand, people would read through. It always attracted a small crowd and people who did it enjoyed it.

Q: Did Ethiopia intrude? The government there, were there any things that affected our embassy in Khartoum?

BROOKS: Ethiopia provided a steady stream of domestic workers for us in the embassy community. Refugees coming out to Sudan were a problem and they were processed through Khartoum on to some other places. There also was the issue of the "Black Jews."

Q: I've talked to people and I think it's fairly well known that planes were landing out in the desert, picking up, buses were taking these people. Were you involved in this?

BROOKS: I wasn't directly involved.

Q: I think it's fairly well known. These were ending up in Israel.

BROOKS: Yeah. At the time it was a Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) operation. The deputy chief of mission (DCM) was involved.

Q: Who was the DCM?

BROOKS: David Shinn at the end, but there was another one before him.

Q: Was Osama bin Laden at all involved or were we aware of his type of operation at that time?

BROOKS: Never heard his name up until now.

Q: Islamic terrorists, were they a factor? The Muslim Brotherhood had been active up in Egypt but did they penetrate down to where you were?

BROOKS: Well, when Nimeiri decided to change hats and become a Muslim fundamentalist, the Muslim Brotherhood had a very important role in the government. A prominent Muslim Brotherhood member was very active in promoting Sharia law, in chopping off of hands, etc. One of the amusing stories we heard was that he attended one of these ceremonies and passed out.

Q: In dealing with the Sudanese government — you were doing economic work, which meant you dealt with the Ministry of the Economy — how did you find Sudanese officials?

BROOKS: Sudanese officials generally had a Western education, probably British, spoke English. I would say Sudanese people in general are very friendly, that's their nature. So they were easy to talk to, for the most part. At my level, in the embassy and dealing with economics, I wasn't talking to them about the most sensitive issues, the most difficult, prickly issues between our countries. So I can imagine that the ambassador may have had some very difficult conversations with government officials at times. Mine were pretty easy. The odd thing about Nimeiri deciding to become an Islamic fundamentalist is that most Sudanese Muslims are very easygoing and not very strict. I remember talking to a Sudanese lawyer after the imposition of Sharia and him talking to me wistfully about the rights they were being deprived of, the rights to have a drink, as though that were part of the Bill of Rights, the right to have a girlfriend. Mostly, the Sudanese people are pretty easygoing.

Q: Was the Sudanese military a major force in the country?

BROOKS: They were a major part of Nimeiri's power structure. He depended upon them, and in the end they deposed him, but I wouldn't consider them, outside of Sudan, to be a strong military force. Everywhere you went you could see soldiers loitering around, trucks carrying soldiers to and fro. It was forbidden to take pictures of bridges and other things. One woman, a spouse at the embassy, was taking a picture of a guy on a bike carrying loaves of bread or something that happened to be outside of a police station and the police came out and detained her because they thought she was taking pictures of the police station.

Q: After this episode I take it you were, your wife particularly, aiming for something else.

BROOKS: Yes.

Q: Were you at all tempted to become an Arabist?

BROOKS: No, not really. I went out to Sudan without any language training for the post. There was a language program at post, which I enrolled in. I attempted to learn some Arabic but the teacher was not reliable; he frequently did not show up and disappeared for a long period of time, so I didn't learn a lot of Arabic while I was there — enough to get into a cab, tell him where I wanted to go. So, no. Going into Sudan it wasn't

something I wanted to do, and coming out of Sudan it was something my wife would have forbidden, if I'd wanted to.

Q: So where'd you go?

BROOKS: Back to Washington. I went back to participate in the econ/commercial training course, which was six months long at the time. Going out of that I took an assignment in international organizations.

Q: How'd you find the training course?

BROOKS: I went into the training course thinking that this was something I needed and really wanted to do. In fact, I thought because the course is supposed to give you ... Well, several universities in the area will accept that training as credit towards a master's degree. I said, "Well, I'm going to finish this course. I'm going to get a domestic assignment, I'm going to enroll in a program, get my master's degree, and maybe I'll get a Ph.D. in economics some day." So you get to the course and the first thing they do is they give you a math review and they start you in microeconomics. Then you're into calculus and then statistics and every Friday, at the most every other Friday, you're taking an exam. It wore me down, and by the time I was out of there I said, "I don't want to go back to school. I don't want to take another exam again." It was good training but it was hard work.

Q: Then after that, we're talking about '86 or so?

BROOKS: Got back in '85, yeah, '86.

Q: Where, you went into what, IO?

BROOKS: International organizations.

Q: International organizations. What were you doing?

BROOKS: I was in IO/C, which is economic policy, basically. I was an action officer for the Economic and Social Council.

Q: ECOSOC?

BROOKS: ECOSOC, right, and that met in the fall during the (United Nations) General Assembly up in New York, but it also met in the summer in Geneva, so I spent a couple of summers, five or six weeks at a time, in Geneva.

Q: How'd you find it?

BROOKS: I liked the UN works, especially at the outset. It was great to go to Geneva and spend some time. Actually, I delivered some interventions at UN meetings and got

myself involved in negotiating resolutions, etc. All of that was good experience. My second year in IO, when the agenda for ECOSOC and the agenda for the General Assembly came along and I had to write papers, I realized that these were the exact same agenda items that were on the agenda the year before, and sometimes the papers changed very little from year to year. You might have to update some of them, but not a lot of work. When I was encouraged to stay and do a third year in IO, I said I don't want to stay and do the same thing for a third consecutive year so, no, thank you.

Q: You say that when you were in Geneva you found yourself doing interventions. What sort of issues were you involved in?

BROOKS: One of the issues that was very important to us was that Israel wanted to become a member of ECOSOC, in one of ECOSOC's regional groups, and they didn't quite fit in. The Middle Easterners wouldn't have them, so they wanted to join the European group, which they might belong to as a like-minded country, but regionally they don't fit in. So that was an issue, certainly a very contentious issue. We debated a number of economic resolutions. It was the time when Gorbachev was in charge in Russia and so we were very fond of using some of the things that Gorbachev was writing and saying against the Soviet Union, because he was talking about opening up the Soviet economy and having a much more free-market approach to economics. The Soviets had, for a number of years, been proposing a concept that they called "economic security," which we didn't quite understand. But each year they would suggest a resolution on economic security and we'd spend our time trying to use it against them, sticking all of this free-market business into it.

Q: Was the feeling toward Gorbachev at the time, was he for real or was this a lot of talk?

BROOKS: I'm not sure that anybody knew for sure the answer to that question but we certainly were very willing, we liked the things that he was saying, coming from a Soviet leader's mouth. We spent a lot of time delving into his words and trying to pick out the things that we liked and raise them at the appropriate time to further our own agenda.

Q: What was your impression of ECOSOC as an organization?

BROOKS: I'm going have to say that I'm having a little trouble choosing the right words. I remember a British diplomat ... We were talking about, I think it was an Eastern bloc resolution that had gotten passed, and we were engaging in a little debate as to whether it was a good thing or a bad thing. His attitude was to sort of shrug and say, "It's just the UN. It doesn't really make a lot of difference in the real world." I think an awful lot of what ECOSOC did could be maybe shrugged off in that manner: it's just the UN.

Q: There are very important UN organizations that do things and some that are a lot of talk. Would you put ECOSOC into a lot of talk? Were there any sort of operations going on with ECOSOC?

BROOKS: Not within ECOSOC, no.

Q: How did you find the ECOSOC team within the State Department?

BROOKS: I worked very closely with people at the U.S. Mission to the United Nations (USUN), spent time with them in Geneva during the summertime and some more time up in New York in the fall. It was a good team. The ambassador for ECOSOC was a career Foreign Service officer who had political connections. He was trying very hard to further his own career and he encountered some resistance.

Q: Within the State Department, were you tempted to get into international organizations?

BROOKS: I did consider that as a career path. I considered USUN, an assignment to Geneva. Actually, I mentioned earlier thinking maybe I'd get a degree in economics, maybe a Ph.D. in economics. At that point in time, I started to think maybe international organizations, UN, might be the direction I'd go. I even thought of going back to school and getting a second law degree in international relations so that I could maybe teach this when my Foreign Service days were over. Two things happened. One thing: at the time, there was a housing program up in New York City for people who were assigned to the UN up there, which was a pretty good deal. Some people abused it. Congress got wind of it. The housing program changed significantly. People who were assigned to New York City typically sent their children to a UN school up there, a private school, and could afford to do so because of the housing program.

Well, the housing program changed. Some guy that I knew got up there in the fall, couldn't get his kid into the UN school, and sent him to a New York City public school and was having kids beat him up for his lunch money and that kind of thing. And I said, "I don't want to go to New York and have my kid in public school and get beat up for his lunch money."

I actually tried to implement this plan by, when I finished IO, working hard with the guy in the legal adviser's office who did UN affairs and was head of L/UNA (Office of United Nations Affairs, Office of the Legal Adviser); Bruce Rashkow was his name. I said, "This is not a Foreign Service assignment that you will find on a bid list, but I would like to get detailed to L (the Office of the Legal Adviser) and work with you on UN issues." He was very happy to help me and did a lot of work to try to make this detail happen and then, at the last moment, almost, other people in L got wind of it and said, "We've got a higher priority. We've got this Foreign Service officer who wants to come and work in L but we think he should work on the Moscow arbitration team." This was an international arbitration case against the Soviet Union over the building of the embassy in Moscow. They came to me and said, "Would you like to come and work for us?" I said, "Well, I feel very bad for Bruce Rashkow, he did all this work." So I got the blessing from Bruce to go ahead and do that because basically that was presented to me, I could work for L or not.

Q: So you then went to the Moscow arbitration case. This was when?

BROOKS: It probably would have been '88.

Q: What is the Moscow arbitration business?

BROOKS: It was an international arbitration case against the Soviet Union over the construction of the new embassy building in Moscow, which had a number of problems, including ordinary construction delay and shoddy construction issues and the rather unique issue of having bugs implanted throughout it.

Q: You were doing this for how long?

BROOKS: I was on a detail assignment to the Legal Advisor's office for one year.

Q: Now what was the state of play when you got there? This was in ...

BROOKS: I think we decided in '88. We already filed claims. During the year that I was there we revised our claims to make them more specific, especially in quantifying the monetary damages. I prepared a memo while I was there on the chain of custody of the evidence of the bugging that we were removing from the embassy and did some other tasks as well. However, things were moving rather slowly at the time. Part of the problem was that the old Soviet Union, the evil empire, was becoming our new best friend, sort of, and there were some doubts within the administration as to how we wanted to proceed. That continued after I was gone. The new administration did a study and I think in the end the arbitration case just went away, and we made whatever decisions we made with regard to the embassy building based upon other considerations.

Q: What was the state, again, when you got there, of the embassy building?

BROOKS: It was built but it was not occupied. There was also a housing complex that went along with it and we did begin to move into that, but because of the evidence of the bugging that we found we stayed in the old embassy and didn't move into the building.

Q: At one point, Ambassador Robert Strauss was handed, by the then-head of the KGB, the so-called plans of all the bugging, as things were changing rapidly. Was that during your watch?

BROOKS: No, that would have been after.

Q: What were you supposed to do?

BROOKS: What were we supposed to do? We were supposed to proceed with this arbitration case and hopefully get a decision from the arbitrators that the Soviet Union was responsible for all of our claims and collect monetary damages so that we could use those to reconstruct or build a new embassy.

Q: Who was the arbitrator?

BROOKS: The arbitrators hadn't been chosen.

Q: Where would they come from in something like this?

BROOKS: There are international arbitrators. International arbitration cases are not unusual and there are people who do this more or less for a living. There were procedures in place for choosing the arbitrator. The United States was to choose one. There would have been three. The Soviet Union would choose another one and then the two of them would choose a third.

Q: What about the workmanship? All of us are familiar with these huge apartment complexes in Moscow that are falling apart before they're even occupied over the years. Was there anything different? Did you get a feel that we had made extra, even extraordinary efforts to get good construction?

BROOKS: It didn't seem so. I was never on this team, but I heard stories that during the construction process ... Whereas we do a construction project here in the United States involving concrete — you're familiar with the big trucks that turn and mix the concrete? There are none of those. They pour concrete and mix it by hand at the site and frequently you get problems with hardening before you get it in place.

Q: And well-mixed, too?

BROOKS: Well-mixed, too? Certainly. I've also heard stories about little old women in babushkas digging in the dirt, where we would use cranes.

Q: While you were doing this, was there a feeling this was a futile effort, wasn't going anywhere?

BROOKS: I think we tended to reject that idea but at least in the beginning, the first six months or so, we felt that we had gone to great lengths to build a timeline for the construction project, how it was supposed to proceed and all the elements of it to be delivered on time. We used the same process to construct a timeline for our arbitration case. When I first arrived we were more or less on schedule. A year later we hadn't made much progress and it was clear we'd fallen behind schedule. By the time I left there it was pretty clear that it wasn't moving forward very vigorously.

Q: While you were there I imagine you were beginning to look for another job, weren't you?

BROOKS: That's the way it is with the Foreign Service.

Q: What were you looking for?

BROOKS: Well, I know what I ended up with. I'm not sure what all of my choices were at the time. I don't recall, but I ended up leaving there and going to the Bureau of Intelligence and Research (INR) watch. It was something that I looked forward to. I thought it would be very interesting.

Q: What was the INR watch?

BROOKS: It's a 24-hour, 365-days-a-year operation, where the watchstanders monitor incoming intelligence — CIA reports, National Security Agency (NSA) reports, Defense Intelligence Agency (DIA) reports, as well as embassy cable traffic and even United Press International (UPI) and Associated Press (AP) reporting — and alert people as necessary to things that are going on. In particular, INR produced back in those days the secretary of state's morning intelligence summary. One of the critical functions that the watch performs is making sure some item that has been drafted during the day or afternoon to go into tomorrow morning's report isn't overtaken by events and gets out of date. So frequently we updated those during the night.

Q: You were doing this from when to when?

BROOKS: This would have been around '89.

Q: You recall any issues that may have come up that particularly grabbed your attention?

BROOKS: The Soviet Union was actively engaged in Afghanistan at the time. That was certainly a very important issue and '89 was democracy movement in China, at Tiananmen Square.

Q: And particularly Tiananmen Square, did, say, a China watcher come in there, a China INR hand?

BROOKS: There was nobody on the watch who was a China watcher specifically. However, as I said, the China watchers were watching closely and they frequently spent hours during the evening, late — 11 o'clock, midnight, sometimes — writing their pieces for the next morning, coming in on weekends.

Q: Did you get a feel for the variety of intelligence that was coming in from the CIA, from the Department of Defense (DOD) and all?

BROOKS: I certainly did. That was really my first exposure to all of the intelligence coming into the building. As I said, everything ... Well, I can't say everything that came in came in that way because there are some other channels, but most of it.

Q: How did you get any feel for the type of intelligence that arrived there from these other places?

BROOKS: I would say that one of the things that we did was prepare at the end of each shift a summary of the most interesting pieces. Usually it was a one-pager, maybe two pages. I would say that a great volume would come in during a shift of which maybe six or ten may be truly interesting pieces. The rest of it tends to be not so interesting.

Q: Were we watching the war in Afghanistan closely at that time?

BROOKS: Yes, we were.

Q: Get any feel for how it was going?

BROOKS: Not well for the Soviets. It would be interesting, and I'm not sure that I've ever really done this, to look back and think about if back then anybody was thinking about the consequences for us in the future — us giving Stinger missiles, for example, to the Afghan resistance. I'm not sure that there were many people thinking about that or worrying about that at that time.

Q: We're just about '90, then. Whither?

BROOKS: When I left the INR watch I went to the Economic and Business Bureau in the Office of Maritime Affairs. My job was defined as an econ/commercial officer with a geographic emphasis, that geography being Asia and the Middle East — as my boss used to say, Sakhalin to the Suez Canal. I spent several months there, must have been '89 to '90 when I was on the INR watch. I was there several months doing pretty much a commercial job, which is to say, trying to help the U.S. companies get into Japan, China, and Korea, shipping companies and FedEx and people like that. And I thought it was pretty darned boring — and then Saddam Hussein invaded Kuwait. Things changed, because all of a sudden I was maritime sanctions officer because of the Sakhalin to Suez, as part of the geography. Then I had a new full-time job. I still had to do the commercial function, which seemed a little less important at that time. but I had a new full-time job as sanctions officer. Boy, that kept me busy for the rest of my tour.

Q: Let's stop and talk first about the commercial side and then we'll move over to the sanctions part. In many ways much of American business has turned into service industries and shipping certainly is one of them, and Federal Express and all that is one of the crown jewels. How did you find, particularly, Japan and Korea responding?

BROOKS: Reluctantly and slowly. Part of the problem in Japan in particular is that the ports are controlled to a large extent by the Japanese mafia. So even the government, if it were inclined to, would have a difficult time opening things up in the ports. We made some progress while I was there, but it was slow.

Q: Did we have any weapons to deal with the Japanese?

BROOKS: We have the maritime commission here in the United States, the Federal Maritime Commission, which is part of the Department of Transportation, and they can impose sanctions on countries if they feel that they're imposing barriers to U.S. trade. And they would do that; they were very anxious to do that. Sometimes it was like holding on to the leash of a bulldog, of a pit bull.

Q: What was your office's attitude?

BROOKS: Toward the Maritime Commission?

Q: Toward the sanctions threat.

BROOKS: It was useful to have the threat. We were reluctant to use it very often, but very useful to have it in your pocket, so to speak. It was used during the two years that I was there.

Q: I understand that around this time, the French got annoyed with the Japanese attitude of holding up shipping and all, picked an obscure port in the Mediterranean, and said all Japanese TV goods have to go through this port. They assigned an elderly customs man near retirement to take care of this, and after a short time, something happened.

BROOKS: Yeah, I do seem to recall that. It had slipped my mind, but we did partner with the European Union (EU) at times in order to apply more pressure to the Japanese.

Q: Now, turning to sanctions: What did these involve on what you were doing?

BROOKS: Basically we had a naval embargo on Iraq and we had to work very closely with the Pentagon. There was legitimate trade going into Jordan, for example. We didn't want to hurt Jordan because Jordan was an ostensible friend in the area, although they certainly collaborated with the Iraqis to a large extent to help them get across the border. So there was always that issue — legitimate trade being interrupted, either in the Persian Gulf or in the Red Sea. Then there was an issue that came up with an American company that had a rather unique type of boat that, once loaded, couldn't be opened at sea. That's what the naval interdiction forces did: they stopped ships and inspected them on the open sea. So we had to come up with some sort of plan that would allow these things to go into a port in Jordan and be inspected and basically to give data when they came through the Suez Canal.

Q: Did we find shipping lines and companies that were sort of renowned for trying to slip stuff over?

BROOKS: I don't know if it was specific companies. One of the issues that I didn't mention was the Iraqi commercial fleet itself. Basically, they left Iraq at the beginning of the sanctions regime and started seeking ports all over the world to hide out in. Then they went through a reflagging process, saying, okay, we're no longer an Iraqi ship, we're now a Liberian ship, we're now a Panamanian ship. So we were constantly doing demarches

to various countries, saying, “This is an Iraqi ship. It’s in your port. Please seize it and make sure that it doesn’t get out.”

Q: Did you have much success?

BROOKS: We certainly had success. Eventually we tied up the entire Iraqi fleet. Basically, the Iraqi seamen all abandoned their ships and went back to Iraq.

Q: Who kept the books? Who knew where the ships were and who would want it?

BROOKS: There is an international registry that is accessible. I don’t know if it’s accessible online; at that point in time, probably not. We knew the ships and it was up to the intelligence people to tell us if there were attempts to reflag, for example.

Q: You did this for how long?

BROOKS: I was in that job for two years.

Q: Now at the end, when Iraq pulled out of Kuwait, the sanctions remained on, didn’t they?

BROOKS: Yes, they did.

Q: So you continued up to then. Did you get involved with oil?

BROOKS: It was one of the commodities, certainly, that we were interested in. The oil comes out of Iraq through the Persian Gulf and there was an interdiction force in the Persian Gulf so, yeah, we were involved in oil.

Q: Did you get the feeling that the sanctions leaked around, particularly from Iran or from Jordan?

BROOKS: Sanctions always leak. There’s no such thing as an airtight sanctions regime. Actually, when I leave this job and go into INR again, I’m going to be working on Iraqi sanctions and later on Serbian sanctions. So I know a fair amount about sanctions and I state with a great deal of confidence that there’s no such thing as an airtight sanctions regime.

Q: Then you went over to INR? This was when?

BROOKS: Well, I guess ‘92 or ‘93, one of those.

Q: And you stayed until when?

BROOKS: I was there for three years.

Q: Three years. Working ... the whole time was on sanctions?

BROOKS: When I came in to do the job, I was supposed to be in economic analysis. Originally my area of expertise was supposed to be the Far East, but due to personnel reasons that really had little to do with me within INR, I ended up bouncing around for a while, doing economic analysis in different geographic areas. But because I had worked on economic sanctions in the Bureau of Economic and Business Affairs (EB), they asked me fairly early on if I would do economic sanctions as well, Iraq sanctions, and I said sure. So basically I was doing economic analysis for different geographic regions, but I was doing Iraq sanctions.

Q: On Iraq sanctions, one of the things that's been talked about is that basically the French, Germans and Russians were trying essentially to sell stuff to Iraq and weren't very interested in sanctions.

BROOKS: They certainly were very interested in positioning themselves for after sanctions. They had much more in the way of commercial relations with Iraq than we did and they didn't want to do anything to harm those commercial relations. Yeah, the Russians were a particular problem. I wouldn't say the French government was a problem but you think about any country in the world and you'd find some commercial interest there that was interested in doing business with Iraq.

Q: Did you find any firms or countries particularly egregious in what they were trying to do?

BROOKS: As I indicated, Russia was a problem. Jordan was a big problem. It's a country that borders and there was a lot of traffic going across the border between Jordan and Iraq. I don't remember offhand any countries in particular.

Q: How about with Jordan? Was there at all a certain laissez-faire feeling that Jordan is a very poor country and if it can't work deals it's going collapse, or we don't want it to collapse?

BROOKS: That was certainly a big problem because ostensibly they're a friend in the area and a fragile economy that depended a great deal on trade with Iraq prior to sanctions. And so there was an attempt to help them economically, while at the same time trying to impede commodities from going across the border to Iraq, oil being one of them.

Q: You were monitoring, rather than action.

BROOKS: I was monitoring the information and I also was engaged in clearing language for demarches. There was a huge production process at that time with all of the regional bureaus. I monitored the intelligence traffic, brought them to daily — they eventually became twice weekly — meetings in which all of the desk officers would sit around and read the traffic and say, "Let's do a demarche on this one." Then you had to go back to

the agency that produced the report and get language that was cleared for use with the government of Jordan or the government of whatever.

Q: Did you feel that our monitoring and all had results?

BROOKS: Yes, definitely it had results. As I said once or twice already, there's no such thing as an airtight sanctions regime but certainly we were successful in reducing, to a significant degree, the amount of imports that Iraq was getting. Now, unfortunately, this is a huge problem with sanctions as a general rule. Frequently what you end up doing is enriching some of the worst elements of the society that you're targeting and making things significantly worse for the poorest people of the society.

Q: And this is in Iraq. Saddam Hussein and his cronies were doing all right and the rest of the people weren't.

BROOKS: Exactly.

Q: Did the UN enter this at all at this point?

BROOKS: Yes, the UN was certainly involved. There were UN resolutions, actually the interdiction force was enforcing UN resolutions. I may be confusing Serbia with Iraq, if there were actually UN forces or other countries' forces involved in the interdiction regime. I seem to recall some, small amounts from European countries.

Q: Had the Oil-for-Food Programme started?

BROOKS: It did start while I was there, yes. The problems with it were not clear at that point in time.

Q: I guess it's later, became very much entangled with corruption. Elements at the UN and all were involved.

BROOKS: I frequently compare sanctions with drugs, trying to keep drugs out of our country, for example. To the extent that you're successful, you create shortages, which creates greater opportunities for profits because of supply and demand. Those profits are used to bribe people — in the case of drugs, and it applies to sanctions as well — to buy better boats and planes sometimes than the people have who are enforcing the sanctions or the drug interdiction.

Q: Did you work closely with the Iraqi desk at all in this?

BROOKS: All of the desks, all of the regional desks.

Q: Were there pressures to make changes in the sanctions? "We should let this in" and that sort of thing?

BROOKS: I'm trying to recall if food and medicine was originally not involved in the sanctions or if that came later. I think the original resolution excluded food and medicine. I don't recall any attempts to exclude anything else. I think the fact that their case for the poor Iraqi people and citing the number of deaths and child malnutrition and things like that ... To the extent that food and medicine didn't get in there, it's probably more the fault of Saddam Hussein himself than the sanctions regime.

Q: Dealing with these sanctions and all, did you begin to get frustrated about sanctions? How did you feel?

BROOKS: I can't honestly say that I saw sanctions have much of an impact in Iraq. When we get to talking about Serbia a little bit later, I could say that after a number of years I think Milosevic was very anxious to free himself of the sanctions. And I think with a lot of the caveats I've already mentioned sanctions can be an effective tool. It takes time. It's not a quick kind of thing, to expect an immediate response, and with all of the problems I mentioned it won't be airtight and some of the bad guys will get rich off of it and poor people will suffer.

Q: Then you moved a little later. What'd you do?

BROOKS: Still in INR, I changed portfolios. Again, I had a geographic, economic portfolio as well as the sanctions, and somebody asked me to trade my geographic, economic portfolio for his because he wanted to do that area that I had. And I said, "Sure, but I'm tired of sanctions. You have to take the sanctions, too." And he did. So I was out of the sanctions business for a little bit, the Iraq sanctions business; but the portfolio I took on for economic analysis happened to be Central Europe and it was only a few months later before we had economic sanctions on Serbia. So I was back in the sanctions business.

Q: So how long were you doing this?

BROOKS: The whole time I was in INR was three years, so between Iraq sanctions and Serbia sanctions, it was most of those three years.

Q: And that would be from when to when?

BROOKS: In '94 I left the States to go to Brussels, so '94, '93, and '92.

Q: What triggered the sanctions for Serbia?

BROOKS: It was the disintegration of Yugoslavia and all the Serb and the Croatian and Muslim conflict.

Q: Sanctions went in before activities started in Bosnia?

BROOKS: Yes.

Q: What sort of things were being sanctioned against Serbia?

BROOKS: It was pretty much across the board, again with an exception for food and medicine, pretty standard, and there was a UN resolution that we were enforcing.

Q: What part of the sanctions seemed to work best and what didn't work?

BROOKS: There are certain critical commodities, and oil is always one, that are really important. The way that you can best measure how sanctions are working is inflation, because shortages cause price increases and in Serbia you had historically high inflation. I've got at home fifty-million dinar notes that the government was cranking out and which within a week or two of their production were worth pennies. So the sanctions worked by that measure did quite well and yet things did get through, and oil was one of the things that did get through. Either they'd come up the Danube River or there was a port ...

Q: Bar. The port across there is Bar, I think. It's in Montenegro.

BROOKS: I made a very interesting trip to Thessaloniki, which is an important port for Serbia. There are trains that go from Thessaloniki up into Serbia. I went up to the capital of Macedonia, Skopje, and met with the international sanctions monitors and traveled with them to various border places with Serbia. Saw huge lines of trucks and watched the inspectors do their job. I went on from there to Sofia and to Bucharest, went up the Danube with the inspections monitors, and visited some border-crossing points in Romania, as well.

Q: Serbia's a pretty hard place to put sanctions on since it sits in the middle of everything.

BROOKS: That's true. In order to address that problem there were, as I mentioned, these international sanctions monitors, which were drawn from the customs service, police forces of a number of countries. We would go to the border-crossing points. Unfortunately, they weren't there 24 hours and they weren't there 365 days but they would work; they showed up, at least — the customs people of Romania, Bulgaria, Macedonia, Hungary, and the others. They went through the motions of searching and sometimes conveniently finding cargo that was forbidden. There was a lot of traffic across the border, locals going back and forth and trucks delivering food and things like that.

Q: What about barge traffic down the Danube?

BROOKS: It was a problem. It was one of the things that had to be addressed and the inspectors had the authority to inspect barge traffic.

Q: They would head from Austria down through Romania to the Black Sea. How were the Serbs reacting to all this?

BROOKS: There was nobody in Serbia inspecting. It was all done from the other side of the border. A lot of people were very actively engaged in what we considered illegal trade. They weren't particularly unhappy.

Q: Did you feel any pressure from anywhere or was INR far enough away so that petitions, save the starving Serbian children or something like that ... ?

BROOKS: We were aware of reports in the news but direct pressure on INR, no. Any pressure of that type would more likely come into the policy side of the State Department rather than an intelligence bureau like INR.

Q: Were you getting statistical reports on what was happening in various commodities, either from our embassy or from the CIA?

BROOKS: I don't recall statistical reports as such other than, as I mentioned, inflation, which we did have information on. I'm trying to recall if there were oil figures or not. There may have been but I can't recall.

Q: But was there a feeling that the sanctions were getting to have a grip?

BROOKS: I think that was a fairly effective sanctions regime, given all of the problems. There are so many land borders and so many countries around and there are rails that go through, the Danube, of course. It was not an easy place to impose sanctions on. But again, as I said, there were historic levels of inflation. Obviously the sanctions were having an effect, and after a number of years I think it became clear that Milosevic was trying very hard to pull whatever political levers that he had at his disposal to try to get relief from sanctions.

Q: Were we doing this to Croatia, too?

BROOKS: No, we were not.

Q: Were you involved with the arms embargo to Bosnia?

BROOKS: Not directly, no.

Q: You'd spent quite a bit of time in Washington, hadn't you, by this time?

BROOKS: Yes, I had.

Q: Were you ready to go?

BROOKS: Part of the reason that I spent so much time in Washington is that I had a son with a medical clearance problem. Was I ready to go? Well, it was more the career counselor who said, “You really have to go.” And he said, “I’ve got the place for you and it’s Brussels.” And I said, “Well, okay.” I actually worked in the treasury office of the U.S. Mission to the European Union.

Q: And you did this from when to when?

BROOKS: 1994 to 1997.

Q: You were working with the EU. It had already become the EU. And what was your job?

BROOKS: Again, I was in the treasury office. There was a treasury attaché who was assigned and followed the issues that the treasury was interested in, monetary affairs and economic issues. We had an econ section as well. Basically, the treasury attaché did what he felt was most important and left the rest to me. I found what I thought was a pretty good niche for myself following the budget issues. The EU budget, although a lot of people would probably disagree with me, I found rather interesting, and it does impinge upon some very important decisions that we’re interested in. Frequently, in the case of Iraq, Serbia, and other issues, we’re asking the European Union to contribute to help defray the costs of the wars and everything else that’s going on. Also, they have a significant overseas development budget, and by the time my three years were up a really big issue was the European Union’s ability to absorb new countries from the former Warsaw Pact. NATO was able to open up its doors and allow some countries in fairly quickly and in the United States a lot of people thought the EU ought to be able to do the same thing and embrace them into the West very quickly. Well, it turns out budget problems made that rather difficult because basically the EU budget is mostly an income-transfer scheme, where rich countries give money to the poor countries — or to the budget-poor areas in all of the countries, to some extent — and also support the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP). Poland, for example, is a huge agricultural country, and if you allowed it in and paid it under the CAP the same way ...

Q: The Common Agricultural Policy, which is basically designed to keep prices up, is, I won’t say inefficient, but not terribly competitive for farmers, particularly in France and Germany.

BROOKS: Right, and if you allowed Poland in, it would bust the budget. So I was writing about this in a cable saying, “It ain’t gonna happen anytime soon.” The budget is the reason why.

Q: Were you looking at these, particularly the social programs, which in a way the CAP was almost part of? These supports within countries such as France and Germany would seem to be crippling those countries as being economic competitors. Were we looking at those?

BROOKS: When you say we, yeah, I think we were reporting on those issues. Not me so much as either the treasury attaché or the economic section of the embassy. We were aware of those and it's true, as you say.

Q: Who was our ambassador to the EU at the time?

BROOKS: For the largest part of the time I was there it was Stuart Eizenstat, who is one of the most dedicated and hardworking diplomats I've ever encountered in my career. When he left he was replaced by almost his near opposite whose name — which is probably just as well — I don't recall, but not nearly so hardworking. Both of them were political appointees but very different.

Q: Eizenstat has been one of these troubleshooters, a very good person who has been used in a number of significant jobs in the government. Did you have much contact with him?

BROOKS: I had contact with him there in the embassy. I also had contact with him when he was undersecretary for economics back here, afterward.

Q: Did you pick up, not only Eizenstat's, but your office's, view of the European Union? Did we see this as being essentially a competitor at some point? This has always been one of the worries. We're the great sponsor of the European Union going back to the coal and steel community and developments since that time, but at the same time it's always been sort of the cloud, saying, "Is this thing we're creating going to come back and bite us?"

BROOKS: I think the prevailing view was the European Union was a good thing and that the more unity you had in the heart of Europe, the better off it was for us. We also looked at it from the point of view that the stronger they are economically, the more they can help us support things that we're doing around the world. Now, the other side of the coin, as you mentioned — yeah, this was certainly something that we were aware of and people were thinking about. A large part of our relationship, on the economic side, was competitive and there were always trade frictions that we were constantly working on. But at the same time, despite those frictions, they're a huge trading partner.

Q: Looking at the European Union, was there somebody within that who's calling the shots, a country like France or Germany?

BROOKS: Those were the big boys in the European Union, no doubt. United Kingdom's a little bit of an outlier, both in attitude and just the fact that it's not on the Continent. Things were weighted in favor of Germany and France, and they used their influence and collaborated with each other to use their influence.

Q: Where were you getting your information? Were you able to talk to other embassies, or where was your information coming from?

BROOKS: I had a variety of sources. People inside the European Commission, for example, were happy to provide me with a lot of information and even had access to the European Union library, which is not a public library; I was among the minority who had access to it. I attended a lot of budget meetings, both in Brussels and in Strasbourg, because the commission meets in both places. And I did talk to people from other embassies as well.

Q: Who were most helpful?

BROOKS: Who were most helpful? I can't remember anybody who wasn't pretty helpful. The commission people will open up and talk to you. People in the other embassies, as long as you help them with information, are happy to help you, too.

Q: How would you describe relations between the European Union and the United States at this time?

BROOKS: There's always some friction there and sometimes if you read the papers you get the idea that it's a very contentious relationship, but there is so much that we have in common that people tend to lose sight of that. We're Western democracies and more or less free-market economies and that I think tends to outweigh the friction that we have.

Q: Of the Eastern European countries, had any countries at this point come into the European Union?

BROOKS: Not while I was there. They hadn't actually joined but they had begun negotiations — accession talks, they're called — and the first few candidates had been identified.

Q: Who were they?

BROOKS: Czech Republic, Slovenia, and Hungary, maybe.

Q: Poland's also the really big other country. Was Poland problematic at that time, or was it just a matter of waiting for developments?

BROOKS: It was in the second tier, as I recall, and it was certainly considered a problem because of its size and the extent to which it was an agricultural country and the problems that I mentioned with the budget. Although I haven't followed things as closely as I might since I left Brussels, I believe that the way they ended up resolving things was basically deferring full access to the CAP, for example. It's sort of like a staged process.

Q: After this period of time, where did you go?

BROOKS: I came back to the United States and worked in economic and business affairs, the Office of Developed Country Trade, and was trade officer for Japan.

Q: You did this from when to when?

BROOKS: Came back in '97 for two years, until '99.

Q: Trade with Japan has been a great place for contention for anybody who's had to deal with it. What was the status of play when you took over?

BROOKS: Japan's a very large trading partner but always considered a problem as far as opening themselves up to imports, because their economic model, their economic development, has been very export-oriented. Getting into the market has been a problem. The time that I was there, before I had arrived, we were working on what was called the Structural Impediments Initiative, which is rather than getting them to reduce tariffs, for example, it's getting at more structural impediments to imports. For example, retail stores, the big box stores that we have here in the United States, would love to get into Japan and sell all their goods. Japan has a bunch of laws that are very much oriented towards the small mom-and-pop stores, which protected them. That was an issue that I worked on, for example.

Q: Was there much progress on that?

BROOKS: It depends on how you define "much." Each year we were there, we negotiated all year long, at the end of which was a summit of high-ranking officials. There was always a piece of paper and Japan always undertook to do certain new things. On paper, we had an impressive-looking list of accomplishments, and I don't mean to diminish what we had on paper, but I think it probably looked better than it actually was. I think you always have, once you get an agreement ... It's sort of like our talks with North Korea now. They say one thing and the next day they say something that's completely different, sort of take it back. Not that Japan does that quite as openly. but you still find that it's a struggle.

Q: Where was the problem with Japan coming from? Was it within the bureaucracy or was it business, was it the politicians or was it Japan Incorporated?

BROOKS: I think probably Japan Incorporated. We certainly didn't have a politician like — what's his name, today?

Q: Koizumi.

BROOKS: Koizumi, who was committed to a reform program. The Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) was pretty much "business as usual, this has worked for us for a long time."

Q: Was Japan undergoing that ... Had the bubble burst and was it floundering economically?

BROOKS: Things were pretty stagnant at the time that I was there, which was a tool in our toolkit. We were able to go in and lecture them about, for instance, all of the

deregulation measures that we had taken during the Reagan years and would go in and tell them that “Deregulation is the thing that you need to do. Incidentally help us get into their market but it will really help you and your economy.” We did a lot of that.

Q: Did you get much response?

BROOKS: We got a lot of questions back about trucking deregulation and how it impacts safety and things like that. There were, I think, some people in the bureaucracy, younger people, perhaps, who were interested. I’m not sure they were fully convinced, but some people were willing to give the ideas some thought. Again, we had some accomplishments on paper, but I wouldn’t say that Japan ever fully committed to the idea of deregulation.

Q: Again, we’re moving on, ’99.

BROOKS: Yes, I left there. The CDO said, “You’ve never been a desk officer. You really need to have that experience on your resume.” So I applied for a bunch and ended up on the Canada desk in a job that was quite different from anything that I had done previously. It wasn’t a strict economic job; it was environment, science, and technology (EST) officer. In fact they had offered me the trade job and I said, “I’m really not interested in that,” but along came the EST job and eventually that’s what I got.

Q: And you did that from when to when?

BROOKS: From ’99 to 2001.

Q: What were the major issues with science, environment, and technology?

BROOKS: There were some science and technology issues, which were a minor part of what I did. It was environmental issues. We share a very, very long border. We share the Great Lakes and rivers that cross, and air crosses the border frequently, so what we do in the environmental arena affects each other very directly. So they were important issues. Two of the most contentious issues that I worked with had to do with some water projects in North Dakota. The northern part of North Dakota is actually part of the Hudson Bay basin, so what you do there flows north and the Canadians were very concerned, not so much about your traditional pollution as much as invasive species. What North Dakota wanted to do was to allow some water from outside of the basin get into the basin to help them. There are areas of North Dakota where the groundwater is very, very sour. I attended a hearing up on Capitol Hill one time with the governor of North Dakota and on the desk, he had a bottle with Coca-Cola in it and a bottle with iced tea in it and a bottle with well water from North Dakota, and he challenged everybody present to say which one was which. It was very difficult to tell. Basically they wanted to create an outlet to bring water in, again, outside the Hudson Bay basin. The Canadians were very upset about the idea of nonnative species getting into Lake Winnipeg, for example.

Another issue there was the other side of the coin. It was the Canadians who had a mine project on a river in northern British Columbia. That river flowed toward Alaska. The Alaskans were very concerned about metals getting into the water and affecting the salmon, etc.

Q: What'd you do with those?

BROOKS: Those issues existed before I arrived and they existed after I left. We talked a lot and nothing was ever resolved.

Q: My understanding is that these things are in a way far more important to Canadians than to Americans. They've got one country they're concerned about, the United States. We've not a lot of countries we're concerned about. Did you find that on these things they'd sort of outgun us as far as expertise because they have people who've been dealing with this for years and years and years?

BROOKS: I don't think there was an issue of expertise because we had the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), the Fish and Wildlife Service, the Department of the Interior, and all of those people lined up, as well as — if it was a North Dakotan issue — the governor's office and their fish and wildlife or resources people, as well as the state of Alaska. So that was not an issue.

Q: Did any of these result in anything while you were there?

BROOKS: My understanding is that after I left — I was there under Clinton — the Bush administration basically took a new tack toward the mine in British Columbia, which is something along the lines of, we're pro-mining, we trust the Canadians to do the right thing. The issues in North Dakota had continued to percolate, continued to be a problem. The state of North Dakota has gone ahead with a project on its own and the Canadians are very unhappy about it and may be contemplating a lawsuit.

Q: I was wondering whether, with the Clinton administration ... The North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) has been in effect now for what, about ten years or so?

BROOKS: For a while.

Q: For a while, anyway. It started under Bush and Clinton endorsed it. Mexico came in later but did that make things easier, you think, or were people saying, "Well, you should have been here before NAFTA got going"?

BROOKS: NAFTA was a big issue within the Office of Canadian Affairs but I don't recall it impacted what I was doing very much.

Q: Did you feel any of the political heat on these things? Did the governor of North Dakota come after you?

BROOKS: We worked with them. I think at times there was perhaps a little bit of suspicion of the State Department as the one government agency that's interested in making nice with foreign countries. Sure, we do that. But at the same time, we're representing the interests of the United States and congressional constituents, for example. I think we did a fair and balanced job of representing interests and trying to make everybody ...

Q: In the long run, you can represent one interest very strongly but it's going to end up, with another country, with some sort of compromise.

BROOKS: Exactly. There could be no agreement without compromise. There were times when some of our ideas were not warmly embraced by either North Dakota or Alaska but they had a fairly good sense of political reality themselves.

Q: How about the Canadian Embassy? They've got a very large embassy. Did you deal much with them?

BROOKS: Yes, I did.

Q: How'd you find them?

BROOKS: I found the people I worked with very easy to work with, good people.

Q: In a way, as these issues came up, did you almost, with your Canadian colleagues, figure out where things were going to go, because you're both trained in the art of compromise but you had to sort of wait for all the forces to bring these about?

BROOKS: I guess the one thing that I didn't necessarily foresee was a change in administration. The change in administration happened after I left but the difference between a Gore administration and a Bush administration was rather stark when it comes to a lot of environmental ...

Q: The Clinton administration.

BROOKS: Well, if Gore had won, quite different, and I mentioned the mine issue where basically the Bushes came in and pretty much reversed what we were trying to do.

Q: We were talking about you and the Canadians at the embassy.

BROOKS: Could we see where things were going? I remember various attempts by different people to predict how things were going, and I don't know that any of those predictions were necessarily very accurate because during the course of the two years things didn't go very far.

Q: So we get up to what, 2000?

BROOKS: In 2001, I had the experience to parlay that EST work into a job with the Bureau of Oceans and International Environmental and Scientific Affairs (often referred to as the Bureau of Oceans, Environment, and Science), which I was definitely interested in doing. I had an office that was offering me and urging me to accept a job and it was right at the time when the rather prolonged election process was being worked out between Gore and Bush. And when it was decided in favor of Bush, I decided that the Bureau of Oceans, Science, and the Environment was not where I wanted to spend the next two years.

Q: Yeah, this was not, you might say, a very environmentally friendly regime that was coming in.

BROOKS: So I went off in a completely different direction. I went to FSI and studied Russian for a year with the idea that I would then work in the Nuclear Risk Reduction Center, which is another 24-hour, 365-day watch operation.

Q: Did you do that?

BROOKS: That's what I did.

Q: From when to when?

BROOKS: 2001. It's basically a year of Russian, 44 weeks, but by the time that you get into your new job it's a year later, and then I worked in the Nuclear Risk Reduction Center.

Q: And you did that to when?

BROOKS: Another year. So, '01 to '02 to '03.

Q: What were you doing? What was sort of the regime that was going on?

BROOKS: The Nuclear Risk Reduction Center? It was set up after the first Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (START) as a place where we would exchange information on various aspects of treaty compliance. Every time a B-52 flies from a base in North Dakota to California or wherever it's going, we notify the Russians that a B-52 is on the move. Every time we do a missile test, we notify them. They notify us. Every once in a while we tell them, "Bring your missiles out of storage and put them out in the open so that we can see them, count them." And they do that.

Q: With satellites.

BROOKS: Yes. If they're going to destroy a missile or a bomber or something like that, they do it out in the open, they cut it up into sections, and once again we observe from above that they've done that. So messages go back and forth on a daily basis on various things that are going on. The Russians send their messages in Russian and the people on

the NRRC, as we call it, have to translate them and then distribute them to DOD and other people in the government.

Q: The Russians have people in the United States and we have people in Russia, don't we, who observe some of the chopping up of missiles and things like this?

BROOKS: We do have a small team in; there's only one place that I can think for sure now where there's a team that is there year-round. We do inspection tours, as well, where we're putting together a group, and we go over and inspect various facilities. They come here and some of those messages are about those inspection teams' arrival and things like that.

Q: Did you get out on any of those teams?

BROOKS: No, I did not.

Q: What was your impression of how well this operation was working?

BROOKS: It seemed to work very well. I think everybody was pretty happy. It worked well enough on the START treaty that as other arms control treaties came into effect in subsequent years, the two sides said, well, we got this NRRC and it seems to be working. We've just signed a treaty on conventional arms in Europe, let's assign the same kind of functions to the NRRC — and they did that. The Treaty on Open Skies, again, was assigned to the NRRC. So basically, when I was there, there were two sides: There were the Russian speakers who handled the START side and the functions that the NRRC was initially set up for, and then there was the other side that had French, Spanish, and German speakers who did the conventional forces in Europe and Open Skies.

Q: Then you left that job in 2003. Then what?

BROOKS: My last job in the Foreign Service was back in INR for two years and the function was terrorism finance.

Q: Of course this was after we'd been attacked, known as 9/11, the attack on the World Trade Center in New York. We'd gone to war in Afghanistan on terror and sort of a dubious war in Iraq, but what was your particular slice of the action and what you were doing on the subject of the finance of terrorism?

BROOKS: This was a very high-priority project and a lot of parts of the government were involved in it. I was most directly involved serving as INR's conduit to the coalition-building group, which was an interagency group chaired by Tony Wayne, assistant secretary of state for economic and business affairs. We had a meeting every week in the State Department with the Department of the Treasury, the Office of Foreign Assets Control (OFAC), CIA, the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), National Security Council (NSC), and Justice Department all in attendance, the idea being to identify terrorists and their financiers and decide upon appropriate measures. Now, that

group was part of the process of identifying and deciding upon appropriate measures. There were targeting groups. There was an NSC-chaired group.

There were a lot of different groups. The coalition-building group's primary function, with State Department at the head, was to reach out to other countries and obtain their help. We discussed the process. OFAC was very much involved in writing up cases against terrorist financiers so that we could apply our domestic legislation or executive orders to seize their assets, for example, or nominating them for addition to a UN list of al Qaeda or Taliban supporters so that all UN members would take action against them and freeze their assets. Again, I was the conduit from INR for the intelligence to the State Department people serving in this function, monitoring the intelligence, alerting them, reviewing the things OFAC had drafted; in some cases, drafting things on my own.

Q: How sophisticated was the terrorist financing network, from your observation?

BROOKS: There were many elements to it. They used banks, although as this process that I've just discussed started up and began to work, the banks became much more problematic for them because that's the easiest way to identify transactions and to freeze assets. However, there are lots of other ways that they can operate, and one of the problems that we learned about was the more traditional system in the Middle East and parts of Asia called "hawalas" that are used for transferring money. People who go overseas to work, for example, and want to send money home do it through hawalas. Hawalas are not regulated by the countries that they operate in and they don't keep very good records, so it's very difficult to control transfer of assets. Sometimes cash couriers are used. Businesses are used. A lot of the terrorist financiers are very wealthy businessmen. They can set up phony transactions and transfer money around the world.

Q: How important was money? Because, when you look at it, most of your terrorists that we see today are rather dedicated young Islamicists who are willing to take a bomb or fly a plane or do something, and it doesn't seem to be very expensive to support these people.

BROOKS: A lot of terrorist operations do not require a lot of money, that is true. Osama bin Laden, of course, had training camps in Afghanistan and may still have them in Pakistan or wherever he is these days. They support the families, frequently. When the war in Afghanistan was very hot and heavy, they were supporting families of people who were fighting and of people who were dying. So money's important.

Q: In the Middle East, particularly the precepts of Islam, charity is a big thing and so I understand a lot of Islamic charitable organizations are also conduits for this money. Did you find this?

BROOKS: Yes, we did find that, and we designated a number of Islamic charities and trusts as terrorist financiers, both domestically and with the United Nations. Also, the coalition-building group has worked very hard with Saudi Arabia in particular and some

of the other countries to get them to rein in their charities and exert more control over them.

Q: Saudi Arabia, with its oil money and all, and also the fact that it's become more and more evident that their schools were teaching a rather virulent form of Wahhabism, anti-Western, and that costs money, meant Saudi Arabia seems to be one of the major problems.

BROOKS: It was certainly believed to be one of the major problems and I'm not denying that. I think perhaps one of the biggest favors that Osama bin Laden did for us was turn his attention to Saudi Arabia and attack it. I don't think we had a lot of success enlisting Saudi Arabia's help as an ally until that happened.

Q: There'd been some bombings and attacks, anti-regime cells in Saudi Arabia recently.

BROOKS: That is correct, and since that time I think the Saudis have taken the terrorism issue much more seriously and been a much better partner in the fight against it.

Q: In your group, did you deal much with the Saudis?

BROOKS: Not me so much directly, but the larger group, yes, and quite frequently. Fran Townsend, who was the terrorism coordinator at the NSC, goes out there several times a year, and every time she makes a trip the whole group operation gets geared up to ... What's Fran going to say and what do we want her to do when she's out there?

Q: Were we getting a pretty good handle on drying up money?

BROOKS: The Treasury Department had a figure for the amount of assets that were frozen and it was on the order, as I recall, of about \$26-30 billion, which sounds like a lot of money, and it is. But there's no doubt that money continues to flow in a variety of ways. It's very much like drugs, if you like, or sanctions, where if you started out with the idea that you're going to create some sort of airtight regime, it's a delusion — that'll never happen. If you make things harder for people, you increase their costs, and we have done that to a certain extent, but money is still going to be able to travel.

Q: Looking at the situation in Iraq today, where al Qaeda, an offshoot, is working quite effectively in sending particularly young men over to blow themselves up and kill Americans and Iraqis. Were you there when this was beginning to happen?

BROOKS: Yes.

Q: What was happening? Were we able to identify the families of people who blew themselves up, and were they getting the same support that had been accorded to people doing this before in Israel and other places?

BROOKS: I don't know that there was any identification so much of the families being supported, like in Israel, as you mentioned, but certainly we are aware then and now that the border with Syria, for example, is rather porous and there's a lot of traveling going back and forth. Saudi Arabia, too, but Syria, I think, is the biggest problem.

Q: Were we able to do anything with Syrian money or was Syrian money involved in this?

BROOKS: I don't think that the money from Syria is the biggest problem. The problem is the border and the regime that is not particularly inclined to be helpful. The money, for the most part, comes from Saudi Arabia and other places in the Gulf.

Q: This is your last job and you retired when?

BROOKS: This Friday is my last day on the payroll.

Q: What do you plan to do?

BROOKS: I've been interviewing with a number of companies fondly referred to as "beltway bandits," the contractors with the government to provide warm bodies with clearances like mine to work on terrorism, some other issues like that.

Q: I hate to say it but it's certainly a growth industry here in Washington.

BROOKS: Right.

End of interview